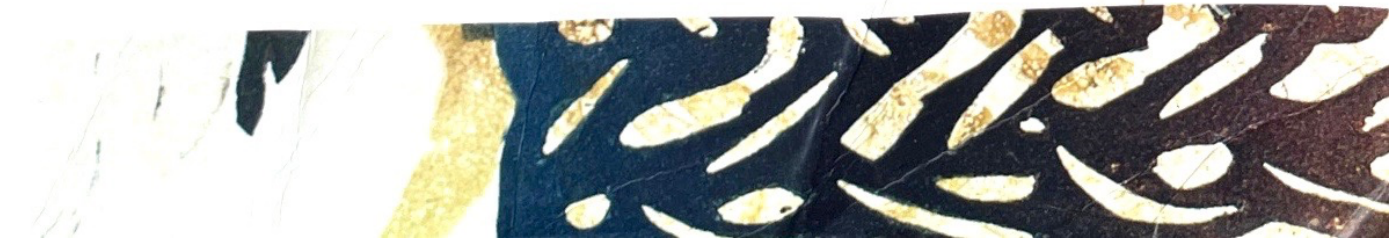


The Mabinogion

A new translation by Sioned Davies

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS



'I cannot be killed indoors,' he said, 'nor out of doors; I cannot be killed on horseback, nor on foot.' 'Well,' she said, 'how can you be killed?'

Celtic mythology, Arthurian romance, and an intriguing interpretation of British history—these are just some of the themes embraced by the anonymous authors of the eleven tales that make up the Welsh medieval masterpiece known as the *Mabinogion*. They tell of Gwydion the shape-shifter, who can create a woman out of flowers; of Math the magician whose feet must lie in the lap of a virgin; of hanging a pregnant mouse and hunting a magical boar. Dragons, witches, and giants live alongside kings and heroes, and quests of honour, revenge, and love are set against the backdrop of a country struggling to retain its independence.

This new translation, the first for thirty years, recreates the storytelling world of medieval Wales and re-invests the tales with the power of performance.

'This fresh, energetic translation is a revelation'
Gwyneth Lewis, *Guardian*

THIS EDITION INCLUDES

Introduction • Guide to pronunciation • Bibliography
Map • Explanatory notes • Indexes

Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Sioned Davies

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How Culhwch Won Olwen



CILYDD son of Celyddon Wledig* wanted a wife as well born as himself. The woman he wanted was Goleuddydd daughter of Anlawdd Wledig. After he had slept with her the country went to prayer to see whether they might have an heir. And they had a son through the country's prayers. And from the hour she became pregnant she went mad, and did not go near any dwelling. When her time came, her senses returned to her. This happened in a place where a swineherd was tending a herd of pigs. And out of fear of the pigs the queen gave birth. And the swineherd took the boy until he came to court. And the boy was baptized, and was named Culhwch because he was found in a pig-run.* But the boy was of noble descent, he was a cousin to Arthur. And the boy was placed with foster-parents.*

And after that the boy's mother, Goleuddydd daughter of Anlawdd Wledig, became ill. She summoned her husband to her, and said to him, 'I shall die of this sickness, and you will want another wife. And nowadays it's the wives who dispense the gifts. But you would be wrong to harm your son. This is what I ask of you: not to seek a wife until you see a two-headed briar on my grave.'

He promised her that. She summoned her chaplain and asked him to clean the grave every year so that nothing would grow on it. The queen died. The king sent a servant every morning to see if anything was growing on the grave. At the end of seven years the chaplain neglected what he had promised the queen.

One day the king was hunting; he made for the graveyard; he wanted to see the grave whereby he might seek a wife. He saw the briar. And as he saw it he took counsel as to where he could get a wife. One of the counsellors said, 'I know of a woman who would suit you well. She is the wife of King Doged.' They decided to seek her out. And they killed the king and brought his wife back home with them, together with her only daughter. And they took possession of the king's land.

One day the lady went out for a walk. She came to the house of a toothless old hag who lived in the town.

The queen said, 'Hag, for God's sake will you answer my question? Where are the children of the man who violently abducted me?'

The hag said, 'He has no children.'

The queen said, 'Woe is me that I have come to a childless man.'

The hag said, 'You need not worry about that. It is prophesied that he shall have an heir; he may have one by *you*, since he hasn't had one by anyone else. Don't be sad either—he does have one son.'

The lady went home happy, and she said to her husband, 'Why do you hide your child from me?'

The king said, 'I will not hide him any longer.'

The boy was sent for, and he came to the court. His stepmother said to him, 'It is time for you to get married, lad. And I have a daughter worthy of every nobleman in the world.'

The boy said, 'I am not old enough to get married yet.'

And then she said, 'I swear a destiny on you, that your side shall never strike against a woman until you get Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Bencawr.'*

The boy blushed, and love for the maiden filled every limb in his body, although he had never seen her. And then his father said to him, 'Son, why are you blushing? What's the matter?'

'My stepmother has sworn that I may never have a wife until I get Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Bencawr.'

'It is easy for you to get that, son,' said his father to him. 'Arthur is your cousin. Go to Arthur to have your hair trimmed,* and ask him for that as your gift.'*

The boy went off on a steed with a gleaming grey head, four winters old, well-jointed stride, shell-like hoofs, and a tubular gold bridle-bit in its mouth, with a precious gold saddle beneath him, and two sharp spears of silver in his hand. He had a battle-axe in his hand, the length of the forearm of a full-grown man from ridge to edge. It would draw blood from the wind; it would be swifter than the swiftest dewdrop from the stalk to the ground when the dew is heaviest in the month of June. He had a gold-hilted sword on his thigh and its blade of gold, with a gold-chased shield, the colour of heaven's lightning, and its rim of ivory. And there were two spotted, white-breasted

greyhounds in front of him, with a collar of red gold around the neck of each from shoulder-swell to ear. The one on the left side would run to the right side, and the one on the right side would run to the left side, like two sea-swallows swooping around him. His steed's four hoofs would cut out four clods, like four swallows in the air above him, sometimes in front of him, sometimes behind him. He had a purple, four-cornered cloak about him, with a ruby-gold ball at each corner. Each ball was worth a hundred cows. The precious gold in his buskins and stirrups, from the top of his thigh to the tip of his toe, was worth three hundred cows. Not even the tip of a hair on him stirred, so light was his steed's canter beneath him on his way to the gate of Arthur's court.*

The boy said, 'Is there a gatekeeper?'

'There is. And as for you, may you lose your head for asking. *I* am gatekeeper to Arthur each first day of January, but I have deputies for the rest of the year, namely Huandaw and Gogigwr and Llaesgymyn, and Penpingion who goes about on his head to save his feet, neither looking to heaven nor to the ground, but like a rolling stone on a court floor.'

'Open the gate.'

'No, I won't.'

'Why won't you open it?'

'Knife has gone into meat and drink into horn, and a thronging in the hall of Arthur. Apart from the son of the lawful king of a country, or a craftsman who brings his craft, none will be allowed to enter. You shall have food for your dogs and corn for your horse, and hot peppered chops for yourself, and wine brimming over, and songs to entertain you. Food for fifty shall be brought to you in the hostel. There travellers from afar do eat, together with the sons of other lands who do not offer a craft in the court of Arthur. It will be no worse for you there than for Arthur in the court. A woman to sleep with you and songs to entertain you. Tomorrow, in the morning, when the gate is opened for the crowd that has come here today, for you shall the gate be opened first. And you may sit wherever you choose in Arthur's hall, from its upper end to its lower.'

The boy said, 'I will do none of that. If you open the gate, well and good. If not, I will bring dishonour on your lord and give you a bad name. And I will raise three shouts at the entrance of this gate that will be no less audible on the top of Pen Pengwaedd in Cornwall

as at the bottom of Dinsol in the North, and in Esgair Oerfel in Ireland.* And all the women in this court that are pregnant shall miscarry, and those that are not, their wombs shall become heavy within them so that they shall never be with child from this day forth.'

Glewlwyd Gafaelfawr* said, 'However much you shout against the laws of Arthur's court, you shall not be allowed in until I go and speak with Arthur first.' And Glewlwyd came into the hall.

Arthur said to him, 'You have news from the gate?'

