

1141 Castle Rescue!

Try our choose-your-own-adventure story. See if you make the right decisions in your quest to deliver a vital message to Lincoln Castle. All you need is a coin to flip and your imagination!

~ 1 ~

It is January 1141 and despite the cold weather, there is war in England! Some people want Stephen to be King, others want Matilda to be Queen. Across the country there are battles and attacks on castles as both sides fight each other over who will rule England.

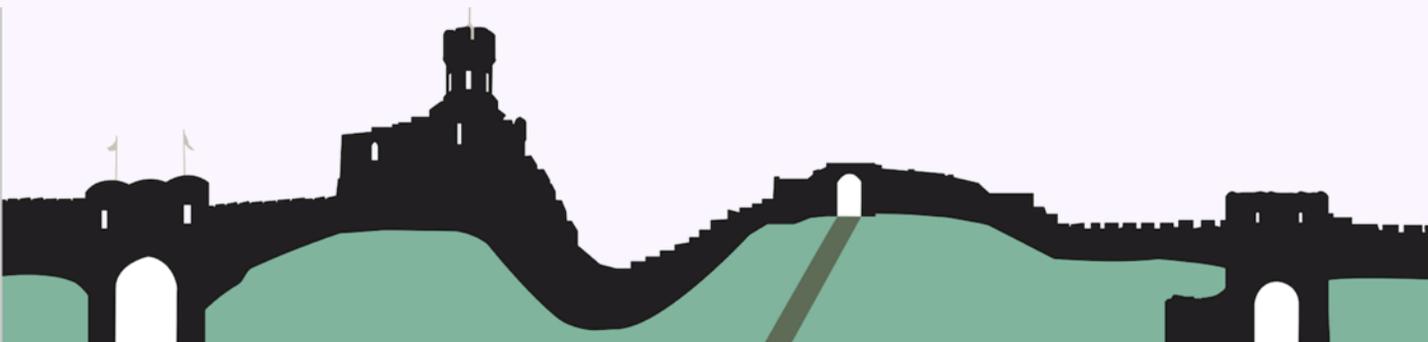
You are in a castle in the west of the country where Matilda and her bravest knight, Robert of Gloucester, are gathering a huge army. They have heard that their friends (and Robert's daughter Maud) are stuck in Lincoln Castle, surrounded by a huge army under the command of their enemy, Stephen. They are going to march to Lincoln to fight Stephen and help free the people trapped in the castle.

Matilda has asked you to take a message to the people in Lincoln Castle. You must go secretly to Lincoln, somehow get past all of Stephen's soldiers and tell those in Lincoln Castle that help is on its way. They must hold on, not surrender, it won't be long before they are free.

If you want to get on your way, go to **18**.

If you want to talk to Matilda's scribe, go to **10**.

If you want to ask for help from Matilda's woodman, go to **21**.



~ 2 ~

You journey on and find yourself in a swamp to the west of Lincoln. You can see the Castle on the hill in the distance and Stephen's army surrounding it. You notice an old lady gathering eggs in the marsh.

You feel hungry, so if you ask to buy some of her eggs (and ask her some advice on which way to go), go to **20**.

If you are sure you can manage to get through a big swamp without her help, go to **14**.

