the
four diamonds

by
Chris Millard
Courage
Wisdom
Honesty
Strength

Four Diamonds Fund
at Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital
CONQUERING CHILDHOOD CANCER

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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 was Christopher’s symbolic description of his fight against the evil and unpredictable cancer. In 1972 Christopher died from the cancer, a type of cancer that in many instances is curable today.

Christopher’s story, The Four Diamonds, is a legacy of inspiration and hope. It is reproduced here in the original handwriting of the author. Christopher’s teacher’s comments and corrections are included.

The Four Diamonds Fund, founded by Christopher’s parents, Charles and Irma, perpetuates that legacy. Its primary purpose is to provide complete medical, financial and emotional support for children being treated for cancer at Penn State Children’s Hospital at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. Children’s Hospital and the Medical Center are part of Penn State University, and the University coordinates the activities of the Fund.

Since its inception, the Fund has expanded to include support for staff members who provide comprehensive medical care through a team of pediatric oncologists, nurse specialists, social workers, child life specialists, a clinical nutritionist, a clinical psychologist and a music therapist.

Comprehensive care for pediatric cancer patients is costly. It involves a multi-disciplinary team for its delivery and is dependent upon research and education for advances.

The diagnosis of cancer in a child is indeed tragic. It disrupts every aspect of family balance. Current treatment has offered a possible cure to as many as 80% of children diagnosed with the majority of childhood cancers.

Christopher’s message is clear. The Four Diamonds – Courage, Wisdom, Honesty and Strength – will help us to overcome evil. Through The Four Diamonds Fund, each of us can share in helping children and families in their battle against cancer.

Illustrations by S. Arthur Shoemaker

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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 literati who engaged themselves with these noble characters. He was Sir Millard, the worthy leader of the magnificent Dianonius Quadruus.

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 dark towers, Millard knew it was the home of the evil sorceress Raptanahad, surely there was some aplenty for the liberator of Raptanahad's many wicked curses. Onward he rode across the field, into the strange forest, and after a short time he found himself approaching the shadow of the castle. Millard called for the witch to appear before him and deal fairly to the death. Again he called and this time Raptanahad stood above the gate with a rope wrapped around her hands. With glaring eyes and a sly grin, she tossed the rope to Millard's feet. Then as if it were 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 passed the precarious
cliffs and beyond the demons that haunted the slopes of the Mountain of Christophelet, to bring back to Ropstan and 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 valley, through thick forests and across open plains, wading streams and swimming rivers until he finally camped at the foot of Christophelet.

The next morning came fast, but Millard was awake and duly 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 dole. 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 looked 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
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 slope, 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 Kaptenahad with his prize. Millard had won his first diamond.

The Diamond of Wisdom

While Millard was gone Kaptenahad arranged his next task. He was assigned to capture the elusive Stacia Swan. It was a graceful, slender bird, tried for by many skilled hunters, but it still seemed free from men. To seize this wondrous animal and return it to Kaptenahad 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 food with, he presently
The Diamond of Wisdom
completed the swan outfit. The day after, 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 beauty, Millard assumed to swim 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 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, Kaptenshad 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. Kaptenshad was certain that Charles would never give up his prized Medallion to anyone. Millard wandered, not knowing when at all to find the
secretive magician. One day he came upon an old gray-haired man 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 Clessel, to regain his strength and health. One night Millard asked Clessel if he knew where to find Charles the Mysterious, and his reasons why. Clessel gave no answer, but the sparkle in his eye showed he really did know something about Charles.

The morning following the questioning, Clessel 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 Clessel. Checking for missing pieces and finding none, Clessel turned to Millard but he was no longer an old man. He, Clessel, 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 Athlone Medalion. Millard had won his third diamond, but there was one more gem to gain before he could unlock himself from Kaptenshod’s evil curses.
The Diamond of Honesty
The Diamond of Strength

Upon Millard's third fruitful return, Raptenehad 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. Raptenehad 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.

Millard journeyed reluctantly until one day he entered a small glade. As if his mighty opponent expected him, there sat the armored jouster 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 crack 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 smeared through
the wicked knight’s black helmet. Totally
exhausted Millard headed for Raptenehad’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 singing cheerfully from the green trees.
No longer was Raptenehad’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 Raptenehad,
Millard entered the palace that bore his very own
crest 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!