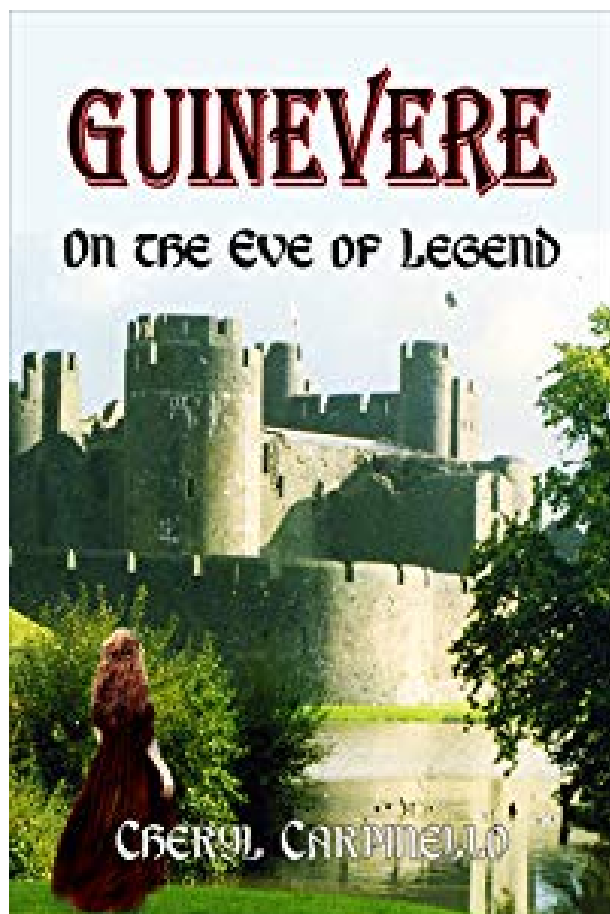


Guinevere: On the Eve of Legend



Goodreads Rating:	4.15
ISBN13:	9781432737047
Genre:	Mythology
Language	English
Author:	Cheryl Carpinello
Published:	March 30th 2009 by Outskirts Press
Pages:	122
ISBN10:	143273704X

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At twelve years old, Guinevere is a typical girl except that she is a princess and, unknown to her at this time, slated to marry King Arthur. Like any preteen, she enjoys having a good time, but also is unable to refrain from getting into trouble and rebelling against her father's authority. And, even though Guinevere lives in the Middle Ages, she still has to deal with going to school. This includes being chastised by for not doing her homework. However, being a princess does create problems for her because at thirteen she is expected to leave childhood behind and assume the position of the Lady of the Castle. While she is sure that she is not ready to grow up, several adventures help guide her to accept her future and even to look forward to it. Because of her preoccupation with growing up, Guinevere mistakenly shoots a wild boar with an arrow when she and seven-year-old Cedwyn are out hunting rabbits. The two scramble for their lives, and their reward is the discovery of a rabbit in one of their traps. This innocent rabbit creates problems when it gets loose in the kitchen. The rabbit's escape leads Guinevere on a race to redeem herself and puts her directly into the path of a charging knight on his steed, with disaster narrowly averted by Merlyn. One night, Guinevere's father holds a giant feast in honor of King Arthur. Guinevere and Cedwyn marvel at the different knights, enjoy the feast and hear the storytelling by the bard. Guinevere is introduced to King Arthur for the first time experiences the first stirrings of love. After the feast Guinevere is treated to a surprise encounter with Merlyn, Nimue, and a special unicorn. Merlyn doesn't miss his chance to relate the tale of the unicorn to Guinevere's future as a queen. Later at a meeting with her father and Merlyn, Guinevere discovers that she has been promised in marriage to King Arthur. Her response to that is an emphatic "No "; as she storms out of the room and literally trips over

Cedwyn. Guinevere informs Cedwyn that she is running away, and he comes with her. On their runaway, Cedwyn learns that Guinevere is to marry King Arthur, and his excitement further enrages Guinevere. King Arthur is his idol, and one who can help him become a knight. Not understanding Guinevere's reluctance and anger, Cedwyn helps her to see that she is just like the princesses in the stories who become queens so that they may take care of their people and friends, like him. Guinevere returns home to make amends with her father. Grudgingly, with many misgivings, she accepts her future. On Guinevere's thirteenth Birth Day, people from all over the kingdom travel to enjoy the festivities. The excitement of the day buries her doubts of her marriage. She is met with good wishes wherever she and Cedwyn go. They traipse through the tents and join in a rousing game of kickball before the evening feast begins. Merlyn's firework show ends with a magnificent display just for Guinevere highlighting her future. One year after Guinevere's thirteenth Birth Day finds her and Cedwyn in the forest again, but this time Guinevere is teaching Cedwyn to shoot a bow and arrow. A final shot by Cedwyn is filled with disaster as his arrow finds a stray boar, and the two are in the same predicament as they were a year ago. However, by this time, Guinevere has accepted her future and even fallen in love with Arthur. This historical novel of approximately 29,000 words is written at the mid-fourth grade reading level. The dual purpose of this novel is to acquaint young readers with Guinevere and to entice reluctant readers.