'I do—

Two thirds of my life have gone
and two thirds of your own.
I was once in Caer Se and Asse,
in Sach and Salach,
in Lotor and Ffotor.
I was once in India the Great
and India the Lesser.
I was once in the battle of the two Ynyrs
when the twelve hostages were taken from Norway.
And I was once in Europe,
I was in Africa,
and the islands of Corsica,
and in Caer Brythwch and Brythach and Nerthach.
I was once there when you killed the warband of Gleis son of Merin,
when you killed Mil Du son of Dugum.
I was once there when you conquered Greece in the east.
I was once in Caer Oeth and Anoeth,
and in Caer Nefenhyr Nawdant:
fair kingly men did we see there—

but I never in my life saw a man as handsome as the one who is at the entrance to the gate this very moment.'*

Arthur said, 'If you came in walking, then go out running. And he who looks at the light and who opens his eye and then closes it, an injunction upon him. And let some serve with golden drinking-horns and others with hot peppered chops until he has plenty of food and drink. It is a shameful thing to leave in the wind and the rain such a man as you describe.'

Cai said, 'By the hand of my friend,* if you were to take my advice, the laws of court would not be broken on his account.'

'Not so, fair Cai. We are noblemen as long as others seek us out. The greater the gifts we bestow, the greater will be our nobility and our fame and our honour.'

And Glewlwyd came to the gate, and opened the gate for him. And whereas everyone else would dismount by the gate at the mounting-block, he did not, but rode in on the steed.

Culhwch said, 'Hail, chief of the kings of this island. May it be no worse to the lower end of the house than to the upper. May this greeting apply equally to your nobles and your retinue and your battle-chiefs. May no one be without a share of it. As my greeting to you is all-encompassing, may your grace and your word and your honour in this island be all-encompassing.'

'God's truth on that, chieftain. Greetings to you, too. Sit between two of the warriors, with songs to entertain you and the privileges of a prince, heir-apparent to the kingdom,* for as long as you are here. And when I divide my bounty between guests and travellers from afar, it shall be with you that I begin in this court.'

The boy said, 'I have not come here to sponge food and drink. But if I get my gift, I shall be worthy of it and acclaim it. If I do not get it, I shall dishonour you as far as the furthest corners of the world that your fame has reached.'

Arthur said, 'Though you do not reside here, chieftain, you shall have the gift your mouth and tongue shall name, as far as the wind dries, as far as the rain soaks, as far as the sun reaches, as far as the sea stretches, as far as the earth extends, except my ship and my mantle, and Caledfwlch my sword, and Rhongomyniad my spear, and Wynebgwrthucher my shield, and Carnwennan my dagger, and Gwenhwyfar my wife.'*

'God's truth on it?'

'You shall have it gladly. Name what you want.'

'I will. I want to have my hair trimmed.'

'You shall have that.'

Arthur took a golden comb, and shears with loops of silver, and combed his hair,* and asked who he was.

Arthur said, 'My heart warms towards you. I know you are of my blood. Tell me who you are.'

'I will. Culhwch son of Cilydd son of Celyddon Wledig by Goleuddydd daughter of Anlawdd Wledig, my mother.'

Arthur said, 'That is true. You are my cousin then. Name what

you will, and you shall have it, whatever your mouth and tongue may name.'

'Have I God's truth on that, and the truth of your kingdom?'

'Yes, gladly.'

'I ask you to get me Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Bencawr. And I invoke her in the name of your warriors.'

He invoked his gift* in the name of Cai and Bedwyr, and Greidol Gallddofydd, and Gwythyr son of Greidol, and Graid son of Eri, and Cynddylig Gyfarwydd, and Tathal Twyll Golau, and Maelwys son of Baeddan, and Cnychwr son of Nes, and Cubert son of Daere, and Ffercos son of Poch, and Lluber Beuthach, and Corfil Berfach, and Gwyn son of Esni, and Gwyn son of Nwyfre, and Gwyn son of Nudd, and Edern son of Nudd, and Cadwy son of Geraint, and Fflewddwr Fflam Wledig, and Rhuawn Bebyr son of Dorath, and Bradwen son of Moren Mynog, and Moren Mynog himself, and Dalldaf son of Cimin Cof, and the son of Alun Dyfed, and the son of Saidi, and the son of Gwryon, and Uchdryd Ardwyad Cad, and Cynwas Cwryfagl, and Gwrhyr Gwarthegfras, and Isberyr Ewingath, and Gallgoid Gofyniad, and Duach and Brathach and Nerthach, sons of Gwawrddydd Cyrfach (from the uplands of hell did those men come), and Cilydd Canhastyr, and Canhastyr Can Llaw, and Cors Cant Ewin, and Esgair Gulhwch Gofyncawn, and Drwstwrn Haearn, and Glewlwyd Gafaelfawr, and Lloch Llaw-wyniog, and Anwas Edeiniog, and Sinnoch son of Seithfed, and Wadu son of Seithfed, and Naw son of Seithfed, and Gwenwynwyn son of Naw son of Seithfed, and Bedyw son of Seithfed, and Gobrwy son of Echel Forddwyd Twll, and Echel Forddwyd Twll himself, and Mael son of Roycol, and Dadwair Dallben, and Garwyli son of Gwythog Gwyr, and Gwythog Gwyr himself, and Gormant son of Rica, and Menw son of Teirgwaedd, and Digon son of Alar, and Selyf son of Sinoid, and Gusg son of Achen, and Nerth son of Cadarn, and Drudwas son of Tryffin, and Twrch son of Perif, and Twrch son of Anwas, and Iona, king of France, and Sel son of Selgi, and Teregud son of Iaen, and Sulien son of Iaen, and Bradwen son of Iaen, and Moren son of Iaen, and Siawn son of Iaen, and Caradog son of Iaen—they were men of Caer Dathyl, Arthur's family on his father's side. Dirmyg son of Caw, and Iustig son of Caw, and Edmyg son of Caw, and Angawdd son of Caw, and Gofan son of Caw, and Celyn son of Caw,

and Conyn son of Caw, and Mabsant son of Caw, and Gwyngad son of Caw, and Llwybyr son of Caw, and Coch son of Caw, and Meilyg son of Caw, and Cynwal son of Caw, and Ardwyad son of Caw, and Ergyriad son of Caw, and Neb son of Caw, and Gildas son of Caw, and Calcas son of Caw, and Huail son of Caw (he never submitted to a lord's control), and Samson Finsych, and Taliesin Ben Beirdd, and Manawydan son of Llŷr, and Llary son of Casnar Wledig, and Sberin son of Fflergant, king of Brittany, and Saranhon son of Glythfyr, and Llawr son of Erw, and Anynnog son of Menw Teirgwaedd, and Gwyn son of Nwyfre, and Fflam son of Nwyfre, and Geraint son of Erbin, and Ermid son of Erbin, and Dywel son of Erbin, and Gwyn son of Ermid, and Cyndrwyn son of Ermid, and Hyfaidd Unllen, and Eiddon Fawrfrydig, and Rheiddwn Arwy, and Gormant son of Rica (Arthur's brother on his mother's side, his father the chief elder of Cornwall). And Llawnrodded Farfog, and Nodawl Farf Trwch, and Berth son of Cado, and Rheiddwn son of Beli, and Isgofan Hael, and Ysgawyn son of Banon, and Morfran son of Tegid (no man laid his weapon in him at Camlan because he was so ugly, everyone thought he was an attendant demon; he had hair on him like a stag). And Sandde Pryd Angel (no one laid his spear in him at Camlan because he was so beautiful, everyone thought he was an attendant angel). And Cynwyl Sant, one of the Three Who Escaped from Camlan; he was the last to part from Arthur, on Hengroen his horse.

And Uchdryd son of Erim, and Eus son of Erim, and Henwas Edeiniog son of Erim, and Henbeddestyr son of Erim, and Sgilti Sgafndroed son of Erim. There were three magical qualities about these last three men. Henbeddestyr, he never found any man who could keep up with him, either on horseback or on foot; Henwas Edeiniog, no four-legged animal could ever keep up with him over one acre, let alone any farther than that; Sgilti Sgafndroed, whenever he wanted to go on an errand for his lord, he would never seek a road as long as he knew where he was going, but while there were trees, he would travel along the top of the trees, and while there was a mountain, he would travel on the tips of the reeds, and throughout his life no reed ever bent beneath his feet, let alone broke, because he was so light.

Teithi Hen son of Gwynnan, whose kingdom the sea overran, and he only just escaped and came to Arthur—and his knife had

a magical attribute: ever since he came here no handle would ever stay on it, and because of that he became sick and weary during his lifetime, and of that he died. And Carnedyr son of Gofynion Hen, and Gwenwynwyn son of Naf, Arthur's foremost champion, and Llygadrudd Emys and Gwrfoddw Hen, they were Arthur's uncles, his mother's brothers. Culfanawyd son of Goryon, and Llenlleog Wyddel from the headland of Gamon, and Dyfnwal Moel, and Dunarth, king of the North, Teyrnon Twrf Liant, and Tegfan Gloff, and Tegyr Talgellog. Gwrddywal son of Efrei, and Morgant Hael, Gwystyl son of Nwython, and Rhun son of Nwython, and Llwydeu son of Nwython, and Gwydre son of Llwydeu by Gwenabwy daughter of Caw, his mother—Huail his uncle stabbed him, and because of that there was hatred between Arthur and Huail, because of the injury.

