



King Alfred and the Legend of St George

“Sire, I come with important news.”

The knight’s voice echoed loudly through the church but the king continued to pray for his family. There was still much he wanted to say; so much he needed to confess.

“Sire...”

The king opened his eyes. The knight’s voice was too loud and irritating to ignore. “Amen,” he whispered, blessing himself with the sign of the cross as he rose from his knees.

The knight looked anxious as the king approached him along the church’s nave. “Sire,” he repeated, kneeling and bowing.

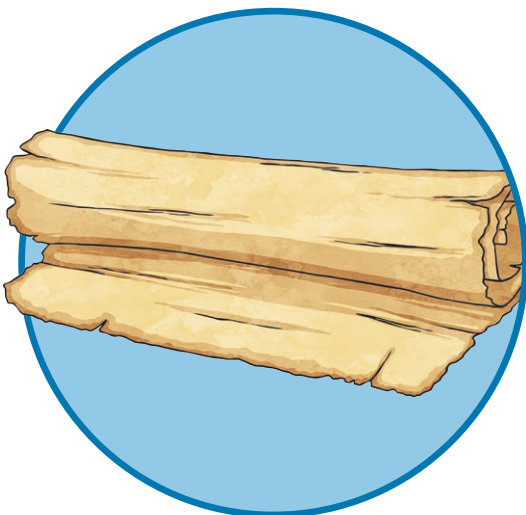
“I trust you disturb me from my prayers for good reason,” the king addressed him coldly.

“I do, sire, I do,” the knight said, still with his head bowed.

“Rise,” the king ordered. “Explain this *important* news.”

“Yes, sire,” the knight said, handing the king a scroll.

The king frowned. “What is this?”



“News of a miracle, sire,” he smiled as the king began reading the scroll. The knight stood patiently as the markings on the paper became words inside his king’s mind.

After a short while, the king rolled it up and stood there, thinking. He turned to the knight. “You believe this to be true?” he asked, plainly.

“I have travelled from northern Africa, sire,” he replied. “It

has taken me many months to bring you this news. It is a miracle.”

The king smiled thinly. “But do you believe this to be true?” he repeated.

The knight eyed his king up and down. There was a sense of frustration in his face. “It was written by Father Ethelbert, sire!” he blurted. “Did the markings not reveal themselves to you?”

“Yes,” the king hissed sharply. “I read the words, Sir Knight, and I understood their meaning. I ask for the third time - do you believe it to be true?”

Half bowed, the knight stared at his king with eyes wild with wonder. “Yes,” he breathed, “with all my heart, I do.”

The king paused, tapping his foot repeatedly on the stone floor. “I know of Father Ethelbert,” the king said, quietly. “I know him to be a man of God. I have no reason to disbelieve his words but I ask you, Sir Knight, what if some other learned man wrote the words on this scroll? What other proof have I that will convince me of its truth?”

The knight fell on one knee. His face looked desperate and flushed with sweat. He clasped his hands together, raising them high as if to pray. “As God is my witness,” he said in a whisper of a voice, “the miracle is true. I spoke to the people of Silene. They told me their story and I saw their faces. I believe their words, sire.”

“What did they say?” the king asked, stepping closer.

“They spoke of a beast who took the lives of their daughters,” the knight said, straining to contain his emotions. “A dragon who lived by their lake and grew fond of human flesh. The villagers would take lots to decide whose daughter to sacrifice. Then, one day, the king’s name was drawn. He pleaded with the people to spare his beloved daughter. He offered them gold and silver and half his kingdom but the people refused. They feared losing their own kin. The girl was then sent to the lake; her fate to be sealed by the jaws of the beast.”



“And...” the king said, hanging on his knight’s every word.

“A miracle, sire. A horseman appeared from the mists of the lake. He defended the princess, piercing the beast’s chest with his lance. The villagers bargained with the rider, beseeching him to slay the dragon, so he fought it in a fierce battle. The rider defeated it; he slew the beast. They believed in the miracle and now they believe in our God.”

“I see,” the king said, teasing at the hairs of his beard. “And do you know the name of this mysterious rider?”

“It was St George, sire,” the knight announced proudly.

It took some moments before the king spoke again. In that time, he silently paced up and down the nave of the church. Eventually, he approached the knight. “Do you realise that St George has been dead for well over 500 years?”

The knight nodded, swallowing hard.

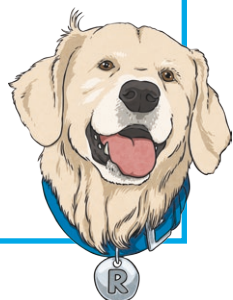
“And did you know he was a Turk and later a soldier of the Roman army? He was not English by birth, Sir Knight, but a Middle Eastern Christian, destined to die for his beliefs when he was beheaded all those years ago.”

The knight remained silent.

The king rested his hands on the knight’s shoulders. “But I believe you,” he whispered.

