

III-The tale of Balen

The chapter titled "The Tale of Balen" describes a series of dramatic and mystical events unfolding around Balen, an esteemed figure, whose life is intertwined with profound hope and impending doom. As mythical as the first light of dawn, a series of events unfolds akin to waves driven by the east wind, heralding both life and inevitable doom. Balen, exalted by a fleeting joy, finds himself in the presence of a series of significant individuals, from a lady resembling a delicate windflower, associated with the Lady of the Lake, to a malevolent sorceress whose fate intertwines with his own tragic past.

In an audience with the king, the Lady of the Lake claims her reward for a previously gifted sword, Excalibur, triggering a chain of fateful events. Her request for Balen's head or that of the lady who brought the sword, underlines a deep-rooted desire for a macabre form of justice. Balen responds to this twisted demand by facing a sorceress responsible for his mother's death, ultimately killing her. This act, although seeking to right past wrongs, casts a shadow over Balen's honor in the eyes of the king, who admonishes Balen for his impulsiveness and for carrying out vengeance in his presence.

Despair and honor clash as Balen justifies his actions by highlighting the sorceress's evils, including the deaths of many innocents by her hand. Despite understanding Balen's motives, the king suggests Balen's leave, implying a need for atonement. Before departing, Balen tasks his squire with showcasing the sorceress's severed head across Northumberland as proof of her demise and his liberation from her dark influence.

Balen then sets his sights on combating King Ryons of North Wales, hoping to regain King Arthur's favor and establish peace. However, unaware of the brewing storm, Sir Launceor of Ireland, driven by pride and envy towards Balen, seeks permission from Arthur to avenge the perceived dishonor.

Merlin, a sage with deep insight, then reveals a complex web of deceit, magic, and betrayal surrounding the events. He elucidates the true nature of the damosel who brought Excalibur to Arthur's court and her connection to the sorceress, painting a grim picture of manipulation aimed at Balen's downfall. Merlin's narrative weaves a tragic tale of manipulated destinies, revealing the sorceress provided the magical sword specifically to pit the siblings against each other, with Balen as an unintended victim caught in a merciless plot of vengeance and sorcery, highlighting the inevitable clash between honor and the dark machinations of fate.