

THE SACRED QUEST, THE FINAL FAREWELL.

THE STORY OF THE  
**GRAIL**

AND THE  
PASSING OF ARTHUR

THE CHRONICLES OF KING ARTHUR: BOOK 4



HOWARD PYLE

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by  
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Living Book Press

# **S**ir Galahad of the Grail *s*





## Foreword.



*I*N this volume there follows the fourth and last series of those histories relating to the life and to the kingship of Arthur, King of England. In this it shall first be told how it befell with Sir Geraint; then it shall be told how the Holy Grail was achieved by Sir Galahad, the son of Sir Launcelot; and then it shall be told how King Arthur passed from this life, and how, after doing battle right royally for his crown and having overcome his enemies, he was slain by one of them whom he had wounded to death.

*Much in this is sad, but much is not sad; for all endings are sad, and the passing of any hero is a sad thing to tell of; but the events and the adventures and the achievements of such a man are not sad. Thus it is here said that much of this is sad, but much is not sad.*

*Now I have for seven years been writing these four books, and in them I have put the best that I have to say concerning such things. Wherefore I now hope that you may like that which I have thus written, for if you do not like it, then I have written in vain; but if you do like these narratives, and the several various incidents in them recounted, then you put the seal of your approval upon my work, and my reward is full.*

*Know you that it is a very glorious thing for any man to achieve the approval of others; for all men write for approval, and all would win*

*approval of their fellows if they were able to do so; wherefore, it is my strong hope that you may set the seal of your approval upon these books.*

*Be it said that some things in these histories are not recounted in other histories of this momentous reign, but that most of the things that I have written are recounted in such histories, and all those things so recounted I have told to you as they have been aforetime written by other men. In this I have shaped them and adapted them from the ancient style in which they were first written so as to fit them to the taste of those who read them to-day.*

*And I thank God that He has spared my life to finish this work, and also I hope that He may spare me that life still further, to achieve other works which I desire to undertake. But nevertheless it would have been a great regret to me to leave these books unfinished. For I have made a study of this history and have read much concerning it; wherefore, it was my earnest wish to finish that which I had begun if God would spare me my life to do so. This He has done.*

*So now I take leave of you upon the threshold of this book, and bid you godspeed in reading it. And the first of these adventures that you shall read shall be "The Story of Sir Geraint," which was the first time written in the ancient Welsh, but which is here re-written for your delectation in the manner which I here set it forth.*





# The Story of the Grail

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# ir Geraint, Son of Erbin





## Prologue

**U**PON a certain time, at Michaelmas tide, King Arthur held a high hunting near to his court at Carleon-upon-Usk. Upon the morning of the day appointed for this hunting, all the attendants of the King were gathered in the courtyard of the castle ready to depart. The King cast his eyes about him, but he did not see the Queen near at hand. Quoth he, "Where is the Queen this morning, that I do not see her here?" One replied to him, "Lord, she is yet abed and asleep; shall we go wake her?" The King said, "No, if she would rather sleep than hunt, let her lie abed."

Then another said, "Lord, Sir Geraint is not here either. Shall we call him?" King Arthur laughed. "Nay," quoth he, "let him also lie abed if he be drowsy." Therewith they took horse and rode away into the dewy sweetness of the early morning; the birds chaunting their roundelays and the sun bathing the entire earth as in a great bath of golden radiance.

Anon and after they had thus all departed, Queen Guinevere bestirred herself and awoke, and she said to her attendants, "Where is the King?" They say to her, "Lady, he hath ridden into the forest with his court." At that the Queen was vexed, and she said, "Why was I not awakened?" They say to her, "Lady, the King forbade that you should be disturbed." "Well," said she, "let that be as it may, but I shall yet go to view the hunting." So she arose and clad herself in a robe of sea-green taffeta, and she belted herself with a belt of gold, and she had her lady to enmesh

her hair in a net of gold. And after she had broken her fast, she and her court took horse, and rode forth to the woodlands to find the King and his court.

Now as the Queen and her ladies and their attendants wended onward in a sedate and quiet fashion, they were presently aware of one who came riding after them at a hand gallop. Then the Queen drew rein, and said to her attendant ladies, "Who is yonder gentleman who follows us at a hand gallop?" One of her attendants said, "Methinks, Lady, yonder is Sir Geraint." The Queen said, "Yea, it is indeed Sir Geraint," so they all drew rein and waited until Sir Geraint overtook them. Then the Queen said to him, "Sir Geraint, I am glad that thou too art a sluggard, for now, as a penance, we shall hold thee in attendance upon us." "Lady," quoth Sir Geraint, "that is no penance but a pleasure, for what pleasure could be greater than to wait upon you and your court upon so fair and sweet a morning as this?"

