

# Arthurian Legends of Excalibur Adventures

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Welcome to an England that never was, and a time there will never be. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a growing fascination swept Europe centering on the court of a legendary king: Arthur. He had a Round Table surrounded by the best knights in the entire world, he ruled England with wisdom and justice, repelling both Roman and Saxon invaders with equal strength. He sought the Holy Grail, filled with the blood of the divine, and he was one with the land of his kingdom. And all was undone over the betrayal of the two people he loved best in the world. Since Chretien de

*And down a streetway hung with folds of pure  
White samite, and by fountains of running wine,  
Where children sat in white with cups of gold,  
Moved to the lists, and there with slow sad steps  
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd chair:*

*He glanced and saw the stately galleries,  
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their Queen  
White-robed in honor of the stainless child,  
And some with scattered jewels, like a bank  
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of fire.*

*-Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

Troyes first wrote of the San Graal in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, each generation has added its own tales to the Arthurian cycle, from Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, written anonymously around the 14<sup>th</sup> century, to Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, and the 19<sup>th</sup> century's *Idylls of the King* by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Even today, Arthurian legend continues to be crafted, in movies such as *Excalibur*, and every week in newspapers around the world with *Prince Valiant*. Arthur may be, as T.H. White called him, the "Once and Future King", but in many ways, the boy who never existed has never stopped being king since he first appeared in our consciousness.

## ARTHURIAN TRADITIONS

There are many versions of Arthurian legend, to the extent that it would be difficult to even list all versions of the tale here. However, through the course of this work, three traditions have been used again and again, and would be as useful to players and narrators of this game as they were to me.

### LATE MEDIEVAL ROMANCE TRADITION

This work achieved its ultimate under Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, but also finds expression in the French tales of Lancelot, and the brilliant *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, written by an unknown medieval writer. Malory is the template for this tradition because he used all the other contemporary sources in his telling, but the other works are interesting for a different perspective. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, for example, King Arthur is bumbling, childlike, and cruel. Quite a different take on the boy king of romance.

### VICTORIAN TRADITION

This tradition, though riddled with works dripping with sentimentality, finds its ultimate expression in Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, which provides a startlingly realistic, in some cases stark, telling of the tale. There is no ruse with Uther changing shape to seduce Igraine in Tennyson. When her castle is taken and her husband is dead, Tennyson points out that Igraine had no one to call to for aid but Uther, and this depiction of Arthur's birth in rape provides an important context to this version of the tale.

## MODERN TRADITION

Modern tales of Arthur have focused on different aspects of the story never explored in earlier traditions. In both Malory and Tennyson, for example, Arthur appears more or less “fully formed”, with the stories beginning with his ascension to the throne. Modern works such as T.H. White’s *The Once and Future King*, and the children’s movie based on it, *The Sword and the Stone* deal extensively with Arthur’s upbringing and education. In addition to the previously cited works, those interested in a rich, vivid telling of the tale should also see the movie *Excalibur*, which does an excellent job of giving you the whole tradition in a short time span, and reconciles some of the differences between the various traditions in interesting and innovative ways. Lastly in this category I would be remiss if I did not mention *Prince Valiant*, originally created by Hal Foster, but still in print today in newspapers around the world. These stories are of particular interest to any potential narrator of Arthurian adventure, because they provide an example of the richness of the setting, while using the established major characters very sparingly, with Valiant and his companions traveling much of the world, interacting with desert nomads in the Sahara, whaling tribes in Greenland, and visiting the exotic East of India and China.

## AUTHOR’S NOTE ABOUT “THE REAL” ARTHUR

There are hundreds of books written each year seeking the “real King Arthur”. Many people wonder if there is a real boy king, a real round table, a real Camelot. Arthur is mentioned as a real king in historical texts, which place his reign somewhere in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This was where Malory set his tales, in the time of Saxon invasions and departed Roman leaders. However, the tales were not written as if set in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and Arthurian legend was not written that way either. Malory wrote his tales as if they were taking place in the England of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in which he lived, with heavy cavalry, kings and dukes and English feudalism. To this he added many things that *never* existed, such as giants, witches, demons, and maids who lived underwater. So, as interesting as the search for a real Arthur (if there ever was one) might be, I wrote this game in the spirit of the legends, filled with magic and historical anachronisms. Arthurian England is as much a real place as Oz, and historical commentary has as much interest, and as much use, in sorting it out.



## AUTHOR’S NOTE ABOUT THE TRUE 20 EDITION

This edition has been crafted with the True20 rules in mind. As such this edition is somewhat more “rules light” than the earlier d20 edition, using the excellent foundation laid by True20 whenever possible. The Nobility system, for example, is gone, since True20’s Virtues and Vices system achieves the same purpose. Wherever possible, this edition seeks to take the flavor of Arthurian legend provided in *Legends of Excalibur* and tailor it to the rules of True20. Designing this has been a real pleasure and I hope fans of True20 enjoy using this edition to bring Arthurian legend to life once more in their games.

-CHUCK

# CHAPTER 1: CHARACTERS



## KNIGHT CREATION

Knight creation is your chance to make an impact on the tales of Arthur. Whether creating your own character or playing an established character, your choices will determine the ultimate outcome of the legends.

## ABILITIES

The heroes and villains of Arthurian legend are extraordinary men and women, every one. Even ordinary heroes were not worthy to sit at the table round. For this reason all heroes in *Legends of Excalibur* gain 10 points when choosing their ability scores.

## BACKGROUNDS

All player characters in *Legends of Excalibur* are human. While there is the occasional dwarf (here just meaning a little human though usually notoriously libidinous) or elves, these non-human races tend to be friends and foes encountered during the knights' journey, not the knights themselves. Despite all player characters being human however, there are still many backgrounds for the players to choose from, here delineating the characters' bloodline. While some knights rose from very humble beginnings, others were raised in the courts of great kings.

In Arthurian legend, bloodline is not just an accident of birth, but a combination of destiny, opportunity, and determination. Characters rise from the son of a lowly blacksmith or dishwasher to become a Knight of the Table Round, and mighty kings are led into desolation and servitude.

## BARBARIAN

Barbarians are members of primitive tribes outside the natural order of the European class system. Being an outsider has as many advantages as disadvantages, and many barbarians are disdainful of the so-called civilized world, seeing it as stagnant and unnatural.

**Personality:** Barbarians are noted for their fierceness. To civilized men their appearance, dress and mannerisms are as frightening as their ability at combat, which is substantial.

**Physical Description:** A barbarian's appearance depends on where he hails from. The Scot highlander, the Pictish savage, the Hun outrider and the Saxon clansman each have their distinctive appearances. What all barbarians have in common is that their appearance is sufficiently distinct from

that of civilized men that even a barbarian who dresses like civilized folk and attempts to mimic their ways will clearly stand out.

Early in Arthur's reign, when the lands of Britain have become wild and feral, there is an additional type of barbarian bloodline: the wolf men. These are boys snatched from their cribs by wolves and raised as part of their packs. As grown men these savage animal men often rise to lead large packs of wolves through their intelligence and cunning. As Arthur slowly achieves mastery over a land gone wild, these creatures become rarer.

**Relations:** The barbarians are invaders who have conquered much of England at the beginning of Arthur's reign. Since one of the primary goals of Arthur and his knights is to remove the Saxon infidels from Britain, this puts the two groups at odds with each other and causes relations to be strained at best (when not outright hostile).

**Lands:** Barbarians have little in the way of inherited lands. Most of what they have was taken by force. Still, a barbarian whose *father* took lands by force might style himself the rightful inheritor of those lands.

**Religion:** Barbarians tend to worship the Old Faith, though growing numbers of young warriors are answering the call of the One God as well.

**Adventurers:** Barbarians seek gold and fame and land. If those things are not readily available by honest means, they delight in taking them by force.

## LINEAGE TRAITS

- **Ability Adjustments:** +1 Strength, -1 Intelligence. You are a proud warrior from a race of proud warriors but learning is not as valued by your people.
- **Favored Feats:** You may select the Diehard and Rage feats at 1<sup>st</sup> level regardless of role. If you have no Warrior levels, however, you may only rage once per day and may not select Rage as a feat multiple times.
- **Illiteracy:** You must spend a skill point in order to be able to read and write in the languages you speak.

## CRIMINAL/BASE LINEAGE

You are the lowest of the low, completely without standing. If you died tomorrow no one would notice. You deal with garbage and burial of the dead, if you can find an honest means of sustenance at all. Even the life of a serf would seem a paradise to you.

**Personality:** Criminals tend to keep to themselves, only interacting with their own kind. Usually they have no choice in this, since their betters want to deal with them as little as possible. However, criminals prefer to avoid their betters whenever possible, since the slightest misstep could lead to the harshest punishment, and there is no recourse to redress wrongful punishment. When criminals must deal

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with those of high station, they will say as little as possible, speaking only when spoken to.

**Physical Description:** Criminals are filthy and bedraggled, living in shantytowns or garbage dumps that are both home, place of work (if any is to be had), and source of food (if you can call it that). In larger cities, such as London, these lost souls can be seen wandering the streets, begging, looking for scraps, or simply lost in their own world.

**Relations:** Criminals have little in the way of relations with other bloodlines. Even serfs want nothing to do with this scum, many of whom fled serfdom for a perceived better life in the city. To the serf, these miscreants serve as a bitter reminder that, although their lot is hard, it could be much worse and that there is a natural order to things that is best obeyed.

**Lands:** The closest things criminals have to “lands” are the garbage dumps found near large cities. Those that find work are frequently paid to haul garbage and dead bodies to the dump in wheelbarrows, a job no one would want if they had any other means of survival because of the rampant disease suffered by those who do it.

**Religion:** Criminals are outside the societal structure, and as such face less pressure, peer and otherwise, to conform to standard religious practices. Where a serf might face the displeasure of his peers or even a beating from a superior for not attending Mass, a criminal would not be allowed in a church anyway. So if criminals practice religion it is alone, in small groups among their own kind or at the behest of a missionary. When a missionary comes, since he might be bearing alms (gifts given to the poor), a strong religious showing will be seen, however.

**Adventurers:** If a criminal is to improve his station, adventuring is one of the only ways to do so. Although some have family that they seek to bring up out of abject poverty, most criminals who succeed as adventurers want nothing to do with their background and former life. Rogue is by far the most common profession among adventurers of this background, although not usually by a conscious decision. Rather, these folk tend to fall into petty crime, and if they have talent, work their way out of the shantytowns and dumps.

## LINEAGE TRAITS

- *Ability Adjustments:* +1 Dexterity, -1 Charisma. You have grown up nimble and quick but because of the filth in which you live and work, no one wants to be associated with you.
- *Bonus Feat:* You gain one bonus feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level from the list of feats normally available to your role.
- *Illiteracy:* You must spend a skill point in order to be able to read and write in the languages you speak.
- *Favored Feats:* You may select two Expert feats as favored feats. These feats are available to you regardless of role.
- *Limited Resources:* You suffer a -5 penalty to your



Wealth score at 1<sup>st</sup> level meaning the only Wealth modifier you gain comes from Charisma and any feats you select.

## SERF/COMMON LINEAGE

You are descended from common workers, the serfs and tenant farmers that make up the majority of the population. Your family might own a small plot of land, but you are still required to provide service to your lord.

**Personality:** Commoners tend to be reserved when around their betters. However, these folk are lively and spirited when among their own kind, prone to dancing, making music of every description, singing, and telling jokes (usually bawdy). Although the labor these folk do is often backbreaking, their spirit is undimmed, even the slightest excuse is reason enough to have a feast or at least a dance in time of plenty. The viewing of a saint's bones can lead to a carnival atmosphere, and social structures are strong at this level of the medieval hierarchy, perhaps stronger than at any other.

**Physical Description:** Commoners tend to be rustic in appearance, wearing clothes made from the animals grown on their lord's land, the land that provides for all their other needs, and serves as their home. For most, it was where they were born, and it will be where they die, and they couldn't imagine living any other way. Despite their rustic appearance and usually threadbare clothing, however, these folk take pride in their appearance, and any holiday, carnival, or visit from one of their betters will see these folk dressed in their finest clothes.

**Relations:** Serfs tend to have good relations with most social groups, especially the peerage and the nobility. The Peers rely on these folk for the labor that feeds them on a day-to-day basis and treat them with respect (though always

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with a clear understanding of who's in charge). Nobles rarely see or think about the commoners, but do show them a distant respect, at least for appearance's sake. Commoners tend to dislike the middle class and the criminal bloodlines, however. The middle class is an unknown quantity, and tales of their wealth will occasionally draw a young serf off the manor and to the city (usually with disastrous consequences according to conventional wisdom). This makes the middle class the medieval equivalent of a "hippy" from the 1960's. Criminals are beneath the commoner, a status they enjoy rarely. As such, many commoners do not want to be seen associating with such rabble. Criminals and the middle class have one thing that unites them in the commoner's mind that cements this dislike: the city. Just as today, urban and rural cultures have different values and cool attitudes toward each other, in the medieval period this distinction was more pronounced. Commoners might not always get along with the peerage or the nobility, but they are all part of the same system. The city (and by extension the criminal and middle class bloodlines) is something alien, which will continue to grow in influence until, in the far future, it will completely replace the farm as the center of life and society.

**Lands:** Although the majority of the population (close to 85% in fact), Commoners own little of the land on which they live. Some hold small plots of their own as a gift from their lord, which they pay for by providing labor at harvest. However, most simply work land owned by their lord in return for the right to a modest existence.

**Religion:** Religion is very important to commoners, for the structure it provides, the sense of wholeness in terms of the "great chain" hierarchy of the universe, and as a wonderful reason for festivals and celebrations.



**Adventurers:** Common adventurers tend to begin life either in war or disaster, or, if of a rebellious nature, simply leave the manor in search of adventure and excitement.

### LINEAGE TRAITS

- *Ability Adjustments:* +1 Strength or +1 Constitution, -1 Intelligence. You are used to hard labor and lots of it but you have been given little time for educational pursuits.
- *Bonus Feat:* You gain one bonus feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level from the list of feats normally available to your role.
- *Illiteracy:* You must spend a skill point in order to be able to read and write in the languages you speak.
- *Talented:* +2 to two Craft skills
- *Favored Feats:* You may select two feats from the Warrior or Expert role as favored feats. These feats are available to you regardless of role.
- *Limited Resources:* You suffer a -3 penalty to your Wealth score at 1<sup>st</sup> level.
- *Oath of Fealty:* Unlike the criminal/base lineage, you are not outside the feudal system and must swear an oath of fealty to a noble in return for his protection. Usually this oath is satisfied through military service but some other task could be asked of you. This oath is considered a Virtue and when your lord calls upon you to perform a service you will gain 1 point of Conviction (up to your current maximum) for answering his call to the best of your ability. You will not be paid monetarily for serving your lord.

### MIDDLE CLASS

The middle class is something new. Specialists, not laborers, not nobility, of every description are rising to prominence in the cities that seem to grow in power and wealth with every day. Middle class citizens are guildsmen, merchants, religious leaders, entertainers, moneylenders, and specialists of every stripe. Although technically illegal and outside the normal feudal system, kings and lords look the other way at these escapees from the manorial system due to the tremendous wealth they generate.

However, this lineage does not only include those who have escaped the manor for the city. Younger sons of the Peerage, given careers in the military, church, or business to help advance their family's interest are also considered "middle class".

**Personality:** The middle class mindset is markedly different from that of other bloodlines, both above and below. Everything is possible, both spectacular success, and spectacular failure.

**Physical Description:** The middle class is filled with men and women of every description. The appearance will depend largely on what the character does. Merchants tend to dress according to their wealth, entertainers in garish eye-catching colors, and craftsman in practical clothing.

**Relations:** Generally speaking, the middle class tends to get along with everyone. Everyone is a potential customer

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or a potential soul to be saved.

**Lands:** The middle class tends to have no lands of their own. Instead, this lineage's holdings may be found in the large cities, where they have their businesses, churches, and shops.

**Religion:** The middle class runs the gamut from the most virulently anti-religious, to the most devout evangelist. Most tend toward mild piety, but are not devout.

**Adventurers:** Middle class bloodlines produce many adventurers, usually associated with trade, religion, or war.

### LINEAGE TRAITS

- *Ability Adjustments:* None
- *Bonus Feat:* You gain one bonus feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level from the list of feats normally available to your role.
- *Bonus Skill:* You gain one bonus skill at 1<sup>st</sup> level in addition to those gained for your role and Intelligence score.
- *Favored Feats:* You may select two feats from any role as favored feats. These feats are available to you regardless of role.
- *Modest Resources:* You suffer a -1 penalty to your Wealth score at 1<sup>st</sup> level.
- *Oath of Fealty:* You are part of the feudal system and must swear an oath of fealty to a noble in return for his protection. Usually this oath is satisfied through military service but some other task could be asked of you. This oath is considered a Virtue and when your lord calls upon you to perform a service you will gain 1 point of Conviction (up to your current maximum) for answering his call to the best of your ability. You will not be paid monetarily for serving your lord.

### LESSER NOBILITY/PEERAGE

The lesser nobility is made up of knights, baronets, and the younger sons of higher-ranking nobles such as dukes and barons. Collectively these folk refer to themselves as "peers". Members of this social class tend toward careers in the military or in the clergy, especially in Arthurian legend where knights absolutely abound.

**Personality:** Peers combine the nobles' expectation of deference from those beneath him with the upward gaze and desire for mobility of the middle class. These medieval "middle managers" see potential for upward movement both in station and wealth. Though certainly better off than most, peers are not as well off as nobles, and have more practical day-to-day concerns to occupy their thoughts. Politics, religion, and the military are all popular careers among younger sons of this bloodline, both as a means of fame, but also as a career so the family does not have to support them.

**Physical Description:** Appearance is important to the peerage, to create an atmosphere of deference and authority. Dress and manner will be fine, but subdued compared to the sometimes garish colors seen in the wealthy middle class.

**Relations:** Peers are often the bearers of bad news to those beneath them, and potential rivals to those above them. Even among their own lineage there is a constant jockeying for position that leads members of this lineage to have a reputation for untrustworthiness.

**Lands:** Members of this bloodline typically have land holdings in their family that they may one day have to manage directly. When young, all but the eldest son will typically be sent to learn a useful trade for the family, especially in the military or the clergy.

**Religion:** Peers tend to stand on ceremony, and so religious piety, at least outward religious piety, is to be expected. Few members of this bloodline are truly devout however, even those who enter the clergy.

**Adventurers:** Soldiers and clergy dominate the adventurers of this bloodline, and frequently the knights that abound in Arthurian legend are drawn from the peerage and lesser nobility.

### LINEAGE TRAITS

- *Ability Adjustments:* +1 Constitution, -1 Intelligence: You are used to a life of activity but there is little emphasis on intellectual pursuits. Your concerns are with doing not learning.
- *Landed:* You gain a +2 bonus to your Wealth score at 1<sup>st</sup> level.
- *Benefit:* You gain this feat, with the status of knighthood as a bonus feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level.
- *Bred to the saddle:* You have been trained to ride from an early age and receive a +2 bonus to Ride skill checks.
- *Oath of Fealty:* You are part of the feudal system and must swear an oath of fealty to a noble in return for his protection. Usually this oath is satisfied through military service but some other task could be asked of you. This oath is considered a Virtue and when your lord calls upon you to perform a service you will gain 1 point of Conviction (up to your current maximum) for answering his call to the best of your ability. You will not be paid monetarily for serving your lord.

### NOBILITY/ROYALTY

The elite of any medieval society, these characters are well off even by the standards of the peerage.

**Personality:** Royals are used to being obeyed and can back up that assumption through the force of the law. From an early age, these elder sons of the nobility are taught to negotiate and obfuscate, maintaining the interests of their family through guile and deception.

**Physical Description:** Most characters will dress in keeping with their station. Nobles, along with merchants of the middle class, tend to dress a little *better* than they can afford to present the proper "image".

**Relations:** Nobles are either very aware that good relations makes getting their way easier, or they are

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- *Voice of Command:* You are used to being obeyed and gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate skill checks.
- *Landed:* You gain a +4 bonus to your Wealth score at 1<sup>st</sup> level.
- *Benefit:* You gain this feat with the status of nobility as a bonus feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level.



## ARCHETYPES

The following archetypes are presented to give players and narrators an idea of the types of characters typical to the Arthurian setting. A player may choose to play one of these archetypes or define his character individually. Archetypes are especially handy for narrator Characters and players new to the game who want some guidance or fewer options for faster character generation. Playing an archetype is strictly optional. The archetypes below consist primarily of role-playing guidance but also have suggested feat and skill lists. Players running an archetype are not required to select from these lists, they are provided merely as suggestions.

## ADEPT ARCHETYPES

### DRUID

The druid is a priest of the Old Faith. His ability to manipulate natural forces and rain destruction down on those who oppose him makes the druid feared throughout Arthurian Britain.

