

A crew of Rising Star Scouts were sitting around a campfire roasting marshmallows. "Are we going hiking tomorrow?" Sandra asked.

"We're hiking up those hills in the background", Tommy offered. "They say there is ancient castle!"

"What kind of castle? There is no castle!" Sammantha insisted.

"Wait!" Tommy cried and went to his backpack, returning with the book "Legends Through Time". "See, there they are! Pictures of castles and knights of old!"

They all looked at the picture of the castles, but Bobby, Annie, Juan, and Jessica shared a smile.

"What's wrong with you guys?" Tommy asked.

"Oh nothing", Annie said and broke into a laugh.

They four of them looked at each other again and sighed at once, agreeing to tell the story.

"Do you remember the hot air balloon race that was this time last year?" Bobby asked.

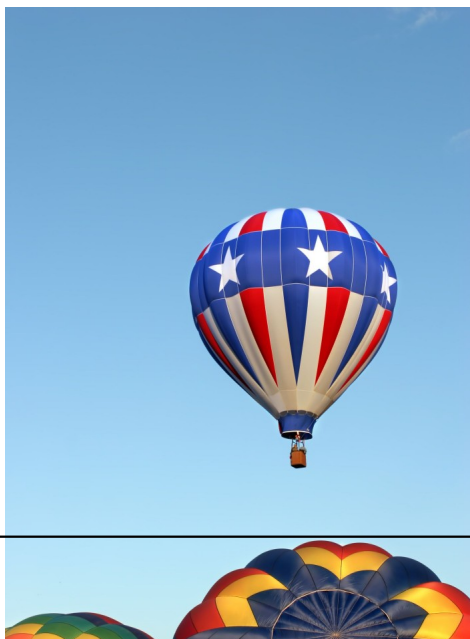
"Sure", Tommy said.

"And you remember our balloon got separated from the others?" Jessica asked.

"Yeah... and?" Sammantha said.

ONE YEAR AGO

Bobby, Juan, Jessica, and Annie were in a hot air balloon soaring over the landscape. They pointed and waved to other members of their Crew and their Team, in other balloons.



“Where are we going to come down?” Annie asked, looking skeptically over the side.

“Who knows”, Juan answered.

The sky began to darken suddenly and the Scouts saw a flash of lightening in the distance.

“We better land. It’s not safe to be up here in a storm”, Bobby said.

“You’re right”, Annie commented, reaching up to pull a cord to start cutting off the burner. But the fire did not dampen and the balloon did not start to descend



“Oh no, something’s wrong with it!” Annie cried

Each of the Scouts tried to pull the cord, but it would not budge. Their fellow Scouts were descending quickly to the ground in the face of the coming thunderstorm.

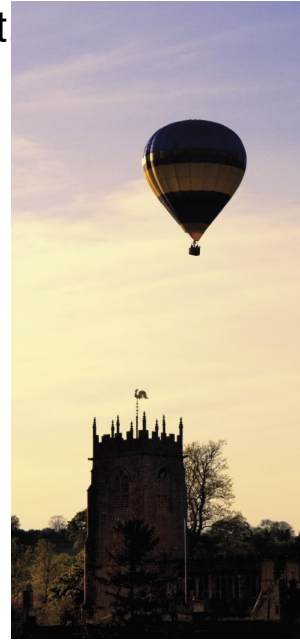
“What do we do?” Juan asked.

“Let’s try all together!” Jessica suggested.

They all pulled together and suddenly the balloon began to descend. They watched as their friends landed safely in the park below.

A thick mist enveloped them and the balloon and they could not see. The balloon drifted a long way in the fog and finally descended. It

lodged in a tree, and the Scouts tumbled to the ground, unhurt



The Scouts looked around. “Where are we?” Bobby asked.

A group of people dressed long belted shirts and hats of the medieval period were passing by playing instruments. They stopped in their tracks when they saw the Scouts sitting by the side of the road in modern cargo pants and polo shirts.

“Who are you? Are you also musicians?” asked one of the musicians.

“We’re Scouts”, Jessica answered, “Rising Star Scouts of Adventure Scouts USA.”

“I have never heard of “Scouts”. What do you do?” the musician asked.

“We have FUN and we help others”, Bobby answered.

