

Appendix B Summary of the Plot used by the Ywain Texts

Earliest text: *Yvain* by Chrétien de Troyes, 12th century

While King Arthur is asleep, the queen joins a group of knights outside his chamber door to hear Calogrenant tell the tale of his fountain adventure. He tells how he set out in search of a testing adventure, and, after a night with a hospitable host, met a giant herdsman, who directed him to a fountain where he performed a rain-making ritual and raised a terrifying storm. After the storm, a knight came galloping up to accuse him of making war on him. They fought and Calogrenant was defeated. The fountain knight took his horse, and he returned ashamed, but, on his way, he was welcomed by the host with undiminished kindness. At the end of the tale, Ywain (Yvain, Iwein, Ivan, Owein) says he wishes to undertake the adventure to avenge Calogrenant's shame; Kay jeers his disbelief that he would dare to do so and the queen rebukes Kay. When Arthur wakes, the queen retells Calogrenant's tale to him and he plans to undertake the fountain adventure himself.

Ywain secretly sets off immediately on this adventure and defeats the fountain knight. He pursues the mortally wounded knight back to his castle gate, where the descending portcullis shaves off his spurs and kills his horse, and he is trapped. The fountain lady's companion, Lunete, saves him from retribution by making him invisible with a ring. He falls in love with the grief-stricken lady of the fountain. Lunete persuades the lady (Laudine) to marry Ywain, arguing that she urgently needs a defender of her land as Arthur is on his way to the fountain. Thus Ywain becomes the fountain knight, and, upon Arthur's performing the ritual at the fountain, he fights Kay, who has asked for the battle, and defeats him. Then he returns Kay's horse to the king and makes himself known. Arthur and his company are entertained at the fountain castle.

When Arthur decides to return home, Gawain persuades Ywain to go with them, and the lady of the fountain gives permission, provided Ywain returns no later than a year from that date. Ywain forgets to return and a messenger from his lady arrives to denounce him as a thief and a traitor, and tell him he has lost his lady. He becomes a madman in the forest until he is cured by the lady of Noroison and her damsel, who use an ointment made by Morgan le Fay; the lady needs Ywain's help against her enemy Count Alier. When the count comes to plunder, Ywain defeats him, and the count gives pledges that he will always live on peaceful terms with the lady and make good the losses he has caused her. The lady wishes Ywain to remain and be lord of her possessions, but Ywain departs.

Retracing his path through a wood, Ywain hears a cry and finds a lion in the grip of a dragon. He rescues it and it places itself at his service. Arriving at the fountain, he discovers that Lunete is imprisoned in the chapel on a treason charge for advising her mistress to receive Ywain. Ywain rescues her, with the help of his lion, by defeating the steward who has accused her.

In most of the texts, other adventures are added, but Ywain and the lady of the fountain are finally reunited.

