

Chapter 1,

in which Uther Pendragon fell in love with lady Igraine, a wife of another man, Merlin helped Uther have what he wanted, and Uther and Igraine had a child by the name of Arthur

It was in the days¹ of Uther Pendragon, when he was king of all England, that there was a mighty duke in Cornwall that held war against him for a long time. That duke was called the Duke of Tintagil. One time king Uther sent for this duke², asking him to bring his wife with him, because she was known to be a fair and wise lady, and her name was Igraine.

When the duke and his wife came to the king, the great lords that were

¹ It was in the days... — и так случилось во времена...

² Sent for this duke — отправил (гонцов) пригласить этого герцога

in the king's council helped them make peace. The king liked Igraine very much, and fell in love with her, and desired to lay with her. But she was a good woman, and did not accept the king's offer. She came to her husband the duke and said, "I suppose that we were sent for so that I be dishonored. I advise you that we depart from here immediately, and ride all night to our own castle." She also said that it would be wise to not tell the king and the lords that they were leaving.

So they departed. When king Uther learned that they left, he was very angry. He called his council and told the lords that the Duke of Tintagil rode away with Igraine. They advised the king to send for the duke and his wife to catch them and call them back, and if they didn't want to come back, then the king had a reason to start a war against them.

They sent the messengers, and the messengers caught the duke and his wife midway. The duke said that nei-

ther he nor his wife¹ would come back. King Uther was very angry to hear that message. He sent the messengers again to warn the duke that he should prepare for a war, and that in less than forty days, Uther would take his biggest castle from him.

When the duke heard this warning, he started to prepare his castles for war. The duke had two strong castles, the bigger one was called Terrabil, and the smaller one was called Tintagil. The duke put his wife Igraine in the castle of Tintagil, and he put himself in the castle of Terrabil, which had many secret exits and passageways. Then in all haste² came Uther with a great army, and laid a siege to the castle of Terrabil. And there was a great war, and many people were slain.

But then Uther fell sick, because of his anger and his love to Igraine. A noble knight named Sir Ulfius came to king Uther and asked why he was sick.

¹ **Neither he nor his wife** — ни он, ни его жена

² **In all haste** — в великой поспешности

“I will tell you,” said the king, “I am sick because of anger and love to fair Igraine.”

“Well, my lord,” said Sir Ulfius, “I will find Merlin, and he will prepare a remedy that will cure you.” So Ulfius departed, and after great adventures he met Merlin.

“Who are you seeking?” Merlin asked him.

Sir Ulfius took a little pause to think.

“I will tell you who you are seeking,” said Merlin. “You are seeking Merlin, and you should seek no further, because I am he. If King Uther rewards me, and swears to do exactly as I say, I will give him what he wants so much.”

“I can promise you,” said Sir Ulfius, “that he will reward you and do as you ask, as long as you ask reasonable things of him.”

“Ride back to Uther,” said Merlin, “And I will not be long behind¹.”

¹ Will not be long behind — прибуду вслед за тобой

Ulfius was glad to hear that, and rode in all haste back to king Uther Pendragon, and told him that he had met Merlin.

“Where is he?” said the king.

“Sir,” said Ulfius, “He will be here soon.”

As he said that, he saw that Merlin was standing at the entrance to the pavilion. Then Merlin came to the king, and when the king saw him, he said he was welcome.

“Sir,” said Merlin, “I know what you wish with all your heart, so if you swear to me as a king that you will do as I say, you will have what you wish.”

The king swore on the Four Evangelists¹.

“Sir,” said Merlin, “This is what I want from you: the first night that you will lie with Igraine, you will conceive a child. When this child is born,

¹ **Swore on the Four Evangelists** — поклялся именами четырёх евангелистов (авторов канонических Евангелий — Матфея, Марка, Луки и Иоанна)

he will be delivered to me to nourish. This will bring great glory to you and your child, if he proves worth it¹.”

“Let it be so²,” said Uther. “You will have the child.”

“Get ready,” said Merlin, “Tonight you will lie with Igraine in the castle of Tintagil. You will look like her husband the duke, Sir Ulfius will look like Sir Brastias, one of the duke’s knights, and I will look like Sir Jordanus, another of the duke’s knights. Do not talk a lot with her nor her men, just say that you are sick. Go to bed, and rise in the early morning, and I will come to bring you back.”

They rode to the castle of Tintagil. The duke saw them depart from the siege of Terrabil, so came out to fight with the king’s men. That night he was killed even before Uther came to Tintagil.

After the death of the duke, king Uther laid with Igraine, looking like

¹ **If he will prove worth** — если он окажется достойным

² **Let it be so** — да будет так

the duke three hours after the duke was dead. In the early morning Merlin came to Uther to take him back. Uther kissed lady Igraine and departed in all haste.

When the lady heard that her husband the duke was killed that night, she wondered, who came to her chambers looking like the duke. She mourned privately, but didn't tell anybody. Soon, the lords of king Uther asked him to end the war between him and Igraine. He was happy to do that, and he made Sir Ulfius to be the messenger.

"Now we will do well," said Ulfius. "Our king is a strong man, and he doesn't have a wife, and my lady Igraine is a fair lady. It would be great joy for us all and it might please the king to make her his queen."

So king Uther took Igraine as a wife and made her his queen.

But the queen was pregnant, and soon everyone could see that. So the king came to her and asked who the

father of the child was. She didn't want to tell him.

"Tell me the truth," said the king, "And I promise I will love you even more after that."

"I will tell you the truth," said Igraine. "The same night my lord was killed, a man came to me at the castle of Tintagil, and he looked exactly like my lord, and with him were two men looking like my lord's knights Sir Brastias and Sir Jordanus. So I went into bed with him, as I should have with my lord, and that night we conceived a child."

"You're telling me the truth," said Uther, "Because it was I who came to lay with you that night. And I am the father of the child." And he told her how all of that happened as Merlin planned. She was happy to know that Uther was the father.

Soon Merlin came to the king.

"Sir," he said, "You swore that you would give the child to me to nourish."

“As you wish,” Uther said.

“I know a lord of yours in this land,” said Merlin, “his name is Sir Ector, and he is a true and faithful knight, and he owns many parts in England and Wales. Send for him, and tell him that in the name of his love to you, he should put his own child to nourishing of another woman, and that your child should be nourished by Sir Ector’s wife. And when the child is born, have him secretly brought to me unchristened, through the back door of the castle.”

Uther did as Merlin said. He called Sir Ector, and granted him great rewards. Sir Ector swore to do as the king told him. When the child was born, Uther commanded two knights and two ladies to bring the child, bound in a cloth of gold, through the back door of the castle and give him to the poor man they meet outside. So the child was brought to Merlin, and Merlin took him to Sir Ector and brought