



# imagine*ry* theatre company

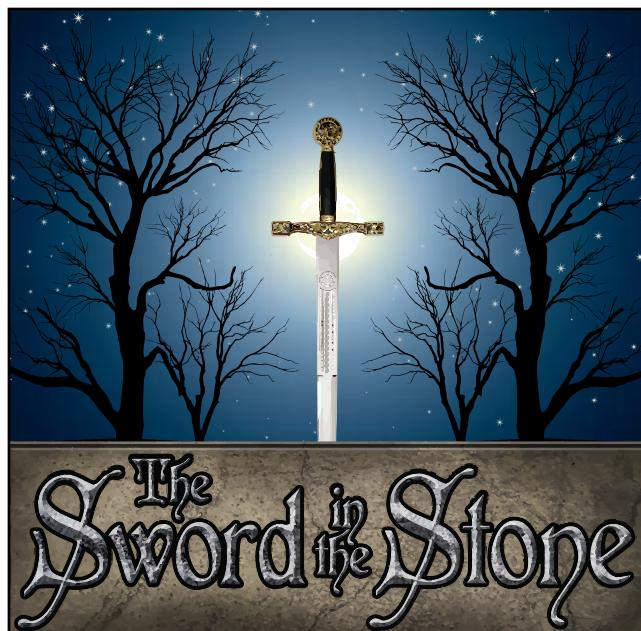
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by Kathryn Schultz Miller  
Directed by Jason Cannon

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# imaginary theatre company



by Kathryn Schultz Miller  
Directed by Jason Cannon



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## The Company

Kai and others / **Lakeetha Blakeney**

Merlin / **Alan Knoll**

Arthur / **Jerome Lowe**

Guenever, Spike and others / **Laurie McConnell**

Financial assistance for this theatre has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis; and the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission.

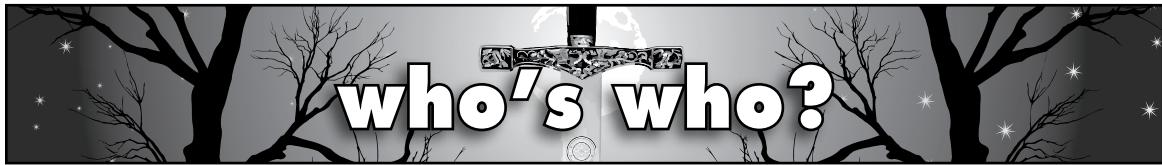


Have you heard of Camelot? Well our story, *The Sword in the Stone*, is going to show you where the legend of Camelot began. Young Arthur is just a kid living in England, but he's not any ordinary kid, there's something quite grand in his future. This isn't just regular old England either; this is the England of legends, where dragons breathed fire, damsels in distress were rescued by knights in shining armor, and magic was an everyday occurrence.

When the story begins, an orphaned Arthur is helping his older brother Kai train to become a knight. Because he is younger, Arthur can only be a squire, even though he is much better than his brother at, well, just about everything. But Arthur isn't going to let his job as a squire get him down, instead he's going to do the best he can to help his brother, and maybe sneak in a little sword practice when nobody's around.

But wait, maybe there is somebody around. One day when young Arthur is practicing with his brother's sword, a magician appears. This isn't just any magic man, this is Merlin, the greatest magician of the age and the man who is going to help Arthur fulfill his destiny. But what is his destiny, and is the youngster ready for it?

Answers to page 12 crossword:



MERLIN is a very powerful magician, but also a very good teacher.

He may be just a squire when the play begins, but there are great things in store for ARTHUR.

Arthur's older brother KAI may not be ready for the responsibility of being a knight in battle.

We might never see SIR ECTOR, but he's Arthur's adopted father, who's been taking care of him and teaching him.

SPIKE and other animal creatures may not be human, but they sure are capable of teaching Arthur quite a lesson.