**Adventures:** The druid works to support and protect the followers of the Old Faith as well as traveling on pilgrimages to the many ancient henges scattered across the British Isles that serve as his sources of power. Given the wild and dangerous nature of Arthurian Britain these pilgrimages are often adventures in their own right.

**Characteristics:** The druid's magic enables him to control nature herself. This makes him a figure of awe and reverence. This rapport with nature extends to animals as well, adding to the druid's mystique given the increasingly wild and feral nature of Britain's animal life.

**Religion:** The druid is a staunch defender of the Old Faith, a pagan religion that is slowly fading into obscurity while the One God grows stronger every day.

**Background:** Druids begin their training as early as possible, preferably before the age of ten. Many druids were rescued either by druids or by wild animals after their parents were killed by a dangerous predator or in one of the many skirmishes being waged throughout the land.

**Other Roles:** Druids get along well with any follower of the Old Faith but especially prefer the company of minstrels during their travels.

**Role:** The druid is an adept capable of controlling the weather to damage the party's enemies, slow their

insufferably arrogant. Either way, other bloodlines tend to view the nobility with some suspicion.

**Lands:** The smallest percentage of the population, the nobility owns the vast majority of the lands in any feudal society.

**Religion:** Nobles tend to be very skeptical of religious institutions, seeing them as a rival to the power of the nobility. Too often has piety caused a noble to fall under the sway of a powerful church, and many nobles prefer their own judgment to that of some distant god.

**Adventurers:** Noble adventurers are very common in Arthurian legend. Kings and princes abound in the tales, often fighting to win back their kingdom or defend it from rebels. Sometimes, however, as in the case of King Pellinore, being a king is a side job, while adventuring is the noble's true calling.

## LINEAGE TRAITS

- *Ability Adjustments:* +2 Charisma, -2 Strength. You are trained from a young age in the arts of leadership and manipulation. However, you rarely perform any real work.

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*When Sir Accolon saw this, he blessed him and said, Jesus save my lord King Arthur; and King Uriens, for these damosels in this ship have betrayed us, they were devils and no women; and if I may escape this misadventure, I shall destroy all where I may find these false damosels that use enchantments.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

movement or help his comrades escape when the battle goes against them.

**Feats:** Animal Empathy, Familiar, Night Vision, Track, Trackless, Trailblazer

**Powers:** Beast Link, Body Control, Cold Shaping, Cure Disease, Earth Shaping, Elemental Aura, Elemental Resistance, Elemental Weapon, Enhance Senses, Fire Shaping, Nature Reading, Plant Shaping, Self Shaping, Water Shaping, Weather Shaping, Wind Shaping

**Skills:** Handle Animal, Ride, Survival

### ENCHANTRESS

The enchantress is a common type of female magician in Arthurian legend, one whose magic is intertwined with feminine beauty. Using a combination of magic and their natural wiles, these women wrap knights around their little fingers and assemble legions of stout warriors who follow their every command out of love.

**Adventures:** The enchantress is much less likely to be found rummaging around an ancient crypt seeking lost knowledge than the hedge mage. These adepts are much more at home in places of intrigue, seeking out powerful men they can bend to their will.

**Characteristics:** The enchantress is beguiling in every sense of the word, both magical and mundane. She often does not need to resort to magic to get her way. Subtlety is her stock in trade.

**Religion:** The enchantress is as likely to follow no faith as she is the Old Faith or the One God. The only difference is in how the respective religions see *her*. To the Old Faith, the power of a woman's beauty is one of the fundamental mysteries of life and pursuing that path to power is regarded with respect and even awe. To followers of the One God, an overt reliance on a woman's beauty leads to sin and should be discouraged. Since enchantresses tend to be subtle however, they are found through the Arthurian world as members of all communities and religions.

**Background:** Like most adepts, enchantresses often begin their training early and there is much speculation about how much of their abilities are learned and how much is a part of them. To followers of the Old Faith a life as an enchantress is a calling, a destiny. To followers of the One God it is a conscious choice, like all sin.

**Other Roles:** Enchantresses are found with characters of all roles and work well with them, though they will most often be encountered in the presence of someone big



enough and strong enough to protect them.

**Role:** The enchantress is a spell caster who focuses on subtle magic and serves as an excellent complimentary party member, rather than a flashy adept or frontline warrior.

**Feats:** Attractive, Banter, Connected, Contacts, Leadership, Subtle Power, Taunt

**Powers:** Bliss, Dominate, Heart Reading, Heart Shaping, Illusion, Sleep, Suggestion, Truth Reading

**Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information

### HEDGE MAGE

Arthurian tales are full of stories of those who follow the "black arts": necromancy, prophecy, and other dark forces that put the immortal soul in peril. The church has declared these arts off limits, but it is often their own power-hungry priests and scribes who preserve knowledge of the black arts. Morgan le Fay learned necromancy in the nunnery Uther sent her to after wedding her mother Igraine.

**Adventures:** Hedge mages adventure on the fringes of the Arthurian world, distrusted even by those they aid, for despite their power, especially their ability to divine the

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*And through the wit of Merlin, he had the host northward, the priviest way that could be thought, unto the forest of Bedegraine, and there in a valley he lodged them secretly. Then rode Merlin unto Arthur and the two kings, and told them how he had sped; whereof they had great marvel, that man on earth might speed so soon, and go and come.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

future, all who associate with practitioners of the dark arts put their own souls in jeopardy (or so they think).

**Characteristics:** Hedge mages cast spells by tapping *Ley Lines*, rivers of magical energy that course through Britannia like blood through a king's veins. This makes hedge mages closely related to druids, who also tap this energy, though focused at holy sites to their faith such as henges and magical lakes.

**Religion:** Hedge mages care little for the One God, and even less for the way his followers tend to treat the earth, as their dominion, to be used (and abused) as best suits their current short-sighted interests. The Old Faith, however, with its veneration of the earth, and ability to concentrate ley energy at holy sites, is a religion often practiced by hedge mages.

**Background:** Hedge mages develop their powers early, especially the second sight which is their hallmark. Often they are born with some sort of birthmark, such as a moon or sliver, and even the parents of such children can succumb to their superstitions, shunning them, calling them "changelings".

**Other Roles:** Hedge mages care little for priests and the One God. Druids are especially respected, and knights are often seen in their company, gaining valuable insight and guidance.



**Role:** Hedge magic is more subtle than that employed by either druids or priests, causing this class to operate behind the scenes, using guile and their second sight to manipulate events to their advantage.

**Feats:** Assessment, Canny Dodge, Eidetic Memory, Familiar, Light Sleeper, Mind Over Body, Night Vision

**Powers:** Apport, Earth Shaping, Enhance Other, Heart Reading, Illusion, Mind Probe, Mind Reading, Mind Shaping, Mind Touch, Pain, Scrying, Second Sight, Sleep, Teleport, Truth Reading, Visions, Weather Shaping

**Skills:** Concentration, Diplomacy, Disguise, Knowledge (earth sciences, history, physical sciences, supernatural, theology and philosophy), Notice, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand

### HERMIT

The hermit is the other divine adept in Arthurian tales, the legendary healer and surgeon. Rather than seeking the power and influence of the Church of Rome, the hermit prefers a life of quiet contemplation of the mysteries of the One God, and is always ready to help those who need his healing skills.

**Adventures:** In Legends of Excalibur, the hermit's adventures usually come to him. While living his solitary life, a wandering knight will come seeking healing. Hermits would be the Arthurian equivalent of everyone's favorite country doctor, providing healing and curmudgeonly wit as they accompany more combat oriented characters on adventures.

**Characteristics:** The hermit has potent healing abilities, both magical and mundane, and combines these with outdoorsmanship due to his life away from civilization. Through his knowledge of medicine and healing herbs, the hermit is also adept at making healing potions, usually called poultices in Legends of Excalibur to aid the recovery of his patients.

**Religion:** The hermit is a worshipper of the One God, just as priests are. However, he shuns the political machinations that are one of the hallmarks of the priest class, searching for a more personal relationship with his god. This is not to say the hermit will not be seen performing good deeds. Hermits routinely seem to offer healing and shelter to knights in the tales with no thought of reward, and many tend to the sick and seek alms for the poor as well.

**Background:** Hermits come from all backgrounds,

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*Right so the king and he departed, and went unto an hermit that was a good man and a great leech. So the hermit searched all his wounds and gave him good salves; so the king was there three days, and then were his wounds well amended that he might ride and go, and so departed.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

from the highest to the lowest-born. Their reasons for seeking a life of quiet contemplation are just as varied.

**Other Roles:** The healing abilities of the hermit, the most potent of any role, make them a welcome companion to all characters. The only roles hermits tend to have trouble getting along with are priests. Many hermits dislike the wealth and trappings and concern with temporal power that goes along with rank in the Church of Rome. Other roles hold the hermit in high esteem, and many quest knights, such as Percival, take up the profession of hermit when their adventuring days are done.

**Role:** The hermit is the best healer in the game, able to heal through skill, magic, and potion.

**Feats:** Canny Dodge, Iron Will, Light Sleeper, Mind Over Body, Supernatural Tower

**Powers:** Body Control, Calm, Cure, Cure Blindness/Deafness, Cure Disease, Cure Poison, Heart Reading, Nature Reading, Scrying, Truth Reading, Visions

**Skills:** Concentration, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Knowledge (earth sciences, history, life sciences, theology and philosophy), Medicine, Sense Motive, Survival

### PRIEST

The priest is the divine healer of Legends of Excalibur, charged not only with the divine power of the One God, but also with the temporal power and backing of the Church of Rome. At high levels, Priests are extremely influential, able to gain the ear of a king through their ability to enforce Papal will and absolve sin. However, their power also puts them at odds with nobility who want to decide the fate of their subjects alone, not under the thumb of a distant Pope.

**Adventures:** Priests often find themselves involved in quests of their own, or aiding knights in quests, to recover holy relics or retake holy lands overrun by “infidels”. At higher levels, priests can give these quests to their followers. Because of their involvement in politics, priests are often involved in the mundane adventures of the knight as well, aiding one side or another in the dynastic struggles



of the day.

**Characteristics:** The priest has healing magic and abilities, and also the ability to inspire the faithful and sway them to his cause. The priest can also convert those of different religions to the worship of the One God, transforming an enemy to a friend.

**Religion:** Although all priests worship the One God (as opposed to Druids who worship older faiths) they frequently disagree on all aspects of that deity’s nature. Judaism, Islam, Catholicism, and even more obscure variations such as Aryanism and Zoroastrianism all worship the One God. However, the tenets of these individual religions could not be more different, and often these sects spend more time fighting with one another than they do helping their followers. In Arthurian tales, all priests serving a faith other than Christianity should be prepared for the assumption that they are at best substandard, and at worst the enemy. Priests of the Church of Rome are the only characters seen in Legends of Excalibur, which takes a decidedly Christian view of Arthur and his knights. Saracens *do* appear in the tales (the medieval term for Muslims and Arabs, especially when talking about opponents of crusaders), usually represented as honorable opponents, with the truly virtuous Saracens “seeing the light” and converting to Christianity.

**Background:** Priests come from all backgrounds, and it is not uncommon for those of Common and Middle Class bloodlines to pursue the priesthood as a career. Peers and Royals also use the priesthood as a career for younger sons,

*So the Archbishop, by the advice of Merlin, sent for all the lords and gentlemen of arms that they should come by Christmas even unto London. And many of them made them clean of their life, that their prayer might be the more acceptable unto God.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

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along with military service.

**Other Roles:** A priest's healing ability makes him much sought-after by knights and others engaging in battle. However, his service of, and allegiance to, the Church of Rome also makes him a target of suspicion, especially from nobles, who see the priest as a rival for their control over the hearts and minds of their subjects.

**Role:** Priests are primarily healers, but are able to fight when called upon.

**Feats:** Armor Training, Benefit, Iron Will, Leadership, Supernatural Focus, Supernatural Talent, Wealthy, Weapon Training

**Powers:** Calm, Cure, Cure Blindness/Deafness, Cure Disease, Cure Poison, Heart Reading, Heart Shaping, Imbue Life, Severance, Supernatural Weapon, Truth Reading, Ward

**Skills:** Concentration, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (history, theology and philosophy), Medicine, Sense Motive

## EXPERT ARCHETYPES

### FOOL

The fool is part minstrel, part bard, part actor, part juggler, part tumbler, with his entire physical and mental prowess bent toward one aim: to make those around him laugh. Fools often find employment in the courts of Kings, where they live on the razor's edge of their wit, making light of the most serious around them, often in bitter and sarcastic tones. When not under the protection of the powerful, Fools

count on that same wit to protect them, or the speed of their feet to get them away from those with no sense of humor. All fools revere the king of fools, Dagonet, dubbed Sir Fool by Gawain, and actually admitted to the fellowship of the Table Round, as the undisputed master of their craft.

Fools often accompany knights on dangerous adventures, lending their wit to quests too often doleful and dangerous. Although not Arthurian (except in inspiration) one can find no better example of the knight and his fool than Don Quixote and Sancho Panza (although one could certainly debate which was the knight and which was the fool).

**Adventures:** The fool seeks only amusement, and cares little for wealth or glory. More often than not, a fool will go to great lengths, risking his life in the process, for the sake of a joke, even if the joke ends up being on him.

**Characteristics:** Fools are light of foot and light of tongue, able to engage in stealth, acrobatics, and sleight of hand, but also able to talk their way out of almost any situation.

**Religion:** Fools care little for religion, except as the butt of their many jokes. The more any group takes themselves seriously, the more likely they are to come under assault by the fool's tongue.

**Background:** Fools almost universally hail from the lowest social castes, and are often deformed or physically stunted in some way. But these were not made to till the soil and slave for a lord, and so at an early age most fools have slipped away into the night, and found themselves in the company of likeminded troubadours and wandering minstrels. After an "apprenticeship" with these itinerate entertainers, a fool will seek a patron to entertain and enliven.

**Other Roles:** Fools complement all roles with their stealth, acrobatics and wit.

**Role:** The fool is part rogue and part minstrel, and is able to provide elements of both classes to any adventuring party.

**Feats:** Acrobatic Bluff, Banter, Challenge, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll, Dodge Focus, Evasion, Far Shot, Improved Defense, Improved Evasion, Lightning Reflexes, Lucky, Second Chance, Snatch Arrows, Taunt, Uncanny Dodge

**Skills:** Acrobatics, Bluff, Climb, Disguise, Escape Artist, Jump, Perform, Sleight of Hand

### MINSTREL

Minstrels are the bards of the Old Faith, trained by the druids to aid in the cultural advancement of the people, especially the Welsh and Irish folk who see music and song and story as integral to their religious life. These are no mere entertainers, however, for in times of trouble, the minstrels aid the druids in the defense of the people.

**Adventures:** Minstrel adventures will usually be in support of a knight or noble, who wants the minstrel to enhance his reputation. However, minstrels can work magic with their songs, and their value to any quest is overlooked

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only by the foolish.

**Characteristics:** The minstrel combines the power of song with the ability to enhance fame, and to work the magic of the druid into a potent mix. In Welsh and Irish society, the minstrel is equal in heroic stature to the warrior, and many great heroes are minstrels as well as warriors.

**Religion:** Minstrels are, by definition, followers of the Old Faith, and work in concert with the druids to see to the needs of the worshippers of the older gods, slowly being driven into extinction by the One God.

**Background:** Minstrels come from all backgrounds and social classes. Among the Welsh and Irish there is no social stigma for a nobleman becoming a minstrel, indeed it is considered a badge of honor by most in these societies. Minstrels of a lower class background will seek to attach themselves to a wealthy patron, using their ability to bring him fame and enhance his reputation to earn an easy living for themselves.

**Other Roles:** Minstrels and druids consider one another kin, and regard their mission as the same- to serve the Old Faith and its worshippers, tending to the health, both

*Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye so, Sir Fool?'  
Wheeled round on either heel, Dagonet replied,  
'Belike for lack of wiser company;  
Or being fool, and seeing too much wit  
Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip  
To know myself the wisest knight of all.'*

*-Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

*Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards?  
"Confusion, and illusion, and relation,  
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion?"*

*-Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

physical and spiritual, of their people. Green knights, with their connection to nature are also respected, as are nobles who follow the Old Faith. Nobles and priests of the One God, however, are viewed with suspicion, but also a sort of fatalism, since the decline of the Old Faith in the face of the One God seems inevitable.

**Role:** The minstrel keeps the party in good spirits, defending them with his songs and his odes. He is also a competent adept and outdoorsman.

**Feats:** Animal Empathy, Connected, Contacts, Fascinate, Jack-of-All-Trades, Light Sleeper, Lucky, Mass Suggestion, Night Vision, Suggestion, Track, Trackless, Trailblazer, Well-Informed

**Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Medicine, Perform, Survival, Swim

### NOBLE

Nobles are at the top of the feudal system of interweaving responsibilities and obligations. Skilled at diplomacy and leadership, they carry a small spark of the divine that binds them to the land and their subjects. Their power is thus both temporal and divine.

**Adventures:** Noble adventures will tend to revolve around politics, plotting, and dynastic rivalries. In Legends of Excalibur, the nobles must choose between Arthur's divinely ordained rule, and the lesser nobles who oppose him.

*On New Year's Day we saw him in his estate, which was the royalest that ever we saw, for he was served at his table with nine kings, and the noblest fellowship of other princes, lords, and knights that be in the world, and every knight approved and like a lord, and holdeth Table Round: and in his person the most manly man that liveth, and is like to conquer all the world...*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

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**Characteristics:** Nobles are an embodiment of the feudal system, representing the ideal mix of military might, wealth, and divine influence. As such they are supported by fellow members of that system, such as the knighthood, but are often made the target of those who dislike the current way things are handled, such as the lowborn.

**Religion:** Although nobles rule in the name of a deity, and indeed carry a spark of his power, they are the rivals of the clergy, with each group seeing themselves as the designated representative of the One God on Earth. Although the clergy and nobility recognize their need for one another, frequent clashes erupt between them over ultimate control. When they work together, they are an irresistible force, but they must put aside their own petty rivalries to do so.

**Background:** Most nobles were born into luxury, trained from birth to lead men and deal with backstabbers who would steal the heritage of their family line. A rare few earn their way into the nobility, having risen from common blood through great deeds for a king or other high-ranking noble.

**Other Roles:** Nobles have a close relationship with knights, ordaining them, giving them quests, and leading them into battle. Although divine magic is much sought after, and a priest is an ideal advisor for a noble, he is always wary of the adversarial nature of the institutions of the nobility and the clergy.

**Role:** The noble is a leader, both in times of peace and

times of war. In battle, he serves to inspire others, but is a highly capable combatant in his own right.

**Feats:** Armor Training, Attack Focus, Benefit (the character must take this feat with the status of nobility to be a true noble), Connected, Contacts, Fascinate, Inspire (Awe, Competence, Courage, Fear), Leadership, Lucky, Master Plan, Shield Training, Vehicular Combat (with the Ride skill), Wealthy, Weapon Training

**Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Ride, Sense Motive

### ROBBER BARON

Robber barons are knights with no adherence to the code of chivalry. These men steal from the weak, engage in banditry, and hide behind the guise of knighthood when it suits them. Many robber barons take up arms in the service of Arthur's enemies, the lords and petty dukes who band together to destroy the Boy King early in his reign. Some of these knights repent, becoming true knights, but most are either killed, or retreat into the wild lands and continue their raids on the helpless.

**Adventures:** The robber baron will seek to increase his wealth and fame through his adventures. The quickest means to this will be his adventure of choice, which will occasionally mean posing as a true knight.

**Characteristics:** Robber barons are good combatants, but not nearly as good in a "fair" fight as a knight or a warrior. Fortunately, robber barons care nothing about fairness or the code of chivalry, and use guile to supplement their deficiencies in combat.

**Religion:** Robber barons care nothing for religion of any sort. If put in a situation where religion is a way to get ahead, most will play along, pretending to worship the One God, or the Old Faith, just as long as it serves their interests. True piety is almost unheard of among these ruffians, however. They are too concerned with the here and now of the physical world to worry about an afterlife.

**Background:** Robber barons come from all walks of life, from the criminal, rising up from desperate poverty, to the royal raiding his own subjects for sadistic pleasure.

**Other Roles:** The robber baron has no particular problem with any of the other roles, as long as they don't get in his way. Knights, especially quest knights and white knights, are avoided, as these heroes will seriously cramp the robber baron's "style", and things will usually come to

*What, said Sir Launcelot, is he a thief  
and a knight and a ravisher of women?  
He doth shame unto the order of  
knighthood, and contrary unto his oath;  
it is pity that he liveth.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

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blows. The robber baron tends not to fare well in these confrontations, so he will simply move on and avoid extended contact, playing the part of a roguish knight for as long as possible.

**Role:** The robber baron is a cross between the rogue and knight, and is used to represent the many knights seen in Legends of Excalibur who are more bandit than knight.

