

## Lancelot

In the medieval legends about King Arthur of Britain and his knights, Lancelot or Launcelot, named *du Lac* (“of the Lake”) was the greatest knight of all. In time, however, Lancelot’s love for Guinevere, the King’s wife, led him to betray his king and set in motion the fatal event that ended Arthur’s rule.

### **Setting**

Generally considered to a French contribution to the Arthurian legends, he was first introduced by Chretien de Troyes in 1170.

Lancelot was the son of King Ban of Benwick and Queen Elaine. He is the heir of the French region of Armorican Brittany. Lancelot is particularly the descendant of a prestigious lineage, going back to Joseph of Arimathe, the biblical character who collected Christ’s blood and took it to Brittany’s land.

His father’s castle, situated next to a lake, in the heart of the forrest of Broceliande, was known as being impregnable. Yet, he lost it during a war and died of sorrow. After his birth, Niniane, the Lady of the Lake vanished with the infant Lancelot into her domain, disappearing into the Lake. She brought up Lancelot. She was responsible for his education, giving him lessons in courtly love and manner. Then she presented him to Arthur’s court upon his eighteenth birthday and he became the most famous of the Knights of the Round Table. He also fell in love with Arthur’s queen, Guinevere and was the perfect courteous lover. However, he slept with Guinevere and they were caught by Arthur himself. Lancelot managed to escape but the king ordered the Queen’s execution, for her infidelity was tantamount to treason.

### **Characterization**

At early age, he excelled in his education and training. He grew into a strong and handsome youth. Indeed, he was endowed by God of a natural beauty and a very chivalrous presence. As a knight of King Arthur, he never failed in gentleness, courtesy or courage. Lancelot was also a knight who was very willing to serve the others. He was tall, strong, muscled. Time seemed to have no hold on him.