

# the four diamonds

By Chris Millard



Courage  
Wisdom  
Honesty  
Strength

FOUR  DIAMONDS  
— Conquering Childhood Cancer —

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[www.FourDiamonds.org](http://www.FourDiamonds.org)

## Four Diamonds — Courage, Wisdom, Honesty and Strength

These were the attributes of Sir Millard, the worthy bearer of the magnificent Diamonus Quandrus. And these were the attributes he needed to overcome the evil and unpredictable sorceress, Raptenahad.

In reality, Sir Millard was Christopher Millard, a talented 14-year-old who struggled for three years to overcome cancer. Sir Millard and the four diamonds were Christopher's symbolic description of his fight against cancer. In 1972 Christopher died from cancer, a type of cancer that in many instances is curable today.

Christopher's parents, Charles and Irma Millard, created a gift fund to perpetuate Chris's Legacy. That gift fund — called Four Diamonds — has a mission to conquer childhood cancer by assisting children treated at Penn State Children's Hospital and their families through superior care, comprehensive support and innovative research. Each year, Four Diamonds helps approximately 500 children with cancer — 100 who are newly diagnosed and 400 who are continuing their fight.

Four Diamonds provides comprehensive support to children and their families by paying for care and treatment not covered by insurance, and also funds an array of specialty care providers to serve the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of our patients and their families. Because of the community's steady and generous support, Four Diamonds has assisted 100% of the childhood cancer patients treated at Penn State Children's Hospital.

Despite great advances in how childhood cancer is treated, the reality is more children die from cancer than any other disease.\* Research is the only way to change this. Therefore, Four Diamonds funds more than 90 scientists and research professionals at Penn State Children's Hospital and Penn State College of Medicine — all working towards the discovery of improved treatments and a cure.

This story — written by 14-year-old Christopher Millard — set the course for Four Diamonds' work to conquer childhood cancer.

*Illustrations by S. Arthur Shoemaker*

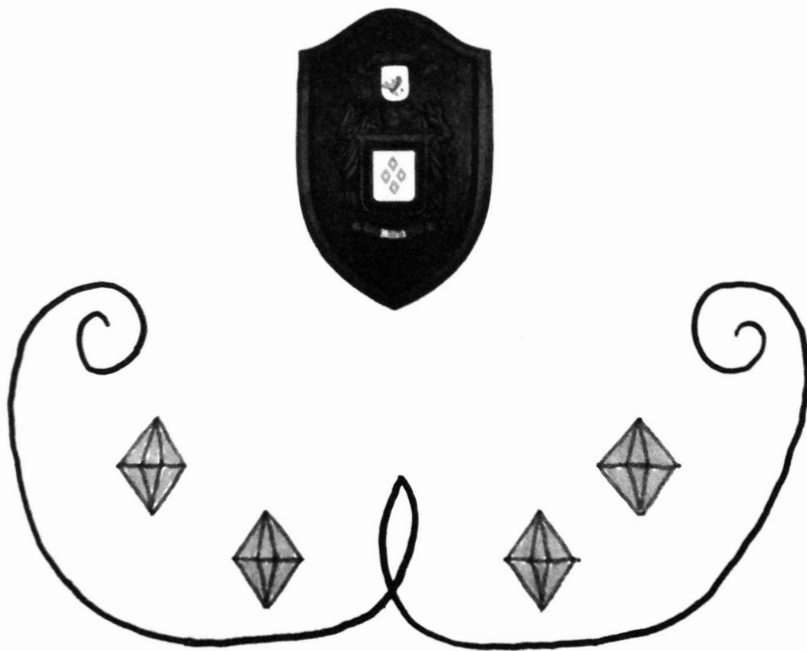
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\*[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)



# The Four Diamonds



CHRIS MILLARD

## The Four Diamonds

There are many famous tales of King Arthur's more illustrious Round Table members such as the renowned Sir Lancelot and Sir Galahad. But one gallant knight was incredibly forgotten by the litterateurs that engaged themselves with these noble characters. He was Sir Millard, the worthy bearer of the magnificent Diamonus Quadrus.\*

This account of Sir Millard's adventures was discovered in an old Welsh castle by myself while exploring the ancient ruins. It is a story of a young squire leaving his duties to find and prove his knighthood by some miraculous accomplishment.