“Help others?” He asked confused. “What do you get in return?”

“We develop good character, pride, and a sense of accomplishment”, Annie said, “And lot of other stuff, but mostly we help because we want to.’

“I have never heard of such a thing. I will think on that”, the musician said. “Are you on the way to the palace also, for the celebration of the princess’s birthday?” the musician asked.

“Um, sure”, Bobby said, looking at fellow Crewmembers.

“Let’s go to the birthday party!” Jessica said.

The Crew stood up. “Can we follow you?” Juan asked.

“Certainly”, the musician answered. The musicians

again began playing their instruments and walking along the road.

The Scouts walked behind them and could not believe their eyes. Everyone was dressed as they were long ago, in medieval clothing. Everywhere people were bartering and talking. They turned and stared at the Scouts.

“Why are they looking at us?” Jessica asked.

“I don’t think they’ve seen our clothes before”, Juan remarked.

“Why are you dressed so strangely?” another musician asked.

“We’re wearing our Scout uniform”, Jessica replied, “We all dress alike to show we are equal. And we can recognize each other and member of the community can recognize us by our uniforms. It does not matter if we are rich or poor, we all wear the same clothes.”

As they walked along, there was a little boy standing

by the side of the road, dressed in little more than rags. His mouth fell open when he saw the Scouts.

“Are you going to the princess’s birthday party?” he asked.

“We sure are”, answered Bobby.

“I have been trying to get there, but no one will take me with them. Who are you?” he asked.

“We’re Scouts”, Juan answered, and “We have FUN and help others.”

“I help others!” the little boy announced. “I give directions to the castle to all who pass, though they refuse to take me with them.” He began to cry. “I wish I were a Knout like you. Then I could go with you to the castle.”

“No, we are Scouts!” Annie said, and they all laughed. “You are a Scout too.”

“I am?” he asked.

“Yes”, Bobby said, “It doesn’t take a uniform to be a Scout. Being a Scout is a way of living one’s life and

leading one's life."

"I'm a Scout? I'm a Scout!" the little boy shouted joyously. "Can I go to the castle with you?"

"Of course you can!" the Scouts cried.

"My name is Arthur, and I have never been to the castle", the little boy said.

"Let's all go together!" they cried.

Hear our call, we are for one and all. We're from here, there, and everywhere. We give our best in all we do; we stand tall and true. And wonder about it all

As they walked, Arthur told them all about the town. He was the woodcutter's son and knew how to make beautiful things from wood.

"I made the princess a wooden jewelry box for her birthday, but thought I would never get there", he said.

“You’ll give it to her yourself”, Juan said and Arthur smiled broadly.

“How can you tell a Scout from everyone else if they do not have to have a uniform?” Arthur asked.

“A Scout is someone with a desire to improve life long, to help others, and who has a belief in something greater than oneself. We include everyone; that’s our Scout Spirit – everyone is welcome”, Jessica said.

“As Rising Star Scouts, we have a Scout Code too that we all know”, Bobby said.

“A secret code!” Arthur said with joy, “Teach me, teach me the code!”

“It’s not a secret code, it’s a code we, as Rising Star Scouts, use to live our life by”, Bobby said.

“A Rising Star Scout is: Trustworthy;
A Good Person; A Good Citizen;
A Good Friend and Brother or Sister to
all Other Scouts; Honest
and Respectful; Responsible and Caring;
Loyal and Ready to Help”, Juan said

“A fine code!” Arthur said, ‘I shall memorize it!”

“These are not just nice-sounding words. You should not just memorize them. They have meaning. Let them guide you wherever you go, in everything you do. As you say them, resolve to live by their meaning”, Juan said.

In the distance, the castle rose high into the clouds.

“Wow! They cried.

The train of people walked on to the castle.
Men-at-arms stood at the castle drawbridge.



“Who goes there?” they cried.

“We are humble musicians come to play for the Princess’s birthday”, the musicians said and then they were admitted.

“Who goes there?” the Men-at-Arms cried again.

“Annie”, she replied.

“Annie who?” the Men-at Arms asked.

“Annie-time you want, let us in!” she said.

The Scouts howled with laughter.

“Who are you?” the man asked again.

“Knouts!” Arthur said laughing.

The Scouts laughed again.

