

Decisions that
contributed to the end
of arthur's reign in the
once and future ki...

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



The novel *The Once And Future King* by T. H. White tells the tale of a boy named Arthur, who grew up and matured while he was King of England. Arthur was a fair and loving ruler, but he did have his faults and made choices that would ultimately lead to his downfall. When Arthur first assumed the throne, he was young and needed Merlyn's help on making decisions. The only successful choice that Arthur made was when he had Merlyn there to guide him. Then, when Merlyn was taken captive by his love, Nimue, Arthur struggled to make wise decisions for his kingdom. He relied on the momentum of his choices that he made while Merlyn was present. But, alone and without Merlyn's guidance, Arthur failed at leading his kingdom to become greater and stronger.

Many variables and decisions contributed to the end of Arthur's reign. The most significant mistake that Arthur made was attempting to kill his own child. "It is the tragedy, the Aristotelian and comprehensive tragedy, of sin coming home to roost. That is why we have to take note of the parentage of Arthur's son Mordred, and to remember, when the time comes, that the king had slept with his own sister". Arthur's half-sister, Morgause gave birth to a son, Mordred, who would ultimately lead to Arthur's greatest downfall. Arthur never took responsibility for his incestuous actions with his half-sister. Instead, he tried to cover it up by sending all of the babies born at a certain time (which included Mordred) and shipped them off to sea to die. Unluckily for Arthur, Mordred survived and because of Arthur's attempt to drown him, Mordred developed a burning hatred for Arthur. Mordred hated Arthur for leaving him to die as a baby so much, he used Guenever and Lancelot's love affair to destroy Arthur. He knew that if there was evidence of treason

between the two lovers, Arthur had to bring the matter to court. Mordred turned the two friends, Arthur and Lancelot against each other and stole Arthur's wife.

After his attempts to rid his life of his son, Arthur came to accept the consequences of his choices and his heart softened towards showing love and compassion. Even when Mordred had conspired against him, he still didn't want to see his own son die. Arthur told Guenever and Lancelot about Mordred's plans to overthrow the king. When Lancelot heard about this, he immediately said that he would go kill Mordred, but the king insisted that he wouldn't do such a thing. "I asked Sir Lancelot not to kill my son". Mordred was Arthur's own flesh and blood and because of that, the king loved him. Arthur was kind and forgiving even to those who did him wrong.

Arthur was not a perfect king, but his presence and leadership did leave a lasting impression upon England. Before Arthur became the kingdom's ruler, England was a dispirited country with all the life and happiness sucked out of it. The past monarchs had terrorized the public to the point, that everyone living within the country feared for their lives twenty-four, seven. "When Arthur first came, the country people had been accustomed to bar themselves in their cottages every night as if for siege, and had prayed to God for peace during darkness". Death was everywhere, the people were suffering and became corrupt. Arthur inherited a broken country full of dispassionate, dejected bodies. Slowly and gradually during his reign, Arthur was able to restore the joy and goodness in the towns and country sides of England. His heart for the people, reflected throughout the kingdom in how

life changed for the common folk. The citizens were able to go about their daily lives without the fear of something awful happening to them. “ Arthur was the heart’s king of a chivalry... he was the badge of everything that was good in the Middle Ages, and he had made these things himself”. Chivalry is defined as the combination of qualities expected of an ideal knight, especially courage, honor, courtesy, justice, and a readiness to help the weak. Throughout the story, Arthur displays all of these traits, which rubbed off onto the people of England. The love and kindness that Arthur brought to the nation softened the civilian’s hearts and restored the humanity that was once taken from them.