The princess GUENEVER understands what it's like to live the royal life. Perhaps she can help Arthur learn.

#### ACROSS

- 3 Wind
- 4 Sword
- 7 Tournament
- 8 Merlin

#### DOWN

- 1 Knight
- 2 England
- 4 Spike
- 5 Squire
- 6 Stone



There is magic all around.

At least, that's what the magician Merlin believes, even though his country is in the midst of a terrible war. As the play begins, Merlin devises a way to save his beloved England, that is, as long as everything goes according to his plan for a baby named Arthur.

Several years later, Arthur is a young man, helping his older brother Kai prepare to become a knight by practicing his swordsmanship. Even though Arthur is younger than Kai, he is also bigger and better at just about everything. Kai's not so fond of getting beat up on by his younger brother, so he decides to throw in the towel for the day and head off for swim and then a nap. Arthur, however, has other plans. He wants to keep practicing.

As Arthur practices, Merlin appears and tells Arthur that he is a magician. Arthur wants to see some tricks, but Merlin insists that magic isn't quite like he might have imagined. Magic doesn't involve pulling a rabbit out of a hat, but instead is found in everything around us—the earth, wind, water and fire. Arthur is skeptical, but Merlin proves his point in his very first lesson. The young squire will first learn about the wind, as Merlin turns them both into birds and they take to the sky.

As they fly, Arthur is amazed to see the kingdom from so high above. They fly over the forest and his father's land, and then they fly over what appears to be a large group of men. Arthur thinks it looks beautiful, but as they get closer, he realizes that it is a war. Merlin explains that, like many of nature's creatures, men believe that the strongest should rule. However, the strongest are not always the best rulers.

For Merlin's next lesson, the two become fish in a moat outside Arthur's family castle. As Merlin is teaching Arthur how to swim and how to avoid the moat's biggest predator, the pike named Spike, they realize that Arthur's brother Kai has accidentally been transformed as well. The fishy Kai doesn't want to listen and swims too close to danger. Merlin takes the opportunity to teach another lesson, and he leaves the young squire to find a way out of the situation. Arthur uses cunning and bravery to save himself and his brother from Spike, learning that it isn't just strength that a ruler needs, but also intellect.

After their adventure, the two boys return home and find a stranger, the princess Guenever. She has arrived because her father has arranged for her to marry Kai, but that is certainly not what she wants to do. Arthur tries to comfort the young lady, and in doing so, seems to gain a new admirer. Merlin appears with yet another lesson, this time about fire. He teaches Arthur that fire isn't only found in the breath of dragons, but also in the heart of a man in love.

Kai soon arrives with some bad news—he has been called to battle. Arthur must fulfill his duty as Kai's squire and assist his brother in preparing to depart. He helps Kai get into his armor and gather his supplies, but wait—Kai's sword is missing! Desperate to find his brother a sword before he leaves, Arthur comes upon a sword lodged in a stone. Will he be able to get the sword in time?

Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your classroom needs and reproduce them for future use.

The activities in this guide address the following Missouri Show Me Standards and Illinois Learning Standards.

MO: CA1, 3, 4, 5, FA1, 2, 4, 5; SS2, 5, 7  
IL: 1, 3, 5, 16, 17, 25, 27

# words to the wise

A villain has evil plots and motives and is the bad guy of a story.

Merlin provides Arthur with Excalibur, a legendary sword that only a king can carry.

When Arthur pretends to be a knight, he celebrates great triumphs, or great victories and achievements.

Kai needs to learn to joust, a sport in which men attempt to knock each other off their horses using long wooden weapons called lances.

Someday Kai will become a knight, a job for men who serve the king as brave soldiers.

Arthur believes his destiny is to become a squire, an attendant or helper to a knight.

You might shout “Confound it!” if something didn’t go your way, sort of like “Darn it!”

In Arthur’s time, a hermit was a person who lived all alone, totally separated from everyone else.