“No, really we are Scouts” Bobby said proudly.

“What is a Scout?” the man asked.

“We have FUN and we help people”, Annie answered.

“Who do you help?” he asked.

“We are brothers and sisters to all Scouts, but we help everyone”, Jessica said.

The Men-at-Arms stared. “Why do you help others without expectation of reward?” the man asked, confused again.

“Because it’s FUN and we feel good”, Annie offered.

“Hmm”, the man commented, “I do not understand, but you are admitted nonetheless.”

Arthur walked with them but felt a hand on his shoulder, pulling him back.

“Why are you with these Scouts? You are a humble woodcutter’s son. You do not even dress as they do”, the man insisted.

“I am a Scout”, Arthur insisted, “It does not matter what I wear; being a Scout is a way of living one’s life and leading one’s life.”

The man stood aside for Arthur in shock at the certainty of the boy’s words.

They could not believe their eyes. The castle was huge. An enormous foyer led to room after room after room and two stairwells led to the floors above.

“Wow!” Arthur said, jumping up and down, “I’m here! The castle, the castle!”

“Come into the dining hall, Scouts, the feast will begin shortly”, the Man-at-Arms said.

They follow him into an enormous dining hall. Everyone was seated at long wooden tables. Goblets and silver plates sat in front of them. Some were banging their goblets on the table.

The Scouts sat down among them. “May I have some water, please”, Annie called

out to the passing server.

“You’ll never get anything that way, milady”, the man next to her said, and then banged his goblet up and down.

“You are more likely to get what you want if you ask nicely”, she said to the man sitting next to her. Then she repeated, “Could I have some water please?” to the server.

“Can I have some water please?” the man next to her asked and they both laughed as his goblet was filled.

Suddenly men came into the room with trumpets blaring. The King then entered with his daughter the Princess and they took their seats on beautiful golden

thrones.

“Thank you all for coming to celebrate the princess’s birthday. We shall have games and tournaments and much feasting!” the king announced.

“Hooray!” the revelers cried.

The meal was brought out. Great platters of beef and turkey were passed around. Heaping bowls of vegetables and other foods were also passed around. The revelers and Scouts ate their fill.

“We will see you all in the morning for the games!” the king announced. “Those who have brought presents for the princess may leave them on that table.” The King left to go to sleep.

Arthur jumped up from the table but waited until the Princess walked over to the table to look at the presents. He walked over to her and handed her the jewelry box.

“I made it myself”, he said quietly and then shyly ran away.

He rejoined the group of Scouts. “The beds in the castle are full. You will be sleeping on the floor, in the barn, or outside”, the Man-at-Arms said.



“We have a tent, we’ll sleep there”, Bobby announced.

“What?” the man asked and followed them outside.

The Men-at-Arms laughed as they saw the Scouts take a strangely shaped object out of Bobby and Annie’s backpacks. But they stopped laughing as it became a small structure.

“What a convenient thing to carry with you when you are away from the castle!” the man announced, “What is it called again?”

“A tent”, Bobby said, “We can show you how to set one up.”

“I would like that”, the man said. “Good night for now Scouts.”

“Good-night” they said. The Scouts made room for Arthur in Bobby and Juan’s tent and all went to sleep.

The next morning, the Scouts awoke to find the Men-at-Arms making food over a fire. “Would you like some breakfast?” the man asked.

“Yes” they answered and joined the men.

“We are wondering what a Scout is”, the man said, “Though you are young, you seem very able.”

“We develop skills by taking on

Challenges”, Bobby answered, and “Setting up a tent was one of my Challenges.”

“We work together to help each other with our Challenges”, Bobby said.

“I wish I could get my fellow Men-at-Arms to work together”, he said and several of them frowned at him.

“We follow a Scout Promise, a Scout Code, a Scout Motto, and a Scout Spirit”, Juan said. “Being a Scout is a way of living one’s life and leading one’s life.”

“Our Motto is Give Your Best”,
Jessica offered.

“What a fine Motto”, the man said, “I think we shall develop a Motto. The games are starting, are you going?” he asked.

“Should we go?” Jessica asked.

“I’d like to go in ten minutes”, Juan said.

“I’d like to go now”, Annie said.

“I would like to go now too”, Bobby said.