Drem son of Dremidydd, who from Celli Wig in Cornwall could see a fly rise in the morning with the sun as far away as Pen Blathaon in Pictland. And Eidoel son of Ner and Glwyddyn Saer who built Ehangwen, Arthur's hall. Cynyr Ceinfarfog—Cai was said to be his son. He said to his wife, 'If there is any part of me in your son, maiden, his heart will always be cold, and there will be no warmth in his hands. Another of his magical attributes: if he be a son of mine, he will be stubborn. Another attribute: when he carries a load, be it large or small, it will never be visible, neither in front of him nor behind him. Another attribute: no one will withstand water or fire as well as he. Another attribute: there will be no servant or officer like him.'

Henwas, and Hen Wyneb, and Hengydymaith, Gallgoig another—whatever town he would come to, though there were three hundred houses in it, if he wanted anything he would let no man sleep while he was there. Berwyn son of Cyrenyr, and Peris, king of France—and that's why it is called the citadel of Paris. Osla Gyllellfawr who would carry Bronllafn Ferllydan; when Arthur and his hosts would come to the edge of a torrent, a narrow place over the water would be sought, and the dagger would be placed in its sheath across the torrent—it would be bridge enough for the men of the Three Islands of Britain and her Three Adjacent Islands, and their booty. Gwyddog son of Menestyr, who killed Cai, and Arthur killed him and his brothers to avenge Cai. Garanwyn son of Cai, and Amren son of Bedwyr, and Eli, and Myr, and Rheu Rhwyddyrys, and Rhun Rhuddwern, and

Eli, and Trachmyr, Arthur's chief huntsmen. And Llwydeu son of Cilcoed, and Huabwy son of Gwryon, and Gwyn Godyfron, and Gwair Dathar Weinidog, and Gwair son of Cadellin Tal Arian, and Gwair Gwrhyd Enwir, and Gwair Gwyn Baladr—Arthur's uncles, his mother's brothers; the sons of Llwch Llaw-wyniog from beyond the Tyrrhenian Sea, Llenlleog Wyddel, and Ardderchog Prydain, Cas son of Saidi, Gwrfan Gwallt Afwyn, Gwilenhin, king of France, Gwitardd son of Aedd, king of Ireland, Garselyd Wyddel, Panawr Penbagad, Atlendor son of Naf, Gwyn Hyfar, overseer of Cornwall and Devon—one of the nine who plotted the battle of Camlan. Celli, and Cuelli, and Gilla Goeshydd—he would clear three hundred acres in a single leap, chief leaper of Ireland.

Sol, and Gwadn Osol, and Gwadn Oddaith—Sol, who could stand all day on one leg; Gwadn Osol, if he were to stand on top of the largest mountain in the world, it would become a level plain beneath his feet; Gwadn Oddaith, like hot metal when drawn from the forge were the flashing sparks from his soles when he encountered strife—he would clear the way for Arthur and his hosts. Hir Erwm and Hir Atrwm, on the day they came to a feast, they would seize three cantrefs for their needs; they would feast till noon and drink till night. When they would go to sleep they would devour the heads of insects through hunger, as if they had never eaten food. When they went to a feast they left neither fat nor lean, neither hot nor cold, neither sour nor sweet, neither fresh nor salt, neither cooked nor raw.

Huarwar son of Halwn, who asked his fill as a gift from Arthur; it was one of the Three Mighty Plagues of Cornwall and Devon until he was given his fill; he never gave a hint of a smile except when he was full. Gwarae Gwallt Eurin, the two whelps of the bitch Rhymhi, Gwyddrud and Gwydden Astrus, Sugn son of Sugnedydd, who would suck up the sea where there were three hundred ships until it was just a dry beach; he had red breast-fever. Cacamwri, Arthur's servant—show him a barn, though there would be in it the work of fifty ploughs, he would thrash away with an iron flail until the boards, the rafters, and the side-beams would be no better off than the fine oats in the heap of corn-sheaves at the bottom of the barn. Llwng, and Dygyflwng, and Annoeth Feiddog, and Hir Eiddil, and Hir Amren—they were two of Arthur's servants—and Gwefl son of Gwastad—on days when he was sad he would let his bottom

lip drop to his navel and the other would be a hood on his head. Uchdryd Farf Draws who would fling his bushy red beard across fifty rafters in Arthur's hall. Elidir Gyfarwydd, Ysgyrdaf and Ysgudydd—they were two of Gwenhwyfar's servants; on an errand their feet were as fleet as their thoughts. Brys son of Brysethach from the top of the black fernland in Prydain, and Gruddlwyn Gorr.

Bwlch and Cyfwlch and Syfwlch,
sons of Cleddyf Cyfwlch,
grandsons of Cleddyf Difwlch.
Three gleaming glitterers their three shields,
Three stabbing strokes their three spears;
Three keen carvers their three swords;
Glas, Glesig, Gleisiad their three hounds;
Call, Cuall, Cafall their three steeds;
Hwyr Ddyddwg and Drwg Ddyddwg and Llwyr Ddyddwg
their three wives;
Och and Garym and Diasbad their three grandchildren;
Lluched and Neued and Eisiwed their three daughters;
Drwg and Gwaeth and Gwaethaf Oll their three maidservants.*

Eheubryd son of Cyfwlch, Gorasgwrn son of Nerth, Gwaeddan son of Cynfelyn Ceudog, Pwyll Hanner Dyn, Dwn Diesig Unben, Eiladar son of Pen Llarcan, Cynedyr Wyllt son of Hetwn Tal Arian, Sawyl Pen Uchel, Gwalchmai son of Gwyar, Gwalhafed son of Gwyar, Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd—he knew all languages—and Cethdrwm Offeiriad. Clust son of Clustfeiniad—if he were buried seven fathoms in the earth, he could hear an ant fifty miles away stirring from its bed in the morning. Medyr son of Methredydd, who from Celli Wig could strike a starling in Esgair Oerfel in Ireland right through both legs. Gwiawn Llygad Cath, who could cut a membrane in a gnat's eye without harming the eye. Ôl son of Olwydd—seven years before he was born his father's pigs were stolen, and when he grew to be a man he traced the pigs and brought them home in seven herds. Bedwini the Bishop, who would bless Arthur's food and drink.

And also the gentle, golden-torqued ladies of this Island. Besides Gwenhwyfar, chief queen of this Island, and Gwenhwyfach her sister, and Rathtien, only daughter of Clememyl, Celemon daughter of Cai, and Tangwen daughter of Gwair Dathar Weinidog, Gwenalarch daughter of Cynwal Canhwch, Eurneid daughter of Clydno Eidin,

Eneuog daughter of Bedwyr, Enrhydreg daughter of Tuduathar, Gwenwledyr daughter of Gwaredur Cyrfach, Erdudfyl daughter of Tryffin, Eurolwyn daughter of Gwddolwyn Gorr, Teleri daughter of Peul, Indeg daughter of Garwy Hir, Morfudd daughter of Urien Rheged, Gwenllian Deg, the magnanimous maiden, Creiddylad daughter of Lludd Llaw Eraint, the most majestic maiden there ever was in the Three Islands of Britain and her Three Adjacent Islands. And for her Gwythyr son of Greidol and Gwyn son of Nudd fight each May day forever until the Day of Judgement. Ellylw daughter of Neol Cŷn Crog, and she lived for three generations. Esyllt Fynwen and Esyllt Fyngul. In the name of all of these did Culhwch son of Cilydd invoke his gift.

Arthur said, 'Well, chieftain, I have never heard of the maiden of whom you speak, nor of her parents. I will gladly send messengers to search for her. Give me some time to search for her.'

The boy said, 'Gladly, I will give you a year from tonight.'

And then Arthur sent the messengers to the far ends of every land to search for her. And at the end of the year Arthur's messengers returned with no more news or information about Olwen than on the first day.

And then Culhwch said, 'Everyone has had his gift but I am still without. I will leave and take away your honour with me.'

Cai said, 'Ah chieftain, you insult Arthur too much. Come with us. Until you admit that the maiden does not exist anywhere in the world, or until we find her, we will not be parted from you.'

