

The Story of Gelert

Many years ago, in a castle deep in the rugged mountains of Eryri, in the county of Gwynedd, lived a brave and well respected prince called Llewelyn. This prince loved to hunt and his favourite hunting dog was a faithful and fearless hound called Gelert. Gelert accompanied Llewelyn everywhere and was always to be found at the head of the pack. No game was too big, too strong or too fierce for Gelert, whose bravery knew no bounds.

This prince had a beloved son, a swaddling babe whose mother had died in childbirth. Llewelyn had loved his wife dearly and been broken hearted by her death. His only consolation had been his son. On her death-bed, Llewelyn had promised his wife that he would cherish the boy and this he did.

He looked forward to the day when the two of them could ride out together, tracking the wolves and the other wild animals found in the ancient hills and the dark forests of Gwynedd in those far off days.

One day, Llewelyn and his men were preparing to go out hunting. The baby lay fast asleep in his cradle, his nurse in attendance nearby. The day was cold and damp but a huge log fire blazed in the bedchamber and the cradle was covered with warm furs. The baby was safe and snug. Nevertheless, Llewelyn decided to leave his loyal hound, Gelert to protect the homestead. As he left he gently stroked the dog's huge, shaggy head.

"Guard them well, Gelert," he said. "Until I return."

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