Chivalry is a knight’s code of conduct and includes qualities like honor, courage, courtesy and readiness to help those in need.

Valor is great courage in the face of danger.

A knight is gallant if he shows chivalry, and is brave, grand and heroic.

Something that is majestic shows great beauty and dignity.

If something occurs miraculously, then it happened almost by magic as if supernatural powers are involved.

Virtues are morally good and desirable qualities.

To proffer is another way to say to offer something.

Kai thinks turning into a fish is absurd, or a crazy, wild and unreasonable thing to do.

If something is ghastly, it is awful, frightening and terrible.

Sir Ector’s castle has a moat around it, or a large ditch filled with water that is a form of protection for the people inside the castle.

Spike is a pike, which is a kind of fish with a pointed snout and large teeth.

In Arthur and Guenevere’s time, a dowry was money or gifts that were given to a man from his bride’s father.

It’s not very nice to call someone an imbecile, which is like calling them dumb or stupid.



*Costume rendering  
by Costume Designer  
Elizabeth Eisloeffel*

# Touring England

*The Sword in the Stone* gives us a brief look at England and some elements of its culture. If we took a trip across the ocean, what more might we find out about England today?

## Did you know?

- England is part of the United Kingdom, which consists of a group of islands and four different countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- In northern parts of Scotland and England, there are many lakes, called lochs. Loch Ness, in Scotland, is even said to be home to a giant monster, called Nessie!
- The government of the United States was started by people who came from England. In fact, the first colonists battled England for control of the country in the American Revolution.



Located on the southern and central part of the island of Great Britain, England is a large part of the United Kingdom (or UK), consisting of over half the UK's territory and around 84% of its overall population (England alone consists of 51 million people). Here are some quick facts about England.

## Geography and Climate

Most of England consists of what are lowlands, or land below sea level. The climate tends to be more damp and mild than what we might be used to around these parts. Winters usually don't get any colder than around 34 degrees Fahrenheit (though the English would probably measure in Celsius, which would be 1 degree for them) and summers don't typically get any hotter than around 70 degrees Fahrenheit or 21 degrees Celsius.

## Government

The English are governed by both a constitutional monarchy (that is—a King or Queen may rule but only within rules set up by the constitution) and a parliamentary democracy (a system of ministers and representatives). While the monarchy has held most of the power in the past, Parliament and the Prime Minister are actually in charge of governmental work these days.

## Culture and the Arts

While the English enjoy much of the same popular culture as we do—we share many of the same popular musicians, movies and television shows—there are some distinct differences in their entertainment habits. Perhaps one of the most striking is England's interest in theatre.

There are around 150 theatres in England today, producing a variety of plays from tried and true classics by William Shakespeare to new and exciting plays starring people like Daniel Radcliff, who played Harry Potter.

## Food

Though you might be able to pop into a pub and grab a relatively familiar burger, traditional English favorites include a good Sunday roast (that's beef, lamb or chicken roasted and served with boiled vegetables and gravy), fish and chips (deep fried battered fish with deep fried chipped potatoes like fries), and shepherd's pie (meat pie with a crust made from mashed potatoes).

## Sports

While many American sports like basketball have caught on in England, the strongest athletic traditions in England are in sports like football (not American football, it's actually soccer), rugby (more like American football, though without the pads!), cricket (kind of like baseball with a big flat bat) and tennis.

# A Modern Kingdom

Many fairy tales, legends and even modern stories take place in the United Kingdom where *The Sword in the Stone* is set. Find the notable places listed below and mark them on this map.



## 1. London

The Darling family has a normal life in this city, at least until Peter Pan arrives.

## 2. Cheshire County

This region was home to Lewis Carroll, who wrote *Alice in Wonderland*.

## 3. Sawrey

One might find Peter Rabbit hopping around this small town, once the home of Beatrix Potter.

## 4. Edinburgh

Though she is from Bristol in England, J.K. Rowling wrote her first *Harry Potter* book at a cafe in this Scottish city.

