**MERLIN AND ARTHUR PLOT SUMMARIES**

**The Sword in the Stone**

The boy Arthur grows up in the castle of Sir Hector, his foster father. Sir Hector’s son, Kay, is training to be a knight, and Arthur will be Sir Kay’s squire. In the forest, Arthur meets Merlin, a magician, who wants to train him to be wiser and braver; hinting that there is a reason for this training. The King of England, Uther Pendragon, dies leaving no heir. It is proclaimed that whoever pulls a sword, driven into a rock, out of the stone will be the next king. Arthur and Kay travel to London where the strongest knights try to remove the sword, but fail. While running an errand for Kay, Arthur, not knowing the significance of the sword, pulls the sword from the stone**.** He is declared the next King of England.

**The Lady of the Lake**

Nimue the Lady of the Lake, wears white robes and has many special powers. She lives underwater and never grows old. She can travel through time and to other worlds, and she can view the future. Most importantly, she guards the sword Excalibur. Arthur is now king of England but he has no sword of his own so he goes to the lake with Merlin to ask for Excalibur. There they see a woman’s hand rise from the water, clutching a sword. Nimue agrees that Arthur can have Excalibur and leads them to a barge by the water’s edge. Merlin and Arthur row out to the middle of the lake where the hand still holds Excalibur aloft. Arthur grips the sword, which is protected by a scabbard made of gold and precious jewels, and the hand slips back under the water. Merlin asks Arthur which he likes best, the sword or the scabbard. Arthur chooses the sword but this is the wrong answer, for the scabbard has the power to protect him from harm on the battlefield and he must look after it carefully. Years later, the sorceress Morgana steals the scabbard and Arthur’s fate is sealed.

**Morgana’s Plot to Kill the King**

Skilled in magic and seeking revenge on Arthur, his sister, Morgana, finds where Arthur is resting after a battle and steals the scabbard of Excalibur. When Arthur realises his sister’s treachery he gives chase, but is not able to stop her throwing the sword into a lake where it sinks. Morgana tricks Arthur by turning herself and all her men into blocks of marble, only coming back to life once Arthur has gone. Arthur returns to Camelot, where he tells his knights of Morgana’s treachery. They vow to burn her for treason. The next morning a young damsel presents herself at Court with a peace-offering from Morgana: a rich cloak, decorated with precious stones. But before Arthur dons the cloak Merlin warns him not to wear it until he has seen the damsel sent by Morgana wear the cloak herself. When Arthur forces the damsel to wear it she is burnt to ashes before his eyes. Arthur swears revenge.

**The Death of Arthur**

Mordred is Arthur’s secret son and King Arthur has never treated him like a son. So Mordred is angry and resentful and sets out to kill Arthur and take the throne at Camelot. He raises an army to fight Arthur’s army. When they meet, Arthur kills Mordred, but as he falls to his death, Mordred fatally wounds Arthur with his spear. As he lies dying, Arthur commands Bedivere to throw Excalibur into a nearby lake. A hand rises out of the lake and catches the sword. Then a barge appears on the lakeshore and Arthur is carried away to Avalon.