It had been nearly five weeks since Millard left King Arthur's castle in search of deeds to be done in the name of goodness, but until now he had not been confronted with anything of the sort. Before him, across a vast field lay a dark, gloomy forest and atop a knoll in its midst rose a ghostly

\* Four Diamonds (see Coat of Arms)

castle. Glancing at the display of banners above the sleek towers, Millard knew it was the home of the evil sorceress Raptinahad, surely there was some aplenty for the liberator of Raptinahad's many wicked curses. Onward he rode across the field, into the strange forest, ~~and~~ after a short time he found himself approaching the shadows of the castle. Millard called for the witch to appear before him and duel fairly to the death. Again he called and this time Raptinahad stood above the gate with a rope wrapped around her hands. With glaring eyes and a sly grin, she <sup>can't divide</sup> tossed the rope to Millard's feet. Then as if it ~~was~~ alive, it slithered like a serpent and began to wind itself around Millard's body. He struggled for his sword and slashed vigorously at the rope, but its coils were as hard and as strong as metal. Tighter and tighter the rope's grip squeezed until Millard's energy and strength were sapped from his body. He now had fallen captive to the unpredictable

## Raptenahad.

The story continues with great detail of his imprisoned days, but for our purposes I shall condense the next portion and then resume to the original script.

Raptenahad grew to admire her prisoner for his bravery and unlimited daring. Many times he had attempted to gain his lost freedom. On one occasion he endeavored to kill Raptenahad with a jousting lance he chanced upon in the tunnels of the musty dungeon. One day the sorceress decided to put her discovery to work. She told Millard that every time he returned from an assigned task, he would receive one of her peerless Four Diamonds. If he accomplished every task without fail, he would be freed and her reign of evil would end forever.

## The Diamond of Courage

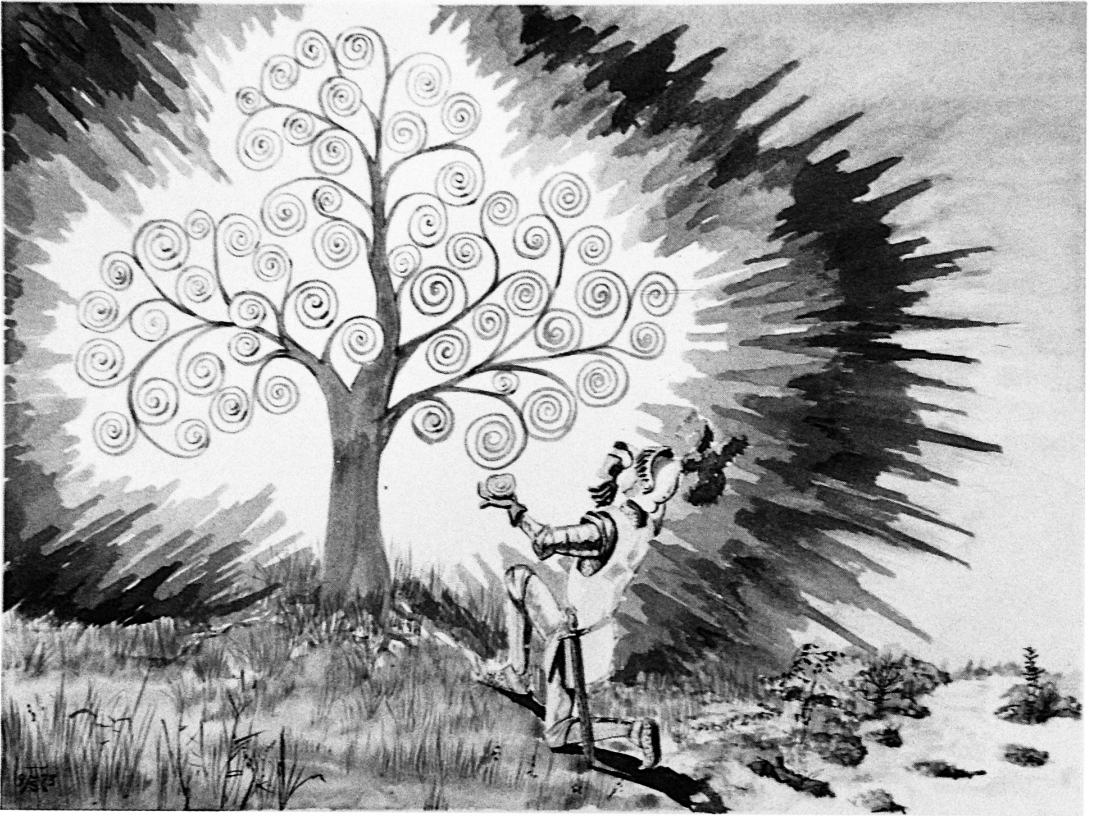
The following day Millard departed from Raptenahad's domain. He was ordered to climb <sup>past</sup> ~~pass~~ the precarious