## 5. Cardiff

The home of Roald Dahl, perhaps this city in Wales was the inspiration for such great places as Willy Wonka's chocolate factory.

## Bonus

Color each of the United Kingdom's four countries in a different color:

- England=red
- Scotland=blue
- Wales=yellow
- Northern Ireland=green

# It's Legendary

The world of King Arthur, Merlin and magical wonders might seem long ago and far away, but there are all sorts of legendary things that people still believe today.

## Bigfoot

Have you heard of Bigfoot? No, not the monster truck. This legendary creature is also known as sasquatch and is reported to roam the forests of Northwest America. Usually described as a large, hairy, ape-like being, Bigfoot has been sighted on many occasions, or at least, that's what people think. Scientists doubt the existence of such a creature, but many campers and hikers believe they've seen the big guy. Many believe that the legend of Bigfoot comes from Native American tales of "sesquac" which means "wild man." Some tribes have recorded stories of giants living on and around the mountains and stealing salmon from fisherman. In recent times, pictures have surfaced, but their authenticity is usually doubted as people assume a human could simply dress up and fake a picture. But whatever the truth, the legend of Bigfoot continues.

## Is it real?

Here are a few more mysterious tales and legendary creatures that you can look into:

- Aliens
- Stonehenge
- The Abominable Snow Monster
- Witches
- Dracula
- Ghosts
- Leprechans
- Crop Circles
- Vampires
- Werewolves
- Dragons

## Nessie

Perhaps as early as the sixth century, reports surfaced of a large aquatic monster living in Scotland's Loch Ness. Stories loomed of a water beast that attacked men and boats, dragging them under the surface to their doom. Scientists have done searches and sonar readings of the lake, and even speculated that the creature is the descendant of a plesiosaur, a giant, long-necked, water-bound dinosaur. Others think Nessie may have actually been a sturgeon, which have been reported to reach sizes of 20 feet long and 500 pounds. However, even with dozens of photos and sightings, no real evidence has been found of the monster's existence. That doesn't stop people from searching though, and even becoming fans of the beast.

Affectionately referred to as Nessie, the Loch Ness Monster is a tourist favorite in Scotland where you can take a cruise of the lake to search for her or have your picture taken with her statue.

Research another legend that you know of. Find out where this story originated and how it has progressed. What have experts found about this legend? Do people still believe in it? What evidence do supporters present to back their belief? What do you think?

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# Face to Face: King Arthur

*The Sword in the Stone* is the stuff of legends with magic, knights, dragons and princesses. But what if it was also the stuff of real life? Though there's not enough evidence to decide one way or another, some historians believe there actually was a real-life King Arthur. Below are just a few of the possibilities, what do you think?

## Arthur: The British War Commander

The first candidate for the real King Arthur is a late fifth century/early sixth century British soldier mentioned in several medieval texts. This Arthur wasn't exactly a king, but he was a war commander fighting for British kings against a Saxon invasion. While there are certainly several legendary aspects to this story (some sources claim he single-handedly killed 960 men!), there is little debate that he led the British to victory, beating the Saxons and thereby holding back their invasion.



## The Sarmatian Connection

Piggy-backing off of the Artorius theory, some historians believe that the inspiration for King Arthur comes from the Sarmatians that Artorius commanded. Like the legends, the Sarmatians possessed great skill with the sword and a deep admiration for the weapon (almost a religious admiration, in fact, as their tribal worship was directed at a sword sticking up from the ground ... kind

of like a sword in a stone, no?). They carried standards (military flags) that depicted dragons (just like King Arthur), and employed shamans (divine healers or men of magic), similar to Merlin.

## For Rome: Lucius Artorius Castus

Another possible inspiration for the King Arthur legend is a late second century/early third century Roman soldier named Lucius Artorius Castus (or Artorius for short). After a long and illustrious career in the Roman army, Artorius became a commander at the British station in York. From there, he would lead several legions (including one made up entirely of Sarmatians—a former Roman enemy) with great success. Though he was never a king, after his military service he was appointed governor of the province of Liburnia.