“Would it be okay if we go in five minutes?” Bobby asked Juan.

“Yes, that would fine”, Juan said.

Arthur looked at them strangely.

“We make decisions by consensus”, Bobby said.

“I never heard of such a thing!” Arthur said.

Bobby said, “We are Rising Star Scouts. We all get a vote. We sit in a circle, and everyone’s vote is equal to everyone else’s. Although we have Team Leaders,

all our members are equals".
Arthur was listening closely.

"The games are about to begin. I
have to go", the man said

The Games were held outside in
the bright sunlight. There were log
rolls, archery, sword fighting and
catapult contests, jousting, and
races.

The Scouts took part in all the
games. The revelers were
shocked as Jessica's arrow
split the Princess's down the

middle, but the Princess was a good sport and congratulated Jessica on her good shot.

Even when others won, the Scouts laughed, played, and completely enjoyed themselves. The King watched noticed the Scouts did not seem to care who won, but had FUN.



Everyone went in to dinner and the Princess walked back over to the table to see if her heap of presents had grown. Suddenly she noticed something missing. The wooden jewelry box....

“Father!” she cried, “One of the gifts is gone. The box made by the boy, how terrible.”

The King rose from his throne,

angry. “One of the Princess’s gifts is missing!” he shouted. “I do not believe one of you would reward my hospitality with theft! My daughter is missing her wooden jewelry box.”

Arthur’s face fell. As the people began to shout and point fingers at each other, the Scouts looked around to see if they saw anything suspicious. A long thick, green tail suddenly oozed around the corner of the dining hall!

“What was that?” Bobby asked.

“You saw it too?” Jessica asked.

The Scouts headed for the door.

“Stop! We see you trying to leave, you must be the thieves!” the guards shouted.

“No, no, we saw something!” Annie insisted. “The box was

made by Arthur, would he steal his own gift back?”

The man looked perplexed.
“We saw a....” Juan began.

“A what?” the man asked.

“I sounds so strange, but a long green tail!” Bobby said.

“The dragon!” the man shouted. “Of course he would want to disturb the Princess’s party.”

“Dragon?” they all cried out.

“Yes, he steals whatever he can”, the man said, “We must go and battle him once and for all.”

The Scouts asked to go too, and the Men-at-Arms agreed because the Scouts were so skilled. The Men-at-Arms then handed out swords and shields to the Scouts. But there was not enough swords for Arthur to go.

“We cannot have anyone out there unarmed”, the man said. “If you can find a sword, you can come.”

“Here is a sword”, Arthur said, confused.

But the men laughed and walked on. The sword was stuck down deep, in a stone. Arthur gave the sword a yank and out it came.



“Good job! Let us all go and find the dragon!” the Scouts cried.

The Scouts walked along with the Men-at-Arms. It was a dark and stormy night. The wind was howling through the trees and owls hooted.

Darkness fell and the Men-at-Arms and Scouts

walked along with torches and swords.

After a long while, Jessica asked, “How far away does the dragon live?” She realized they had passed the same knotty tree three times.

“The dragon lives in a cave in the forest a few

miles away”, the man said.

“But we have been going around and around the same tree”, Bobby said.

“Are you sure you know where he lives?”

“Not exactly. In this area though, Scouts, fear not, we will lead you”, the

Men-at-Arms said. The Scouts looked at each other.

“Perhaps we can help”, Bobby said.

They began to walk around and look around the area carefully.

“Look the edge of this

branch is broken”, Annie said.

“Yes, and I see a little bit of slime over here”, Jessica said looking carefully at the tree.

“We know how to use a compass and as Scouts we are good observers”, Juan commented.

“This way”, Bobby said to the Men-at-Arms and began leading everyone in the opposite direction.

“When we find the Dragon, we can’t just barge in there, we could get hurt”, Bobby said, “We need to think about how to do this.”

Arthur looked sad. “We’ll get your gift back, Arthur”, Jessica said.

“It took a long time to make and I wanted something special for the princess”, he said.

“We’ll get the gift and teach the dragon a lesson besides”, Juan said.

After a while, they saw a cave in the distance with a large opening. As they came closer, the opening to cave became smaller and smaller. The cave held a great stench.

“What is that smell?”

Jessica asked, holding her nose.

