

"I was never your father nor of your blood, but I wote²⁵ well ye are of an higher blood than I wend²⁶ ye were."

"Plenty of people have told me you are not my father," said the Wart, "but it does not matter a bit."

"Sir," said Sir Ector humbly, "will ye be my good and gracious lord when ye are King?"

"Don't!" said the Wart.

"Sir," said Sir Ector, "I will ask no more of you but that you will make my son, your foster-brother, Sir Kay, seneschal²⁷ of all your lands."

Kay was kneeling down too, and it was more than the Wart could bear.

"Oh, do stop," he cried. "Of course he can be seneschal, if I have got to be this King, and, oh, father, don't kneel down like that, because it breaks my heart. Please get up, Sir Ector, and don't make everything so horrible. Oh, dear, oh, dear, I wish I had never seen that filthy sword at all."

And the Wart also burst into tears.

25. **wote** (wōt) *v.* old word meaning "know."

26. **wend** (wend) *v.* here, old word meaning "thought."

27. **seneschal** (sen' ə shəl) *n.* steward in the house of a medieval noble.

Review and Assess

Thinking About the Selection

1. **Respond:** Who is your favorite character in this retelling? Why?
2. (a) **Recall:** What significant news does King Pellinore bring? (b) **Compare and Contrast:** How do the different characters respond to the news?
3. (a) **Recall:** How is the new king of England to be chosen? (b) **Interpret:** What does this method of selecting the king add to the story?
4. (a) **Recall:** Why does the Wart attempt to pull the sword from the stone? (b) **Interpret:** In what ways is the Wart's accomplishment of drawing the sword from the stone a moment of magic and mystery?
5. (a) **Draw Conclusions:** How does the Wart feel about becoming king? Why? (b) **Evaluate:** What kingly qualities does the Wart reveal even as a boy?
6. (a) **Interpret:** What examples can you find to show that T. H. White pokes fun at the Arthurian legend? (b) **Evaluate:** Do you think his humor is successful? Explain.

T. H. White

(1906–1964)



At the age of thirty, Terence Hanbury White resigned his teaching position to devote himself to his many interests, which included flying, deep-sea diving, falconry, knitting, jumping horses, and, of course, writing. His most famous work, from which "Arthur Becomes King of Britain" is taken, is the four-part novel *The Once and Future King* (1958), a comic retelling of the Arthurian legends. White's version of the legends has inspired several movies as well as the musical *Camelot*.