"Sir," said the Queen, "that is very well said. Now I bid you to ride beside me, and so together we will seek the King."

So Sir Geraint rode with the Lady Guinevere in that wise, and as they rode they discoursed together concerning many things of interest.

Now as they ambled thus through the forest they presently perceived a small company of riders who came the other way through the checkered lights of the woodland.

The first of these riders was a very strong, powerful and lordly knight in armor. Beside him rode a fair lady clad all in scarlet, and following after these two there came a deformed and crooked dwarf clad in green. And the dwarf sat perched upon a great tall horse like a toad upon a mountain.

Then the Lady Guinevere said, "What company is yonder?" But no one could answer her question. Then the Queen said to one of her damsels, "Go, maiden, and ask the dwarf who is the knight whom he follows."

So the maiden to whom the Queen spake made forward to meet that party, and she accosted the dwarf, saying, "Sirrah, I pray you tell me, who is the lordly knight whom you follow?" The dwarf said, "I will not

tell you, for it is not needful that you should know.” The maiden said, “Then, since you are so ungentle to me, I will e’en go and ask the knight his own name. For I do not think he will be so discourteous as not to tell me his name and his degree.” The dwarf said, “I forbid you to do that, and I will not permit you to ride forward, for my lord is of such quality that the likes of you are not fit to speak with him.” And when he saw that the Queen’s maiden was of a mind to follow the knight, he caught the horse by the bridle rein and forced it backward so that the maiden was in danger of falling.

Then the maiden said, “Let go thy hold upon my horse!” and when the dwarf had released her she drew rein and returned to the Queen complaining of the discourtesy of the dwarf, and saying, “Lady, yonder is a most rude and uncivil atomy, for he forbade me to speak to his master, and when I would have done so in spite of him he caught my horse by the bridle rein and forced him backward so that I well-nigh had a fall.”

The Queen frowned and was very much displeased, and she said, “Sir Geraint, go you and find for me who is yonder knight.” And Sir Geraint said, “I will do so.”

So Sir Geraint rode down to where the others were, and he followed after the three until he had overtaken them. Then he rode up to the dwarf and he said, “Sirrah, tell me the name of yonder knight.” The dwarf said, “I will not do so, for it is not befitting that I should speak his name to you.”

Sir Geraint said, “Then I will ask for myself.” Therewith he set spurs to his horse and drove forward toward the knight. But the dwarf, seeing his intent, spurred his horse across the way, so that Sir Geraint could not pass. And he cried out, “Sir Knight, forbear, for you know not what you do.”

Sir Geraint said, “Sirrah, bear back!” and therewith would have over-ridden the dwarf. Then the dwarf, in a rage, rose in his stirrups and smote Sir Geraint in the face with a whip which he held in his hand. And the whip struck Sir Geraint across the cheek and the eyelid, so that a great red line immediately started out across his face.

Then when Sir Geraint felt the smart of that blow he was filled with rage and he turned upon the dwarf, clapping hand upon his sword. But he straightway withdrew his hand, saying, "Sirrah, this shall be a sad day for your knight!" Therewith he turned his horse and rode back to where Queen Guinevere was waiting for him. Then he said to her, "Lady, I could not learn the knight his name, but if I have your leave I will follow after him, and when I come to some inhabited place I will purvey me armor, and then I will compel him to return to you and to tell you his name, and to ask pardon for the insult which his dwarf offered your maiden."

Then the Lady Guinevere beheld Sir Geraint's face, and the weal where the dwarf had struck him, and she cried out, "Sir Geraint, what ails your face?" Sir Geraint said, "The dwarf smote me with a whip." The Queen said, "What did you do to him for that blow?" Sir Geraint replied, "I did nothing to him, for I will deal with the knight who is his master, and not with him." "Sir," said the Lady Guinevere, "you did right in that matter. So I pray you to follow after those people and to do as you are able with the knight who is the master of the dwarf."