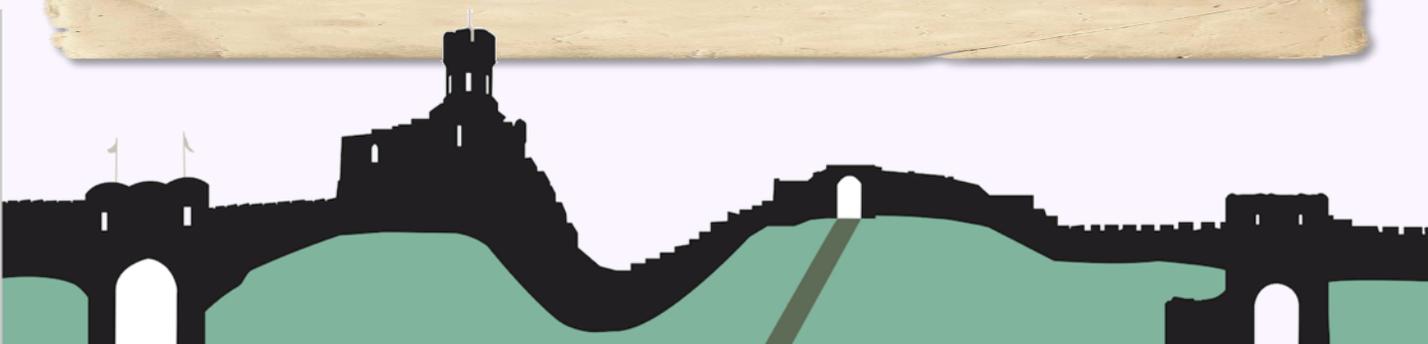
~ 3 ~

It is tiring and dangerous work digging a tunnel into the Castle. Stephen's army have dug a maze of tunnels under the Castle and you could easily get lost underground. After a little while you find yourself alone and head down the deepest tunnel. You use a pickaxe to dig the earth and rock. Suddenly the wall of the tunnel collapses and you find yourself falling into the Castle dungeons. Well, you may now be in prison, but at least you are in the Castle!

Go to **8**.

~ 4 ~

You tie your message to an arrow and fire it high over the castle walls. Flip a coin, if it is heads go to **11**, if it is tails, go to **9**.



~ 5 ~

You enter the woods of Sherwood Forest and bump into a young person dressed in green, carrying a bow with a sleek brown dog at their feet. "I am Jem the Forrester, I hope you aren't hunting in the King's Forest? If you are, I may set my dog, Bamber, on you."

If you have no bow you can convince Jem you are just a normal traveller and are allowed to pass, go to **7**.

Otherwise, flip a coin. If it is heads, go to **16**, if it is tails, go to **19**.

~ 6 ~

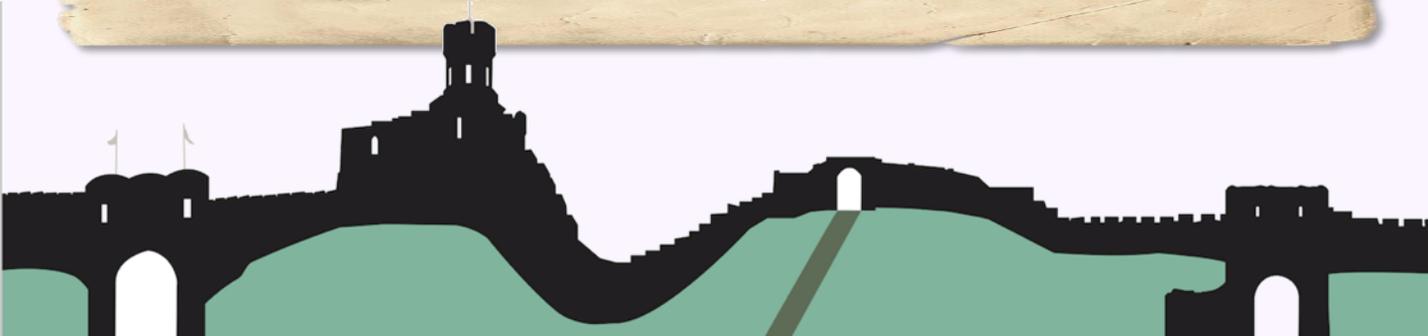
You creep through Stephen's army, trying to look like you belong there. Some of the soldiers look at you suspiciously. They don't recognise you, this could be trouble.....

Flip a coin, if it is heads go to **19**, if it is tails go to **17**.

~ 7 ~

Eventually you find that your path is blocked by a huge river. There is no bridge, but it is possibly shallow enough to cross..... It is winter, the water is freezing and the current is strong. You struggle to get across the ford.

Flip a coin, if it is heads go to **2**, if it is tails go to **14**.



~ 8 ~

You are in the dungeons, which are under the buildings in the centre of the castle. The walls are made of stone and there are bars on the windows. It is cold and damp. Suddenly a jolly figure wearing an old apron appears carrying a small plate of food. "I am Gina Georgeson, the cook. I have brought you your dinner. It is not much as we don't have much ourselves with Stephen's army outside and prisoners always get less anyway."