Then Cai gets up.* Cai had magical qualities. For nine nights and nine days he could hold his breath under water. For nine nights and nine days he could go without sleep. A wound from Cai's sword no physician could heal. Cai was clever. He could be as tall as the tallest tree in the forest when it pleased him. There was another strange thing about him. When the rain was at its heaviest, whatever was in his hand would remain dry (and for a hand-breadth above and below), so great was his heat. And when his companions were coldest, this would be kindling for them to light a fire.

Arthur called on Bedwyr, who never feared the quest upon which Cai went. There was this about Bedwyr—no one was as handsome as he in this Island except Arthur and Drych son of Cibddar.* And this, too, that though he was one-handed, no three warriors could draw

blood in the same field faster than he. Another peculiar quality of his—there was one thrust in his spear, and nine counter-thrusts.

Arthur calls on Cynddylig Gyfarwydd: 'Go on this quest for me with the chieftain.' He was no worse a guide in the land he had never seen than in his own land.

He calls Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd: he knew all languages.

He calls Gwalchmai son of Gwyar, for he never returned home without the quest he might go to seek. He was the best on foot and the best on a horse. He was Arthur's nephew, his sister's son, and his cousin.

Arthur calls on Menw son of Teirgwaedd, for should they come to a pagan land he could cast a spell on them so that no one could see them, but they could see everyone.

They travelled until they came to a great plain, and they could see a fort, the largest fort in the world. They walk that day until evening. When they thought they were close to the fort, they were no closer than in the morning. And the second and the third day they walked, and with difficulty they got there. And when they get close to the fort they could see a huge flock of sheep without boundary or border to it, and a shepherd on top of a mound tending the sheep, and a jacket of skins about him, and a shaggy mastiff beside him, bigger than a nine-year-old stallion. It was his custom that he had never lost a lamb, much less a grown animal. No troop had ever gone past him that he did not harm or hurt. Any dead tree or bush that was on the plain, his breath would burn them to the very ground.

Cai said, 'Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd, go and talk with that man over there.'

'Cai', he said, 'I only promised to go as far as you yourself would go. Let's go there together.'

Menw son of Teirgwaedd said, 'Don't worry about going there. I will cast a spell on the dog so that he will not harm anyone.' They came to where the shepherd was.

They said to him, 'You are prosperous, shepherd.'

'May you never be more prosperous than me.'

'Yes, by God, since you are supreme.'

'There is nothing that can ruin me except my wife.'

'Whose sheep are you tending, and whose is that fort?'

'You stupid men! Throughout the world people know that it is the fort of Ysbaddaden Bencawr.'

'And you, who are you?'

'I am Custennin son of Mynwyedig, and because of my wife, my brother Ysbaddaden Bencawr has ruined me. And you, who are you?'

'We are messengers of Arthur, seeking Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Bencawr.'

'Oh no, men. God protect you! For all the world, do not do that. No one who came to make that request has ever left alive.'

The shepherd got up. And as he got up, Culhwch gave him a gold ring. He tried to put on the ring, but it would not fit, and he placed it in the finger of his glove, and he went home and gave the glove to his wife to keep. And she took the ring from the glove.

'Where did you get this ring, husband? It is not often that you find treasure.'

'I went to the sea to look for sea-food. Behold, I saw a corpse coming in with the tide. I never saw such a handsome corpse as that, and on its finger I found this ring.'

'Alas, husband, since the sea does not tolerate a dead man's jewel, show me that corpse.'

'Wife, he whose corpse it is, you shall see him here soon.'

'Who's that?' said his wife.

'Culhwch son of Cilydd son of Celyddon Wledig, by Goleuddydd daughter of Anlawdd Wledig, his mother, who has come to ask for Olwen.'

She was in two minds. She was happy that her nephew,* her sister's son, had come to her, but she was sad because she had never seen anyone who had come to make that request leave with his life.

They made for the gate of the shepherd Custennin's court. She heard them coming. She ran joyfully to meet them. Cai snatched a log from the wood-pile, and she came to meet them to try and embrace them. Cai placed a stake between her hands. She squeezed the stake until it was a twisted branch.

'Woman,' said Cai, 'had you squeezed *me* like that, it would be useless for any one else ever to make love to me. That was an evil love.'

They came into the house and were waited upon. After a while, when everyone was milling about, the woman opened a coffer at the far end of the hearth, and out of it came a lad with curly yellow hair.

Gwrhyr said, 'It's a shame to hide such a lad as this. I know that it's not his own wrong that is being avenged on him.'

The woman said, 'This one is all that is left of twenty-three sons of mine that Ysbaddaden Bencawr has killed. I have no more hope for this one than for the others.'

Cai said, 'Let him be my companion, and neither of us will be killed unless we both are.' They eat.

The woman said, 'On what business have you come here?'

'We have come to seek Olwen for this boy.'

Then the woman said, 'For God's sake, since no one from the fort has seen you yet, turn back.'

'God knows, we won't turn back until we have seen the maiden,' said Cai. 'Will she come to a place where we can see her?'

'She comes here every Saturday to wash her hair, and in the bowl in which she washes, she leaves all her rings. Neither she nor her messenger ever comes for them.'

'Will she come here if she is sent for?'

'God knows I won't destroy my friend. I won't deceive one who trusts me. But if you give your word that you will do her no harm, I will send for her.'

'We do so.'

She was sent for. And she comes—

with a robe of flame-red silk about her,
and a torque of red gold about the maiden's neck,
with precious pearls and red jewels.
Yellower was her hair than the flowers of the broom.
Whiter was her flesh than the foam of the wave.
Whiter were her palms and her fingers
than moist cotton grass amidst the fine gravel of a bubbling spring.
Neither the eye of a mewed hawk,
nor the eye of a thrice-mewed falcon—
no eye was fairer than hers.
Whiter were her breasts than the breast of a white swan.
Redder were her cheeks than the reddest foxglove.
Whoever saw her would be filled with love for her.
Four white clovers would spring up behind her wherever she went.
And for that reason she was called Olwen.*

She came into the house and sat down between Culhwch and the high seat. And as he saw her he recognized her.

Culhwch said to her, 'Maiden, it is you I have loved. And will you come with me?'

'In case you and I are accused of being sinful, I cannot do that at all. My father has asked me to give my word that I will not leave without consulting him, for he shall only live until I take a husband.* There is, however, advice I can give you, if you will take it. Go to my father to ask for my hand, and however much he asks of you, promise to get it, and you will get me too. But if he has cause to doubt at all, you will not get me, and you will be lucky to escape with your life.'

'I promise all that, and I will get it.'

She went to her chamber. They all got up to go after her to the fort, and killed the nine gatekeepers who were at the nine gates without a single man crying out, and nine mastiffs without a single one squealing. And they proceeded to the hall.

They said, 'Greetings, Ysbaddaden Bencawr, from God and from man.'

'You, where are you going?'

'We have come to seek Olwen your daughter for Culhwch son of Cilydd.'

'Where are my good-for-nothing servants and my scoundrels?' he said. 'Raise the forks under my eyelids so that I may see my prospective son-in-law.' They did that.

'Come here tomorrow. I'll give you some sort of an answer.'

They got up, and Ysbaddaden Bencawr snatched one of the three poisoned stone spears* beside him and hurled it after them. And Bedwyr caught it and hurled it back, and pierced Ysbaddaden Bencawr right through his kneecap.

He said, 'Cursed, savage son-in-law, I shall be all the worse when I walk down the slope. Like the sting of a gadfly the poison iron has hurt me. Cursed be the smith who forged it and the anvil on which it was forged, it is so painful.'

They spent that night in the house of Custennin. And the second day, splendidly, and with fine combs set in their hair, they came to the fort and into the hall.

They said, 'Ysbaddaden Bencawr, give us your daughter in exchange for her dowry and her maiden-fee to you and her two

kinswomen. And unless you give her, you shall meet your death because of her.'

'She and her four great-grandmothers and her four great-grandfathers are still alive—I must consult with them.'*

'Do that,' they said. 'We'll go to eat.'

As they got up, he took the second stone spear that was beside him and hurled it after them. And Menw son of Teirgwaedd caught it and hurled it back and pierced him in the middle of his chest, so that it came out in the small of his back.

'Cursed, savage son-in-law, like the bite of a horse-leech the hard iron has hurt me. Cursed be the furnace in which it was heated, and the smith who forged it, it is so painful. When I go uphill I shall have a tight chest, and belly-ache, and throw up often.' They went to their food.

And the third day they came to the court. They said, 'Ysbaddaden Bencawr, do not aim at us again. Do not bring harm and hurt and death upon yourself.'

'Where are my servants? Raise the forks—my eyelids have fallen down over my eyeballs—so that I may take a look at my prospective son-in-law.'