Sir Geraint said very proudly, "I need no revenge for the blow of such a mannikin, but I would fain compel this knight to come to you, to disclose to you his name, and to ask pardon of this maiden for the discourtesy of his attendant." The Queen said, "Go; follow him."

So Sir Geraint departed after the knight, and the lady, and the dwarf, as the Queen bade him to do.

So begins the Adventure of Sir Geraint, concerning which you will learn much more if you will read this narrative to its conclusion.



PART I

**The Story of Sir Geraint**

***H**ERE beginneth the story of Sir Geraint, which same hath been noted in many ancient histories of the reign of King Arthur, and which is here inserted because it belongeth to the story of King Arthur at this place, as follows:—*

**F**inid and Geraint in the garden:





## Chapter First

*How Sir Geraint followed the knight and the lady to whom the dwarf belongeth. How he lodged in a ruined castle, and how he found armor to wear.*

**S**O Sir Geraint followed after that knight and the lady and the dwarf, and they led him at first toward Camelot. Then they turned aside and led him in another direction. For, by and by, they came to a cross-road and they turned into it, and later they came to a high ridge of land that overlooked a valley. And the valley was spread out beneath them, meadow and dale, woodland and fallow, as though it had been carved very minutely in ivory or in some sort of wood, very hard and fine, and so exquisitely and wonderfully modelled that it was as though a man might have covered it with the palm of his hand.

Then, after awhile, they quitted this open ridge of land and entered a woodland. Here they beheld no other thing than trees and green leaves, for all else was shut from sight. And no other sound disturbed the ear saving only the sweet song of the woodland birds, chaunting their pretty roundelay. Anon they descended from these places, and so at last came to a high-road that led beside a wide and brightly shining river, where slow-moving barges and quick wherries drew silvery threads across the smoothly mirroring surface.

Thus, by highland and lowland, by farm and woodland and waterway, the knight, the lady and the dwarf travelled for all that day; and for all that day Sir Geraint followed patiently after them.

So toward eventide they came to a town set on a hill. And overlooking the town was a high grey castle, and there was a wall drawn all about the castle and the town. And over against the town and the castle and set up on a hill opposite to them was another castle, very ruinous and neglected.

The knight, the lady, and the dwarf entered the town, and Sir Geraint followed after them. And he followed them through the streets, and everywhere he beheld great crowds of people, and his ears were confused by the constant and continuous sound of laughing and chatting and calling of voice to voice. For all these people cheered and applauded the knight with his lady and the dwarf, when they entered the town—crowding after them and about them, seeking to touch the knight or his horse. And everywhere the lights of forge fires were burning, and the bellows were blowing, and the anvils were ringing with the continual beating of hammers upon armor. For all the town was in a bustle and uproar, as though preparing an army for battle.

Meantime the knight, the lady and the dwarf made their way through the throng and the turmoil, which every moment became greater and greater about them. For the street was presently full of people, and other people appeared at the windows and looked out and down upon them as they went forward upon their way. And some waved scarves and others cheered, and everywhere there was an uproar around about that place.

Then Sir Geraint said to one who was near to him, "I prithee, friend, what is all this bustle and noise and what does it all portend?" Quoth he to whom Sir Geraint spoke, "The Sparrow-Hawk! The Sparrow-Hawk!" and hurried away.

Then Sir Geraint queried of another, "What is all this to do?" Quoth he, "The Sparrow-Hawk, good friend, the Sparrow-Hawk!" and he also hurried away.

Then there came by a stout red-faced man, and of him Sir Geraint

asked, "What is all this noise and bustle? I prithee tell me." Quoth the fat man, "The Sparrow-Hawk, good sir, the Sparrow-Hawk."

Then Sir Geraint was angry, and he reached down from his horse and caught the fat man by his collar, and held him fast. And he said, "Sirrah, I will not let you go until you tell me what is the meaning of all this tumult. Who is yonder knight, and whither goeth he?"

"Hah! Sir! Do you not know?" said the fat man. "Yonder knight is the Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk, and he goeth to the castle where he shall lodge until the battle of to-morrow."

"Well," said Sir Geraint, "that is something to know. Now I bid you tell me where I may find lodgings in this town and where I may find arms wherewith a knight may arm himself."

Quoth the fat man, "There is no lodging to be had in this town at such a time as this, nor are there any arms to be found at any place. But if, fair sir, you will cross the valley, to yonder ruined castle, you will doubtless find lodgings for the night, and maybe you may find arms, and to-morrow you may behold the Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk overthrow in the lists all who come against him."