**Feats:** Armor Training, Attractive, Benefit (status of knighthood or nobility if the character plans to be a “real” knight), Connected, Contacts, Crippling Strike, Dodge Focus, Lucky, Move-by Action, Sneak Attack, Stunning Attack, Taunt, Vehicular Combat (with the Ride skill), Weapon Training, Well Informed

**Skills:** Bluff, Disguise, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Notice, Ride, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Stealth

### SKALD

The skald is a poet who accompanies military units, fighting alongside them, recording their heroic deeds, and keeping their spirits high both during and between battles. While the minstrel is the bard most commonly found among the Welsh and the Irish, the skald will most commonly be found in Saxon and Scottish communities.

**Adventures:** Skalds are at home in a variety of adventure settings, but excel at combat. This is not to say the skald is incapable of subtlety, merely that, while he is better in combat than a minstrel or a bard, he is not as skilled at subterfuge as those types of characters.

**Characteristics:** A skald is slightly less capable in combat than a warrior, but is able to hold his own. Where he really shines is in making those around him fight better, keeping their morale high and working them into a fever pitch when necessary.

**Religion:** A skald’s religion will depend more on his cultural upbringing than his profession. Depending on their background and personal tastes, one could find skalds ranging from the most devout to complete unbelievers in anything they cannot feel or touch.

**Background:** Skalds tend to come from middle class and common bloodlines. Many are retired warriors, who have grown too old to see service on the front lines, but still seek the excitement of battle. These skalds are highly prized, as they have seen many battles, and can lend their wisdom to younger warriors, aiding them in their pursuit of victory.

**Other Roles:** Skalds and warriors of all kinds (knights, marauders and yeomen) share a mutual respect. Each sees in the other a kindred spirit, and the wily warrior knows that the skald can enhance his reputation tremendously.

**Role:** The skald is primarily a support character, with a range of abilities, both combat and non-combat in nature.

**Feats:** All-out Attack, Armor Training, Inspire (Courage, Fear, Fury), Mass Suggestion, Night Vision, Startle, Suggestion, Track, Trailblazer, Uncanny Dodge, Weapon Training



**Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Medicine, Perform, Survival

## WARRIOR ARCHETYPES

### CRUSADER

Crusaders are knights dedicated to the recovery of holy relics, the defense of holy lands and combat against infidels, including Saxons, Saracens and followers of the Old Faith.

**Adventures:** The crusader adventures on behalf of the One God, sometimes taking orders from the church and at other times following his own conscience in defense of his beliefs. His adventures often take him beyond Britain and into the holy lands of Jerusalem, overrun with infidels during Arthur’s reign. Many crusaders take up the Grail Quest as well.

**Characteristics:** The crusader is a disciplined warrior who works with the church.

**Religion:** Crusaders are almost always followers of the One God but, like all worshipers of the One God there are many different sects which often come into conflict with one another. For example both the Christian and Saracen crusaders fighting over the Holy Land are both followers of different faiths of the One God.

**Background:** Crusaders come from a variety of backgrounds but most are knights with a particular love for the church of the One God. Galahad was a crusader after Arthur’s death and died in the Holy Land after returning the Grail to Jerusalem. Others of humble birth decide on their own to become faithful warriors.

**Other Roles:** The crusader works very well with knights and priests, preferring the company of those who are servants of the One God most of all.

**Role:** The crusader is a warrior who defends the church

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and protects weaker party members.

**Feats:** Armor Training, Attack Focus, Attack Specialization, Dedicated, Diehard, Endurance, Favored Opponent (infidels), Lucky, Second Chance, Shield Training, Smite Opponent, Tireless, Tough, Vehicular Combat (with the Ride skill)

**Skills:** Diplomacy, Intimidate, Ride, Survival

### KNIGHT

The knight is the tank of the medieval battlefield, combining power with mobility. Although in the minds of many the knight was a symbol of national power, he was never the unquestioned king of the battlefield, often being felled by the bow and the polearm. In the literature of the time, the knight was also the symbol of the heroic code of Chivalry.

**Adventures:** Knight adventures fall into two broad categories: military and questing. Many of a knight's adventuring opportunities will be military in nature. Arthurian England is a tumultuous realm wracked with civil war and barbarian incursions. The lack of cohesive government, particularly of a king has also allowed monsters and dangerous animals to multiply unchecked. Quests are the more fantastic adventures, involving the pursuit of magical beasts, slaying giants, or the pursuit of powerful items of power such as the legendary Holy Grail or the Lance of Longinus.

**Characteristics:** The knight is the ultimate mounted warrior. While the warrior is an excellent all around

*"Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May!  
Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!  
Blow thro' the living world- 'Let the King reign!'"*

*"Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?  
Flash brand and lance, fall battle-axe upon helm,  
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the King reign!"*

*"Strike for the King and live! His knights have heard  
That God hath told the King a secret word.  
Fall battle-axe and flash brand! Let the King reign!"*

*"Blow trumpet! He will lift us from the dust.  
Blow trumpet! Live the strength and die the lust!  
Clang battle-axe and clash brand! Let the King reign!"*

*"Strike for the king and die! And if thou diest,  
The King is king, and ever wills the highest.  
Clang battle-axe and clash brand! Let the King reign!"*

*"Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!  
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!  
Clang battle-axe and clash brand! Let the King reign!"*

*"The King will follow Christ, and we the King,  
In whom the high God hath breathed a secret thing.  
Fall battle-axe and flash brand! Let the King reign!"*

*-Song of the Round Table, Alfred Lord Tennyson,  
Idylls of the King*

combatant, the knight has special abilities that set him apart from any other class in the saddle.

**Religion:** Some knights are worldly, serving nothing more celestial than the lord they have sworn fealty to. However, many knights have a strong religious view, either for the One God, or the Old Faith. Often, these religious institutions are the source of the knight's quests, and many knights are passionately devout, nearing the paladin in religious zeal.

**Background:** Knights typically come from the lesser nobility, or the peerage, and are trained from a young age to use their superior weaponry and skill at horsemanship to be the backbone of the medieval army. For characters of less noble birth, knighthood is often a goal all its own, and many Arthurian tales revolve around the commoner taking a job in the kitchens of Camelot, watching the knights and dreaming of the day he can join their ranks.

**Other Roles:** Knights are most like crusaders, and the two professions are often seen side by side. In fact many knights desire to be crusaders, but have never been able to rise to quite so holy a calling. Priests and druids are respected, and are often sought out both for healing, and to advise the knight on his more esoteric quests. Nobles and knights have a symbiotic relationship, with the knight

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protecting the noble's lands, and the noble providing the knight with direction and leadership. Knights do not care for barbarians, since many of his battles have been against them, and robber barons are particularly despised.

**Role:** Outdoors, the knight is the best combatant a party could want, providing speed, mobility, and raw power. Indoors his role is much like that of a warrior, providing protection for weaker party members and an extra frontline warrior.

**Feats:** Armor Training, Attack Focus, Attack Specialization, Benefit (the character must take this feat with the status of knighthood or nobility to be a true knight), Dedicated (many knights choose a particular cause to attach themselves to), Diehard, Endurance, Great Attack Focus, Greater Attack Specialization, Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Tireless, Vehicular Combat (with the Ride skill)

**Skills:** Handle Animal, Intimidate, Ride

### MARAUDER

The marauders are the rampaging hordes of the Saxons that have invaded Britain following the departure of the Romans. Against these warriors who fight for bloodlust and the spoils of victory stand Arthur and his noble knights.

**Adventures:** The marauder loves to be in the thick of battle. If there is no tribal enemy to fight or money to be won, the marauder will sell his blade to the nearest army. Some characters fight for ideology, others for national pride or the defense of their homes. The marauder just likes to fight.

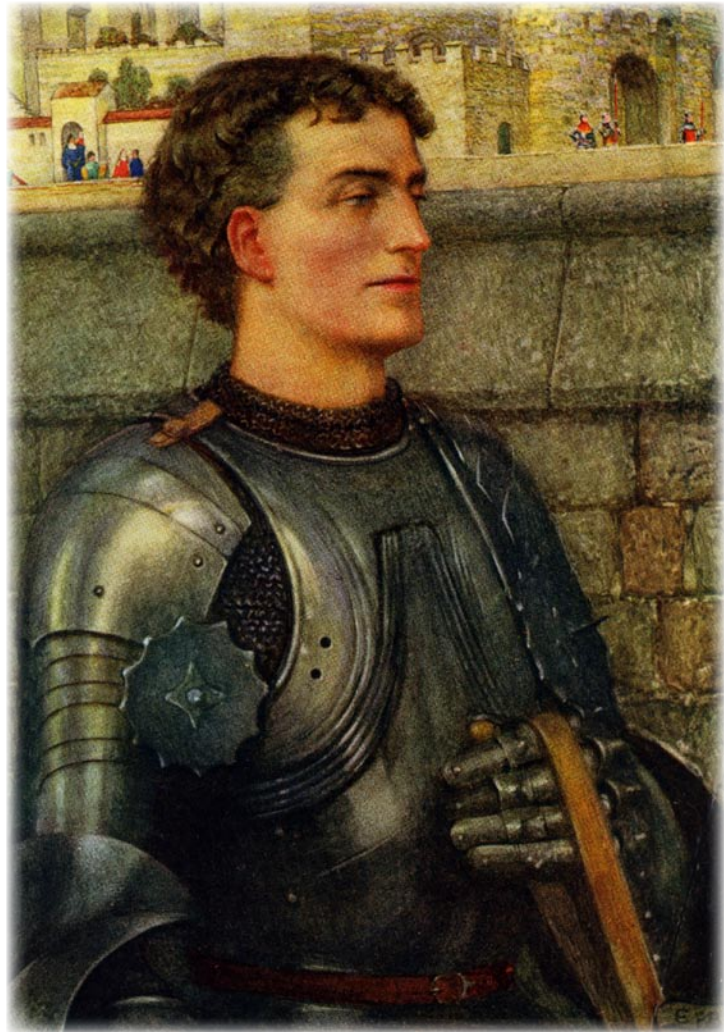
**Characteristics:** A berserker at heart, he prefers the large axes and furs of his homeland. Although other barbarians conform and learn to fight like "civilized" folk, the marauder draws strength from the weapons and armor of his home and uses these items to much better effect than should be possible. When combined with his ability to enter a berserker fury, these traits make the marauder nearly invincible in combat.

**Nobility:** The marauder cares little for nobility. His standing in polite society means nothing to him; only his reputation as a warrior among his own people matters.

**Religion:** Although many barbarians have converted to the One God, the marauder is more likely than most to hold to the pagan religion of his homeland and worship the Old Faith. As they come into contact with missionaries and the religions of the One God, however, a great number of marauders convert.

**Background:** Marauders receive little formal training in combat, but are usually taught the basics by an older male relative. At a surprisingly early age, this training is put to use in real combat, where the marauder's true warrior training begins.

**Bloodline:** Marauders come almost exclusively from the barbarian bloodline.



**Other Roles:** The marauder prefers the company of other barbarians and thus favors roles most commonly taken by members of that bloodline: the skald, mercenary and soldier.

**Role:** The marauder is a tank and serves to protect weaker party members in melee combat.

**Feats:** All-out Attack, Armor Training, Attack Focus, Attack Specialization, Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Attack Focus, Greater Attack Specialization, Improved Critical, Improved Speed, Improved Sunder, Light Sleeper, Night Vision, Rage, Seize Initiative, Startle, Tough, Track, Trailblazer, Uncanny Dodge

**Skills:** Intimidate, Survival

### YEOMAN

Woodsman, hunter, and archer, the yeoman is a fixture of British legend from Arthur to Robin Hood to William Tell.

**Adventures:** The yeoman is most at home in the outdoors, where his ability to track and use stealth is most useful, and where he can best pick his enemies off from afar with his archery skills, which are significant.

**Characteristics:** Yeomen are good all around combatants, but really shine when able to make full use of

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*At Yule last he made me yeoman, and gave to me horse and harness, and an hundred pound in money; and if fortune be my friend, I doubt not but to be well advanced and [of aid to] my liege lord.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

their archery abilities. They lack the toughness and armor to go toe to toe with a knight or warrior for an extended period of time, but in open areas, particularly outdoors, the yeoman's skills make him the best long-range sniper in the game.

**Religion:** Yeomen have no particular religious connection, nor do they have a natural aversion to worship, running the gamut from piety to complete irreverence.

**Background:** Yeomen tend to be of the Middle Class or Common bloodlines, and their financial standing ranges from bordering on starvation to landowners with almost the same standing as a knight.

**Other Roles:** Yeomen work well with other characters, providing long-range combat ability. Yeomen also work well with a knight or warrior to stand up front and keep the enemy pinned down while they rain down fire from afar.

**Role:** The yeoman is a long-range combat specialist, and also a competent scout and outdoorsman.

**Feats:** Accurate Attack, Attack Focus, Attack Specialization, Far Shot, Greater Attack Focus, Greater Attack Specialization, Improved Initiative, Improved Precise Shot, Improved Ranged Disarm, Light Sleeper, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Ranged Pin, Track, Trailblazer, Uncanny Dodge

**Skills:** Climb, Craft (bowyer), Notice, Stealth, Survival



## CHARACTERISTICS



### VIRTUES AND VICES

Characters in Arthurian legend are always taking oaths to perform certain actions (or to avoid performing them). These oaths work with the Virtues and Vices in the standard game. Normally an oath is a virtue for the character than takes it and following that oath faithfully can help a character recover Conviction more quickly by following his nature. Some oaths are expected of certain archetypes and if a character *refuses* to take the oath this might actually be considered a vice for the character.

### CODE OF CHIVALRY

Characters with this allegiance vow to be of brave, gentle (not overly cruel in this context), and honest. Taking this vow is required of characters who are knights (those who have the Benefit (knighthood) feat). If a character takes this vow with no intent to carry it out that is considered one of the character's vices.

### OATH OF CELIBACY

Characters with this oath agree not to marry or be sexually active. Taking this vow is required of characters who are priests of the One God (those who have the Benefit (priest of the One God) feat). If a character takes this vow with no intent to carry it out that is considered one of the character's vices.

### OATH OF FEALTY (SPECIFIC PERSON)

You have sworn to serve a specific person, serving him within the bounds of the feudal system, including work and military service. Feudal service is highly prized in Arthurian society. This feat always applies to a narrator character of higher social status than you (but never of lower status than the Peer or Noble bloodline). All bloodlines except Criminal and Barbarian will be expected to take an oath of fealty. An oath of fealty is considered a virtue. If a character takes this oath with no intent to carry it out that is considered one of the character's vices.

### OATH OF POVERTY

An extreme oath. You have vowed to give all money you receive to the poor, even that required for your own sustenance. To feed yourself, you will have to beg. To fulfill this oath you must always give your possessions and wealth to the poor (these must be narrator characters) in order to keep your Wealth score at +0. Oaths of poverty are sometimes required for the character to enter

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an order of monks or the like. If a Hero takes this oath with no intent to carry it out that is considered one of the character's vices.

### OATH OF SILENCE

You have sworn not to speak, except when raising your voice in veneration of the One God. Like the oath of poverty such oaths are usually sworn at the behest of an order of monks. If a character takes this oath with no intent to carry it out that is considered one of the character's vices.

### NOBLESSE OBLIGE

You feel an obligation to those born with less than you. You attempt to use your status to care for those born with fewer advantages. Caring for them in this case could mean protecting them through force of arms or it could mean donating money and food to the poor. This vow is expected of those born into the Noble bloodline. If a Hero takes this vow with no intent to carry it out that is considered one of the character's vices.

### WORD IS YOUR BOND

You are honest almost to a fault. When you give your word willingly (in other words this does not apply if a vow is coerced from you somehow) you will die before you break it.

### FATE

Characters in Arthurian tales have destinies that, try as they might, they cannot escape. These destinies lead them to glory, fame, renown, power, and love. Just as often, these great men and women are fated to die, to break their marriage vows, and these fates are just as powerful as the ones that lifted them to the heights.

Excalibur handles this through the use of Fate points and Destiny points. Any player may, during character creation, pick a *fate* for himself (with the Narrators permission). However, the character also has a secret *destiny*, which goes hand in hand with his fate, which the Narrator selects.

During the course of his adventures, a player may invoke his character's fate, spending Fate points. These points work identically to Conviction and can be used for the same purpose. However, every time a character spends a Fate point, this gives the Narrator a destiny point, which he may spend, to modify die rolls, or to perform special actions, in order to make the character's destiny that much harder to resist.

**Number of Fate and Destiny Points:** A Hero has a maximum number of Fate points equal to his maximum Conviction, as found on the level-dependant benefits table. The number Destiny points a character possesses is equal to the total number of Fate points he has spent minus the number of Destiny points the narrator has spent to ensure his destiny comes to pass.



**More than One Fate:** A player may select more than one fate for his character. In fact, there is no limit to the number of fates a character may select, except that he must receive the Narrators permission for each fate so selected. However, for each fate a character selects, he receives another destiny, and having more than one fate does not increase the number of Fate points a character receives.

**Finite vs. Infinite Fates:** There are two types of fates a character can choose: finite or infinite. Finite fates are fates that represent an attainable goal. This could be a short-term goal, such as winning an important tournament or battle. Or it could be a longer-term goal, one that requires a series of adventures to complete. Examples of this kind of fate would be to make a long dangerous sea-voyage to discover an unknown land, or Gawaine's promise to kill Pellinore, the man who killed his father, Lot.

Infinite fates dominate the character's entire life, and can never truly be fulfilled. Examples might include being the "bravest knight of the Round Table" or "greatest jousting in all England." The latter might seem attainable, but even if the character is considered the greatest jousting, it's something he must continually maintain.

**Fate and Destiny Intertwined:** Regardless of the magnitude of a character's fate, his destiny should be tied into the fate he chooses in an ironic way. For example a character that chooses the fate to be the "greatest jousting in all England" might end up facing his long-lost brother in

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a jousting tournament. This would cause the character a great deal of anxiety whether he won or lost, and he might very well end up killing his brother in that tournament.

**Evolving Fate:** A character that chooses a finite event for his fate, such as winning a single battle, can, upon the completion of that task, take a new fate for his character. However, all destiny points remain, and a character that exchanges one fate for another must face the possibility that his destiny will become more severe. A character should only be allowed to change his fate when the narrator feels he has accomplished the task or goal set for his character, not at a time convenient for the player. However, he may still add new fates with the Narrators permission.

**Example:** To illustrate how fate and destiny work, and how they play together, let's use the famous character of Arthur, pretending he is a player character. When creating his character, Arthur's player decides to select two powerful fates destined to make his character famous and powerful. He selects "to wield the sword Excalibur" and "rule all of England" as his fates. Since he selected two fates, the narrator then secretly selects two destinies, and chooses "to be betrayed by the two people he loves most in the world" and "to be killed by his son Mordred in battle".

## USES FOR FATE POINTS

Fate points operate exactly like Conviction and can be spent for the same purposes.

## USES FOR DESTINY POINTS

Destiny points are spent by the narrator for the following purposes:

- To automatically confirm a critical made by a narrator character (if dying in an encounter would fulfill your destiny).
- To activate a "plot point", an unlikely event that would further your destiny (such as the challenger in the finals of a jousting tournament being your long lost brother).
- To heal a narrator whose destiny is entwined with the player's (such as a narrator character destined to kill the player or die in the player's stead).

## RECOVERING FATE AND DESTINY POINTS

Fate is fickle and a character cannot always rely on it. A character regains one point of Fate each day up to his current maximum. Destiny points never recover by themselves. Each player's pool of Destiny points is increased when he spends Fate points.



## NEW FEATS

### BANTER

You are adept at making witty (read: annoying) comments that distract your opponent in combat. When unarmored and unencumbered you add your Charisma modifier as a bonus to your Defense. This bonus is in addition to the standard bonus granted by Dexterity. You lose your bonus if you are wearing armor or carrying more than a light load.

## LAY ON HANDS

**Prerequisite:** Dedication (Old Faith or One God), Charisma +1

Your faith in your god is so devout you have acquired some minor healing abilities. This ability may be used once per day. As a full-round action you can grant a subject an immediate recovery check using your Charisma modifier +1 per 2 Warrior levels (round down but always at least +1) in place of their Constitution modifier. You can stabilize a dying character with a Cure check, Difficulty 10. This ability can be used on yourself in all the ways that the Cure supernatural power can be.

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## MULTIPLE POWER SOURCES

You are a rare individual capable of drawing from more than one source of power. You may choose which source to draw from and use the most advantageous power source. See *Sources of Power* below for more information on power sources.

## STANDARD BEARER

**Prerequisite:** Inspire

You have a distinctive standard that doubles the number of allies affected by your Inspire feat as well as the duration. This standard must be entrusted to a hearty, reliable servant (known as the standard bearer) because if it should fall, the inspiration granted to your allies will be transferred to your opponents for the full duration (2 rounds per Expert level). For example, if you were inspiring your soldiers for courage, your opponents would gain the benefits as if you had just inspired *them*. If you were instilling fear in your opponents, your own soldiers would have to save vs. the fear effect and so forth.

