

Chapter I

The Elegant Horse

by Elise K.

*M*y name is Arthur Finnigan. I am a poor boy by which the monks call upon. To the world, I am no one. I live in England and have never met the king or any knights or nobles of equal power. Only one in all of Europe respects me and he is old and dying and everyone believes he has the plague that is spreading through the countryside. Everyone also believes that he has gone loopy, even his fellow brothers. His name is Brother Ethel. I live with the monks in an old, tiny, and decrepit church on 54th Street, Lamon, England. I was born an orphan, as my mother died at my birth. The monks took me in, which was very humble of them, and I respect them greatly for it. Still though, I don't want to be left with only the option of growing old and dying as nothing but a monk, therefore, I have not agreed to follow their religion.

I have many talents, but they are all disregarded. I can read and write, as you can see, because you are reading my journal. I am also able to fight like none other, even better than King Arthur himself. I am named after King Arthur because of my skills, by Brother Ethel, the only one who ever believed I could be better than an old monk, but he did indeed wish I would let myself be baptized.

The only other idol in my life besides Old Brother Ethel (although Brother Ethel is more of my hero, not my idol, because he was the one who found my little scrawny body near the trash outside of the hospital) is Merlin the Wizard. I have been pondering this horrible plague that is passing through the countryside, that has somehow passed me by and instead attacked my only companion, Brother Ethel. It is very unnerving because every illness that has come to our small, broken down, of what one would never call a cathedral, but more of a shack, I have become deathly ill with. Even so, Brother Ethel never tires of taking care of me every time. I really hope with all my heart that I can meet Merlin, and soon, before it's too late to save Brother Ethel.

I wish to learn magic and be an apprentice of Merlin, for he is the greatest magician out of all that live on earth. I hope that somehow if I can gather enough coins to travel to the castle where he lives with King Arthur then he will consider me as something more than a poor, dirty, peasant from the working class, since he has special and unknown magical abilities. Maybe he will even believe I have potential, but even that is more than I can wish for. For the time being, I will have to try and save coins and gold by doing laboring chores without letting Brother Ethel get worse from the plague.

I wake at the sound of a deep, long groan filling the air, followed by a soft whimper. Tired and aggravated I sit up, hoping the sound will disappear and that I can wake from this awful nightmare. I drag myself to the bed in which Brother Ethel sleeps, looking into his pained eyes. Carefully, I lean over to feel his forehead but leap back at his scalding temperature. He murmurs something incomprehensible and turns over. Quickly, I run down the steps to fetch him a towel. I douse the cloth with cold water until it is soaked. When I reach Brother Ethel's bedside I lay the towel limply over his weary face. I wait and wait, for there is nothing more that I can do.