If you have Hugh's letter, you could persuade her to let you see the person in charge of the Castle, go to **22**.

If you don't have the letter, they soon get fed up of feeding you and send you out to Stephen, who decides you're a spy and has some soldiers march you off to Nottingham, go to **19**.

~ 9 ~

Oh, no! You try to fire your arrow with the letter attached over the walls, but as the arrow leaves your bow, the message falls off and flutters to the ground. One of Stephen's soldiers picks it up. "What's this, a secret message to the people in the castle. Grab that archer!"

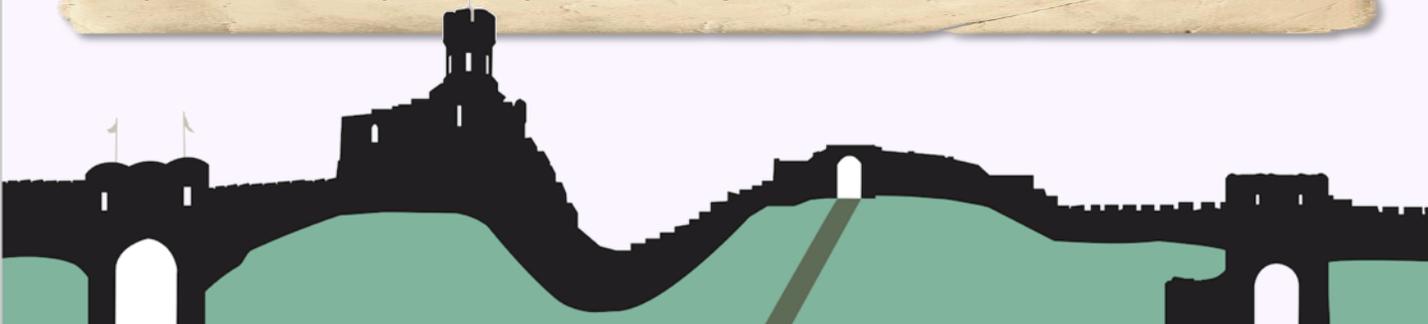
Go to **19**.

~ 10 ~

You visit Matilda's scribe, Hugh the Victor. He is rather old and his hair is thinning. "I am in charge of writing all Matilda's important letters. I can write your message for you on a piece of parchment." You take the letter and hide it in your clothes.

If you want to visit the Woodman (and haven't already), go to **21**.

If you want to hurry on with your mission, go to **18**.



~ 11 ~

Success! Your arrow flies over the walls of the castle. Soon after you hear a cheer from inside. They have heard that help is on its way. You wait till dark and creep away from Stephen's army and make your way back west. You have carried out your mission. Well done!

~ 12 ~

As you walk down the road, you are stopped by a group of armed men. As they approach you notice that they have a half man half horse figure painted on their shields. Oh, no! It is the sign of the centaur, the symbol of King Stephen, your enemy. "I am Wain, I am in charge of this road. None may pass without being searched."

If you have the message written as a letter, you are searched and it is found, go to **19**.

If you don't have the message written down, you are allowed to pass. Go to **7**.

~ 13 ~

"That is a fine bow. You must be an archer, join the others over there." says Stephen. You walk over to where the other archers are. The leader, a tall figure with long red hair, greets you. "Another archer, good! I am Hawkins, I am the best archer in the whole of Kent. Join us!" You stay the night with them sitting round the fire swapping stories. The next day you decide it is time to continue your mission.

If you decide to give the archers the slip, go to **6**.

If you have your message written down, you could try to attach it to an arrow and fire it over the wall. Go to **4**.



~ 14 ~

Your adventure is over. You drown in the water and the people in the Castle will never know help is on its way.

~ 15 ~

“What’s this?” says Gina. “Well, it looks like you should see the boss. Jailer, let this one out!” she bellows. The jailor unlocks your cells and you are taken to the tallest tower in the castle.

Go to **22**.