## WARRIOR'S MOUNT

**Prerequisite:** Handle Animal Rank 6, Ride Rank 6

You have a special warhorse with which you share an almost supernatural bond. This ability functions as the Familiar feat except that your Warrior levels are used to determine the abilities granted to your warhorse.



## SUPERNATURAL POWERS

Despite being legends primarily about a group of warriors, Arthurian legends are filled with magical creatures and those who can shape supernatural energies to their will, such as Merlin and Morgana. The magic in these legends had a distinctive feel so some additional rules for the use of supernatural powers in *Legends of Excalibur* are provided below.

## SOURCES OF POWER

All adepts in *Legends of Excalibur* have a “home ground” for their supernatural abilities, a location where they are much more formidable than they normally would be. These sources of power vary from caster to caster and are detailed below.

## CHOOSING A SOURCE OF POWER

Under most circumstances the narrator should allow characters to choose the source of their powers. There are guidelines below but the narrator can ignore these if there is a compelling reason provided by the player (though it is hard to imagine how a druid of the Old Faith would be empowered by the holy ground of a cathedral).

## MULTIPLE POWER SOURCES

Some adepts are able to tap different sources of energy. These adepts are greatly feared. To be able to tap multiple sources of power an adept must have the Multiple Power Source feat.

## ISOLATION

Some adepts are most powerful when isolated. Hermits and many hedge mages have this source of power.

Location	Modifier to Fatigue Saves / Power Check	Effective Adept Level
Metropolis (London, Paris, Rome)	-2	-1
City (Camelot, York, Pembroke)	-1	0
Town	+0	0
Hamlet (Manor house)	+1	0
Isolated (Dungeon, ruins, wasteland)	+2	+1
Wilderness (completely alone, not a soul for miles)	+2	+2

## LEY LINES

No one is completely sure of the connection between the Ley Lines tapped by arcane magic, and the henges that have been built by druids of the Old Faith throughout Britain over the millennia. What is known, is that major concentrations of this energy, called *veins*, always travel between henges. Minor sources of ley energy move around randomly.

There are those who feel the henges were built by the druids to sap the energy of the land, reducing the power of the supernatural to a level where it could be controlled. Many adepts, however, theorize that before the henges were created the great veins of energy moved randomly as well, causing terrible destruction and allowing creatures of darkness to roam unchecked. Whatever the reason and the nature of the ley energy, one can be sure to find many adepts making their homes along the powerful veins between henges. Many knights purposefully avoid these routes while questing, hoping to avoid being waylaid by an adept at the height of his power.

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The fact that a vein runs directly under the city of York has led that city to become home to countless adepts of every kind.

The Wasteland, the area surrounding the Grail Castle, was created by the *Dolorous Stroke*. This area has been leeched of almost all life, and tapping ley energy is extremely difficult there.

Location	Modifier to Fatigue Saves / Power Check	Effective Adept Level
Wasteland	-2	-1
Weak energy	-1	0
Neutral energy	0	0
Nearby source	+1	0
Nearby ribbon	+2	+1
Nearby vein	+2	+2

The Wasteland and veins are fixed locations and never occur randomly. Other energy sources are randomly determined. When an adventure takes place, roll on the following table. If the party is stationary, roll again in 2-12 days. If the party is traveling, roll again in 1-6 days.

Roll	Energy
1-3	Weak energy
4-11	Neutral energy
12-16	Nearby source
17-20	Nearby ribbon

### HENCES

Followers of the Old Faith draw their energy from ley lines but in a special way. Since the dawn of time, these followers have built special structures, called *henges*, a name that includes barrows, stone circles, and standing stones, at sites where ley lines intersect, to strengthen and harness that energy. Although they are capable of tapping ley lines, they do so less efficiently than other adepts, because of the holy reverence they bear for these ancient sites.

Location	Modifier to Fatigue Saves / Power Check	Effective Adept Level
The Wasteland	-2	-1
Weak energy	-1	0
Neutral energy	0	0
Ley Line nearby	+1	+0
Minor Henge nearby (1-2 intersecting Ley Lines)	+2	+1
Major Henge nearby (3 or more intersecting Ley Lines)	+2	+2

### HOLY GROUND

Some adepts draw power from areas of veneration and worship to the One God. Some believe the residual adoration of thousands of worshippers aids these adepts, while others believe it is the grandiose structures, designed to inspire worship that awaken deep feelings in the faithful. Still others believe that these structures have been touched by the One God Himself. Regardless of the reason, cathedrals and temples enhance the power of priests, and allow them to recover spiritual energy more quickly.

Location	Modifier to Fatigue Saves / Power Check	Effective Adept Level
Hallowed ground (rival god)	None	-1
Unhallowed ground		
Consecrated ground (rival god)	-1	0
Desecrated ground		
Neutral Ground	0	0
Consecrated Ground (Any roadside temple)	+1	0
Hallowed Ground (Any major cathedral, temple, monastery, or nunnery)	+2	+1
Major site of worship (Canterbury cathedral, Glastonbury monastery, Vatican)	+2	+2

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## THE TRAINING OF A KNIGHT

The Knights of the Table Round were universally regarded as the finest collection of knights in the world, and were composed of knights from all over the known world. However, before one could join the ranks of the Round Table, one first had to become a knight, no easy task itself.

### A PAGE'S LIFE FOR ME?

The first step toward knighthood was to become a page, also called a valet or varlet (this is one reason the word varlet is commonly used as a slander toward another knight- essentially you are referring to him as a boy who needs over 10 years of seasoning to become a true knight).

At age 7, a prospective knight was sent to live with a governor or patron, to be introduced to life at court. Their early education revolved around religion and obedience to superiors, as well as education in the history of England and all its kings and rulers.

Their duties involved waiting tables and carving meat at meals, working in the kitchen and stables, and generally performing all manner of menial tasks.

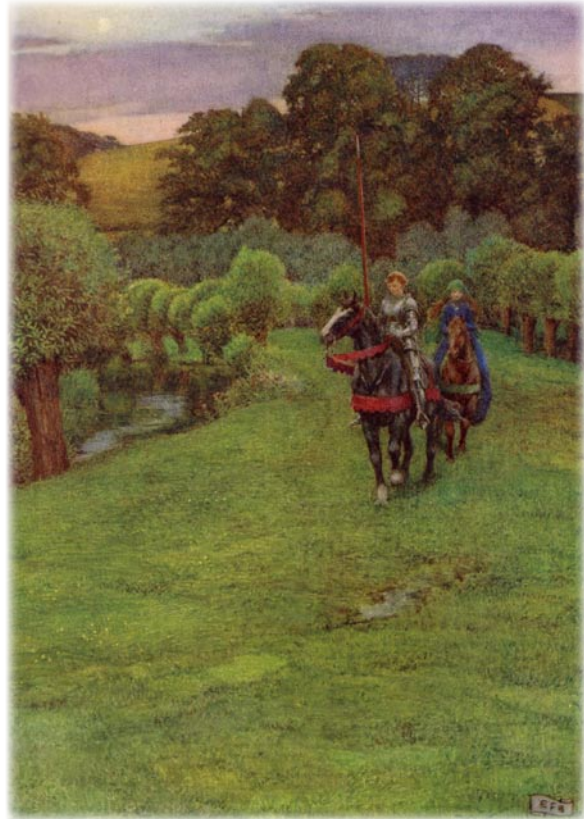
During their free time, pages engaged in hunting, falconry, fishing, wrestling, archery, horsemanship and tilting (hitting a stationary object, such as a wooden target with a spear on horseback). These activities, while certainly fun and engaging to an active young man, were also preparatory to the tasks a knight would have to undertake in earnest later in life.

### THE SQUIRE'S TALE

At fourteen, if a page is worthy, he is elevated to the rank of squire. Here, military training begins in earnest, and almost all of a squire's exercises were performed in armor, in order that he could become accustomed to its weight and carry it with ease in battle.

Horsemanship, vaulting into the saddle, running, jumping ditches, climbing walls and fences, all in full battle dress are performed by squires on a regular basis. Older squires are assigned to assist knights during tournaments and battles, carrying extra spears, tending to horses, and the like.

During a squire's free time, his education concentrated on refining the young man for his later role, and a great deal of this "sensitivity training" revolved around the opposite sex. When not on campaign, squires were housed in castles thronging with young girls of station undergoing a similar



training and refinement, and squires were encouraged to choose a girl as an object of their affection, and to wear some small token she would give them, such as a scarf, during their jousting exercises against other squires. Often these court dalliances turned into wives, but this was seen as a secondary benefit to the training of a young knight to fight on behalf of ladies and treat them with gentleness.

### DUBBING

A young squire's entry into the honored station of knighthood was handled with utmost solemnity. The squire would fast and pray for days, take confession and mass, and clothe himself in a pure white cloth. Finally, a sword was blessed by the confessional priest and tied around the squire's neck. After this was done, the squire made his way to a nearby chapel.

Waiting for the squire in the chapel would be a full-fledged knight, and the squire would kneel before him, arms folded over his chest. The knight would then question the squire about his motives for becoming a knight, after whom the knight would take the squire's oath of allegiance and name him a knight.

After this was done, the squire would remove the white cloth and sword, and onlookers would assist the squire in dressing as a knight: armor, spurs, gauntlets, and finally the

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sword he had worn around his neck would be belted to his waist. When this was done, the squire would kneel before the presiding knight once more, who would draw his own sword, and perform “the accolade”, three strokes with the flat of the blade on alternating shoulders, with each stroke accompanying the words “In the name of God, of Saint Michael, and St. George, I make thee knight; be valiant, courteous, and loyal!”

When this was done, the presiding knight would then give the squire his helmet, lance, and shield. The squire was now a knight.



## THE HISTORY OF ARTHURIAN BRITAIN

### AGE OF ANTIQUITY

In the earliest times, Britain was not inhabited by man at all, but by several races of giants (one reason why giants abound in Britain even after the time of Arthur) ruled by Albion, a son of Poseidon, and built numerous stone circles in which to perform bizarre rites of sacrifice and worship.

After many millennia, Hercules came to the island during his exploration of the world, seeking passage to the mysterious west. When Albion opposed him, Hercules killed him in an epic battle. After Hercules' departure, the giants set to tremendous wars with one another over who would rule the island, and these wars were so long and so terrible that the giants' numbers dwindled and dwindled, and the forests reclaimed the island and the land grew wild.

Over time the northern part of the island became occupied by the fierce men later known as the Picts and the Scots, while the Western Isle was settled by the Irish, for these areas had few giants, but the central area in later times called Britain was still too heavily populated by the giant folk for man to inhabit.

### THE COMING OF BRUTUS

Brutus was the son of Silvius, who was the son of Ascanius, who was the son of Aeneas. After killing his father accidentally while hunting, he was forced to flee Troy. And, after seeking refuge in Greece, Brutus and his followers fled west with his wife Imogen. Seeking guidance at a temple of Diana, Brutus receives this message:

*Brutus! Far to the west, in the ocean wide,  
Beyond the realm of Gaul, a land there lies,  
Seagirt it lies, where giants dwelt of old;  
Now, void, it fits thy people: thither bend  
Thy course; there shalt thou find a lasting seat;  
There to thy sons another Troy shall rise,  
And kings be born of thee, whose dreaded might*

*Shall awe the world, and conquer nations bold*

*-Bullfinch's Mythology, Mythical History of England*

After a long journey west, the rag-tag band of refugees landed at what is now Devonshire on an isle they called Albion after the giant king who formerly ruled it. Moving inland, Brutus established a capital, called Trojanova (New Troy), on the site of present day London.

After a reign of 24 years, Brutus died, leaving England divided between his three sons, Locrine, Albanect, and Camber.

According to legend these events took place approximately 1,000 years before the invasion of England by Julius Caesar.

### THE CONQUEST OF BRITAIN

After conquering Gaul, Julius Caesar cast his eye across the English Channel to Britain, and boldly embarked across the water, hoping to take the island and add it to his growing list of conquests. He moved his forces up the Thames, intending to take London, thereby decapitating the island nation and conquering it quickly and easily.

Caesar was not destined to conquer Britain during that campaign however, and was met with stiff resistance by King Cassibellaunus. At one point he engaged Prince Nennius in single combat, and Caesar's sword became stuck in the British prince's shield. When Caesar was forced to withdraw, his sword remained behind, much to the delight of the Britons.

*The famed Cassibelan, who was once at point  
(O giglot fortune!) to master Caesar's sword,  
Made Lud's town with rejoicing fires bright,  
And Britons strut with courage.  
-William Shakespeare, Cymbeline*

However, on a second try, Caesar conquered Britain, and forced the island to pay tribute to the Roman Empire, and took young prince Cymbeline as ransom, to be raised in Rome. When Cymbeline returned and took the throne, he was a very sympathetic ruler to Rome.

### THE DEPARTURE OF THE ROMANS

Although the invasion of Rome was resisted bitterly, the two peoples became very close over time. And when the Empire began to fall, and forces were called back from frontiers such as Britain in order to protect interior parts of the Empire from barbarian invasions, the Arthurian Age officially begins, with a newly independent, and newly defenseless, Britain at the mercy of invading Picts, Scots, and Saxons.

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## THE BIRTH OF MERLIN

Born of an incubus and a virtuous woman, Merlin seemed destined for a life of wickedness and deceit. However, his mother was able to avert most of his father's lineage through the help of a priest, who baptized the child immediately after his birth.

How Merlin began his career in the magical arts we do not know, however we are given a brief glimpse of his master and teacher, old Blaise by Malory:

*Then Merlin took his leave of Arthur and of the two kings, for to go and see his master Blaise, that dwelt in Northumberland; and so he departed and came to his master, that was passing glad of his coming; and there he told how Arthur and the two kings had sped at the great battle, and how it was ended, and told the names of every king and knight of worship that was there. And so Blaise wrote the battle word by word, as Merlin told him, how it began, and by whom, and in likewise how it was ended, and who had the worse. All the battles that were done in Arthur's days Merlin did his master Blaise do write; also he did do write all the battles that every worthy knight did of Arthur's court.*

## VORTIGERN THE USURPER

At the time Merlin was entering into the height of his power, Vortigern killed the King, Moines, and had driven his brothers, Pendragon and Uther into exile. Vortigern was Moines' Seneschal, and had made a black bargain with the Saxons, allowing them to entrench themselves throughout Britain in return for a small piece of it which he could rule as a petty fiefdom.

Vortigern was constantly afraid the brothers, who were mighty knights of great renown, would return and reclaim their birthright, so he tried to build a mighty tower for his defense the like of which the world had never seen. Three times the tower collapsed to the ground of its own weight.

Vortigern consulted his court astrologer, who told him that only the blood of a child born without a mortal father poured into the foundation of the tower would make it stand. After much searching, Merlin, who seemed to fit the prophecy, was brought before Vortigern.

However, the young magician proclaimed this prophecy false, and countered with one of his own. The cause for the tower's threefold collapse was that it was built over the lairs of two dragons, constantly at war with one another. And Merlin offered to prove his prophecy, telling Vortigern where he should dig. When the workers dug where he specified, two mighty dragons, one red, and one white, flew into the air, continuing their battle above the ruined tower.

Vortigern and all his subjects fled, while Merlin stayed, merrily clapping and cheering the dragons on, eager to see the winner. As the red dragon fell, no one had remained to hear Merlin's next prophecy, that the dragons represented the brothers-in-exile Pendragon and Uther, but that one



brother, the red dragon, would not survive long after his return.

While Vortigern and his men fled the dragons, they were greeted by Pendragon and Uther, who had landed from Brittany with a mighty army, and who quickly killed the usurper and his advisors, burning them in the tower Vortigern had hoped would provide him with sanctuary.

## THE BROTHER KINGS, SAXON COUNTERATTACK

Pendragon, the eldest of the two brothers, took Merlin as his advisor, and Merlin first advised him to rule jointly with his brother, and for the two knights to swear an oath of mutual fidelity. However, the two brothers were not long to rule, as the Saxons immediately launched a full scale attack, seeking to snuff out the native Briton kings before they had a chance to grow in power or reputation.

During the battle, the Saxons were repelled, but Pendragon was killed, as Merlin had predicted. Uther, assuming full kingship alone, nonetheless assumed the surname Pendragon, forever remembering his oath to rule Britain jointly with Pendragon.

Merlin, during this time, performs one of his greatest miracles, bringing the most powerful stone circle across the waters from Ireland to England and forming Stonehenge. This massive giant's circle forms a magical hub for Britain,

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strengthening the magic of the land and allowing Merlin to perform magical feats never known before in the history of the world. As a final solemnity, Uther buries his brother in the center of the great stone circle.

Under Merlin's wise counsel, which included securing for him the sword Excalibur from the Ladies of the Lake, Uther unites the bickering British warlords under his banner, and eventually drives all the Saxon, Pict, and Scot invaders north of Hadrian's Wall, making the land free, and united. It should have been the beginning of a golden age for Britain, but fate then did something that not even mighty Merlin could foresee.

At a mighty castle in Carlisle, Merlin unveils another of his great miracles, the Table Round, and advises Uther to invite all the kings and barons united under him to join a great fellowship and permanently unite Britain under his rule. All the lords and their wives attend, and at this council, Uther falls in love with Igraine, wife of the second most powerful lord in attendance, Gorloise of Cornwall, and makes an advance toward her, offering to make her his queen. She spurns him, and when her husband learns of Uther's treachery, he immediately leaves, and begins to prepare for war. Worse still, seeing that Uther is not a man to be trusted, the other warlords withdraw as well, and the golden age ends in the preparation for civil war before a single council is held at the Round Table.



### KING Uther

*It befell in the days of Uther Pendragon, when he was King of all England, and so reigned, that there was a mighty duke in Cornwall that held war against him long time.*

*- Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur Book I Chapter I*

The war between Uther and Cornwall provides the backdrop of Arthur's birth, and as Uther marches south to Cornwall, Gorloise puts himself in the second most powerful castle in Cornwall, Terrabil, and his wife in the most powerful, the legendary Tintagel.

During the battle, when Uther falls sick with love, his attendant knight, Ulfius, seeks out the wizard Merlin, who promises to aid Uther, changing him into the likeness of Cornwall so he may have one night with Igraine.

### A PACT WITH MERLIN

*Sir, said Merlin, I know all your heart; so ye will be sworn to me as ye be a true king anointed, to fulfill my desire, ye shall have your desire.*

*Soon came Merlin unto the king, and said, Sir, ye must purvey you for the nourishing of your child. As thou wilt, said the king, be it. Well, said Merlin, I know a lord of yours in this land, that is a passing true man and a faithful, and he shall have the nourishing of your child, and his name is Sir Ector...*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

Merlin changes Uther's form to that of the Duke of Cornwall, and Uther travels the ten miles to Tintagel castle where he lay for a night with Igraine.

Cornwall, seeing what he thinks is Uther fleeing the siege of Terrabil, leaves his castle with a group of men and attacks Uther's troops in an attempt to break the siege. During this battle, while Uther lays with the unsuspecting Igraine, Cornwall is killed.

When it is learned that Cornwall has died during the night, Igraine realizes the man she slept with was not her husband, however she tells no one. Soon after, Uther offers to marry Igraine, and end the siege.

At a group wedding, Uther marries Igraine, and arranges the marriages of her daughters by Gorloise like so many trophy pieces to reward nobles who have been loyal to him in the past. King Lot of Lothian marries Morgawse, King Nentres of Garlot marries Elaine, and Morgan le Fay, who is not yet of age, is sent to a nunnery.

Lot and Morgawse are the parents of Sir Gawain, who will become one of the greatest of Arthur's knights.

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In this way, Uther ends the war with Gorloise and brings peace anew to Britain; however, his reign will find no peace between rebellion, sickness, and new barbarian invasions.

## THE DEATH OF UTHUR

*Then within two years King Uther fell sick of a great malady.*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur Book I Chapter IV*

When Uther falls sick, in Arthur's second year, the barbarians attack again, moving swiftly from the north. Merlin advises Uther that he must take the field, even though he is too sick to ride, so Uther is carried out to St. Albans, where his army has a final confrontation with the barbarian host. Sir Ulfius and Sir Brastias are especially heroic and pivotal figures in the battle, which sees the defeat of the barbarians.

After the battle, Uther becomes even more sick, unable to speak, but Merlin calls all the barons loyal to Uther before him, and, after declaring Arthur heir to the throne of Britain, Uther dies, and is mourned by all his subjects.