They got up, and as they got up he took the third poisoned stone spear and hurled it after them. And Culhwch caught it and hurled it back as he had longed to do, and pierced him in his eyeball so that it came out through the nape of his neck.

'Cursed, savage son-in-law, as long as I live my eyesight shall be the worse. When I walk against the wind, my eyes will water; I shall have a headache and giddiness with each new moon. Cursed be the furnace in which it was heated. Like the bite of a mad dog the poisoned iron has pierced me.' They went to their food.

The following day they came to the court.

They said, 'Do not aim at us again. Do not bring harm and hurt and martyrdom upon yourself, and more than that if you wish. Give us your daughter.'

'Where is the one who is seeking my daughter?'

'I am the one who is seeking her, Culhwch son of Cilydd.'

'Come here where I can see you.' A chair was placed under him, face to face with him.

*

Ysbaddaden Bencawr said, 'Are you the one who seeks my daughter?'

'I am,' said Culhwch.

'I want your word that you will not be less than honest with me.'

'You have it.'

'When I get what I ask from you, then you shall get my daughter.'

'Name what you want.'

'I will. Do you see the large thicket over there?'

'I do.'

'I want it uprooted from the earth and burned along the ground so that the cinders and ashes fertilize it; and I want it ploughed and sown so that it's ripe in the morning by the time the dew disappears, so that it can be made into food and drink for the wedding guests of my daughter and yourself. And all that I want done in one day.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy*.'*

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* There is no ploughman to till that land or to prepare it apart from Amaethon son of Dôn. He will not come with you willingly, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy*.'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Gofannon son of Dôn* to come to the edge of the land to set the plough. He will not undertake work willingly save for a rightful king, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy*.'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* The two oxen of Gwlwlydd Winau, yoked together, to plough well the rough ground over there. He will not give them willingly, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy*.'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* I want the Melyn Gwanwyn and the Ych Brych* yoked together.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy*.'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Two horned oxen, one from the far side of Mynydd Bannog and the other from this side, and brought together under the one plough. They are Nyniaw and Peibiaw,* whom God transformed into oxen for their sins.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy*.'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Do you see the tilled red soil over there?'

'I do.'

'When I first met the mother of that maiden, nine hestors* of flax seed were sown in it; neither black nor white has come out of it yet, and I still have that measure. I want to have that flax seed sown in the newly ploughed land over there, so that it may be a white veil on my daughter's head at your wedding feast.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Honey that will be nine times sweeter than the honey of the first swarm, without drones and without bees, to make bragget for the feast.'*

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* The cup of Llwyr son of Llwyrion,* which holds the best drink; for it is the only vessel in the world able to hold that strong drink. You will not get it from him willingly, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* The hamper of Gwyddnau Garan Hir.* If the whole world were to gather around it, three nines at a time, everyone would find the food that he wanted in it, just to his liking. I want to eat from that the night my daughter sleeps with you. He will not give it willingly to any one, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* The horn of Gwlgawd Gododdin* to pour for us that night. He will not give it willingly, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* The harp of Teirtu to entertain me that night. When a man so desires, it will play itself; when he wants it to be silent, it is. He will not give it willingly, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* I want the birds of Rhiannon,* they that wake the dead and lull the living to sleep, to entertain me that night.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* The cauldron of Diwrnach Wyddel,* the steward of Odgar son of Aedd, king of Ireland, to boil food for your wedding guests.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* I must wash my head and shave my beard. I want the tusk of Ysgithrwyn Pen Baedd* to shave with. It will be no use to me unless it is pulled from his head while he's alive.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* There is no one in the world who can pull it from his head except Odgar son of Aedd, king of Ireland.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* I will not entrust the keeping of the tusk to anyone except Caw of Prydyn.* The sixty cantrefs of Prydyn are under him. He will not leave his kingdom willingly, nor can he be forced.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* I must dress my beard to be shaved. It will never straighten out until you get the blood of the Very Black Witch, daughter of the Very White Witch, from Pennant Gofid* in the uplands of hell.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* The blood will be useless unless it is obtained while warm. There is no vessel in the world that can keep the liquid in it warm except the bottles of Gwyddolwyn Gorr,* which keep their heat from when liquid is placed in them in the east until the west is reached. He will not give them willingly, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Some will want milk. There's no way of getting milk for everyone until you get the bottles of Rhynnon Ryn Barfog.* No liquid ever turns sour in them. He will not give them willingly to anyone, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* There is no comb and shears in the world which can dress my beard, because of its stiffness, except the comb and shears that lie between

the ears of Twrch Trwyth son of Taredd Wledig.* He will not give them willingly, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* You cannot hunt Twrch Trwyth until you get Drudwyn, the whelp of Graid son of Eri.'*

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* There is no leash in the world that can hold him, except the leash of Cors Cant Ewin.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* There is no collar in the world that can hold the leash, except the collar of Canhastyr Can Llaw.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* The chain of Cilydd Canhastyr* to hold the collar along with the leash.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* There is no huntsman in the world who can hunt with that dog, except Mabon son of Modron,* who was taken when three nights old from his mother. No one knows where he is, nor what state he's in, whether dead or alive.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you won't get.* Gwyn Myngddwn, the steed of Gweddw* (he's as swift as a wave), under Mabon to hunt Twrch Trwyth. He will not give it willingly, nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Mabon will never be found—no one knows where he is—until you first find Eidoel son of Aer,* his kinsman, for he'll be tireless in his search for him. He's his first cousin.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Garselyd Wyddel, he is the chief huntsman of Ireland.* Twrch Trwyth will never be hunted without him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* A leash

from the beard of Dillus Farfog, for nothing will hold those two whelps* except that. And it will be of no use unless it's taken from his beard while he's alive, and plucked with wooden tweezers. He will not allow anyone to do that to him while he's alive. But it will be useless if he's dead, because it will be brittle.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* There is no huntsman in the world who can hold those two whelps, except Cynedyr Wyllt son of Hetwn Glafyriog.* He is nine times wilder than the wildest wild beast on the mountain. You will never get him, nor will you get my daughter.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Twrch Trwyth will not be hunted until Gwyn son of Nudd is found—God has put the spirit of the demons of Annwfn* in him, lest the world be destroyed. He will not be spared from there.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* No steed will be of any use to Gwyn in hunting Twrch Trwyth, except Du, the steed of Moro Oerfeddog.'*

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Until Gwilenhin, king of France,* comes, Twrch Trwyth will never be hunted without him. It is improper for him to leave his kingdom, and he will never come here.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Twrch Trwyth will never be hunted without getting the son of Alun Dyfed.* He is a good unleasher.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Twrch Trwyth will never be hunted until you get Aned and Aethlem.* They are as swift as a gust of wind; they have never been unleashed on a beast they did not kill.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Arthur and his huntsmen to hunt Twrch Trwyth. He is a powerful man and he will not accompany you, nor can you force him. This is the reason why—he is under my control.'*

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Twrch Trwyth will never be hunted until you get—

Bwlch and Cyfwlch and Syfwlch,
sons of Cilydd Cyfwlch,
grandsons of Cleddyf Difwlch.
Three gleaming glitterers their three shields;
Three stabbing strokes their three spears;
Three keen carvers their three swords;
Glas, Glesig, Gleisiad their three hounds;
Call, Cuall, Cafall their three steeds;
Hwyr Ddyddwg and Drwg Ddyddwg and Llwyr Ddyddwg
their three wives;
Och and Garym and Diasbad their three witches;
Lluched and Neued and Eisiwed their three daughters;
Drwg and Gwaeth and Gwaethaf Oll their three maidservants.

These three men blow their horns, and all the others come to shriek until no one could care whether the sky fell on the earth.'*

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* The sword of Wrnach Gawr.* He can only be killed with that. He will never give it to anyone, either for money or as a gift; nor can you force him.'

'*It is easy for me to get that, though* you *may think it's not easy.*'

'*Though you may get that, there is something you will not get.* Sleeplessness with no rest at night will be yours seeking those things, and you will not get them, nor shall you get my daughter.'

'I will get horses, and horsemen. And Arthur, my lord and kinsman, will get me all those things. And I will get your daughter, and you shall lose your life.'

'Go on your way now. You shall not be responsible for either food or clothing for my daughter. Seek those things. And when you get those things, you shall get my daughter.'

They travelled that day until evening, until they saw a stone-and-mortar fort, the largest fort in the world. Behold, they saw coming from the fort a black-haired man, bigger than three men of this world.

They said to him, 'Where do you come from, sir?'

'From the fort you can see over there.'

'Whose fort is it?'

'You stupid men. There is no one in the world who does not know who owns this fort. It belongs to Wrnach Gawr.'