“His spirit is a sign from God, Sir Knight. People must hear of the miracle of St George and his legend must live on in their memories, in the stories they tell their children, on scrolls, in books and in churches throughout the land. I swear, my friend, the legend of St George will live forever!”

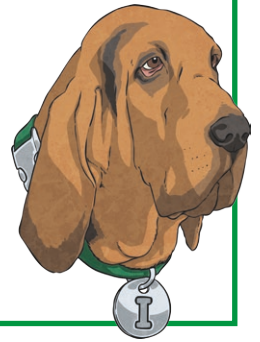
Q1: Which legend is the topic of this text?



Q2: *'There was still much he wanted to say; so much he needed to confess.'*
What does this line tell you about the king as a person?

Q3: Why do you think that the knight always refers to the king as 'sire'?

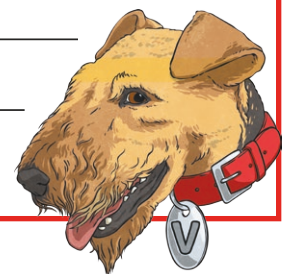
Q4: *"What did they say?" the king asked, stepping closer.'*
Why do you think that the king stepped closer at this part of the conversation?



Q5: *'The villagers would take lots to decide whose daughter to sacrifice...'*
How else could the author have written this line?



Q6: *'They feared losing their own kin.'*
In this sentence, what do you think 'kin' means?





Q7: What was the name of the horseman who defeated the beast?

Q8: *'It took some moments before the king spoke again.'*

Why do you think that this was the case?

Q9: Why do you think that the knight 'remained silent'?



Q10: How do the king's feelings towards the knight change over the course of the story?



Q11: Based on this section of the text, how do you think that the story will develop?



Q12: Write a blurb for this section of the story using 40 words or less.





King Alfred and the Legend of St George **Answers**

Q1: Which legend is the topic of this text?

Accept the answer: The text has the Legend of St George as its topic.

Q2: *'There was still much he wanted to say; so much he needed to confess.'*

What does this line tell you about the king as a person?

Accept any reasonable answers which discuss any of the following:

- **The king knows that he has made mistakes in the past.**
- **The king is a deeply religious person who atones for his sins.**
- **The king has done a lot of regrettable actions but seeks forgiveness.**

Q3: Why do you think that the knight always refers to the king as 'sire'?

Accept answers which discuss the fact that the knight is treating the king with respect.

Q4: *"What did they say?" the king asked, stepping closer.'* Why do you think that the king stepped closer at this part of the conversation?

Accept answers which discuss the fact that the king has become interested in the topic of conversation or wants to know more from the knight.

Q5: *'The villagers would take lots to decide whose daughter to sacrifice...'* How else could the author have written this line?

Accept any rewrite of the line which equates to the same meaning, such as:

- **The villagers would draw names from a hat to see who must be sacrificed.**
- **The villagers would be chosen at random.**
- **The villagers decided by pulling straws to see who was the loser.**

Q6: *'They feared losing their own **kin**.'* In this sentence, what do you think 'kin' means?

Accept any answer which defines the word 'kin' as family, relatives, children or clan.

Q7: What was the name of the horseman who defeated the beast?

Accept the answers that the horseman was 'George' or 'St/Saint George'.

Q8: *'It took some moments before the king spoke again.'*

Why do you think that this was the case?

Accept answers which infer that it was because he was shocked about the revelation, or struggling to think about how such a thing was possible.

Q9: Why do you think that the knight 'remained silent'?

Accept any reasonable answer which discusses that he was in shock and didn't know what to say, that he was being respectful or that he was evaluating the story himself:

- **The knight stayed silent because he didn't know what to say.**
- **He was silent because he knew that the king was right but he also believed that his message was true.**
- **The knight remained silent because he didn't want to argue with the king, his superior.**

Q10: How do the king's feelings towards the knight change over the course of the story?

Accept any reasonable commentary about the king's change in feelings and receptiveness towards the knight over the course of the story:

- **At first, the king sees the knight as an interruption and does not want to talk to him but by the end of the story the king is rejoicing in the news that the knight brings and refers to him as his 'friend'.**
- **At the beginning of the story, the king is quite hostile towards the knight and doesn't want anything to do with him. At the end of the story, the king talks freely with the knight, even placing his hand on his shoulder.**

Q11: Based on this section of the text, how do you think that the story will develop?

Accept any reasonable prediction based on the events of the text so far, including (but not limited to):

- **The king spreads the news towards the kingdom.**
- **The king travels to Silene to talk to villagers about what they saw.**
- **The knight becomes one of the king's trusted staff.**
- **The king holds a celebration for everyone to remember Saint George.**

Q12: Write a blurb for this section of the story using 40 words or less.

Accept any reasonable synopsis of the plot within 40 words or less, which would suffice for a blurb and does not give away the ending of the text. For example:

- **As King Alfred prays, a noble knight arrives with life changing news on a sacred scroll. As the king reads the mysterious message, life as he knows it changes in an instant, as an ancient legend is reborn.**