## BETWEEN UTHUR AND ARTHUR

*For many a petty king ere Arthur came  
Ruled in this isle and, ever waging war  
Each upon the other, wasted all the land;  
And still from time to time the heathen host  
Swarm'd over-seas and harried what was left.  
And so there grew great tracts of wilderness, wherein  
the beast was ever more and more,  
But man was less and less...  
Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

After the death of Uther, a new dark age descends upon Britain, with each petty warlord styling himself a king, numerous barbarian incursions, and the rise of monsters and wild beasts with no fear of mankind. Merlin, having seen what is to come, begins to prepare for the ascent of Arthur, having seen that vast lands and fortunes were given to Sir Ector prior to Uther's death, having assigned Ulfius and Brastias to the court of Ector to ensure the boy's safety, and lastly, preparing the sword Excalibur a new resting place, where it would remain until the boy was ready to become the king.

## THE SWORD IN THE STONE

*And when matins and the first mass was done, there was seen in the churchyard, against the high altar, a great stone four square, like unto a marble stone; and in midst thereof was like an anvil of steel a foot on*

*high, and therein stuck a fair sword naked by the point, and letters there were written in gold about the sword that said thus: Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England.*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

Around this stone, by the decree of the Archbishop of Canterbury, forms a great tournament and joust, held at New Year's, at which ten knights will win the right to attempt the sword. The Archbishop hopes that this will cause some common ground to be forged between the quarreling warlords.

*So upon New Year's Day, when the service was done, the barons unto the field, some to joust and some to tourney, and so it happened that Sir Ector, that had great livelihood about London, rode unto the jousts, and with him rode Sir Kay his son, and young Arthur that was his nourished brother; and Sir Kay was made knight at All Hallowmass afore. So as they rode to the joust sward, Sir Kay lost his sword, for he had left it at his father's lodging, and so he prayed young Arthur for to ride for his sword. I will well, said Arthur, and rode fast after the sword, and when he came home, the lady and all were out to see the jousting. Then was Arthur wroth, and said to himself, I will ride to the churchyard, and take the sword with me that sticketh in the stone, for my brother Sir Kay shall not be without a sword this day.*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

After Arthur draws the sword, he is told to reinsert it into the stone and an ever-increasing line of petty barons and warlords attempt to draw it from the stone, to no avail. Finally, Merlin invites the most powerful Barons to witness Arthur draw the sword flanked by Sir Ulfius and Sir Brastias, the two greatest living knights who served under Uther. Unable to finally deny that the sword has chosen a low-born boy, the robber barons go to war with the fledgling king and his small group of knights.

The Archbishop of Canterbury holds a small coronation on the eve of war, at which Arthur names Sir Kay Seneschal, Sir Baudwin Constable, Sir Ulfius Chamberlain, and Sir Brastias Warden of the Northlands.

## GUINEVERE; THE ROUND TABLE

*It is well your bounty and noblesse should not be without a wife. Now is there any that ye love more than another? Yea, said King Arthur, I love Guinevere the king's daughter; Leodegrance of the land of Camelard, he which holdeth in his house the Table Round that ye told he had of my father Uther.*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur, Book III, Chapter I*

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After uniting his realm, Arthur's Dukes begin requesting he take a wife, so the realm might have an heir. Arthur still loves Guinevere, and asks Leodegrance for her hand. Leodegrance is pleased, but concerned he will be unable to provide a dowry for such a richly endowed King. Leodegrance then decides he will give Arthur the Round Table willed to him upon Uther's death, and his 100 greatest knights. Since the table will hold 150 knights, a cry goes out through the kingdom for the noblest knights of the realm, and men come from near and far, drawn by a table where all are equal.

As a special present to his nephew, Gawaine, Arthur knights him moments before he is wed to Guinevere.

Merlin declares that thirteen seats, called sieges, are for the most holy knights, as these seats represent the apostles and Christ. The thirteenth, the Siege Perilous, represents Judas, as will any who sits in it, save one.

### THE PASSING OF MERLIN

*And so, soon after, the lady and Merlin departed, and by the way Merlin showed her many wonders, and came into Cornwall. And always Merlin lay about the lady to have her maidenhood, and she was ever passing weary of him, and fain would have been delivered of him, for she was afraid of him because he was a devil's son, and she could not beskift him by no mean. And so on a time it happed that Merlin showed to her in a rock whereas was a great wonder, and wrought by enchantment, that went under a great stone. So by her subtle working she made Merlin to go under that stone to let her wit of the marvels there; but she wrought so there for him that he came never out for all the craft he could do. And so she departed and left Merlin.*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

Merlin becomes enamored of a Lady of the Lake, Nimue. He dotes on her, travels the world with her, and teaches her all his secrets and magic arts. Then, in Cornwall, she traps Merlin under a magic rock, and leaves him to die. Before he leaves for his last journey with Nimue, Merlin imparts a great number of prophecies on Arthur to guide him through the coming days alone.

### THE GRAIL QUEST

The Holy Grail was the cup Christ used at the last supper to drink his wine. As Christ lay dying on the Cross, Joseph of Arimathea, the man also responsible for wrapping Christ in the Shroud of Turin, used the cup to catch some of his blood.

Following Christ's death, Joseph journeyed to Britain, founding Glastonbury Tor, the first Christian monastery

in Britain. However, he did not come to Britain as a proselytizer; he came to hide the greatest treasure in the world, the San Greal, the Holy Grail.

Journeying north, Joseph builds a castle, and hides both the grail and the most terrible weapon, the Lance of Longinus, which pierced the side of Christ, a weapon that must never be used. Joseph's descendants, the so-called "Fisher Kings" carry out this task faithfully for generations.

However, a rash knight named Balin, after a series of misadventures, uses the Lance to strike the Fisher King, giving him a wound that will not heal, striking all the people in the Fisher King's kingdom dead, and turning it and the surrounding kingdoms into the Wasteland. Because of this transgression, the Grail, the only way of returning life to the Wasteland also disappears.

Arthur's best knights search endlessly for the Grail, whose disappearance plunges Arthur's entire realm into an ever-increasing cycle of discord and despair.

### LANCELOT AND GUINEVERE: BETRAYAL

*"O Lancelot get thee hence to thine own land,  
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
And if we meet again some evil chance  
Will make the smoldering scandal break and blaze  
Before the people and our lord the King."  
And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,  
And still they met and met.*

*Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

Foretold by Merlin, this betrayal of God, country, and king, serves as the final blow that topples Arthur's already tilting reign. When the betrayal is revealed, Arthur sends Agravaine and a dozen knights to arrest Lancelot, who conducts a daring escape, killing Agravaine and most of the knights sent to arrest him.

Pursued by the king and his men, Lancelot flees to France, accompanied by several Knights of the Round Table, where Arthur lays siege to his castle, a dark, bloody affair that sees the death of Sir Gawaine, along with countless other Knights of the Round Table on both sides.

Guinevere, in shame, retreats to the abbey of Amesbury, where she becomes a nun, there to live out the rest of her days.

This moment of weakness, with the entire realm in disarray, provides Mordred with his chance to strike for the crown.

### DARK ALLIANCES

*"Tell thou the King and all his liars that I  
Have founded my Round Table in the North,  
And whatsoever his own knights have sworn*

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*My knights have sworn to counter it- and say  
My tower is full of harlots, like his court,  
But mine are worthier, seeing they profess  
To be none other than themselves- and say  
My knights are all adulterers like his own,  
But mine are truer, seeing they profess  
To be none other: and say his hour is come,  
The heathen are upon him, his long lance  
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw."*

*Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

Mordred sets up his own Round Table in the north of Arthur's realm, allying with Morgan le Fey to create the "Black Table", his own twisted version of Arthur's court. He takes with him many of the Round Table's younger knights, disillusioned by the fall of Lancelot and Guinevere. Worse, he makes a deal with the barbarian hordes driven back behind Hadrian's Wall to divide Britain after Arthur's death.

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

*"I found Him in the shining of the stars,  
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His fields,  
But in His ways with men I find Him not.  
I waged His wars, but now I pass and die.  
...  
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,  
And have but stricken with the sword in vain,  
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend  
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm  
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.  
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death!  
Nay- God my Christ- I pass but shall not die."*

*Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

Arthur's final battle with Mordred. Although sick of heart, and feeling abandoned by all he loved: Guinevere, Lancelot, and God, Arthur fights bravely in the end, slaying Mordred and preventing England from falling into his hands. Arthur and his knights also break the back of the barbarian horde one last time, giving England a final respite from the looting and burning of the heathen horde.

As he lies dying, Arthur casts Excalibur into the sea, and is borne away on a barge to the isle of Avalon. The last Quest Knights take the Grail to Jerusalem.

After Arthur's death, Constantine, a lord of Cornwall takes up the throne of England.



## ERAS OF THE ARTHURIAN AGE

For practical purposes, most Arthurian campaigns will take place in one of three "eras". Each of these eras has distinct qualities, and campaigns set in different eras will have different encounters, and a different tone. In the campaigns section that follows, each campaign model will note the era in which it is set.

Note that it is also possible to run a campaign that moves from one era to the next, possibly even stretching through all three for a truly long campaign. However, knights come and go in Malory's telling of the Arthurian legend, so the best way to experience the depth and richness of the story, while maintaining a high level of detail (a suitably large number of quests and campaigns within each era), it is recommended that campaigns take place within one era, with new, younger knights coming to the fore.

For instance, Ulfius, a knight who had also served under King Uther, and Pellinore, are two of the most powerful knights of Arthur's early campaigns during his rise to power. However, Ulfius fades from the tales (presumably dying of old age), and Pellinore is killed by Gawain. These knights are replaced at the height of Arthur's reign by more familiar knights such as Lancelot, Tristram, and Gawain.

## RISE OF ARTHUR

Upon achieving the sword Excalibur from the stone, Arthur, a mere boy, is immediately set upon by rebellious lords. These petty rulers have either cooperated with the Saxon horde, or managed to ruthlessly carve out petty baronies in spite of them. Either way, they are not lightly going to bow down to a boy proclaimed king by a wizard. Britain divides into two camps mere days after Arthur is crowned. No sooner does the Archbishop of Canterbury set the crown on the young King's head than an attack is launched by five petty lords, led by King Lot of Lothian. When this battle is won, even more lords flock to the rebel cause, and a full-scale civil war erupts, with eleven rebel lords, led by King

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Lot. So great are the forces against him, that Arthur seeks help from France, in the form of the brother Kings, Ban and Bors, themselves under siege by King Claudas. They agree to help Arthur put down his insurrection, if he will aid them in return (more detail on these events, and many others, may be found in the Campaigns section). Campaigning in the Rise of Arthur era will be tense and action-packed. Adventures will involve reclaiming wild areas of Britain taken over by giants, putting down rebellious lords, and expelling murderous, bloodthirsty barbarian hordes from England.

However, some of the trappings of Arthurian legend are not yet present, however, which may disappoint some players. There is no Round Table, which was left to King Leodegrance (who does not take place in the rebellion, nor does he help Arthur, having his own problems to deal with which are addressed in the Campaigns section). There is no Guinevere (she's also with Leodegrance, being his daughter). Even Camelot is not seen in this era, where Arthur is an almost "vagabond King", holding court at Carlion (when fighting the eleven Lords), Carlisle (when fighting the northern barbarians), and occasionally in London, Arthur is constantly on the move, putting out brushfire after brushfire that threatens to engulf his realm.

### ONE BRIEF SHINING MOMENT

Arthur's realm officially begins, in many ways, with his marriage to Guinevere, which coincides with the introduction of many of the standard trappings of Arthurian legend. The Round Table comes with Guinevere as dowry, and the marriage takes place in Camelot as the first official function held in the grand capital of Arthur's realm. This era also sees older, less familiar knights, such as Ulfius, Brastias, and Pellinore replaced by figures central to many Arthurian legends, such as Lancelot, Gawaine, Percival, and Galahad. One of the chief conflicts of this time occurs when the Roman Emperor Augustus seeks tribute from the fledgling realm he has only recently abandoned. This launches Arthur into a full-scale war with Gaul and Rome that ends this era with Arthur crowned High Emperor by the Pope.

### DREAM'S END

Like an apple, rotten at the core, but still appearing healthy and wholesome on the outside, the end of Arthur's realm happens gradually, and few in Camelot see it coming. The appearance of the Grail during this period offers a brief respite, and a chance at redemption, but the younger Knights of the Round Table are arrogant, hot-headed, violent, and much more likely to follow the lead of young Mordred than their king. The affair with Lancelot and Guinevere is ongoing through this period, and is discovered by many of Arthur's knights before he himself finally becomes aware of it.

The end is bloody and messy, with Lancelot slaying a dozen knights sent to arrest him, including Gawain's younger brother Agravaine, leading him to swear a blood oath to kill Lancelot. Lancelot flees first to Joyous Garde, a castle given to him by Arthur, and then to Benwick, where he is named King, along with numerous Round Table knights who side with him over Arthur.

When Arthur launches his campaign to lay siege to Lancelot, Mordred stays behind, and gains the support of Morgan le Fey, Arthur's half-sister and longtime enemy, and also the barbarians, and sets up his own court, with his own Black Table, to which many of Arthur's younger knights flock. This leads to the final confrontation at Salisbury Plain, where both Arthur and Mordred are killed.



## GAZETTEER OF ARTHURIAN BRITAIN

### AMESBURY

The nunnery to which Guinevere retired after Arthur's death.

### CAIRNPAPPLE HILL (MAJOR HENGE)

This site consists of a small stone circle at the top of a hill. There is an opening at the center of this small henge leading down into the hill, which has been slowly excavated over the years by the druids and turned into a massive network of cairn graves for the local adherents of the Old Faith. No one knows how many graves this hill contains except the druids who guard and maintain the site.

### CAMELOT

*For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined  
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,  
The Lady of the Lake stood: all her dress  
Wept from her sides as water flowing away;  
But like the cross her great and goodly arms  
Stretched under the cornice and upheld:  
And drops of water fell from either hand;  
And down from one a sword was hung, from one  
A censer, either word with wind and storm;  
And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;  
And in the space to left of her, and right,  
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,  
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time  
Were nothing, so inveterately, that men  
Were giddy gazing there; and over all  
High on the top were those three Queens, the friends  
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.*



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*Then those with Gareth for so long a space  
Stared at the figures, that at last it seemed  
The dragon- boughs and elvish emblemings  
Began to move, seethe, twine and curl: they called  
To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive'.*

*Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

Arthur's final capitol, first established after his marriage to Guinevere at the beginning of the "One Brief Shining Moment" era. In fact, one of the first official functions performed here is the marriage of Arthur and Guinevere, at St. David's Cathedral, which is not far from Arthur's palatial castle. The location of this final capitol serves to cement Arthur's power in many ways, giving him easy access to druidic, ley line, and priestly power sources.

## CANTERBURY

Site of a magnificent cathedral, this city is old even in Arthur's time, having been founded by the Romans (who called the city Durovernum). The Archbishop of Canterbury is one of Arthur's closest and most important advisors. Note that the inclusion of an Archbishop of Canterbury is an anachronism, as there was no Archbishopric at Canterbury in historical Arthurian England.

## CARLION (OR CAERLEON)

An important city, and Arthur's first capitol, this will be the home base of Arthur's reign during the War of Ascension. There is a cathedral here, headed by the Archbishop Saint Dubricius who will serve Arthur as an advisor during his wars with the rebellious lords. There is also a Roman amphitheater in this city that is used as an early incarnation of the Round Table. Arthur holds war councils here with his knights and senior advisors.

## CARLISLE

Another of Arthur's early capitols, though not as important as Carlion. Carlisle is primarily used as a staging ground for Arthur's Twelve Battles against the Saxons, the final stage of his wars to cement his control over Britain.

## DEVIL'S ARROWS (MINOR HENCE)

Rather than a circular arrangement, these standing stones consist of five massive stones in a straight line. The name comes from a legend that Satan attempted to fire the stones at a nearby settlement, but missed. Others hold this account to be a tale of a giant attack, with the stones later being erected and invested with power by powerful druids after slaying the giants.

## DOVER

Dover is a major port, even in Arthur's day, and is a key gateway to the continent. During his war with Rome, Arthur embarks his troops here. He also departs here when chasing Lancelot to France, and returns to this port city when coming home to face Mordred in his last battle.

## DURHAM

Durham is framed by the River Wear on three sides, like a frame for the absolutely magnificent cathedral, one of the most impressive major cathedrals in the world.

## DRUID'S CIRCLE (MAJOR HENCE)

This henge consists of two stone circles, ten stones in the inner ring, and fifteen stones in the outer ring. Worshippers of the Old Faith are cremated at the center of this site upon their death, a practice virulently opposed by the local priests of the One God. In the recent past, the two sides have even come to blows over the practice, but for now, the druids are able to hold their own, due to the immense power they have at their disposal near the stones. The priests have therefore taken to attempting to convert the locals, convincing them that this practice of the Old Faith is barbarous, with limited success.

## GORS FAWR (MAJOR HENCE)

This site is one of the oldest stone circles on the isle. Adherents to the Old Faith have been buried here for generations, and this site is literally covered with cairns, barrows, and burial mounds, all of which are tended by the large, powerful group of druids who maintain this bastion of the Old Faith.

## HIGH BRIDESTONES (MAJOR HENCE)

This complex stone circle actually has a companion henge a short distance known as the low Bridestones. A small bog separates the two complexes, and a rather large group of druids tend to both sites. This group is rather secretive, and encourages outsiders (those not of the Old Faith) to stay away. Given the somewhat desolate nature of the surroundings, this isn't hard for them to accomplish.

## LONDON

Even in Arthurian times, London was a thriving metropolis, a center of wealth and influence. Founded by the Romans as Londinius, the Thames River, which the city straddles, makes it an important entryway of trade goods to and from the island. Despite the wealth and strategic importance of

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the city, Arthur never makes it his capitol, preferring instead power centers that increase the might of his magically inclined advisors, of which the Boy King has many.

## MERRY MAIDENS (MINOR HENGE)

According to legend this minor stone circle was originally a group of nineteen nymphs dancing to the music of satyrs who were turned to stone. In keeping with the legend, two nearby standing stones are known as the pipers.

## NINE STONES CLOSE (MAJOR HENGE)

A circle of nine massive stones, this site is also known as the “grey ladies” by the local folk. The druids who tend to the site dislike this name, preferring to refer to the site by its “proper” title. The legends that revolve around this site are many, including that the druids who tend to the stones can make them dance, some say at noon, others at midnight, and that the stones can be used as a gate to the land of the Fey. The druids who tend the site will say nothing about these rumors.

## RING OF BROGDAR (MAJOR HENGE)

Also known as the giant’s ring, because legend has it the site was originally built by giants, this massive ring of sixty stones is maintained and protected by one of the largest sects of druids in the world. These powerful priests of the Old Faith carry tremendous authority in the Orkney Isles, and are ardent supporters of the King of the isles.

## SEA HENGE (MAJOR HENGE)

A wooden circle of posts, this henge rests on a beach, and is completely submerged at high tide. Due to the magical power invested in the site, the wood remains pristine and unaffected despite the action of the waves. There is a wooden altar at the center of the ring for sacrifices to the sea gods of the Old Faith. Sacrifices are left on the altar and carried away by the tides.

## STONEHENGE (MAJOR HENGE)

The greatest, most powerful henge in the world, and thereby the greatest source of druidic power, Stonehenge was erected by Merlin at the behest of Uther, to form a suitable burial ground for Uther’s brother-king Pendragon. In addition to raising this magnificent monument to his brother, Uther took his name, thereby fulfilling Merlin’s prophecy that the brothers would rule together.

## TEMPLE WOOD (MAJOR HENGE)

This circle of thirteen stones is surrounded by a dense forest, hence the name. Like many other sites, worshippers of the Old Faith are cremated at the center of this stone circle. Children who die of natural causes are buried in the center. The priests of the One God are attempting to convince the populace of the folly and godlessness of these practices.

## TINTAGEL

A castle formerly belonging to Gorloise, and the place where Arthur is conceived. This castle is massive, and nigh impenetrable, which necessitated Merlin’s magic to penetrate. Oddly, Arthur neglects this massive castle, and so do his enemies, allowing it to fall into disrepair. A giant takes up residence here, and terrorizes the countryside.

## TRUSHEL STONE (MAJOR HENGE)

This site consists of a single standing stone, a massive obelisk over twenty feet tall. The obelisk marks the grave of the giant who once ruled these islands. This giant was killed by the druids who have watched over the people who live there ever since.

## WOODHENGE (MAJOR HENGE)

Unusual for henges, this is not a stone circle, but rather a wood circle, with wooden posts staked into the ground. The site consists of six rows of wooden posts sunk into the ground. At the center of the complex is the body of a three-year-old child, who according to the druids who tend the site died of natural causes as the site was being finished, and was buried there at the request of her mother, an adherent to the Old Faith. Charges by local adherents of the One God that the child was sacrificed are hotly contested and the source of much tension between the two groups.