'What customs are there regarding guests and travellers who arrive at this fort?'

'Ah lord, may God protect you. No guest has ever left here alive. No one is allowed inside except he who brings his craft.'

They made for the gate. Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd said, 'Is there a gatekeeper?'

'Yes. And as for you, may you lose your head for asking.'

'Open the gate.'*

'I will not.'

'Why won't you open it?'

'Knife has gone into food and drink into horns, and a thronging in the hall of Wrnach. Except for a craftsman who brings his craft, it will not be opened again tonight.'

Cai said, 'Gatekeeper, I have a craft.'

'What craft do you have?'

'I am the best furbisher of swords in the world.'

'I shall go and tell that to Wrnach Gawr, and bring you an answer.'

The gatekeeper came inside. Wrnach Gawr said, 'Do you have news from the gate?'

'I do. There's a band of men at the entrance to the gate and they want to come in.'

'Did you ask if they had a craft?'

'I did. And one of them said he could furbish swords.'

'I need him. For some time I have been looking for someone who could polish my sword, but I have found no one. Let that man in, since he has a craft.'

The gatekeeper came and opened the gate, and Cai came in alone. And he greeted Wrnach Gawr. A chair was placed under him.

Wrnach said, 'Well, sir, is it true what is said about you, that you are able to furbish swords?'

'I can do that.' The sword was brought to him. Cai put a striped whetstone under his arm.

'Which would you prefer, white-bladed or dark-blue-bladed?'*

'Do whatever would please *you*, as if it were yours.' Cai cleaned one half of the blade for him and placed it in his hand.

'Does that please you?'

'It would please me more than anything in my land if it were all like this. It's a shame that a man as good as you is without a companion.'

'But sir, I *do* have a companion, although he doesn't practise this craft.'

'Who is that?'

'Let the gatekeeper go outside, and I'll describe the signs to him. The head of his spear comes away from its shaft, it draws blood from the wind and lands on the shaft again.'

The gate was opened and Bedwyr entered. Cai said, 'Bedwyr is skilful, although he doesn't practise this craft.'

And there was great arguing among those men outside because Cai and Bedwyr had entered. And a young lad came inside with them—the only son of Custennin the shepherd. He and his companions, who stuck close to him, crossed the three baileys, as though it were nothing to them, until they were inside the fort. His companions said of Custennin's son, 'He is the best of men.' From then on he was called Gorau son of Custennin.* They dispersed to their lodgings so that they could kill those who lodged them without the giant knowing. The burnishing of the sword was finished, and Cai placed it in the hand of Wrnach Gawr, as if to see whether the work pleased him.

The giant said, 'The work is good, and I am pleased.'

Cai said, 'Your sheath has damaged your sword. Give it to me to remove the wooden side-pieces, and let me make new ones for it.' And he takes the sheath from him, and the sword in the other hand. He stands above the giant as if to put the sword in its sheath. He thrusts it into the giant's head, and takes off his head with one blow. They destroy the fort and take away what treasure they want. A year from that very day they came* to the court of Arthur, and with them the sword of Wrnach Gawr.

They told Arthur what had happened to them.

Arthur said, 'Which of those wonders is it best to seek first?'

'It is best', they said, 'to seek Mabon son of Modron, but he cannot be found until we first find Eidoel son of Aer, his kinsman.'

Arthur arose, and the warriors of the Island of Britain with him, to seek Eidoel, and they came to Gliwi's outer wall where Eidoel was imprisoned. Gliwi* stood on top of the fort and said, 'Arthur, what do you want from me, since you will not leave me alone on this rock? No good comes to me here and no pleasure; I have neither wheat nor oats, without you too seeking to do me harm.'

Arthur said, 'I have not come here to harm you but to seek the prisoner you have.'

'I shall give you the prisoner, although I had not intended to give him up to anyone. And besides that, you shall have my help and support.'

The men said to Arthur, 'Lord, go home. You cannot go with your host to seek such trivial things as these.'

Arthur said, 'Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd, it is right for you to go on this quest. You know all languages, and can speak the same language as some of the birds and the beasts. Eidoel, it is right for you to go and seek him with my men, he is your first cousin. Cai and Bedwyr, I have hope that you accomplish the quest you are undertaking. Go on this quest on my behalf.'

They travelled until they came to the Blackbird of Cilgwri.*

Gwrhyr asked her, 'For God's sake, do you know anything of Mabon son of Modron, who was taken when three nights old from between his mother and the wall?'

The Blackbird said, 'When I first came here, there was a smith's anvil here, and I was a young bird. No work has been done on it except by my beak every evening. Today there's not so much of it as a nut that is not worn away. God's vengeance on me if I have heard anything about the man you are asking after. However, what is right and proper for me to do for Arthur's messengers, I will do. There is a species of animal that God shaped before me. I will go there as your guide.'

They came to where the Stag of Rhedynfre* was.

'Stag of Rhedynfre, we have come to you here—Arthur's messengers—for we know of no animal older than you. Tell us, do you know anything of Mabon son of Modron, who was taken when three nights old from his mother?'

The Stag said, 'When I first came here, there was only one antler on either side of my head, and there were no trees here except

a single oak sapling, and that grew into an oak with a hundred branches. And the oak fell after that, and today nothing remains of it but a red stump. From that day to this I have been here. I have heard nothing about the one you are asking after. However, since you are Arthur's messengers, I shall be your guide to where there is an animal God shaped before me.'

They came to where the Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd* was.

'Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd, here are Arthur's messengers. Do you know anything of Mabon son of Modron, who was taken when three nights old from his mother?'

'If I knew anything, I would say. When I first came here the large valley that you see was a wooded glen, and a race of men came there, and it was destroyed. And the second wood grew in it, and this wood is the third. And as for me, the roots of my wings are mere stumps. From that day to this I have heard nothing about the man you are asking after. However, I shall be a guide to Arthur's messengers until you come to the oldest animal in this world, and the one who has wandered most—the Eagle of Gwernabwy.'*

Gwrhyr said, 'Eagle of Gwernabwy, we have come to you—Arthur's messengers—to ask if you know anything of Mabon son of Modron who was taken when three nights old from his mother?'

The Eagle said, 'I came here a long time ago, and when I first came here I had a rock, and from its top I would peck at the stars every evening. Now it's not a hand-breadth in height. From that day to this I have been here, and I have heard nothing about the man you're asking after. But once I went to seek my food as far as Llyn Lliw,* and when I got there I sunk my claws into a salmon, thinking that he would be food for me for a long time, and he pulled me down into the depths, so that I barely got away from him. What I did, I and all my kinsmen, was to set upon him and try to destroy him. He sent messengers to make peace with me, and he himself came to me, to have fifty tridents taken out of his back. Unless he knows something about what you are seeking, I do not know anyone who might. However, I shall be your guide to where he is.'

They came to where he was.

The Eagle said, 'Salmon of Llyn Lliw, I have come to you with Arthur's messengers to ask if you know anything of Mabon son of Modron, who was taken when three nights old from his mother?'

'As much as I know, I will tell. With every flood tide I travel up

the river until I come to the bend in the wall of Caerloyw; never before in my life have I found as much wickedness as I found there. And so that you will believe me, let one of you come here on my two shoulders.'

The ones who went on the Salmon's shoulders were Cai and Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd. And they travelled until they came to the other side of the wall from the prisoner, and they could hear lamenting and moaning on the other side of the wall from them.

Gwrhyr said, 'Who is lamenting in this house of stone?'

'Alas sir, he who is here has reason to lament. It is Mabon son of Modron who is imprisoned here, and no one has been so painfully incarcerated in a prison as I, neither the prison of Lludd Llaw Eraint nor the prison of Graid son of Eri.'*

'Do you have any hope of being released for gold or silver or worldly wealth, or through battle and fighting?'

'What you get of me, will be got by fighting.'

They returned from there and came to where Arthur was. They reported where Mabon son of Modron was in prison. Arthur summoned the warriors of this Island and went to Caerloyw where Mabon was in prison. Cai and Bedwyr went on the shoulders of the fish. While Arthur's warriors were attacking the fort, Cai tore through the wall and took the prisoner on his back, and fought the men as before. Arthur came home and Mabon with him, a free man.

Arthur said, 'Which of those wonders is it now best to seek first?'

'It is best to seek the two whelps of the bitch Rhymhi.'

'Does anyone know', said Arthur, 'where she is?'

'She is', said one, 'at Aber Daugleddyf.'*

Arthur came to the house of Tringad* in Aber Cleddyf and asked him, 'Have you heard about her here? In what form is she?'

