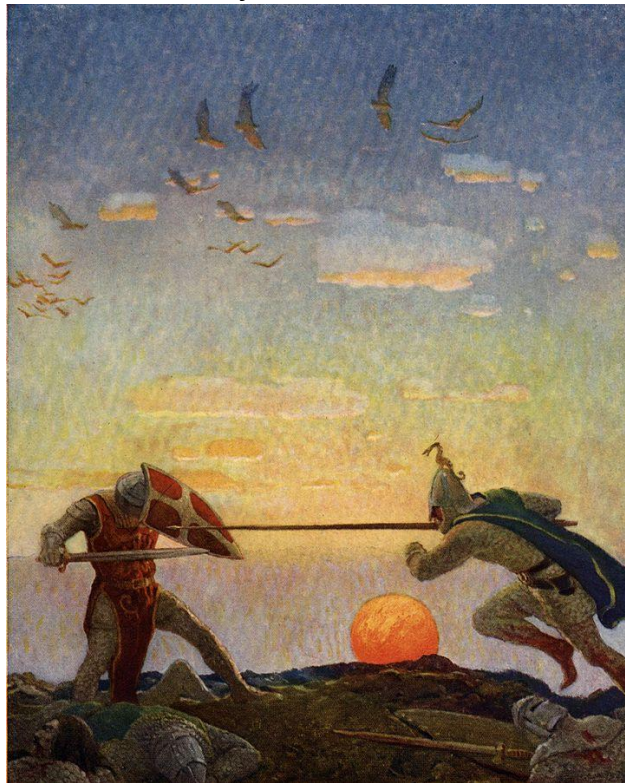


Thomas Mallory - The Death of Arthur

*The tales of King Arthur were very popular in Medieval times (around 500 to 1500CE). The most popular book was *The Death of Arthur*, written by Thomas Mallory around 1470. This is a scene near the end of the book, when Arthur meets his enemy Mordred (who is secretly his son) for a final battle.*



Mordred and Arthur met on the field of battle with their armies. They decided to meet up and talk to see if they could avoid battle. So when Arthur left his army, he warned all his host that if they see any sword drawn: *Look ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor, Sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him.* In like wise Sir Mordred warned his army that: *If ye see any sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever before you standeth; for in no*

wise I will not trust for this treaty, for I know well my father will be avenged on me.

And so they met as their appointment was. Right soon came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him stung, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the armies on both

sides saw that sword drawn, then they blew trumpets and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both armies charged toward each other.

And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land; for there was but rushing and riding, foining and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But ever King Arthur rode throughout the battle many times, and did full nobly as a noble king should, and at all times he fainted never. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold earth; and ever they fought still till it was near night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the down. Then was Arthur angry out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him.

Then the king looked about him, and then was he ware, of all his host and of all his good knights, were left no more alive but two knights; that one was Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, and they were full sore wounded. *Jesu mercy*, said

the king, *where are all my noble knights become? Alas that ever I should see this doleful day, for now, said Arthur, I am come to mine end. But I wish to God I knew where that traitor Sir Mordred was, that hath caused all this mischief.* Then King Arthur saw where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men.

Then the king gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying: *Traitor, now is thy death-day come.* And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran to him with his sword drawn in his hand. And there King Arthur hit Sir Mordred under the shield, and his spear went right through Mordred's body. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death wound he thrust himself with the might that he had up to the end of King Arthur's spear. And right so he hit his father Arthur, with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain-pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth; and the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and soon after died.