## YORK

A large city, York has a major ley line passing right through the city. As a result of this, more mages make their home here than any other place in Arthurian Britain and a fledgling mage may be able to find a teacher here. Both Merlin and his mentor Blaise have been seen here, much to the dismay of the locals, who consider the sight of such bewitched folk bad luck. Perhaps in an attempt to stave off the “devil’s children” who seem to gravitate to the city, York also is home to almost two-dozen churches and monasteries. Like many of the isle’s large important cities, York was founded by the Romans.

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## BRIEF GAZETTEER OF THE KNOWN WORLD

### AMAZONIA

Famed warrior women, located somewhere in Africa. During Arthur's war with Rome, these women served Roman Emperor Lucius. Their Queen is named Radigund.

### ANJOU

A French province conquered by the British usurper King Vortigern and given to the Saxon Hengist to rule for him. When Arthur achieved the crown he gave this land to Sir Kay.

### ATLANTIS

Although this land sank beneath the waves long before Arthur's time, it is rumored that Merlin came from this strange, distant land.

### AVALON

Island of unknown location where Arthur is taken after his death. It is also known as the Isle of Apples. It is quite possible that this island does not exist in the physical realm at all and is in fact part of the Otherworld. Some tales suggest that Avalon is simply another name for Paradise, the Garden of Eden, which still exists but is denied mankind after Adam and Eve. Tennyson refers to the "island valley of Avilion", implying that the land the island is made of is quite large. Despite the fact that she is Arthur's enemy while alive, Morgan le Fey is said to rule this island with nine Celtic priestess-queens able to turn into animals, heal the incurable, and see the future. Some authors have even associated this land with America. Each narrator should decide how he wants to handle Avalon, in keeping with the tone and mysticism of his campaign.

### BAGHDAD

A Caliph named Baruch rules this center of Islamic learning and culture in Arthur's day. This Caliph is served by the finest Saracen knights, and will be a serious threat to any Arthurian Crusaders who venture to the Holy Land (as Galahad did). Note that Islamic culture and religion, as well as the Caliphate of Baghdad are anachronisms that would not exist during the time of the "real" Arthur.

### BENWICK

French kingdom ruled by Ban and Bors, the brother kings. These kings fight a long and bitter struggle against their

uncle Claudas. They aid Arthur in his War of Ascension, after which Arthur sends the majority of his forces to aid the brothers. With Arthur's aid, this rebellion is put down for a time, however as soon as Arthur's troops leave, Claudas strikes again, managing to kill Ban and his wife, who set their son adrift in a basket, where he is raised by a Lady of the Lake who takes pity on him. This boy is Lancelot. Bors' son, who is also named Bors, joins the Round Table, and is one of the Grail Knights (along with Lancelot, Galahad, Percival, and Gawain). When Arthur battles with Rome, Claudas sides with Roman Emperor Lucius, but manages to survive the defeat of the Roman forces with his kingdom intact. Finally, Claudas imprisons Guinevere, attempting to hold her for ransom. Arthur invades and conquers Benwick, killing Claudas. Benwick is then given to Lancelot to rule. After Lancelot's affair with Guinevere is discovered he retreats here, along with several of the Round Table knights, whom he makes high officers in the realm of Benwick. Arthur lays siege to Lancelot, but their battle is cut short when Mordred sizes Guinevere and prepares to marry her, naming himself King.

### BRITTANY

Area on the French coastline traditionally inhabited by Britons. During Arthur's day, this land was ruled by King Hoel, who was distantly related to Arthur and was a staunch ally in his many campaigns, especially the war with Rome. During the time when Vortigern the Usurper had ruled England, the young escaped princes; Uther and Pendragon were raised here in exile by Budicius, Hoel's father

### BULGARIA

Netor and Madan ruled this Eastern European kingdom in Arthur's time. (Narrators running historical campaigns should note that this kingdom did not exist during Arthur's day and is thus an anachronism).

### CONSTANTINOPLE

Capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, also called the Byzantine Empire. Leo I ruled this Empire in Arthur's day, and he was distantly related to Lot of Lothian. His empress was a lover of Percival, and gave him a magical stone that rendered him invisible to giants.

### DENMARK

Saxon kingdom ruled by King Aescil. Mordred allies with this king, who sends barbarian troops to fight alongside Mordred in his attempt to seize the crown.

### ETHIOPIA

This African Kingdom is ruled by Prester John, a holy man of tremendous power. Although too distant to be involved in Arthur's wars, he considers Arthur an ally and is a source of aid to knights adventuring in Africa.

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## FAIRYLAND

Oberon and Titania, King and Queen of the Fey Folk rule this kingdom in the Otherworld. During his youth, Arthur adventures here, along with Kay, on behalf of Oberon's daughter Gloriana. Sprites, pixies, dryads, elves, goblins, and giants (with a nobility of 80 or higher) are all able to travel to Fairyland, and all these creatures except giants are born there. Sprites, pixies, and dryads are all loyal subjects of King Oberon, as are the elves, but Fairyland is in a constant state of war against the goblin and giant forces, who seek to conquer Fairyland as a base from which to attack the material world.

## GAUL

Pharamond rules this land, which is conquered by Roman Emperor Lucius as part of his war with Arthur.

## GREENLAND

Amangons rules this island, which is eventually conquered by Arthur.

## CROCLAND

An island chain ruled by giants that led north to a great mountain range that surrounded the top of the world. This mountain range surrounded a strange kingdom composed of four inland seas. Arthur conquered the islands, but after an expedition of four thousand men failed to return from the lands beyond the mountains, he abandoned any hope of exploring those lands.

## HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

This vast kingdom is ruled by Emperor Lucius. After abandoning Britain to the Saxons, he now requires tribute from Arthur, whose refusal leads the two empires to engage in a bloody clash that engulfs all of Arthurian Europe in a sort medieval World War. After Arthur's victory, the Pope crowns him Emperor of all Europe.

## HUNGARY

King Ditus rules this kingdom, north of Bulgaria on the border of Russia until he aids Lucius when Rome attacks Britain. During the Roman campaign Ditus is killed, and is

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replaced by his son Sagremor (who was already a Knight of Round Table). Gawain married Sagremor's sister. The presence of Hungary in Arthurian legend is an anachronism.

## ICELAND

Malvasius and his queen, the daughter of the King of Russia rule this island kingdom. After Arthur's Roman campaign, he decides to add this kingdom to his Empire. However, rather than fight him, the king agrees to serve Arthur, and provides him his son, Escol, to serve Arthur as a Knight of the Round Table to prove his loyalty.

## IRELAND

This island is ruled by King Anguish, whose daughter, Isolde, is the object of Tristan's affection. Arthur eventually adds Ireland to his empire.

## NORWAY

King Odbrict rules this land and is an ally of Arthur. He dies in Arthur's final battles against Mordred.

## RUSSIA

Baraton rules this distant land of ice and snow in Arthur's time.

## SPAIN

Alaric II, a barbarian of the Visigoth tribe rules this realm. An enemy of the Romans, and the Saxons, and under assault by the Saracens, he is too busy to interfere in Arthur's affairs. However, Christian knights will find few friends here.



## WHO'S WHO IN ARTHURIAN ENGLAND

### ACCOLON, SIR

Consort of Morgan Le Fay.

**Sir Accolon (Lesser Nobility Warrior 15):** Medium-size humanoid; Init; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 30, parry 32, flatfooted 25 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +3 Str, +15 class); Combat +15; Grap +18; Atk +19 melee (+8/19-20 +3, sword), or +17 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Impulsive (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 10; SV Tough +8, Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +5; Str +3, Dex +2, Con +3, Int -1, Wis +0, Cha +1.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Handle Animal 18 (+19), Intimidate 18 (+19), Ride 18 (+22)

**Feats:** All-out Attack, Armor Training (light),

Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (Sword), Attack Specialization (Sword), Benefit (knighthood), Greater Attack Focus (Sword), Greater Attack Specialization (Sword), Seize Initiative, Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Startle, Tough x5, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Sword, Lance (as spear but cannot be thrown), Crossbow, Full Plate, Large Metal Shield

**Description:** Accolon is a young, honorable knight, though a touch on the roguish side. He genuinely cares for Morgan, and is too naïve to see her wickedness. Once he realizes she intends to kill Arthur and place him on the throne, he wants nothing to do with the enchantress.

**Role:** Accolon is the muscle-bound henchman. He will support Morgan in her scheming, never realizing the evil she does.

## ARTHUR, KING

Arthur reigned for approximately 42 years, being crowned King at 14, High King of all England, Wales, and Cornwall at 18 and High Emperor of all Europe after his campaign against the Romans. Defeated in battle only once, by his bastard son Mordred, the only real loss suffered by the Boy King was when the two people he loved best in the world, Lancelot and Guinevere, betrayed him, which sent his Empire crashing down into ruin, and Britain "reeling back into the beast".

*So great bards of him will sing  
Hereafter, and dark sayings from of old  
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,  
And echo'd by old folk beside their fires  
For comfort when their wage-work is done  
Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

### King Arthur (Lesser Nobility Warrior 4/Expert 16):

Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 38, parry 36, flatfooted 29 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +3 Str, +19 class); Combat +19; Grap +22; Atk +27 melee (+11/17-20 +5, Excalibur), or +21 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Noblesse Oblige (Virtue), Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Impulsive (Vice); Fate/Destiny Be king of all Britain/Be betrayed by those he loves most; Conviction 12; SV Tough +20 (+10 Scabbard, +6 Armor), Fort +17, Ref +13, Will +21; Str +3, Dex +2, Con +4, Int +4, Wis +4, Cha +5.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Bluff 23 (+28), Diplomacy 23 (+28), Disguise 18 (+23), Handle Animal 18 (+23), Intimidate 23 (+28), Knowledge (history) 21 (+25), Knowledge (supernatural) 18 (+22), Notice 23 (+27), Ride 23 (+25), Sense Motive 23 (+27), Survival 23 (+27)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Assessment, Attack Focus (Sword), Benefit (nobility), Canny Defense (Wisdom), Challenge (Mass Intimidate), Connected, Elusive Target, Evasion, Fascinate

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(Diplomacy), Improved Evasion, Inspire (awe), Inspire (competence), Inspire (courage), Lucky, Mass Suggestion, Master Plan, Shield Training, Skill Mastery (Diplomacy, Intimidate, Ride, Sense Motive), Spirited Charge, Standard Bearer, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Crossbow, Excalibur (see the description of this weapon in the chapter on supernatural items), Scabbard of Excalibur (+10 Toughness saves), Full Plate, Priwen (Lg. Metal Shield, otherwise see supernatural items below), Warhorse, Ron (Arthur's lance, see supernatural items below)

**Description:** Arthur is ambitious, noble, and honest, almost to a fault. He is determined to be a better king than his father, and confident in his divine right to rule. When a problem presents itself, Arthur tends to trust his instincts, seizing a solution rather than debating, acting rather than thinking. While these qualities serve him well, especially on the battlefield, they are also his only true weaknesses as a leader.

**Role:** Arthur is the king's king. He will serve as a patron and giver of quests, rewarding those who serve him well, crushing those who do not.

## BALIN LE SAVAGE (THE KNIGHT OF TWO SWORDS)

Balan's brother; smote the Dolorous Stroke, creating the Wasteland and necessitating the Grail Quest; banished from Arthur's court for killing the Lady of the Lake who repaired Excalibur for Arthur after a disastrous battle with King Pellinore.

**Balin le Savage (Lesser Nobility Warrior 17):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 29, parry 32, flatfooted 27 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +4 Str, +17 class); Combat +17; Grap +21; Atk +18 melee (+7/19-20 +3, sword) and +18 melee (+5/20 +4, handaxe), or +19 ranged (+3/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft/5 ft; Virtues/Vices none; Fate/Destiny; Conviction; SV Tough +11 (+4 Breast Plate), Fort +14, Ref +7, Will +4; Str +4, Dex +2, Con +4, Int +0, Wis -1, Cha -1.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Handle Animal 20, Jump 10, Intimidate 20, Ride 20, Swim 10

**Feats:** All-out Attack, Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (sword), Attack Specialization (sword), Diehard, Improved Sunder, Rage x3, Seize Initiative, Tough x3, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Uncanny Dodge, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Break, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Sword, Handaxe, Crossbow, Breast Plate

**Description:** Balan's brother; smote the Dolorous Stroke, creating the Wasteland and necessitating the Grail Quest; banished from Arthur's court for killing the Lady of the Lake who repaired Excalibur for Arthur after a disastrous battle with King Pellinore.



**Role:** Balin is a basically good and honorable man with a tragically dangerous temper. Ultimately this temper will damage the very realm of Britain and necessitate the Grail Quest.

## BLAISE

Merlin's teacher and mentor; resides in Northumberland.

**Blaise (Middle Class Adept 10/Expert 10):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 22, parry 21, flatfooted 22 (+0 size, +0 Dex, -1 Str, +12 class); Combat +12; Grap +11; Atk +12 melee (+1/20 +3, quarterstaff), or +12 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft/5 ft; Virtues/Vices Studious (Virtue), Absentminded (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 12; SV Tough +0, Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +16; Str -1, Dex +0, Con +0, Int +5, Wis +2, Cha +2.

**Core Ability:** The Talent

**Skills:** Diplomacy 23 (+25), Knowledge (current events) 23 (+28), Knowledge (earth sciences) 17 (+25), Knowledge (history) 23 (+31), Knowledge (physical sciences) 23 (+31), Knowledge (supernatural) 23 (+31), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 23 (+31), Medicine 23 (+28), Notice 23 (+28), Sense Motive 23 (+25), Sleight of Hand 23

**Supernatural Powers (Save Difficulty 20, Prime Ability Int):** Body Control +20, Enhance Senses +20, Object Reading +20, Scrying +20, Second Sight +18, Suggestion +18, Truth Reading +20, Visions +23

**Feats:** Eidetic Memory, Improvised Tools, Jack-of-All-Trades, Mind over body, Skill Focus (Knowledge [earth sciences]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [physical sciences]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [supernatural]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [theology and philosophy]), Skill Focus (Medicine), Skill Focus (Notice), Supernatural Focus (Visions), Supernatural Talent (Object Reading, Truth Reading), Supernatural Talent (Enhance

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Senses, Scrying), Supernatural Talent (Body Control, Visions)

**Possessions:** Quarterstaff

**Description:** Merlin's teacher and mentor; rumored to reside in the city of York, in a veritable maze of books and scrolls.

**Role:** Blaise is the greatest sage in the world, and chronicler of the Arthurian age.

## BRASTIAS, SIR

Like Sir Ulfius, Brastias is the last of the old guard of knights remaining from the time of Uther and the Old Table. He is one of the most important knights of Arthur's earliest reign, before the rise of such knights as Pellinore, Gawain, and Lancelot.

**Sir Brastias ( Lesser Nobility Warrior 15):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 28, parry 28, flatfooted 25 (+0 size, +3 Dex, +3 Str, +15 class); Combat +15; Grap +18; Atk +21 melee (+10/19-20 +3, masterwork greataxe), or +18 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Vengeful (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 10; SV Tough +15 (+6 Full Plate), Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +5; Str +3, Dex +3, Con +4, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +2.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Climb 9 (+7), Handle Animal 18 (+20), Intimidate 18 (+20), Jump 9 (+7), Ride 18 (+23)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (Greataxe), Attack Specialization (Greataxe), Benefit (knighthood), Cleave, Improved Critical (Greataxe), Greater Attack Focus (Greataxe), Greater Attack Specialization (Greataxe), Overrun, Spirited Charge, Startle, Tough x5, Vehicular Combat, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Masterwork Greataxe, Crossbow, Masterwork Full Plate

**Description:** Brastias is one of the last of the old guard, the knights who stood by King Uther to the end. Brastias was present when Uther proclaimed Arthur his heir, and searched all of Britain for the boy after his lord's death. During these travels he was a constant foe of the rising tide of chaos and barbarism engulfing Britain, and became a folk hero to many beleaguered peasants. When Arthur appears at the New Year's Day joust and draws Excalibur from the stone, Brastias is one of the first knights to swear fealty to him, and his sword is instrumental in helping Arthur secure his reign. In return for his valiant service, Brastias is named Warden of the Northlands, and given rule over the critical city of York, which he rules wisely and well until his death of natural causes.

**Role:** Brastias is the noble vassal. He has no desire other than to serve his King, maintaining Britain as a free and prosperous realm on his behalf.

## DAGONET (SIR FOOL)

Jester of Camelot; made an honorary knight of the Round Table at Gawaine's request.

*Being fool, and seeing too much wit*

*Makes the world rotten, why belike I skip  
To know myself the wisest knight of all.*

*Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

**Sir Dagonet (Middle Class Expert 15):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +5; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 35, parry 21, flatfooted 21 (+0 size, +5 Dex, +0 Str, +11 class); Combat +11; Grap +11; Atk +16 melee (+1/19-20 +3, knife), or +16 ranged (+1/19-20 +3, knife); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices none; Fate/Destiny; Conviction; SV Tough +4, Fort +13, Ref +14, Will +10; Str +0, Dex +5, Con +0, Int +2, Wis +1, Cha +4.

**Core Ability:** Expertise

**Skills:** Acrobatics 18 (+23), Bluff 18 (+22), Climb 18, Disguise 18 (+22), Escape Artist 18 (+23), Jump 18, Perform (comedy) 18 (+22), Perform (dance) 18 (+22), Perform (oratory) 18 (+22), Perform (singing) 18 (+22), Sleight of Hand 18 (+23)

**Feats:** Banter, Benefit (knighthood), Defensive Roll x4, Dodge x5, Elusive Target, Evasion, Fascinate (Perform [comedy]), Improved Evasion, Lucky, Redirect, Taunt, Uncanny Dodge

**Possessions:** Knife

**Description:** Jester of Camelot; made an honorary knight of the Round Table at Gawaine's request

**Role:** Like many jesters in literature, Dagonet makes his living taking humorous stabs at his opponents. Gawain loves his sense of humor, while Tristram, whose faults are frequently the subject of Dagonet's jokes, has nearly killed the fool on several occasions.

## DUBRIC, HIGH SAINT

Leader of the Church of England during Arthur's reign.

**Dubric (Lesser Nobility Adept 20):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 28, parry 20, flatfooted 20 (+0 size, +0 Dex, +0 Str, +10 class); Combat +10; Grap +10; Atk +10 melee (by weapon), or +10 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Vow of Poverty (Virtue), Indecisive (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 12; SV Tough +2, Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +23; Str +0, Dex +0, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +8, Cha +3.

**Core Ability:** The Talent

**Skills:** Concentration 23, Diplomacy 23, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 23, Medicine 13, Sense Motive 10

**Supernatural Powers (Save Difficulty 25, Prime Ability Wis):** Calm +31, Cure +31, Cure Blindness/Deafness +31, Cure Disease +31, Cure Poison +31, Heart Reading +31, Mind Touch +31, Truth Reading +31, Visions

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+31, Ward +31

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Assessment, Benefit (ordained priest), Canny Dodge (Wis), Connected, Dedicated (One God), Defensive Attack, Imbue Item, Lucky, Mind over Body, Shield Training, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Unarmed and unarmored (though trained in war as a younger man, Dubric now eschews violence. He would only wear armor or use weapons in extreme circumstances, such as saving the lives of many others. He would not use violence to save his own life).

**Description:** Leader of the Church of England during Arthur's reign

**Role:** Dubric is a perfect example of the devout priest, who cares little for his own wealth or power, tending to the needs of his flock.

## ECTOR, SIR

Adopted father of King Arthur, father of Sir Kay.

**Sir Ector (Lesser Nobility Knight 4/Expert 6):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 22, parry 23, flatfooted 18 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +1 Str, +8 class); Combat +8; Grap +9; Atk +10 melee (+4/20 +4, battleaxe), or +9 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Noblesse Oblige (Virtue), Oath of Fealty: King Arthur (after his ascendancy) (Virtue), Old-fashioned (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 7; SV Tough +8 (+6 Full Plate), Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +9; Str +1, Dex +1, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +3, Cha +0.

**Core Ability:** Expertise

**Skills:** Climb 6 (+2), Diplomacy 13, Handle Animal 9, Intimidate 13, Jump 3 (-1), Notice 9 (+12), Ride 13 (+16), Sense Motive 13 (+16), Survival 9 (+12)

**Feats:** Accurate Attack, Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (battleaxe), Benefit (knighthood), Inspire (competence), Overrun, Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Wealthy x2, Weapon Bind, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Masterwork Battleaxe, Crossbow, Masterwork Full Plate, Large Metal Shield

**Description:** A noble man, honorable to a fault, even a bit on the stodgy side, Sir Ector is the man chosen by Merlin to care for the upbringing of Arthur both in terms of his training as a knight, but also his training in the institutions of the nobility. Although he does not know who Arthur is, Sir Ector has taken the boy's rearing and upbringing with the same care and attention to detail with which he handles all assignments given to him. The lavish gifts in money and land that have come along with the boy from King Uther have made Ector a powerful noble in his own right, and he is determined to use this newfound power to aid the King and combat the inroads of rebels, barbarians, and bandits with his own life if necessary.