## Riothamus ... The "Great King"

A fifth century king Riothamus (whose name actually means "Great King") draws a lot of interesting parallels to the Arthur legends—first and foremost, he was a king (unlike our other possibilities!). He, like Arthur, crossed into Gaul twice, once to help a Roman emperor and once to squash civil war. He was also betrayed by one of his advisors just like in Arthurian legend, and he lived out his final days in Avalon as the legend suggests for Arthur.

# A Sword's Story

Kai might not realize it, but Arthur knows right from the beginning how important it is to have the right sword. A good sword isn't just a hunk of metal—it is a weapon that has been carefully crafted through an evolution that spans thousands of years.

The earliest swords date back to around the 17th century B.C., made during the late Bronze Age. These first swords had small, slender blades made specifically for thrusting, as longer blades made of bronze bent too easily for use in battle.

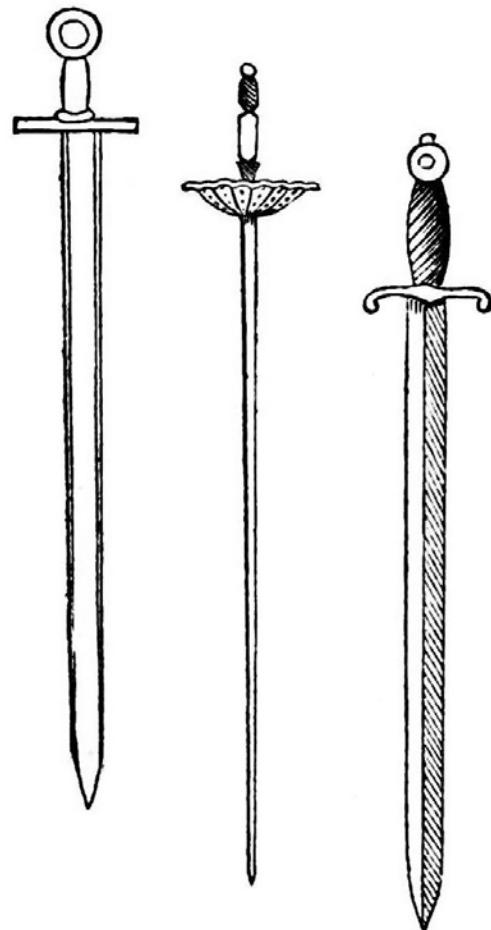
Around the 13th century B.C., the Iron Age began to take hold. While iron didn't offer much change in the final product (iron swords were very similar to those made of bronze), the plentiful supply of iron made for easier mass production, allowing entire legions to be more equipped with iron swords.

The Middle Ages, often known as the Dark Ages, where actually a time of great advancement in swords. Steel became the material of choice, allowing swords to be longer and stronger than ever before. Other innovations like the crossguard (a bar of metal at right angles to the blade, separating the hilt from the blade—an innovation that kept the user from hitting an opponents shield or sword with his own hand) made the sword the weapon of choice. Scimitars (curved blade swords, originally forged in the Middle East) and katana blades (or Japanese samurai swords) were Asian variations of the sword that came from the Middle Ages as well.

Between 1300-1500 (the late Middle Ages and Renaissance), swords continued to evolve alongside improved armor. Such examples of innovation include longswords (a sword with lengthened grip for two-handed use and a longer blade) and estoc (or "tuck" in English) swords—a variation of the longsword made specifically for piercing armor.

In the 16th century, swords slimmed down and became fashion statements with both the rapier (a slender, sharply pointed sword) and the smallsword (essentially an accessory in both Europe and the New World). Swords shifted from primarily weapons of the military to civilian weapons used for dueling well into the 18th century.