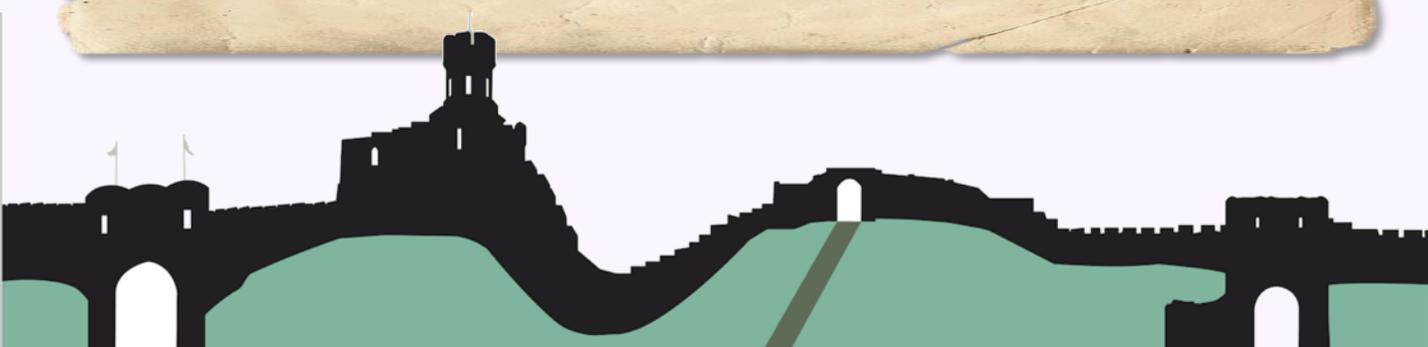
~ 16 ~

You realise Jem is quite short. You are tall enough to grab the branch of a nearby tree that Jem cannot reach. You climb the tree. Jem angrily stomps off saying:

“Oh fiddle faddle! Just you wait, I am going to come back with other Foresters, you are in so much trouble!”

With the forester gone, you quickly climb down again and race through the forest and out the other side, where you see a large river.

Go to **7**.



~ 17 ~

You reach the wall of the castle and spot a small door. You bang on the wood and a small man eventually opens it. "Oh, hello sweetheart. You woke me up, I was having a lovely dream!" he says, stretching and then scratches his belly. "My name is Little Jon the Gardener. They put me here on sentry duty, punishment because I kept eating more than my share of the supplies. You had better not be one of Stephen's soldiers." You tell him you have come from Matilda and have an important message.

Toss a coin. If it is heads, you have convinced him you are who you say you are, go to **22**. If it is tails, you are thrown in the dungeons, go to **8**.

~ 18 ~

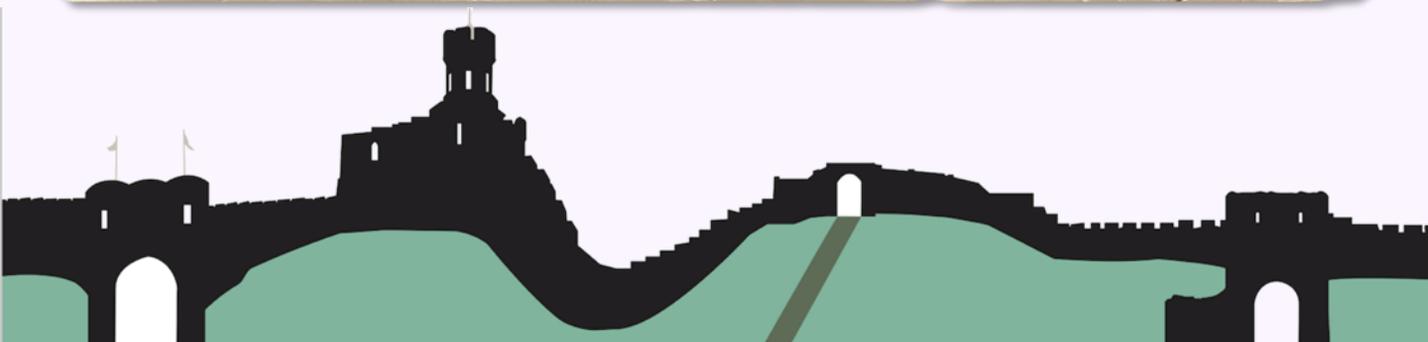
You take the road east towards Lincoln. You walk for miles and miles. Eventually you see a crossroads, one path leads off to the left through a large forest, while the main road leads to the right, but you can see knights ahead down that road!