**Role:** For heroes in the Childhood of Arthur campaign, Sir Ector provides the main patron of the campaign, and

will frequently send them on missions either to protect his land or defend the boy king. Once Arthur becomes King, Ector is one of his most loyal and steadfast supporters, and also serves as an advisor when called upon to serve.

## EDWARD AND HUE, SIRs (KNIGHTS PERILOUS)

Robber knights who always fought together.

**Sirs Edward and Hue (Lesser Nobility Warrior 5/Expert 5):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 23, parry 24, flatfooted 18 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +2 Str, +8 class); Combat +8; Grap +10; Atk +11 melee (+5/19-20 +3, sword), or +10 ranged (+4, shortbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Word is your bond (Virtue), Code of Chivalry- disregard (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 7; SV Tough +5 (+3 chain mail), Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +1; Str +2, Dex +2, Con +2, Int +0, Wis -1, Cha +2.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Bluff 13 (+15), Climb 13 (+13), Gather Information 6 (+8), Handle Animal 13 (+15), Intimidate 13 (+15), Jump 7 (+7), Ride 13 (+17)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (sword), Dedicated (Brother), Fascinate (Bluff), Shield Training, Sneak Attack x2 (+3 damage), Spirited Charge, Suggestion (Bluff), Vehicular Combat, Weapon Break, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Sword, Shortbow, Large Metal Shield, Masterwork Chain Mail

**Description:** The "knights perilous," these robber barons always fight together, raiding, slaying, and doing anything they can to advance themselves at the expense of others. Their only loyalty in the world is to one another.

**Role:** These "knights" are cads, villains, scoundrels, and knaves. They have not a redeeming quality between them.

## GAHERIS

Younger brother of Gawain serves as his squire.

**Gaheris (Lesser Nobility Warrior 5):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 20, parry 22, flatfooted 15 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +3 Str, +5 class); Combat +5; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (+6/20 +4, battleaxe), or +7 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Oath of Fealty: Arthur (Virtue), Impulsive (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 5; SV Tough +6 (+3 chain mail), Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +1; Str +3, Dex +2, Con +3, Int +1, Wis +0, Cha +1.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Climb 8, Handle Animal 8, Intimidate 8, Ride 8, Survival 8

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (battleaxe), Benefit (squire), Dedicated (family), Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Vehicular Combat, Weapon Training

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**Possessions:** Battleaxe, Crossbow, Large Metal Shield, Chain Mail

**Description:** Younger brother of Gawain serves as his squire, and will one day sit at the Round Table himself.

**Role:** Gaheris, along with his brothers, serve as a clan, with a loyalty to themselves second only to Arthur. If one brother is in trouble, the others will quickly follow.

## GALAHAD, SIR

The only knight worthy to sit in Siege Perilous, Galahad is the illegitimate son of Lancelot and Elaine. Ultimately he will complete the Grail Quest, healing King Pellam and the land itself. After Arthur's death, he embarks on a series of adventures in the Holy Land of Jerusalem. After meeting Joseph of Arimathea and returning the Grail to him, Galahad perishes.

**Sir Galahad (Lesser Nobility Warrior 20):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 38, parry 36, flatfooted 30 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +2 Str, +20 class); Combat +20; Grap +22; Atk +24 melee (+7/19-20 +3, sword), or +22 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft / 5 ft; Virtues/ Vices Vow of Poverty (Virtue), Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Oath of Fealty: Arthur (Virtue), because of divine purity Galahad has no vices; Fate/Destiny To recover the Grail/To die in the Holy Land; Conviction 12; SV Tough +14 (+6 full plate), Fort +18, Ref +11, Will +12; Str +2, Dex +2, Con +3, Int +0, Wis +3, Cha +3.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Diplomacy 23 (+26), Handle Animal 6 (+9), Intimidate 23 (+26), Knowledge (religion and philosophy) 17, Ride 23 (+27)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (sword), Attack Specialization (sword),

Attractive, Benefit (knighthood), Canny Defense (Wis), Dedicated (One God), Favored Opponent x2 (Saracens), Greater Attack Focus (sword), Greater Attack Specialization (sword), Lay on Hands, Lucky, Shield Training, Smite Opponent (Saracens), Spirited Charge, Tough x5, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Warrior's Mount, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Sword, Crossbow, Lance, Large Metal Shield, Full Plate

## GAWAINE, SIR

Son of Lot and Morgawse; slayer of King Pellinore; knighted on Arthur's wedding day; because he accidentally killed a woman during a quest, Queen Guinevere made Gawaine swear an oath to always champion women and to never harm them.

*Then Sir Gawaine was all abashed, and with Galatine his good sword he smote through shield and thick hauberk made of thick mails, and all to-rushed and break the precious stones, and made him a large wound, that men might see both liver and lung.*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

**Sir Gawaine (Lesser Nobility Warrior 20):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 34, parry 39, flatfooted 30 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +5 Str, +20 class); Combat +20; Grap +25; Atk +26 melee (+13/18-20 +3, Galatine), or +21 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft / 5 ft; Virtues/ Vices Vow- Defend Women (Virtue), Oath of Fealty: Arthur (Virtue), Vengeful (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 12; SV Tough +17 (+6 full plate), Fort +18, Ref +7, Will +6; Str +5, Dex +1, Con +6, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +1.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Diplomacy 23 (+24), Handle Animal 23 (+24), Intimidate 23 (+24), Ride 23 (+26)

**Feats:** All-out Attack, Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Benefit (knighthood), Attack Focus (sword), Attack Specialization (sword), Dedicated (family), Diehard (from Galatine), Favored Opponent- those who have wronged Gawaine or his family x3, Greater Attack Focus (sword), Greater Attack Specialization (sword), Improved Critical (sword), Seize Initiative, Shield Training, Smite Opponent- those who have wronged Gawaine or his family, Spirited Charge, Startle, Tough x5, Vehicular Combat, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Galatine (see the Supernatural Items section for a full description of this weapon), Crossbow, Large Metal Shield, Full Plate

**Description:** Gawain is the son of King Lot of Lothian and Morgawse. Despite his acceptance into Arthur's court, and indeed his place as a Grail knight and one of Arthur's most important and well-rewarded subjects, his early life in the court of a man considered Arthur's enemy was a constant sticking point for the knight.

Gawain always felt he had to prove himself, prove his loyalty, his worth, and this led to numerous clashes with



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other Knights of the Round Table. Pellinore was a blood enemy of the young knight, and despite the fact that both served Arthur, Gawaine eventually killed the knight who slew his father. Lancelot and Percival were also rivals of the knight, often competing against one another in the same tournament, or even championing opposite sides in minor skirmishes. Gawain always is portrayed as having a chip on his shoulder, even when he accepts the Grail quest, we are told that Percival, Lancelot, Galahad, and Bors accepted the quest, and then finally “Gawain, louder than all the others”.

**Role:** Gawaine is one of the greatest knights in the world, but always carried himself like an outsider. He was determined to be remembered as *the* greatest knight ever to have lived, which will cast him in the role of rival to any knight he sees as equal to himself.

### GUINEVERE, QUEEN

**Guinevere (Noble Expert 3):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 12, parry 10, flatfooted 11 (+0 size, +1 Dex, -1 Str, +1 class); Combat +1; Grap +0; Atk +2 melee (by weapon -1), or +2 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Gentle (Virtue), Impulsive (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction; SV Tough +1, Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +7; Str -1, Dex +1, Con +1, Int +1, Wis +1, Cha +3.

**Core Ability:** Expertise

**Skills:** Bluff 6 (+9), Diplomacy 6 (+9), Gather Information 6 (+9), Knowledge (history) 6 (+7), Notice 6 (+7), Perform (dance) 6 (+9), Perform (singing) 6 (+9), Sense Motive 6 (+7), Survival 6 (+7)

**Feats:** Attractive, Benefit (noble), Connected, Contacts, Fascinate (Diplomacy), Inspire (awe), Lucky

**Possessions:** Rich clothing and jewelry

**Description:** Guinevere is not what many expect her to be. The daughter of a widower, growing up in a kingdom besieged, she has an iron will beneath the beautiful velvet exterior of the pampered noblewoman. Since the attacks on her father’s kingdom, she is always armed, and although she has agreed to an armed escort, refuses to halt her beloved daily ride into the countryside (Player Characters should be favored escorts on these excursions). Although Arthur falls head over heels in love with her at first sight, she begins their relationship extremely underwhelmed with the unassuming Boy King.

In many ways Guinevere’s story is the whole of the Arthurian mythos in one tale. Her marriage to Arthur signals the beginning of Camelot’s golden age, just as her affair with Lancelot signals the end of Arthur and his realm. She is a truly tragic figure.

**Role:** Guinevere is the object of desire. For Arthur she is a beloved wife, for Lancelot she is the forbidden fruit, for Mordred she is the prize. Throughout the tales she is kidnapped (with alarming regularity) by monsters, by bandits, and by Arthur’s enemies. Obtaining her is a constant struggle.



### KAY, SIR

Son of Sir Ector; Arthur’s adopted brother and future Seneschal.

*But always Queen Guinevere praised Sir Kay for his deeds, and said, What lady that ye love, and she love you not again she were greatly to blame; and among ladies, said the queen, I shall bear your noble fame, for ye spake a great word, and fulfilled it worshipfully.*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d’Arthur*

**Sir Kay, Seneschal of Britain (Lesser Nobility Warrior 7/Expert 8):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 26, parry 30, flatfooted 23 (+0 size, +0 Dex, +3 Str, +13 class); Combat +13; Grap +16; Atk +14 melee (+7/19-20 +3, sword), or +13 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Oath of Fealty: King Arthur (Virtue), Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Hot-headed (Vice); Fate/Destiny To serve the King all his life/To die before his King in his final battle; Conviction 10; SV Tough +10 (+6 Full Plate), Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +8; Str +3, Dex +0, Con +3, Int +2, Wis +0, Cha +4.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Diplomacy 18 (+22), Gather Information +18 (+22), Handle Animal 14 (+18), Intimidate 18 (+22), Notice 18, Ride 18, Sense Motive 18, Survival 18

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Assessment, Attack Focus (sword), Attack Specialization

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(sword), Benefit (knighthood), Connected, Defensive Attack, Elusive Target, Inspire (competence), Inspire (courage), Lucky, Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Tough, Track, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training, Well Informed

**Possessions:** Full Plate, Large Metal Shield, Sword, Crossbow, Lance (damage as spear, cannot be thrown), Warhorse

**Description:** Sir Kay thought he knew how his life was going to turn out. He fully expected to follow in his father's footsteps, ruling a tiny barony and living out his days as a feudal lord. However when Arthur drew Excalibur from the stone, Kay's life took an unexpected turn. Rather than be the quiet lord of a prosperous, but unimportant manor, Kay was now at the center of the fight to unify and protect Britain, serving the greatest king who ever lived as Seneschal and advisor. Despite the unexpected nature of these duties, Kay performed them brilliantly, and is one of the most underestimated of Arthur's great knights. Those who face him in battle soon come away with a different impression, if they live.

**Role:** Sir Kay is the administrator. He rules in Arthur's absence, advises the King, and sees to it that the mundane aspects of running a kingdom, and later an empire, run smoothly. In battle he will be found at Arthur's side.

### LANCELOT, SIR

Son of Bans, King of France. When his father's kingdom was taken by the evil Claudas, Lancelot's mother, moments



before being taken and killed by the rebel forces, placed Lancelot in a basket and pushed him out into a lake. Rather than sinking, the basket was picked up by Vivien, a Lady of the Lake, who raised Lancelot. As a man, Lancelot was called Lancelot of the Lake, or Lancelot du Lac in France, to commemorate his amazing childhood. The greatest knight in the world, Lancelot's only two defeats were the failure to achieve the Grail, and the failure to control his disastrous passion for Guinevere.

*...for in all tournaments and jousts and deeds of arms, both for life and death, he passed all other knights, and at no time he was never overcome but if it were by treason or enchantment...*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

**Sir Lancelot (Noble Warrior 20):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +5; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 41, parry 38, flatfooted 10 (+0 size, +5 Dex, +4 Str, +20 class); Combat +20; Grap +24; Atk +29 melee (+12/19-20 +3, sword), or +25 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Loves Guinevere (Vice); Fate/Destiny To be the greatest knight of the greatest King/To betray his King and friend; Conviction 12; SV Tough +13 (+6 full plate), Fort +20, Ref +15, Will +12; Str +4, Dex +5, Con +4, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +4.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Climb 17 (+12), Diplomacy 23 (+27), Handle Animal 6 (+10), Intimidate 23 (+27), Ride 23 (+28)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (sword), Attack Specialization (sword), Dedication (One God), Diehard, Dodge x3, Greater Attack Specialization (sword), Iron Will, Lay on Hands, Lucky, Seize Initiative, Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Tough x3, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Warrior's Mount, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Sword +3, Crossbow, Lance (as spear-cannot be thrown), Masterwork, Full Plate, Large Metal Shield

**Description:** Son of Bans, King of France. When his father's kingdom was taken by the evil Claudas, Lancelot's mother, moments before being taken and killed by the rebel forces, placed Lancelot in a basket and pushed him out into a lake. Rather than sinking, the basket was picked up by Vivien, a Lady of the Lake, who raised Lancelot. As a man Lancelot was called Lancelot of the Lake, or Lancelot du Lac in France, to commemorate his amazing childhood. The greatest knight in the world, Lancelot's only two defeats were the failure to achieve the Grail, and the failure to control his disastrous passion for Guinevere.

**Role:** Lancelot is the tragic hero. Widely regarded as the best knight in the history of the world, his one moment of weakness is destined to ruin the two people he loves most in the world.

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## MARK, KING OF CORNWALL

**King Mark (Noble Expert 20):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 36, parry 31, flatfooted 25 (+0 size, +3 Dex, +2 Str, +15 class); Combat +15; Grap +17; Atk +19 melee (+5/19-20 +3, sword), or +18 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft / 5 ft; Virtues/Vices Noblesse Oblige (Virtue), Jealous (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 12; SV Tough +13 (+6 full plate), Fort +14, Ref +13, Will +17; Str +2, Dex +3, Con +3, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +5.

**Core Ability:** Expertise

**Skills:** Bluff 23 (+28), Climb 23 (+25), Diplomacy 23 (+28), Gather Information 23 (+28), Intimidate 23 (+28), Notice 23, Ride 23 (+26), Sense Motive 23

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (sword), Assessment, Banter, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll x4, Fascinate (Bluff), Inspire (complacency), Lucky, Mass Suggestion (Bluff), Shield Training, Sneak Attack x3 (+4 damage), Suggestion (Bluff), Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training, Well Informed

**Possessions:** Sword, Crossbow, Large Metal Shield, Full Plate

**Description:** King Mark is a foe of Arthur, but has a great hatred for Tristram, because of the latter's affair with his wife Isould. He eventually kills Tristram, causing Isould to die as well.

**Role:** Mark is the noble who cares only for his own power and advancement. He is an opponent of Arthur, but does not openly oppose him, instead using guile and trickery. Any knight of Arthur's court can expect to be ambushed by Mark's bandits while traveling through his realm.

## MERLIN

**Merlin (Middle Class Adept 20):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 28, parry 18, flatfooted 20 (+0 size, +0 Dex, -2 Str, +10 class); Combat +10; Grap +8; Atk +10 melee (+0/20 +3, quarterstaff), or +10 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft / 5 ft; Virtues/Vices Oath of Fealty: Arthur (Virtue), Cryptic (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 12; SV Tough +2, Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +20; Str -2, Dex +0, Con +2, Int +2, Wis +8, Cha +3.

**Core Ability:** The Talent

**Skills:** Concentration 23 (+31), Diplomacy 23 (+26), Intimidate 23 (+26), Knowledge (history) 23 (+25), Knowledge (supernatural) 23 (+25), Notice 23 (+31)

**Supernatural Powers (Save Difficulty 28, prime ability Wis):** Beast Link +31, Body Control +31, Cold Shaping +31, Earth Shaping +31, Elemental Aura +31, Elemental Blast +31, Enhance Other +31, Flesh Shaping +31, Nature Reading +31, Plant Shaping +31, Self-Shaping +31,



Teleport +31, Visions +31, Water Shaping +31, Weather Shaping +31, Wind Shaping +31

**Feats:** Animal Empathy, Canny Dodge (Wis), Imbue Item, Light Sleeper, Mind over Body, Night Vision, Startle

**Possessions:**

**Description:** Merlin is the greatest sorcerer to walk the Earth in the history of the world. More rumors are known about his early life than fact. It is rumored he was sired by the Devil himself, though some say it was a mere incubus that spawned him, and that at an early age, when his talent for magic appeared, he was sent to the sage Blaise for apprenticeship. However, it is also rumored that he was born in the lost continent of Atlantis and learned his arts there, using them to escape that fabled city's watery destruction. Perhaps both these tales are true, or perhaps they are both false. Merlin does not talk about his past in any event.

What can be documented of Merlin is his first appearance to Uther and his brother Pendragon, who were then princes in exile, hiding in Brittany. Their father had been killed by Vortigern the Usurper. Merlin advised the brothers to return, and his magic helped the brothers overthrow Vortigern and remove the barbarian hordes from Britain. When Uther's lust for Igraine threatened to undo all he had accomplished, Merlin saw to it the heir Arthur was placed in his care, and saw to the boy's education and protection until he was ready to complete his father's work.

**Role:** Merlin is the man of mystery. Although he is

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Arthur's most important advisor, he does not act like a vassal. He does not come when he is called, and offers advice when it is not asked for. Many of Arthur's servants resent the fact that, above all else, Merlin acts like he and the King are equal. However, he is always loyal, and when things are at their worst, he can be found by Arthur's side.

### MORDRED

Mordred is the bastard son of Arthur by his half sister Morgawse. A knight of the Round Table as a young man, Mordred was constantly scheming and conspiring to achieve the throne from his father. When Arthur goes to war with France and Lancelot over his affair with Guinevere, Mordred sets up a rebel kingdom in Lothian with Morgan le Fay, and amasses a huge army of Saxons and young, impressionable knights of Camelot. This draws Arthur back to England, where he met with Mordred in battle on the field of Salisbury Plain, near Camelot, where both were killed.

*Sir Mordred; he that like a subtle beast  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,  
Ready to spring, waiting a chance.*

*Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

#### **Mordred (Lesser Nobility Warrior 10/Expert 10):**

Medium-size humanoid; Init; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 38, parry 27, flatfooted 27 (+0 size, +5 Dex, +0 Str, +17 class); Combat +17; Grap +17; Atk +22 melee (+3/19-20 +3, sword), or +22 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Noblesse Oblige (Virtue), Spiteful (Vice); Fate/Destiny To kill King Arthur/To die by Arthur's hand; Conviction 12; SV Tough +8 (+6 full plate), Fort +18, Ref +21, Will +12; Str +0, Dex +5, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +6.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Bluff 23 (+29), Climb 9 (+4 in armor), Gather Information 23 (+29), Intimidate 20 (+26), Ride 20 (+25), Sense Motive 20, Stealth 17 (+22) (+17 in armor)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (sword), Attack Specialization (sword), Banter, Benefit (knighthood), Connected, Contacts, Fascinate (Bluff), Favored Opponent x3 (Arthur and his knights), Lucky, Mass Suggestion (Bluff), Seize Initiative, Smite Opponent (Arthur and his knights), Sneak Attack x4 (+5 damage), Spirited Charge, Suggestion (Bluff), Taunt, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Sword, Crossbow, Large Metal Shield, Masterwork Full Plate

**Description:** Mordred is the bastard son of Arthur by his half sister Morgawse. A knight of the Round Table as a young man, Mordred was constantly scheming and conspiring to achieve the throne from his father. When Arthur goes to war with France and Lancelot over his affair with Guinevere, Mordred sets up a rebel kingdom in

Lothian with Morgan le Fay, and amasses a huge army of Saxons and young, impressionable knights of Camelot. This draws Arthur back to England, and the two meet in battle on the field of Salisbury Plain, near Camelot, where both were killed, ending the Arthurian Age.

**Role:** Mordred is the schemer. He uses guile, false promises, blackmail, and ultimately murder all in an attempt to seat himself on the throne. He is in many ways the polar opposite of Arthur, and his use of Morgan as his advisor in a black parody of Merlin only completes the picture.

### MORGAN LE FAY

Sorceress; wife of King Uriens; daughter of Gorloise and Igraine; half-sister of Arthur; lover of Accolon; after attempting to assassinate Arthur, steals his magic scabbard and flees to Gore.