In the Modern Age of weaponry, swords have shifted completely from primary to secondary weapons, often used these days strictly for ceremonial purposes. They are often worn as part of dress uniforms in many military and naval services throughout the world.



# You're the Designer

The Imaginary Theatre Company knows that there are a lot of different people involved in putting on a play. One very important group is the design team. Each play has a costume designer, who is in charge of everything the actors wear, as well as a scenic designer, who creates the look of the play. It is crucial that the set and costumes for a play accurately represent the time period in which the play is set. What is the setting of the play you have seen? What is the time period? Research the setting of *The Sword in the Stone*. Using the information you learn, design either the costumes or the set, making sure to accurately represent the time period and place.

What are some elements you learned that need to be included in your design?

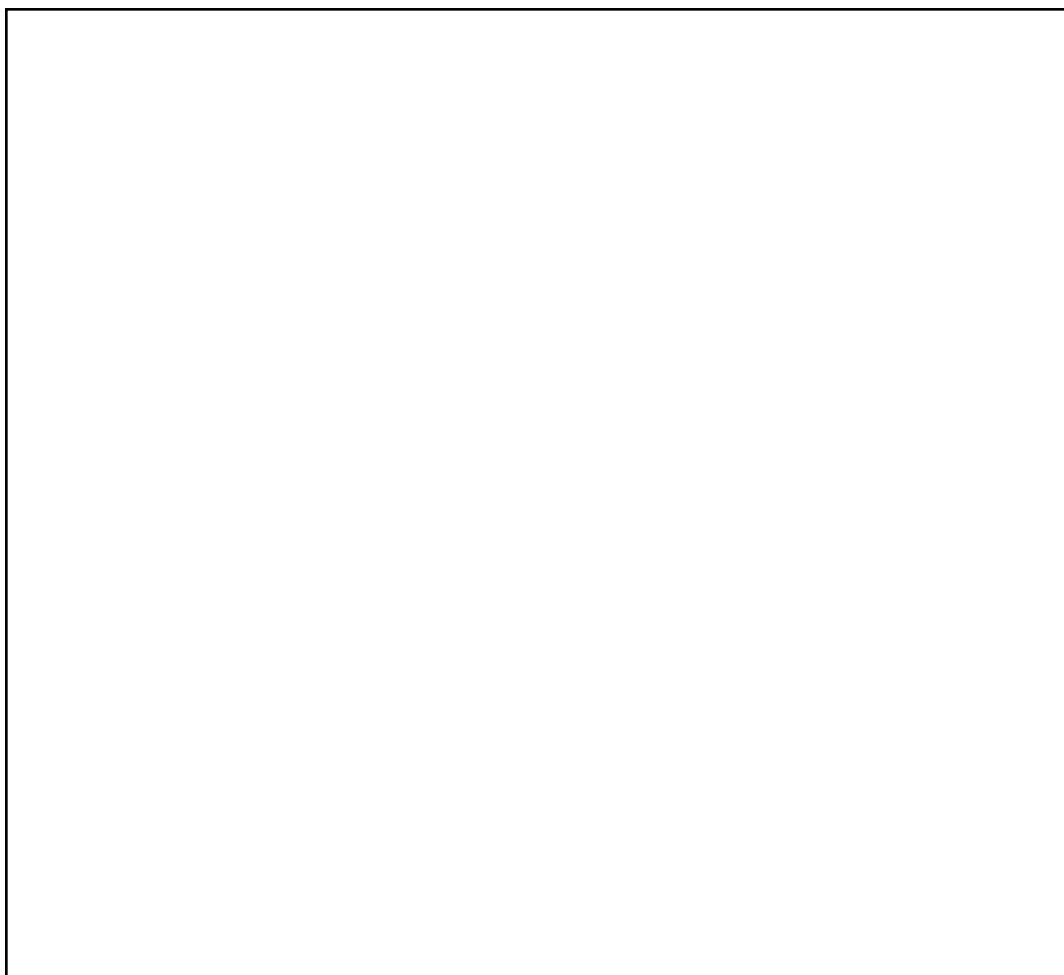
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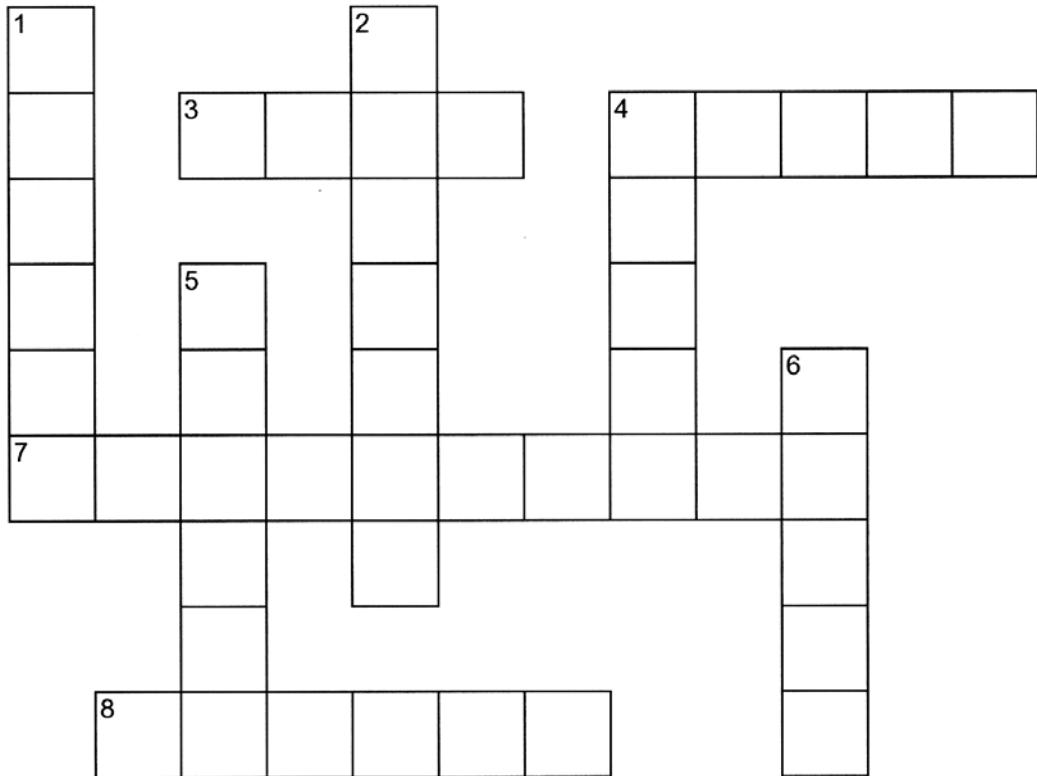
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Now take your ideas and draw your design below.



# It's Puzzling

Use the information you learned in *The Sword in the Stone* along with the information in this study guide to answer the questions below.



[www.CrosswordWeaver.com](http://www.CrosswordWeaver.com)

## ACROSS

- 3 Of the four choices he is given, Arthur chooses this element for his first lesson.
- 4 Arthur has misplaced this very important piece of weaponry and must get a new one for Kai before he leaves for battle.
- 7 Arthur is helping Kai prepare to compete in this sort of jousting contest.
- 8 Arthur's teacher, this grand magician knows the young squire has a lot to learn.

## DOWN

- 1 While it might be Arthur's dream job, it is Kai who may have the opportunity to become this kind of warrior.
- 2 This is the country in which the story takes place, and the land where Arthur will someday be king.
- 4 This king of the moat is after both Kai and Arthur when they cross into his territory.
- 5 It seems like this job might be Arthur's destiny, riding on a donkey beside his brother.
- 6 Merlin places a sword in this object, and Arthur's the only one who can remove it.