To go into the forest, go to **5**.

To continue down the road, go to **12**.

~ 19 ~

You are captured and sent to the dungeons under Nottingham Castle. Your adventure is over, but at least you have lots of lovely brown rats for company in your cell deep under the castle!



~ 20 ~

The old lady is called Dotty and she sells you some eggs then kindly guides you through the marsh.

As you approach Lincoln, there are so many enemy knights around that you are captured and taken to see Stephen. He is in a large tent in the middle of his army just outside the city. "How long before these rebels surrender? I am King of England and those people in the Castle need to know that!" He spies you. He seems to have no idea that you were sent by his enemy. "Another soldier, good, the more the better! We'll soon be inside Lincoln Castle!"

If you have a bow, go to **13**.

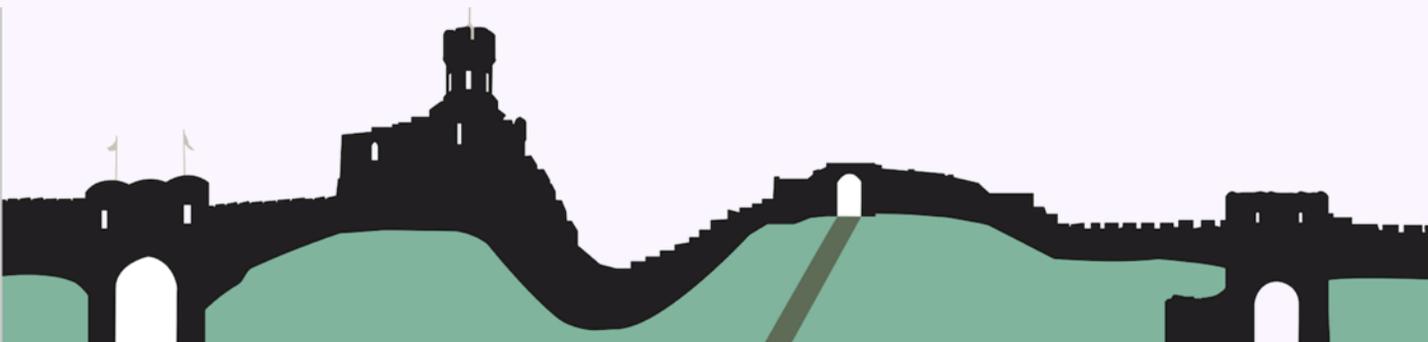
Otherwise you must join his army. You can either join his tunnellers who are trying to dig under the Castle, go to **3**. Or you could wait among his other soldiers and try to slip away when nobody is looking, go to **6**.

~ 21 ~

You visit Matilda's woodman. He is stout and has a huge moustache. "I am Dai, I am a woodman and a Welsh archer. We Welsh make the finest bows! Here take one and a quiver of arrows. You never know when you might need it." You take the bow and decide what to do next.

If you want to visit the scribe (if you haven't already), go to **10**.

If you want to hurry on with your journey, got to **18**.



~ 22 ~

You enter the main hall in the tower and deliver your message to the lord and lady who are sat there dressed in fine robes. "Thank you," the lady says. "My name is Maud and my father is Robert of Gloucester. It is such good news to hear he is on his way. We were going to give up. We are so sick of being stuck in the Castle, with very little to eat and Stephen's archers firing at us every day, but if dad is on his way, we will hold on!" The others all cheer and slap you on the back. You are richly rewarded with a bag of gold. Well done, you have carried out your mission.

Did it really happen?

We hope you enjoyed this game and learnt a little about medieval Britain on the way!

This period of history is known as *The Anarchy*, when the country was in civil war because Stephen and Matilda were fighting over the throne. Stephen's forces really did besiege Lincoln Castle in 1141. Robert of Gloucester did raise a large army (including lots of Welsh fighters) and marched to the aid of those inside, including his daughter Maud. There was a huge battle to the west of the Castle – later known as *The Battle of Lincoln* - and Stephen was defeated.

Some of the characters in the story are real and (for a bit of fun) some are based on people who still work at the Castle today!