Then Sir Geraint, seeing that the three whom he followed were now at the ending of their day's journey, let go the man, who immediately ran away into the crowd that still followed after the knight, the lady, and the dwarf.

So Sir Geraint drew rein and he turned his horse and he quitted that town and crossed over the valley to the ruined castle upon the other side as he had been advised to do.

As Sir Geraint drew near to the castle, he was aware of an old man who walked along upon the parapet of the wall. When this old and reverend man beheld Sir Geraint, that he approached, he descended from the wall and he came down to the gate and there met Sir Geraint. And Sir Geraint beheld that the old man was tall and lordly in his appearance and that he had a noble and stately countenance. But Sir Geraint beheld that he was clad in poor and simple garments, grey in color, and patched in places, and worn and threadbare at the seams. Sir Geraint said to him,

“Sir, I pray you tell me—shall I find lodgings at this castle for to-night? And I pray you also tell me if you know where I may procure a suit of armor fit for me to wear?”

Quoth the old man, “Fair Sir Knight, it hath been long since any of your quality hath been to this place. For this is a poor and ruined house of a poor and ruined man. Ne’ertheless, such as it is, you are welcome hither. I pray you come in. As for armor, I have every belief that I shall be able to supply you with the same, provided you will accept that which is old and out of date.”

Thus saying, the old man took the horse of Sir Geraint by the bridle and he led it into the courtyard of the castle, and when he was come there he set his fingers to his lips and whistled very loud and shrilly. Anon a side door of the castle opened and there came forth a maiden both young and graceful, very tall and slender. And she was clad in a plain blue garment, straight and slim, and girdled with a girdle of blue leather. Her hair was plaited and twisted, and was without any net or ornament of any sort. But Sir Geraint looked at her very searchingly, because it appeared to him that this was the most beautiful young maiden whom he had ever beheld in all of the world.

When the maiden had come to them the old man bade her to take the horse of Sir Geraint to the stable and to see that it was fittingly groomed and cared for.

Then Sir Geraint would have protested at this service, but the old man said, “Sir, I pray you to let be, for we have no servants in this house, and we deem it a shame for a guest to do himself his own service. Wherefore my daughter shall find it a pleasure for to serve our guest.”

So Sir Geraint dismounted from his horse and the maiden led it away to the stable. Then the old lord took Sir Geraint into the castle and he conducted him to an upper room wherein he was to lodge. And he prepared a tepid bath for Sir Geraint, and he brought him a loose garment, faded in color but trimmed with fur that had once been handsome and of rich texture, and the garment was very soft and comfortable.

Then the old man called to his wife and he gave some money into

her hand, and he said to her, "Go down into the town and procure the best that you are able with this money, for it hath been many days since we have had a guest of so much worth and nobility as this gentleman appears to possess."

So the old gentlewoman went down into the town, and after a little she returned again with a porter bearing a great hamper of food.

Meanwhile, whilst this food was preparing for supper, Sir Geraint and the old lord of the castle walked in the garden talking together.

Quoth Sir Geraint, "Sir, I pray you tell me several matters. First, I pray you tell me of this Sparrow-Hawk concerning whom yonder place appears to have gone mad?"

"Messire," said the old lord, "I will tell you. Some years ago I was the earl and overlord of yonder town. But my younger brother undermined me with the inhabitants, and lately he hath gathered all of my power into his hands. Wherefore he is there, lodged in all splendor, and I am here, as thou seest.

"Now you are to know that my brother hath a mind to assemble a court of very worthy knights about him. Wherefore he hath had made a sparrow-hawk of pure silver which same is mounted at the top of a silver staff. For this sparrow-hawk many knights have come jousting; for what knight soever gaineth it and keepeth it for three years in succession, that knight shall be known as the Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk. Wherefore many have contested for it.

"For two years now a knight, hight Sir Gaudeamus of the Moors, hath overcome all who have come against him, and if he overcome all the knights contestant again for this year, he shall be acknowledged as the true Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk."

Thus spake the old lord of the ruined castle, and when he had done Sir Geraint said, "Sir, with that armor which you say you have, I think that I myself will contend with that knight to-morrow day. So I pray you to let that armor be sent to my room, where I may have it to hand when I want it."