“Dragon!” the
Men-At-Arms shouted.

“Come out dragon, or
we’re coming in!” they
yelled.

“Come in and I shall
roast and toast you”, the
Dragon responded. “I’m
not coming out and you’re
not coming in.”

“We wish to speak with you, good Dragon”, Bobby said.

“I will allow only one to enter”, the Dragon said, thinking to pick them off one at a time.

“Which of us should go?” Juan asked everyone

“You cannot go, you’re too young!” the man insisted. “I will go with the other Men-at-Arms no matter what the Dragon says.”

The men marched forward, but found the entrance to the cave was too small.

“He has shrunk the opening by magic!” the Men-at-Arms insisted.

Suddenly a small voice was heard from the back. “I will go. You are a brave and good group. But this is my fight.” They looked to see Arthur standing proud.

“This woodcutter’s son cannot go!” one of the men insisted.

“I am a Scout! Skill and strength of character are what is necessary, not brute force.” Arthur said.

“Aren’t those the marks of a true Scout?”

“Yes, so we all go in the

cave together. We can fit through one at a time”, Jessica said.

They all agreed.

“I will go face the Dragon first”, Arthur said.

Arthur entered the cave and lifted his sword high, and the other Scouts

followed.

“Tis a pity we shall never see them again”, the Men-at-Arms said.

Inside the cave, Arthur and the Scouts stumbled through the darkness and stink with only Arthur's torch and their swords. They could hear deep

rumbles with each breath the Dragon took. They could not see the Dragon, so they had to use their Scout skills of observation.

“I hear you, good Dragon, where are you?” Bobby asked, trying to lure the Dragon into speaking.

“Here, little lamb”, the Dragon said, its voice echoing off the wall of the cave. Arthur could still not tell where the Dragon was.

Under his feet, he heard the scraping of metal and held the torch down to see coins and jewels. He lifted the torch slowly and

before him was the
Dragon's face!

“Boo”, the Dragon said
and Arthur jumped back
and ran to edge of the
room. He held the torch
high to reveal a dragon
of deep blackish green,
with a long tail wrapped
around the many things
he had taken. His claws

were thick and curved and around the Dragon lay evidence of his last meals. Huge amber eyes flickered and focused on Arthur.

“You must come closer, boy. My eyesight is not so good”, the Dragon slyly said.

“I will speak to you from here”, Arthur said wisely. “We have come for the jewelry box you stole from the Princess.”

“I am always accused of stealing”, Dragon said, “It makes my old bones weary to think all the townspeople accuse me of.”

“You sit on a pile of riches you surely stole, Dragon”, Arthur said. “I made the box myself for the Princess’s birthday. It took me many days and nights to get it perfect. I would like it back please.”

The Dragon smiled,
revealing long stained

teeth. “You are very brave, little boy, for now I shall roast you and toast you and melt the flesh from your bones.”

Arthur lifted his sword high and the sparkle from it momentarily blinded the Dragon. “I say you shall not!” he said at the top of the voice, “I am a Scout

and I have come to do what is right and get the gift back. What do you require to return the gift?”

“Why should I give it back?” the Dragon asked.

“Because strength of character is measured in

the dark of night, not only the light of day!” the Scouts shouted in unison as they stepped out from the darkness to join Arthur. The Dragon breathed fire but they jumped out of the way. The Scouts brandished their swords and pinned the Dragon against the wall.

“Why of course you can have the box. You only needed to ask”, the Dragon said sweetly and the Scouts rolled their eyes.

“I am a Dragon and everyone is always afraid of me. I take things so people will come to get them and I won't be

alone”, the Dragon said.

“You breathed fire on us!” Jessica shouted.

“I wasn’t going to hurt you”, the Dragon said,
“But people do have expectations from a Dragon you know.”

Seeing the box, Arthur

picked it up. “Now you shall return all these riches as well”, Arthur said. The Dragon looked unhappy as the Scouts filled their arms with treasure to take back to the people.

“Stealing things from people is not the way to make friends”, Jessica

said.

“I was lonely”, the Dragon said.

Juan said, “Rising Star Scouts are friends to one and all. Come with us, and we will take you to town where soon you will have lots of friends.”

“Even me?” the Dragon asked sadly.

“Even you”, Bobby responded. “Together, we will make new friends.”