cliffs and beyond the demons that haunted the slopes of the Mountain of Christophelot, to bring back to Ropten-ahad a fruit from the Tree of Life that grew on its summit. Millard was eager to complete his quest, so he traveled swiftly over hill and over dale, through thick forests and across open plains, wading streams and swimming rivers until he finally camped at the foot of Christophelot.

The next morning came fast, but Millard was awake and duefully prepared for his dangerous ascent. Glancing upward, he spied a trail leading to the brink of the black, ominous clouds that swallowed the top of the mountain. Millard started upward and with every step his surroundings became more and more dismal and dour. By now the once clear, clean path had disappeared and huge, monstrous boulders were strewn right and left. Still Millard climbed skyward. All light had faded and now an ill-omened darkness prevailed. Suddenly from behind every boulder, shelf, and ledge, hundreds upon hundreds of ghastly phantoms attacked Millard at once. He lashed back at the screaming, clawing demons with his sword, always moving higher up the rocky escarpment. Millard struggled a few feet higher, and then he knew all was not lost. He shielded his eyes from the tremendous

and  
go  
wants!



*The Diamond of Courage*

radiation of light. Shortly he looked directly upon the grandeur and beauty of the Tree of Life. Quickly Millard took a fruit and turned to face the dreaded slopes, but to his surprise and joy the precious fruit which he held freed him of the mountain's fearful curses. After reaching his camp, Millard returned safely to Raptinahad with his prize. Millard had won his first diamond.

### The Diamond of Wisdom

While Millard was gone Raptinahad arranged his next task. He was assigned to capture the elusive Stacia Swan. It was a graceful, slender bird, <sup>tried ~~times~~</sup> for by many skilled hunters, but it still roamed free from men. To seize this wondrous animal and return it to Raptinahad alive and unharmed would require much careful planning and presumably a remarkable scheme. Millard left with as much enthusiasm and intentness as in the first expedition. After much traveling as before he arrived by the shores of a vast blue lake. Millard was told by an old hermit that if he disguised himself as a colossal swan, the Stacia Swan would emerge from concealment and make her capture a realistic possibility. At once he began his work. Using feathers from swans that Millard supplied his hood with, he presently



*The Diamond of Wisdom*

completed the swan outfit. The day afterwards Millard began the wait. He swam impatiently along the shallow banks of the calm lake. Hours passed by and Millard constantly waited for a chance to use the sturdy net that he made from strong reed plants. Out of the corner of his eye he noticed a ripple on the water's surface. Just as he had hoped, it was the Stacia Swan. Nearly enchanted by its <sup>her</sup> beauty, Millard ~~swam~~ <sup>swam</sup> slowly away, pretending not to see her. The swan, disappointed by his actions, floated silently to his side and then straight to his side. Millard instantly flung his net over the Stacia Swan <sup>swam</sup> and tied the ends tightly together. With the help of a bearded hermit and intelligent plans, Millard was one diamond closer to freedom.