Quoth the old lord, "Messire, I have, as I told you, such a suit of

armor, but it is of a sort that I know not whether you will wear it or not, for it is old and beaten; but if so be you are not ashamed to wear such ancient armor, I shall be glad to purvey it for you.”

“Sir,” said Sir Geraint, “I give you high thanks. And now come I to another matter. A short while ago I saw a maiden whom I thought was the most beautiful that ever mine eyes beheld. Now if that damsel hath no knight to serve her, I pray you tell me if I may fight for her sake to-morrow in the field of the Sparrow-Hawk?”

Said the old man, “Sir, that maiden is my daughter and my only child. Her name is Enid. If so be she shall accept you for her knight, then shall I be more than glad for her to do so. But I will send her to you, and you may break that matter to her yourself.”

With this, the old lord took his departure; anon came Enid the Fair into the garden where Sir Geraint awaited her, and when he beheld her coming, his heart was very glad. So she came to him, and he took her very gently by the hand, and he said to her, “Lady, here am I, a knight of King Arthur’s Round Table and of his Court. I am of good repute and I believe am not altogether unworthy of my belt and my spurs. You, I think, are not more than twenty years of age, and I have nearly twice those years, yet I find that I have great pleasure in gazing upon you. Now I pray you, tell me if your heart may incline unto me sufficiently to suffer me to be your knight in the tournament to-morrow day. For I purpose then to endeavor for this Sparrow-Hawk, and I have no lady whom I might consider as the lady of my heart upon such an occasion.”

At this address Enid was very much astonished and abashed. She uplifted her eyes and looked at Sir Geraint very steadily for a little. And she beheld that he was tall and powerful of frame and that he possessed a strong and very noble face. Wherefore her heart went out to him and she said, “Noble Lord, it will give me great pleasure to accept you for my knight champion, if it so be that one of your high nobility and splendid distinction shall regard my poor estate. For my father hath not money to buy him clothes for us all, nor hath he any honor or estate

saving only this ruined castle wherein we dwell. Wherefore it is not meet for me to lift mine eyes to one of your high estate and exalted quality.”

Then Sir Geraint regarded her very earnestly, and he found her to be still more beautiful than he had at first thought her to be; and he said, “Enid, it may be that thy present estate and quality is not very great, yet thy face is more beautiful than that of any woman whom I ever yet beheld, wherefore I would fain have thee to consign thyself for my true and only lady. If thou wilt do this, it may be that I shall be able to be of great help and assistance both to thee and to thy father.”

She said to him, “Lord, I will accept thee for my true and faithful knight.”

Then Sir Geraint said, “Now I have no favor of thine to wear. I pray thee give me that belt thou wearest about thy waist, for I myself will wear it twisted about mine arm to-morrow.” So Enid gave him her belt of leather and he buckled it about his arm.

Then he gave her his hand and she gave her hand to him. So, hand in hand, they departed from that place and entered the castle.



**S**ir Geraint and the Knight of  
the Sparrow-hawk





## Chapter Second

*How Sir Geraint fought with the Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk; how he set right the wrongs of the earldom and how he returned to the Court of the King.*

**N**OW tell we of that notable battle betwixt Sir Geraint and the Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk.

In the level field below the town there was a fine field of green grass, such as was well fitted for knights to tilt upon. Here there was a high seat arranged for the earl of that town, and for his court, and that seat was hung and draped with crimson cloth embroidered with silver gryphons (which same was the emblazonment of the earl). Below the place of tilting and hard by that place was the silver sparrow-hawk under guard of six esquires clad all in crimson embroidered with silver gryphons. The sparrow-hawk was of pure silver, shining very brightly in the glorious sunlight. And it was set upon a cross-bar of pure silver, and the cross-bar of silver was supported by a rod of silver thrust into the earth.

Already the Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk had fought with several opponents that morning and had overthrown them all, the one after the other. So now, as none came against him, he waited in his pavilion till noon, against which time the silver sparrow-hawk should be assigned to him; and as to the people who were gathered to view the sport, they were grown restless and moved about and conversed together, for it seemed to them that no one would come to contest again with Sir Gaudeamus.

But of a sudden, a little group of four figures suddenly appeared coming across the meadowland beyond. The first of these was the old Earl of that town. Beside him rode a knight, tall and strong of figure, and behind these two came the lady of the Earl and his daughter. These presented a very dull and motley appearance, for the Earl was clad in frayed and weather-worn black, and Sir Geraint was clad in the ancient