Later, the Men-at-Arms and the Scouts returned to town with the Dragon.

The people, seeing the large and terrifying Dragon, screamed and ran with fear.

“He will be good from now on, right Dragon?” Annie asked.

“Yes”, the Dragon said.
“I was only lonely.”

“Be friends with the Dragon and he will not attack anyone. In the Rising Star Scout Circle of Friends, everyone is included.” the Scouts said.

“Thank you, Scouts”, the Dragon said as several people came

forward to pet him.

“I cannot reach behind the ears”, the Dragon said. “Can you scratch me there?”

Soon small children were pulling at his ears and playing with his tail. The Dragon

purred.

The Scouts and
Men-at-Arms marched
triumphantly back into
the castle.

The King and Princess
were waiting along with
the revelers and
everyone clapped as

they came in.

Arthur walked forward with the jewelry box and presented it to the Princess. “I have spent many days and many nights making this. And it is for you”, he proudly said.

“You are worthy. What is your name?” the Princess asked.

“Arthur”, he confidently said.

“Mine is Guinevere”, she answered.

“Happy Birthday,

Guinevere”, he said with a smile.

“And now we must honor those who risked their lives for the people”, the King said. “I am impressed with these “Scouts”. I wish my knights would behave with such

honor!”

A roar went up from the crowd.

“Let the Scouts choose anything from my kingdom and it will be theirs with greatest thanks”, the King said.

The Scouts spoke together for a moment.

“We have enjoyed being here”, Bobby said, “But we would like to go home”

“You have not yet told

us your Scout
Promise”, Arthur said,
“I wish to learn it.”

“As a Rising Scout, I
love my family and my
friends, our community
and country too. I
wonder about it all,
stand tall and true, and

I give my best in all I do”, they answered.

“I shall remember every word!” Arthur said.

“Your wish is my command!” the King declared. “Arthur

shall lead you back to the place you started and you shall find you way home.”

“As you wish, your Majesty”, Arthur said.

Outside though he

asked, “Won’t you stay? You are the only friends I have.”

“Now that you are a Scout, you can make friends anywhere”, Jessica said.

They walked back to

the side of the road
where the Scouts had
first met the
musicians.

“Can I go with you?”
Arthur asked.

“You must stay

here”, Juan said,
“This is your
journey. Each
Scout has their
own.”

Bobby and the
others began to
climb up to check

the balloon.

Suddenly the wind began to blow hot and the balloon unexpectedly began to rise. Annie grabbed the balloon tightly as it began to take off and Bobby

pulled her in.

The balloon suddenly began to drift away. A thick mist began to develop around them. Arthur realized they were

from a different time
and place.

“Don’t forget me”,
Arthur said.

“We won’t!
Good-bye, Arthur”,
they shouted.

“Good-bye! And don’t worry, I’ll always be a faithful Scout!” he shouted.

They flew away and eventually the balloon landed in the park, near their

friends.

“Can you believe that?” Bobby cried.

“Did we dream it?”
Jessica asked.

Their fellow

teammates who had
searching for them
saw them suddenly.

“We looked all over
for you!” they said.
Their fellow Scouts
came running over

and tied the balloon down.

Bobby, Juan, Annie, and Jessica then saw a statue in the park. It attracted their attention because statue

showed a man on horseback with a sword raised. As they got closer, they saw there were also four kids in the statue. As their eyes focused on the statue, they

realized that the
four kids were in
fact them wearing
their cargo pants
and smiling with
swords held high.



They then read the plaque and on the plaque, it read,
“Once upon a time, there was King Arthur, the once and future King. King of Camelot.
Four Knouts

inspired him to
create The Knights
of the Round
Table. All of the
Knights of the
Round Table were
all equal and
instilled to give
their best. They

demonstrated their
worthiness by
helping others.

“King Arthur?
The boy we
met...Arthur, he
became King

Arthur!” Annie
announced.

“What is a
Knout?” they said
at the same time
and began to
laugh, knowing

Arthur meant
Scouts.

They all looked
at each and
smiled. It had
been no dream.

ONE YEAR LATER

They sat around
the campfire.

“And that is the
story of how the

knights of the
round table came
to be”, Bobby
said.

The other Scouts
just stared at
them.