

There are many legends about King Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table, and the wizard Merlin. Of all the characters in these tales, many people find Merlin the most fascinating, being a man of mystery and magic. It's said that Merlin could talk to the animals in the forest and predict the future for kings. But unfortunately, he wasn't able to predict his own future with the Lady of the Lake!

According to a popular legend, as Merlin walked through the forest one day, he first met the Lady of the Lake. Some say he predicted he'd find her there that day, beside the forest lake that was her home, and that's why he went there. The Lady was believed to be a great sorceress herself, although not as great as Merlin. She was amazed by his powers and promised to love him if he would teach her his magic. The Lady of the Lake was quite beautiful, and Merlin fell under her spell, so he agreed.

Merlin began to teach the Lady of the Lake his most magical tricks. And for a while, she seemed happy. But she continually urged him to conjure up even greater magical feats. And she was constantly looking for some way to keep Merlin always at her side. She wanted to make sure that if he did come up with any new ideas, he'd have to share them with her!

One day, the Lady of the Lake asked Merlin to build her a magical castle. She wanted it to be so strong that no one and nothing could ever destroy it. And she requested Merlin to make her castle invisible. That might have seemed a tall order for some, but Merlin did his magic. He built her a fabulous castle by the lake and then used his wizard's powers to make the building invisible. Anyone traveling through the forest would see only the lake and not the Lady's beautiful, enchanted castle. Merlin even taught the Lady how she could make her castle appear or disappear to make sure that no one could get in or come out of it unless she wished!

The Lady of the Lake was very happy, for a while. Then she realized that Merlin still had the power to make her castle appear or disappear as well. That worried her. What if he left for good someday? She would no longer share all of the magic secrets he knew or would know in the future! So one day, as she and Merlin sat beneath a tree in the forest, she lulled him to sleep with a sweet song.

As Merlin slept, the Lady of the Lake walked around him nine times, chanting and weaving a magical spell. When he awoke, she led him to the castle. There she locked him in an enchanted tower, from which he was powerless to leave, but which she could visit or leave at will! She had used Merlin's own magic against him, and he never left her enchanted, imprisoning castle again.

At the museum today, we saw an ancient Egyptian mummy and watched a mummy-making video. You know, a mummy isn't like those scary things you see in horror movies; it's just a dead body that was treated so it wouldn't rot away!

The Egyptians were experts at wrapping their dead for the trip to the afterlife! That's what the people called the "place" they'd go after they died, where they believed they'd enjoy pretty much all the comforts of life. So, they figured it was important to keep their bodies preserved for future use!

Making a mummy was no easy job. It took about 70 days! Only special people were allowed to carry out the process. First, they cleaned the body. Then they removed most of the internal organs, including the brain. They pulled that out with a long hooked instrument inserted through the dead person's nose! The Egyptians didn't think the brain was important, so they threw it away. The lungs, stomach, and most other organs were removed through slits in the skin, then placed in special containers, called canopic jars, and buried with the mummy. Because the Egyptians believed the heart was the center of intelligence, only it was left inside the body.

Next, the body was stuffed and covered with salt to slowly suck out all the fluid. After 40 days, the shrunken body was rubbed with lotion to soften the skin. Then the body was wrapped in up to 20 layers of linen.

Goosey tree sap was spread on the linen to make the layers stick together. The workers placed a mask on the face that looked pretty much like the dead person. That was to help the person's spirit recognize him or her in the afterlife and reenter the body.

Then, one last layer of tree sap and cloth was added and it was a mummy. Finally, it was ready to be put into a stone coffin and placed in a burial chamber, along with clothing, food, furniture, toys, jewelry, and any other things it might need in the afterlife.

The mummy we saw was about 3,000 years old. I wonder if its heart is still in there?

Human hair may be curly or straight, and either a blonde-haired person, red, brown, black, white, or a mixture thereof. But everyone's hair is relatively the same in the way it grows.

Hair is a threadlike structure that grows from the skin. Below the scalp, at the bottom of each hair, is a tiny pit called a follicle. It leads down to the hair's root. Cells at the base of the root begin to move up. As they do, they harden and become a strand of hair.

The hair on your head grows in stages. Follicles actively produce hair for three to six years, then rest for about three months. There's an average of 100,000 hairs on the human head, and about 10% are resting at any given time. We lose about 70–100 hairs every day from our resting follicles!

Sometimes it seems your hair grows fast, but it normally grows less than an inch (13 mm) a month. Children's hair grows faster than adults' hair, and everyone's hair grows faster in summer than winter!

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for coming. When I first heard about the state's plan to build an oil storage facility and recycling plant near White River, I thought of the weekends my family spent there every summer when I was a kid. We'd camp out and fish, swim, and explore caves in the nearby woods. My grandfather taught me how to fish there. And he and I spent hours hiking in the woods, where I learned to identify local plants and animals.

The river and the land around it were both familiar and unique. I learned a lot there from my grandfather, and today, I'm a grandfather. I take my grandchildren there, but it's changed. There aren't as many fish, and some animals no longer inhabit the woods. According to Dr. Ima Expert, that's because "they find it difficult to adjust to constant noise from new highways and to avoid dangers from trash left by careless hikers." My grandkids and I usually spend at least one weekend each summer cleaning up after folks who recklessly leave plastic materials that harm animals.

Now, we face the danger of losing more animals from possible oil spills at the proposed facility! Our river and the animals need to be protected and preserved. The danger is real, and only we, the people, can stop it. If we allow our rich natural resources to be destroyed, our lives will be forever changed. We won't be able to undo what we have done. These new facilities will discharge waste into the river. That will impact not only our part of the river but all of it as it travels toward the ocean. Animals and nearby soil will become contaminated.

We must protect our environment. So I ask each of you to join us in trying to stop the project. Please write, call, or e-mail local elected officials, and federal officials, to register your concerns. And if you really care about the environment, please join us next Saturday in a protest march to the state capital. Leading us will be TV star Mark MiWords. He grew up around here and says, "We must make sure that our grandchildren's grandchildren will be able to share the same experiences we had on the river as kids." Please, join us. Thank you.