'In the form of a she-wolf,' he said, 'and she goes around with her two whelps. She has killed my livestock many times, and she is down below in Aber Cleddyf in a cave.'

What Arthur did was to set off by sea in Prydwen,* his ship, and others by land, to hunt the bitch, and in this way they surrounded her and her two whelps. And God changed them back into their own shape for Arthur.* Arthur's host dispersed, one by one, two by two.

And one day, as Gwythyr son of Greidol was travelling over a mountain, he could hear weeping and woeful wailing, and it was terrible to hear. He rushed forward in that direction, and as he came there he unsheathed his sword and cut off the anthill at ground level, and so saved them from the fire.

And they said to him, 'Take with you God's blessing and ours, and that which no man can recover, we will come and recover it for you.'

It was they, after that, who brought the nine hestors of flax seed that Ysbaddaden Bencawr had demanded of Culhwch, in full measure, with none missing except for a single flax seed, but the lame ant brought that before nightfall.

As Cai and Bedwyr were sitting on top of Pumlumon on Garn Gwylathr,* in the strongest wind in the world, they looked around them and they could see a lot of smoke towards the south, far away from them, unmoved by the wind.

And then Cai said, 'By the hand of my friend, look over there—the fire of a warrior.'

They hastened towards the smoke and approached the place, watching from afar, as Dillus Farfog roasted a wild boar. He, without doubt, was the greatest warrior who had ever fled from Arthur.

Then Bedwyr said to Cai, 'Do you know him?'

'I do,' said Cai. 'That's Dillus Farfog. There is no leash in the world that can hold Drudwyn, the whelp of Graid son of Eri, except a leash made from the beard of the man you see over there.* And it won't be of any use either unless it's plucked with wooden tweezers from his beard while he's still alive, for it will be brittle if he's dead.'

'What shall we do about it?' said Bedwyr.

'We will leave him', said Cai, 'to eat his fill of the meat, and after that he will fall asleep.'

While he was doing just that they made wooden tweezers. When Cai knew for sure that he was asleep he dug a pit under his feet, the biggest in the world, and he struck him an almighty blow, and pressed him down in the pit until they had plucked out his beard completely with the wooden tweezers. And after that they killed him outright. And from there both went to Celli Wig in Cornwall, and with them a leash from the beard of Dillus Farfog, and Cai handed it to Arthur. And then Arthur sang this *englyn*:

A leash was made by Cai
From the beard of Dillus son of Efrai.
Were he alive, he would kill you.*

And because of that Cai sulked, so that the warriors of this island could hardly make peace between Cai and Arthur. And yet neither Arthur's misfortune nor the killing of his men could induce Cai to have anything to do with him in his hour of need from then on.

And then Arthur said, 'Which of those wonders is it best to seek now?'

'It is best to seek Drudwyn the whelp of Graid son of Eri.'

A little while before that Creiddylad daughter of Lludd Llaw Eraint* went off with Gwythyr son of Greidol, but before he could sleep with her Gwyn son of Nudd came and took her by force. Gwythyr son of Greidol gathered a host, and came to fight against Gwyn son of Nudd, and Gwyn triumphed, and captured Graid son of Eri, and Glinneu son of Taran,* and Gwrgwst Ledlwm and Dyfnarth his son. And he captured Pen son of Nethog, and Nwython,* and Cyledyr Wyllt* his son, and he killed Nwython and cut out his heart, and forced Cyledyr to eat his father's heart, and because of that Cyledyr went mad. Arthur heard of this and came to the North, and summoned Gwyn son of Nudd to him, and released his noblemen from his prison, and made peace between Gwyn son of Nudd and Gwythyr son of Greidol. This is the agreement that was made: the maiden was to be left in her father's house, untouched by either party, and there was to be battle between Gwyn and Gwythyr every May day* forever from that day forth until Judgement Day, and the one that triumphed on Judgement Day would take the maiden.

And after reconciling those noblemen in that way, Arthur obtained Myngddwn steed of Gweddw, and the leash of Cors Cant Ewin.

After that Arthur went to Brittany, and Mabon son of Mellt* with him, and Gware Gwallt Euryn, to seek the two dogs of Glythfyr Ledewig.* After he had got them Arthur went to the west of Ireland to seek Gwrgi Seferi,* and Odgar son of Aedd, king of Ireland, with him. And then Arthur went to the North,* and caught Cyledyr Wyllt, and he went after Ysgithrwyn Pen Baedd. And Mabon son of Mellt went holding the two dogs of Glythfyr Ledewig, and Drudwyn, the

whelp of Graid son of Eri. And Arthur himself went on the chase, holding Cafall, Arthur's dog. And Caw of Prydyn mounted Llamrei, Arthur's mare,* and held the boar at bay. And then Caw of Prydyn armed himself with a small axe, and with fierce vigour set upon the boar, and split his head in two. And Caw took the tusk. It was not the dogs that Ysbaddaden had demanded of Culhwch that killed the boar but Cafall, Arthur's own dog.

And after killing Ysgithrwyn Pen Baedd, Arthur and his retinue went to Celli Wig in Cornwall. And from there he sent Menw son of Teirgwaedd to see whether the treasures were between the ears of Twrch Trwyth, because it would be pointless to go to fight with him unless he had the treasures. It was certain, however, that he was there. He had destroyed one-third of Ireland. Menw went to look for them. He saw them at Esgair Oerfel in Ireland. And Menw turned himself into a bird, and settled above his lair, and tried to snatch one of the treasures from him. But indeed he got nothing except one of his bristles. The boar got up in full fury, and shook himself so that some of the poison caught him. And from then on Menw was never without affliction.

After that Arthur sent a messenger to Odgar son of Aedd, king of Ireland, to ask for the cauldron of Diwrnach Wyddel, one of his stewards. Odgar asked him to hand it over.

Diwrnach said, 'God knows, even if he were the better for getting just one look at it, he would not even get that.' And Arthur's messenger came with a 'no' from Ireland.

Arthur set off with a small force and sailed in his ship Prydwen, and came to Ireland, and they made for the house of Diwrnach Wyddel. Odgar's retinue took note of their size, and when they had eaten and drunk their fill, Arthur asked for the cauldron. Diwrnach said that if he were to give it to anyone, he would have given it at the request of Odgar king of Ireland. Having been told 'no', Bedwyr got up and took hold of the cauldron and put it on the back of Hygwydd, Arthur's servant (he was a brother by the same mother to Cacamwri, Arthur's servant). His duty was always to carry Arthur's cauldron and to light a fire under it. Llenlleog Wyddel grabbed Caledfwlch and swung it round, and killed Diwrnach Wyddel and all his retinue. The hosts of Ireland came to fight them. And when all the hosts had

fled, Arthur and his men boarded the ship before their very eyes, and the cauldron with them, full of Irish treasure. And they landed at the house of Llwydeu son of Cilcoed at Porth Cerddin in Dyfed. And Mesur y Pair is there.*

And then Arthur gathered together every warrior in the Three Islands of Britain and her Three Adjacent Islands, and in France, and Brittany, and Normandy, and Gwlad yr Haf,* and every choice hound and celebrated steed. And he went with all those hosts to Ireland, and there was great fear and trembling because of him in Ireland. And when Arthur had landed, the saints of Ireland came to him to ask for protection. And he gave them protection, and they gave him their blessing. The men of Ireland came to Arthur and gave him a tribute of food.* Arthur came to Esgair Oerfel in Ireland, where Twrch Trwyth was, with his seven little pigs.* Hounds were let loose on him from all directions. That day until evening the Irish fought against him. In spite of that, he laid waste a fifth of Ireland.* And the following day Arthur's retinue fought against Twrch Trwyth; he did them only harm, he did them no good. The third day Arthur himself fought against him, for nine nights and nine days. He only killed a single piglet. The men asked Arthur what was the history of that swine.

He said, 'He was a king, and for his sins God changed him into a swine.'

Arthur sent Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd to try and talk to Twrch Trwyth. Gwrhyr went in the shape of a bird, and settled above the lair of the boar and his seven little pigs.

And Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd asked him, 'For the sake of Him who shaped you in this image, if you can speak, I'm asking one of you to come and talk to Arthur.'

Grugyn Gwrych Eraint* answered; all his bristles were like wings of silver, and one could see the path he took through woods and over fields by the way his bristles glittered. This is the answer Grugyn gave, 'By Him who shaped us in this image, we will not do and we will not say anything to help Arthur. God has done us enough harm by shaping us in this image, without you too coming to fight against us.'

'I tell you that Arthur will fight for the comb and the razor and the shears that are between the ears of Twrch Trwyth.'