## The Diamond of Honesty

When Millard returned from his last journey, Kaptinahad <sup>encounter with Stacia?</sup> <sup>second? not last! recent?</sup> began to fear for her own life, for she had only two diamonds remaining. Just to be safe, she thought of a task that was simply impossible. Millard must ask Charles the Mysterious, a shy, but fair wizard for his sacred Athene Medallion. Kaptinahad was certain that Charles would never give up his prized Medallion to anyone.

Millard wandered, not knowing where at all to find the

secretive magician. One day he came upon an old gray-beard lying beside the road. Millard dismounted and helped the old man onto his horse. With the weak man's directions, Millard took him to his cottage. Here Millard stayed for a few days, helping the old man, whose name was Cessel, to regain his strength and health. One night Millard asked Cessel if he knew where to find Charles, the Mysterious, and his reasons why. Cessel gave no answer, but the sparkle in his eyes showed he really did know something about Charles.

The morning following the questioning, Cessel produced a dusty cloth bag and handed it to Millard. He said that it was all the gold he ever owned and asked Millard to wash it in a pan by the nearby stream. At noon Millard returned with the gold and gave it to Cessel. Checking for missing pieces and finding none, Cessel turned to Millard, but <sup>he</sup> he was no longer an old man. He, Cessel, was actually Charles the Mysterious. Charles, very impressed by Millard's kindness and honesty in handling his gold said that he would reward him with his Athene Medallion. Millard had won his third diamond, but there was one more gem to gain before he could unshackle himself from Kapterahad's evil curses.



*The Diamond of Honesty*

## The Diamond of Strength

Upon Millard's third fruitful return, Raptentahad decided that she must destroy Millard on his next mission. For many days she pondered over an impossible feat. At last the fourth task was pronounced, Raptentahad wished to have the head of the Black Cavalier. Millard never dreamed of facing this notorious, muscular outlaw, for he was sure to meet his doom. Slightly discouraged and quite haggard from his previous expeditions, he once again left in hope he would someday return.

4 Millard journeyed reluctantly until one day he entered a small glade. As if his mighty opponent expected him, there sat the armored joustier on his jet-black steed across the grassy meadow. The two duelers charged with their sparkling lances cocked for each other's death. They collided with a crash and Millard fell from his horse as his enemy's weapon struck his leg. Luckily Millard's aim had been true also, and now both drew their swords. The shining metal flashed as the battle continued. Minutes passed and turned to hours, but still the rivals fought on. Fatigue had





*The Diamond of Strength*

long begun to show its presence with both contenders, when the Black Cavalier stumbled. Millard mustered up all of his remaining strength and sent his sword smashing through the wicked knight's black helmet. Totally exhausted Millard headed for Raptenahad's castle with his most recent prize.

When Millard arrived at the castle, he noticed a change had taken place in the total environment. No longer was the forest dark and morbid, but now it was full of animals and birds <sup>were</sup> singing cheerfully from the green trees. No longer was Raptenahad's castle black and ghostly, but now it was a noble, stately palace. Even the banners from the towers were not those of the sinister sorceress. Instead they were four diamonds on a field of azure blue. Realizing that he had destroyed Raptenahad, Millard entered the palace that bore his very own coat of arms.

Millard had proven that he truly deserved knighthood and from then on he lived in glory as Sir Millard.

#

Very well written! You ought to be a writer - you write beautifully. Your idea was a good one and well developed.

By your senior year you'll be writing novels!

I've enjoyed working with you this year. You are very perceptive!

Congratulations on your Am. Legion Award! #

Illustrations by S. Arthur Shoemaker

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