

## The Legend of Lou the Great

A long time ago, there lived a brave knight named Lou the Great. Lou was a kind and caring father to his only son. The only thing he loved as much as his son was hunting. The brave knight loved hunting and spent a lot of time with his famous hunting dogs in the hills and forests of the kingdom. Lou's favourite dog was named Gilbert. Gilbert was the finest, biggest, and bravest of all of Lou's dogs.

For many years, Gilbert hunted faithfully at his master's side. It was said that wherever Gilbert went, he carried himself proudly with his head held high and his fur shiny and groomed.

That was until one dreadful day in the middle of winter. Strong winds and cold frosts froze the land for many weeks, and the kingdom was running out of food. Lou the Great decided that he would need to go on a hunt out in the forest to bring back some meat for his starving family. Normally, Lou would never go out in such weather, but he was desperate. Worrying for his family's safety while he was out, the knight left his trusty companion to guard his only son.

For many hours, Lou and his hunting party walked through knee-deep snow. The forest was quiet, the only sound was the crunching of snow under their feet. Lou couldn't give up. He knew that without food, his family would starve. It wasn't much longer until they finally spotted a young deer munching some leaves.



Fighting against his empty, growling stomach, he struggled with all his strength to draw back the heavy, yew bow and nock an arrow. He paused. He held his breath and said a silent prayer. Time slowed to a crawl. For a split-second, Lou worried the deer would notice them and run off, but it was frozen in place. Slap! The sound of the bow-string hitting the wood echoed through the quiet forest, and only the dull thud of the arrow hitting the animal's hide drowned it out. The entire party let out a cheer, "Hurrah." They could practically taste the delicious meat.



The trip back was full of laughter and merriment; even the snow seemed less bothersome, and some of the younger hunters even threw snowballs at each other. It seemed like nothing could ruin the mood and yet when they arrived at the front door of Lou's home, what they saw just did that.

There on the front steps was Gilbert, the faithful hound. His teeth were showing, and his snout dripped with fresh, red blood. A sense of dread swept over Lou, and he felt his veins filled with ice. He raced into the house and straight to his young son's bedroom. The baby's cot was empty, and the floor and walls showed signs of a fierce struggle.



Without hesitating, Lou strode back down to the front porch and approached his most trusted companion. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he drew his sword but was unable to kill his once loyal friend. Despite his overwhelming sorrow, Lou mustered all his rage and shouted at Gilbert with all his might, "Leave here and never return." Gilbert gave his master one final confused look and ran off into the woods, never to be seen again.



Then from the edge of the woods near their home, one of Lou's men cried out, "I've found the boy". Scrambling through the snow, Lou raced to the trees and let out a heart-wrenching cry at what he saw. There in front of him was his son, unharmed except for a few scratches. Next to him and very dead was a large wolf.

As Lou realised what happened and, more importantly, what he did to Gilbert, who remained loyal to the end, all happiness drained from his life. From that day forward, he never smiled again. If only Lou had stopped to think before he acted, he would still have his trusty companion at his side.