

SIR LANCELOT



Things went a little better for Sir Lancelot, but not much. He had seen the Holy Grail at Castle Carbonek, the night after he had rescued fair Elaine from her scalding tub, and so he decided to try and find his way back there again. He came to the Waste Lands, which lay all around the castle. They were as bare and desolate as ever, but no matter how hard he looked for it, the castle itself seemed to have disappeared.

One night, tired after a long day in the saddle, he came to a ruined chapel. There seemed to be light inside, so he knocked at the door. No one answered. Lancelot tried the door, and found it bolted, so he climbed the ivy growing on the wall, and peered in through a broken window.

Inside was an altar covered with silk, with burning candles that filled the chapel with a soft, golden glow. It looked so calm and welcoming that Lancelot longed to go inside, but there was no way in. Warily he went back to his horse, unsaddled it, took off his sword and helmet, and lay down on the ground to sleep.

As he lay there half-asleep, he saw two white horses pulling a stretcher, on which lay a sick knight. The sick knight was groaning and muttering to himself. 'Oh, sweet Lord! How much longer must I bear this pain?'

Then the chapel door opened, and there stood Naciens, the old Hermit of Carbonek who had brought Galahad to Camelot. He was holding a silver candlestick in which burned five white candles. He brought the candlestick outside, and set it on a marble slab near to where Lancelot lay asleep. Then the hermit knelt in prayer.

Now, in his dream, Lancelot saw the Holy Grail. It was covered with spotless, snow-white cloth and it came sliding down moonbeam to rest near the candles. The light of the grail was so bright that the light from the candles, and the light from the moon in the sky seemed like nothing. The sick knight crawled from the stretcher, and with great difficulty stretched out his hand to touch the Grail. Lancelot thought the sick

knight's hands would never reach, but he struggled and struggled. Finally his fingers touched it- and in that same moment he was cured.

Now the grail floated up from the marble altar, moved silently across the moonlit glade, and was gone. The healed knight clambered to his feet, and bowed to Naciens the hermit.

'Thanks be to God who has cured me through the Holy Grail,' he said. Then he pointed at Lancelot. 'But who is this knight?' he asked Naciens. 'He did not even wake when the Grail came close to him!'

'This is Lancelot of the Lake,' said Naciens. 'His sins weigh him down. That's why he didn't wake'.

'They must be heavy sins', said the knight. 'I thought he was supposed to be looking for the Grail'.

Naciens nodded. He picked up Lancelot's helmet and sword, and gave them to the healed knight. Then he helped him mount Lancelot's horse and the healed knight rode away into the forest. Naciens took the silver candlestick with its candles still burning and disappeared into the ruined chapel again, closing the door after him.

Lancelot lay there unable to move, not sure whether he was awake or asleep. In a little while, however, as the moon rose high in the sky, he woke, certain he had dreamed the whole thing. Then to his horror he realized that his horse was gone...and his helmet and his sword...Everything he thought he had dreamed had really happened.

'Oh, no!' he groaned to himself. 'To lie asleep when the Grail appeared? How could I? When it came to the old-style adventures, nothing was too difficult, but this is a holy thing, and the great sin of my love for the Queen stands between me and success'.

Naciens had heard him. He opened the door.

'Come in,' he said. 'I will help you overcome your difficulties'. So Lancelot went into the ruined chapel and spent many weeks with Naciens- but he never saw the grail again.

Define:

- **Scalding tub (n)**
- **Bare (adj)**
- **Ivy (n)**
- **Peer (v)**
- **Wearily (adv)**
- **Unsaddle (v)**
- **Stretcher (n)**
- **Groan (v)**
- **Mutter (v)**
- **Bear (v)**
- **Slab (v)**
- **Heal (v)**
- **Nod (v)**

Find examples of:

- **Two comparisons**
- **A negative suffix**
- **Two compounds**
- **A modal with deductive meaning**
- **Two phrasal verbs**
- **A relative sentence**
- **An infinitive of purpose**



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