Grugyn said, 'Until his life is taken first, those treasures will not be taken. And tomorrow morning we will set off from here, and we will go to Arthur's land, and there we will wreak the greatest havoc possible.'

They set off over the sea towards Wales, and Arthur and his men and his steeds and his hounds went in Prydwen, and they caught a glimpse of Twrch Trwyth and his pigs briefly. Twrch Trwyth landed in Porth Clais in Dyfed. Arthur went as far as Mynyw that night.* The next day Arthur was told that Twrch Trwyth had passed by, and he caught up with him killing the cattle of Cynwas Cwryfagyl after he had killed all the men and beasts there were in Daugleddyf before Arthur arrived. From the moment Arthur arrived, Twrch Trwyth set out from there as far as Preseli. Arthur and the forces of the world came there. Arthur sent his men to the hunt, holding Eli and Trachymyr and Drudwyn, the whelp of Graid son of Eri, while Gwarthegydd son of Caw was on another flank, holding the two dogs of Glythfyr Ledewig, and Bedwyr holding Cafall, Arthur's dog. And Arthur arranged all the warriors on the two banks of the Nyfer. The three sons of Cleddyf Difwlch arrived, men who had received great praise killing Ysgithrwyn Pen Baedd. And then Twrch Trwyth set off from Glyn Nyfer, and came to Cwm Cerwyn,* and there he stood at bay. And then he killed four of Arthur's champions, Gwarthegydd son of Caw, and Tarog Allt Clwyd,* and Rheiddwn son of Beli Adfer, and Isgofan Hael. And after killing those men he stood at bay a second time in the same place, and killed Gwydre son of Arthur, and Garselyd Wyddel, and Glew son of Ysgod, and Isgawyn son of Panon. And then he himself was wounded.

And the next day, early in the morning, some of the men caught up with Twrch Trwyth and his pigs. And Twrch Trwyth killed Huandaw, and Gogigwr, and Penpingion, the three servants of Glewlwyd Gafaelfawr, so that God knows he had no servant left to him in the world except Llaesgymyn himself, a man who was no use to anyone. He also killed many men of the country, and Gwlyddyn Saer, Arthur's chief craftsman. And then Arthur caught up with him in Peuliniog,* and then Twrch Trwyth killed Madog son of Teithion, and Gwyn son of Tringad son of Neued, and Eiriawn Penlloran. And from there he went to Aber Tywi: there he stood at bay, and he killed Cynlas son of Cynan, and Gwilenhin, king of France. From there he went to Glyn Ystun,* and then the men and hounds lost him.

Arthur summoned Gwyn son of Nudd to him, and asked him if he knew anything about Twrch Trwyth. He said that he did not. Then all the huntsmen went to hunt the pigs, as far as Dyffryn Llychwr. And Grugyn Gwallt Eraint and Llwydog Gofyniad rushed at them, and they killed the huntsmen so that not one of them escaped alive apart from one man. Arthur brought his men to where Grugyn and Llwydog were, and then let loose on them all the hounds that had been named. And because of the shouting and the barking that resulted, Twrch Trwyth came and defended his pigs. He had not set eyes on them from the time they had come across the Irish Sea until now. Then Twrch Trwyth was attacked by men and dogs, and he took flight as far as Mynydd Amanw, and then a piglet from among his pigs was killed. They engaged him in mortal combat, and then Twrch Llawin was killed. And then another of his pigs was killed—Gwys was his name. And from there he went to Dyffryn Amanw, and there Banw and Benwig were killed.* Not one of his pigs lived to go with him from there except Grugyn Gwallt Eraint and Llwydog Gofyniad.

From there they went to Llwch Ewin, where Arthur caught up with Twrch Trwyth. Then he stood at bay. And then he killed Echel Forddwyd Twll, and Arwyli son of Gwyddog Gwyr, and many men and hounds besides. From there they went to Llwch Tawy. Grugyn Gwrych Eraint then separated from them, and made for Din Tywi. And from there he went to Ceredigion, followed by Eli and Trachmyr and a crowd besides. And he went as far as Garth Grugyn, and it was there Grugyn was killed in their midst, but not before he killed Rhyddfyw Rhys and many others. And then Llwydog went to Ystrad Yw,* and it was there the men of Brittany encountered him, and then he killed Hir Peisog* the king of Brittany, and Llygadrudd Emys and Gwrfoddw, Arthur's uncles, his mother's brothers. And then Llwydog himself was killed.

Twrch Trwyth then passed between Tawy and Ewias. Arthur summoned Cornwall and Devon to meet him at Aber Hafren,* and Arthur said to the men of this Island, 'Twrch Trwyth has killed many of my men. By the might of men, he will not go to Cornwall while I am alive. I shall pursue him no more but will engage him in mortal combat. You do what you will.'

This is what happened on his advice: they sent an army of horsemen, and the hounds of the Island with them, as far as Ewias,

and they returned from there to the Hafren, and ambushed him with every experienced soldier in this Island, and drove him by sheer force into the Hafren. And Mabon son of Modron went with him on Gwyn Myngddwn, Gweddw's steed, into the Hafren, and Gorau son of Custennin and Menw son of Teirgwaedd, between Llyn Lliwan and Aber Gwy.* And Arthur fell upon Twrch Trwyth, together with the warriors of Prydain. Osla Gyllellfawr approached, and Manawydan son of Llŷr, and Cacamwri, Arthur's servant, and Gwyngelli, and closed in on him. And they grabbed him first by his feet, and soused him in the Hafren until it flooded over him. Mabon son of Modron spurred his horse on the one side and grabbed the razor from him, and on the other side Cyledyr Wyllt rushed into the Hafren on another horse and snatched the shears from him. Before they could remove the comb he found his feet, and firm ground, and from the moment he found dry land neither hound nor man nor steed could keep up with him until he reached Cornwall. Whatever trouble was had getting those treasures from him, worse was had trying to save the two men from drowning. As Cacamwri was pulled up, two millstones pulled him back into the depths. As he was running after the boar, Osla Gyllellfawr's knife fell from its sheath and he lost it, and after that his sheath was full of water; as he was pulled up, it pulled him back into the depths.

From there Arthur went with his men until he caught up with Twrch Trwyth in Cornwall. Whatever trouble he had caused them before was mere play compared to what they then suffered in seeking the comb. But after one difficulty and another, the comb was taken from him. And then he was chased out of Cornwall and driven straight into the sea. From then on it was not known where he and Aned and Aethlem went. From there Arthur went to Celli Wig in Cornwall, to bathe himself and throw off his weariness.

Arthur said, 'Are there any of the wonders we have still not obtained?'

One of the men said, 'Yes, the blood of the Very Black Witch, daughter of the Very White Witch from Pennant Gofid in the uplands of hell.'

Arthur set out for the North, and came to where the hag's cave was. And Gwyn son of Nudd and Gwythyr son of Greidol

advised that Cacamwri and Hygwydd his brother should be sent to fight the hag. As they came into the cave the hag attacked them, and grabbed Hygwydd by his hair and threw him to the ground beneath her. Cacamwri grabbed her by the hair and pulled her off Hygwydd to the ground, and she turned on Cacamwri and thrashed both of them and disarmed them, and sent them out shrieking and shouting. Arthur became angry at seeing his two servants almost killed, and tried to rush at the cave. And then Gwyn and Gwythyr said to him, 'It is not proper and we do not like to see you wrestling with a hag. Let Hir Amren and Hir Eiddil go into the cave.' And they went. But if the first two had difficulties, the fate of these two was far worse, so that God knows how any of the four could have left the place, had it not been for the way they were all put on Llamrei, Arthur's mare. And then Arthur rushed to the entrance of the cave, and from the entrance he aimed at the hag with Carnwennan, his knife, and struck her in the middle so she was like two vats. And Caw of Prydyn took the witch's blood and kept it with him.

And then Culhwch set out with Gorau son of Custennin, and those who wished harm to Ysbaddaden Bencawr, and took the wonders with them to his court. And Caw of Prydyn came to shave off Ysbaddaden's beard, flesh and skin to the bone, and both ears completely.

And Culhwch said, 'Have you been shaved, man?'

'I have,' he replied.

'And is your daughter now mine?'

'Yours,' he replied. 'And you need not thank me for that, but thank Arthur, the man who arranged it for you. If I'd had my way you never would have got her. And it is high time to take away my life.'

And then Gorau son of Custennin grabbed him by the hair and dragged him to the mound and cut off his head and stuck it on the bailey post. And he took possession of his fort and his territory.

And that night Culhwch slept with Olwen. And she was his only wife as long as he lived. And Arthur's men dispersed, each one to his country. And that is how Culhwch won Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Bencawr.