*Now, sir, said Accolon, I will tell you; this sword hath  
been in my keeping the most part of this twelvemonth;  
and Morgan le Fay, King Uriens' wife, sent it me  
yesterday by a dwarf, to this intent, that I should slay  
King Arthur; her brother. For ye shall understand King  
Arthur is the man in the world that she most hateth,  
because he is most of worship and of prowess of any  
of her blood; also she loveth me out of measure as  
paramour, and I her again; and if she might bring  
about to slay Arthur by her crafts, she would slay her  
husband King Uriens lightly, and then had she me  
devised to be king in this land, and so to reign, and she  
to be my queen...*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

#### **Morgan le Fey (Age 22) (Noble Adept 15/Expert 5):**

Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 28, parry 20, flatfooted 20 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +0 Str, +10 class); Combat +10; Grap +10; Atk +12 melee (+1/19-20 +3, knife), or +12 ranged (+1/19-20 +3, knife); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Word is your bond (Virtue), Disregard Oath of Fealty: Arthur (Vice); Fate/Destiny Aid in the downfall of Arthur/Be spurned by the only man she will ever love (Accolon); Conviction 12; SV Tough +1, Fort +13, Ref +17, Will +18; Str +0, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +6.

**Core Ability:** The Talent

**Skills:** Bluff 23 (+29), Diplomacy 23 (+29), Disguise 18 (+24), Gather Information 23 (+29), Intimidate 18 (+24), Knowledge (supernatural) 15 (+17), Concentration 18 (+20), Medicine 10 (+12)

**Supernatural Powers (Save Difficulty 24, prime ability Cha):** Beast Link +24, Dominate +24, Heart Reading +24, Heart Shaping +24, Mind Touch +24, Plant Shaping +24, Scrying +24, Teleport +24, Wind Shaping +24

**Feats:** Animal Empathy, Attractive, Banter, Benefit (noble), Connected, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Fascinate

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(Bluff), Inspire (complacency), Lucky, Night Vision, Subtle Power, Suggestion, Taunt, Well-Informed

**Possessions:** Knife

**Description:** Morgan is destined to be the second most powerful sorcerer in all of Britain, one day rivaling the mighty Merlin himself. She is also consumed with an unquenchable hatred for her half-brother Arthur, who she blames on an unconscious level for the death of her father, Gorloise, and the arranged marriages of her and her sisters like so many chess pieces to cement Uther's crumbling reign. She is a beautiful woman, fully capable of using her beauty to gain whatever she wants, from her husband Uriens, to her many lovers. Her one true love, however, is Accolon, whom she hopes to put on the throne as king. However, it is ultimately Mordred who she will serve as a dark counterpart to Merlin, and aid Arthur's downfall.

**Role:** Morgan is the ultimate manipulator, using wit, guile, and sexuality to manipulate those around her. She hates Arthur, blaming him for Uther's sins, and will do anything to see him fall.

## MORGAWSE, QUEEN

Daughter of Gorloise and Igraine, mother of Mordred by her half-brother Arthur.

**Morgawse (Noble Adept 8):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 21, parry 14, flatfooted 14 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +0 Str, +4 class); Combat +4; Grap +4; Atk +6 melee (+1/19-20 +3, knife), or +6 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft / 5 ft; Virtues/Vices Ambitious (Virtue), Vengeful (Vice); Fate/Destiny To father Arthur's killer/To be killed

by one of her sons; Conviction 6; SV Tough +1, Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +11; Str +0, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +2, Wis +1, Cha +5.

**Core Ability:** The Talent

**Skills:** Bluff 11 (+16), Diplomacy 11 (+16), Gather Information 11 (+16), Knowledge (supernatural) 11 (+13), Notice 11 (+12), Sense Motive 11 (+12)

**Supernatural Powers (Save Difficulty 19):** Bliss (+16), Dominate (+16), Heart Shaping (+16), Mind Touch (+16), Suggestion (+16)

**Feats:** Attractive, Banter, Benefit (nobility), Connected, Contacts, Lucky, Subtle Power

**Possessions:** Knife

**Description:** Morgawse, like all the women in her family, possesses the gift of magic, along with "the sight". Having seen that she will indirectly result in Arthur's death, she supports her husband, feeling that he will kill the boy and become King. What she does not know is that her bastard son of an encounter with Arthur, Mordred, is the one who will accomplish this deed for her, but only after she has been killed by one of her own sons (Gaheris).

**Role:** Morgawse, like Morgan, seeks revenge on Arthur for the wrongs done to her mother by Uther.

## NIMUE, LADY

Enchantress, Lady of the Lake; traps Merlin under the Earth, killing him; later advisor to Arthur; wife of King Pelleas.

**Nimue (Noble Adept 15):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 19, parry 16, flatfooted 17 (+0 size, +2 Dex, -1 Str, +7 class); Combat +7; Grap +6; Atk +9 melee (by weapon -1), or +9 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft / 5 ft; Virtues/Vices none; Fate/Destiny; Conviction; SV Tough +2, Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +16; Str -1, Dex +2, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +7, Cha +3.

**Core Ability:** The Talent

**Skills:** Bluff 18 (+21), Concentration 18 (+25), Diplomacy 18 (+21), Knowledge (supernatural) 18

**Supernatural Powers (Save Difficulty 25, primary ability Wis):** Cure +25, Earth Shaping +25, Elemental Weapon +25, Nature Reading +25, Plant Shaping +25, Scrying +25, Suggestion +25, Teleport +25, Visions +25, Water Shaping +25, Weather Shaping +25, Wind Shaping +25

**Feats:** Animal Empathy, Attractive, Imbue Item, Mind over Body, Trackless, Trailblazer

**Possessions:**

**Description:** A Lady of the Lake, Nimue traps Merlin under the Earth, killing him. She later appears as an advisor to Arthur and wife of King Pelleas.

**Role:** Nimue takes the role of Arthur's advisor during the later part of his reign. Sometime vindictive and cruel, she has a dark side that surpasses that even of her master Merlin.

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## PALAMIDES, SIR

Son of King Pellinore; took up the hunt for the Questing Beast after his father's death

Use the statistics block for King Pellinore below when representing Sir Palamides.

## PELLAM, KING (THE GRAIL KING)

Father of Garlon; descended from Joseph of Arimathea; guardian of the Grail and the Lance of Longinus

Use the statistics of Sir Kay above when representing King Pellam.

## PELLINORE, KING

A king of Wales; pursues the Questing Beast; also the Knight of the Pavilion, challenging all who pass; during a fight with Arthur breaks Excalibur, which is repaired by a Lady of the Lake. Father of Percival, Lamerake, and Tor. Killed King Lot, Sir Gawaine's father, during his rebellion against Arthur. Gawaine eventually revenges this death and kills Pellinore.

*He will not be lightly matched of one knight living, and therefore it is my counsel, let him pass, for he shall do you good service in short time, and his sons after his days.*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur, Book I, Chapter XXV*

**Pellinore (Noble Warrior 20):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 34, parry 37, flatfooted 30 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +3 Str, +20 class); Combat +20; Grap +23; Atk +23 melee (+8/20 +4, battleaxe), or +21 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices none; Fate/Destiny; Conviction; SV Tough +15 (+6 full plate), Fort +19, Ref +10, Will +12; Str +3, Dex +1, Con +4, Int +0, Wis +2, Cha +3.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Diplomacy 23 (+26), Handle Animal 6 (+9), Intimidate 23 (+26), Ride 23 (+24), Survival 17 (+19)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (battleaxe), Attack Specialization (battleaxe), Benefit (noble), Cleave, Diehard, Great Cleave, Greater Attack Focus (battleaxe), Greater Attack Specialization (battleaxe), Lucky, Move-by Action, Overrun, Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Tough x5, Track, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Warrior's Mount, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Battleaxe, Crossbow, Lance (as spear, cannot be thrown), Large Metal Shield, Full Plate

**Description:** A king of Wales; pursues the Questing Beast; also the Knight of the Pavilion, challenging all who pass; during a fight with Arthur breaks Excalibur, which is repaired by a Lady of the Lake. Father of Percival, Lamerake, and Tor. Killed King Lot, Sir Gawaine's father, during his rebellion against Arthur. Gawaine eventually revenges this death and kills Pellinore.

**Role:** Pellinore is a classic knight of the Quixotic tradition. He constantly seeks the impossible, the ephemeral, whether it is the greatest King in the world, the most beautiful woman in the world, or the Questing Beast, his goal is always just over the horizon.

## ULFIUS, SIR

One of the greatest knights to ever live; served Uther Pendragon, and afterwards Arthur; was possibly the greatest knight of Arthur's early reign, before the emergence of Pellinore, Lancelot, and Gawaine.

Use the statistics of Sir Brastias when representing Sir Ulfius.

# CHAPTER 3:

## ARTHURIAN ADVENTURING



### ADVENTURE LOCATIONS

#### TOWNS

Towns are centers of trade. A place where excess food could be sold or traded for other goods was the basis of the economies of Arthurian Britain, and the medieval world in general. Towns are almost always found near some access to trade, either a river or a major road of some sort.

Most towns in Arthurian Britain are a hodgepodge of different architectural styles, revealing their mixed lineage. Celtic towns, which were conquered by the Roman Empire, who adopted their technologies of roads, and the Roman villa, returned to the locals after the Roman withdrawal, and were then conquered by the Saxons. As villages grow, or as they are destroyed and rebuilt, they will be built in the style of the current conquerors. However, the old Roman roads and stone fortifications still form the backbone of the infrastructure, so this can frequently be seen in villages and towns.

Towns can be used in the campaign to provide characters with a place to buy and sell their goods, rest between adventures, and also as a place to get involved in politics.

### SAMPLE TOWN: CARLION (CAERLEON)

Carlion (or as the old folks call it, Caerleon) is a small, yet critically important town built on the ruins of a Roman settlement. A source of food, wool, stone, and lumber, the town's position on the river Usk make it a hub of trade to nearby areas. The castle, built originally by the Romans, and expanded by later rulers from the nearby stone quarries serves as Arthur's headquarters during his War of Ascension, when he is battling King Lot and the Eleven Lords.

The town is important for other reasons as well, not the least of which are the other two prominent landmarks in the town: Caerleon Church and the Amphitheater.

Caerleon Church, despite its humble trappings, is the home of none other than Saint Dubricius, one of the holiest, most highly respected leaders in the church of the One God. He, along with the Archbishop of Canterbury, serves as two of Arthur's closest advisors, exceeded in their wisdom only by Merlin himself. However, as a beatified living saint, Dubricius is an especially powerful ally, and serves as Arthur's senior advisor while Merlin is away engaging in diplomacy and intrigue.



The Amphitheater, constructed during the Roman occupation, was the original reason Arthur chose Caerleon for his Pentecost celebration, as it makes an excellent venue to host jousts, races, and tournaments. However, when open war is declared, the Amphitheater serves another function: it becomes the place where Arthur and his knights discuss war strategy, and is the precursor to the Round Table itself.

Although the key locations of Caerleon are detailed on the map, most of the town is not shown on the map provided. Areas off the map include manorial farmland, rock quarries, and rough hilly terrain occupied by shepherds and their flocks. There are also many ruins of the original Roman settlement in the outlying areas of the map. These have been used as a source of free stone by farmers and villagers for almost a century, and so most items of value have been discovered. However, there are persistent rumors of underground burial chambers, ancient libraries, haunted ruins, and other wonders dismissed by older, more sober minds.

Should the outlying areas be attacked, the villagers will retreat to the town proper, and its Roman walls, for protection. In truly dire circumstances, should the walls of the town center be penetrated, they would retreat to Caerleon Castle.

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## MAP KEY

### 1. GRUNDY'S FARM

This large plot of land is owned by "Big" Sal Grundy, who rose from humble beginnings to become quite wealthy. No one is quite sure what Sal did to become wealthy, and he doesn't talk much, so rumors about him abound. He can often be seen at the Black Stallion drinking alone, watching the crowds of soldiers, entertainers, and locals alike with a detached, bemused interest.

### 2. GUILD HOUSE:

The buildings on either side of this short street belong to some of the most wealthy and influential citizens of Caerleon: the Guildmasters. These individuals spend most of their time working their trades, and occasionally meet to regulate the terms of apprenticeship and other matters. Recently, however, the role of the guildsmen as community leaders has become more important, as the King himself has called on them to manage the explosive growth to the small town brought about by the arrival of the King's men. Certain guild leaders see this as an opportunity to line their pockets, while others try to genuinely support the fledgling King, proud he chose their village as his capitol.

### 3. MERCHANT'S ROW

Merchant life in Caerleon is rather more unorganized than one might expect. This area of shops, while it serves the villagers and manorial lords seeking supplies, also serves the class of itinerant wandering merchants of the day, who pack the open air market simply called "The Common" each afternoon to haggle, buy, and sell. These adventurers, often solitary, but occasionally grouped together in small bands, will buy goods they know (or hope) they can sell at a discount in distant towns.

Popular goods for trade are woolen blankets and cloaks (the cloaks are especially prized because they are water repellent), horn tools and utensils (made from sheep and goat horn), and occasionally more exotic goods such as weapons or artifacts from the Roman ruins. Trade is normally conducted in barter, but a growing number of merchants prefer silver coins (a practice begun by the Roman occupiers that has continued since their departure) as they are more portable and their value is easy to discern without excessive haggling.

With the influx of soldiers, knights, and dignitaries to the town, this area has also become an unofficial entertainment district. The small Inn of the Black Stallion at the base of Lodge Hill is packed to overflowing every evening, and this influx of patronage has drawn entertainers in droves to the small village. A group of entertainers sporting tumblers, jugglers, a monkey, and even a trained bear has secured

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the rights to a performance on the hill behind the inn, and crowds are delighted nightly by their performances.

In addition to the daily markets held for whatever customers or merchants happen to pass through town, this area also hosts a large commerce fair once a year, at which many residents of the surrounding manors come to trade for items they will need to get them through the winter.

### 4. ROMAN FORT

Especially after Arthur arrives and turns Caerleon into his ad hoc capitol, crime becomes a serious problem for the little village. Since the King is busy prosecuting his war with the rebellious nobles, and since the manorial lords tend to their own justice, there was no one with the authority and power to respond to those who would threaten the King's Peace in the town proper. So, with the King's permission, a group of merchants and guild leaders got together and established the first town Sheriff, a yeoman by the name of Carter, and gave him as his office and gaol, this old Roman garrison.

Although all of the crimes in town have been minor (so far), Sheriff Carter has secured labor from the guildmasters to repair the gaol, and has set up stocks for the public display of the drunkards and other minor offenders as an example to the other villagers. Crimes usually consist of petty thievery and fights among soldiers impatient for their first taste of glory, or vying for the attention of an especially promising tavern wench. New in his position, Sheriff Carter is well aware of how tenuous his position in the social order is, and will certainly not prosecute any knights in Arthur's service. He will report such activities to the King's men, and help them deal with it. However he will not act on his own in such matters.

### 5. MALLET HOUSE

This tool shop sees extensive business from the river merchants, who ferry the hammers, nails, and other implements made here to distant towns. Carl Samson recently inherited this shop when his father passed away, and this young craftsman, newly married, has the harrowed look only a man recently thrust into ownership of a business, expecting a child, and attempting to learn the art of politics on the town council can have. Carl's hairline, which has been retreating faster with each passing day, is the subject of much local humor, not to mention the odd betting pool.

### 6. THE HEDGEROW

This dark, narrow, little street is the domain of thieves, cutthroats, and prostitutes, and is avoided by all honest folk, especially after the sun goes down. It was the activities on this street, more than any other cause that prompted the appointment of Sheriff Carter, who does his best to contain the activities of the seedy elements that cater to the darker desires of the soldiers and other newcomers to Caerleon.

### 7. THE MILL

This building is the economic hub of the entire town during harvest time. Like many of the town's important buildings the Romans originally constructed it.

### 8. AULD IRONWORKS

Solomon Aaronson runs the local smithy and has gone from shoeing the occasional horse to repairing the plate mail of Knights of the Realm virtually overnight. This has made Solomon extremely wealthy, but greatly overworked. He has taken on three new apprentices to help with menial duties while he attends to the intricate work required by the military forces stationed in town.

### 9. COOPER'S KEEP

Angus Cooper is the second wealthiest man in town (next to Stanley Morgan), and has an ostentatious manner, making sure everyone knows how wealthy he is. His combination house and place of residence rises to a majestic three stories. The head of the town council, Cooper's arrogance and success in equal measure have made him many enemies. However, his three daughters are all very fetching, and considered prime marriage candidates for ambitious young townsmen who want a piece of the arrogant man's little empire.

### 10. FREE SCHOOL

An unusual site in any town, this school only survives because of its connection to the church. Saint Dubricius has personally sponsored this school, encourages parents to allow their children to attend, and even provides laborers to assist families, allowing their children to attend more often. Because of his tireless work to support the school, most families allow their children to attend year round, except for the harvest, and the most inclement weather. The guildsmen do not like the influence this gives the church over the minds of the young, but are hesitant to oppose the charismatic and beloved Dubricius.

### 11. MORGAN'S HOUSE

Home of the oldest, most prestigious family in town, Stanley Morgan has gone out of his way to support Arthur's fledgling reign, including vast donations to the war coffers. Morgan disdains politics, and refused to head the town council, allowing that honor to fall to Angus Cooper. However, it is rumored that when Arthur moves on, Morgan will take his place in Castle Caerleon itself.

### 12. STONE HOUSE

Along with a sheriff, Caerleon's town council decided their new status as Arthur's capitol also required something else the small village had never needed before: a militia. Gruff old Warden Henslowe was given this assignment, and has

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begun drilling all able-bodied men from the surrounding villages every ten days. Unfortunately, all this rag tag group has to practice with at the moment is some old sticks, as the local metal smiths are too busy creating and maintaining equipment for Arthur's knights. Henslowe is seeking someone willing to travel to Oxford to buy pikes and halberds, but so far no one has presented themselves.

### AMPHITHEATER

This ancient structure, built by the Roman occupiers for their entertainments and town meetings, had fallen into disrepair until Arthur decided to celebrate his coronation here. The influx of money and craftsmen to carry out the work was the first in a series of upturns for the small community. Upon the declaration of civil war against the young King, Caerleon found itself thrust into the spotlight like never before. Now this ancient amphitheater hosts war council meetings between Arthur and his knights, and serves as a practice facility for those same knights to practice their jousting. During other times, the newly formed town militia also drills here.

### CAERLEON CASTLE

Arthur's official headquarters, this castle, while in fairly good repair, has been transformed overnight into a formidable defensive structure through the magic of Merlin himself. This created quite a stir in the community, and drew the criticism of many of the locals. However, Dubricius has refused to condemn even this blatant act of sorcery out of the need to protect the village and support Arthur's claim to the throne, a claim that should bring stability and order back to a land too long subjected to the petty whims of bandits and barbarians.

### CAERLEON CHURCH

A modest house of worship, this church is still the subject of pilgrimages by the faithful, not because of its wondrous architecture, but because of the miraculous character of the man who leads the local congregation. Saint Dubricius is known as a pillar of piety, worker of miracles, and converter of infidels. A model of restraint, he refuses to condemn those who continue to practice the Old Faith, even working with them on joint initiatives.

### CITIES

Cities are rarer, and show more of their Roman heritage than towns. The Romans founded most existing cities, including London, during their occupation of the isle. One thing Romans understood was commerce, and these major settlements, the first real cities on the island, were founded with that in mind, and supported by the best roads the world will see for a thousand years. This only increases the strategic value of these locations.

### SAMPLE CITY: YORK

York was originally built by the Romans during their conquest of Britain. As they moved northward, they established a garrison here called Eboracum. This site was of great strategic importance because it controlled a key north-south route, and was thus a focal point of older Celtic roadways. This site was also adjacent to two rivers which were both suitable for trading and which even provided access to the North Sea. As the Romans continued to occupy this site, they built their roads on top of the older roads, making York more important as a trading hub. These factors attracted a civilian population to York, and when the city was Christianized, a bishopric was established here. Lastly, a major ley line runs right beneath the city, making it a source of great power for magicians, and a natural place for them to build their homes and conduct their studies. All of these factors have combined to make York one of the most powerful and influential cities in Britain.

After the Roman occupiers departed from Britain, York's strategic importance led to it being quickly conquered and occupied by the Saxons, who called the city Eoforwic. During his Twelve Battles to rid England of Saxon rule, Arthur lays siege to York and recaptures it.

### MAP KEY

#### 1. CATHEDRAL PRECINCT

This area is the home of York-minster, dedicated to St. Peter, the largest cathedral in all of England. The Archbishop who rules here is an ardent foe of the "devil's children" who seem drawn to the city for reasons the churchmen do not understand. Sermons denouncing the practice of witchcraft are given here weekly, and sentiment against the "children of the night" seems to be building to a fever pitch.

#### 2. BOOTHAM BAR

This gate guards the major entrance into the city from the north, and can be dated back to Roman times.

#### 3. MONK BAR

This gate is extremely elaborate and well-fortified, having had a portcullis recently installed.

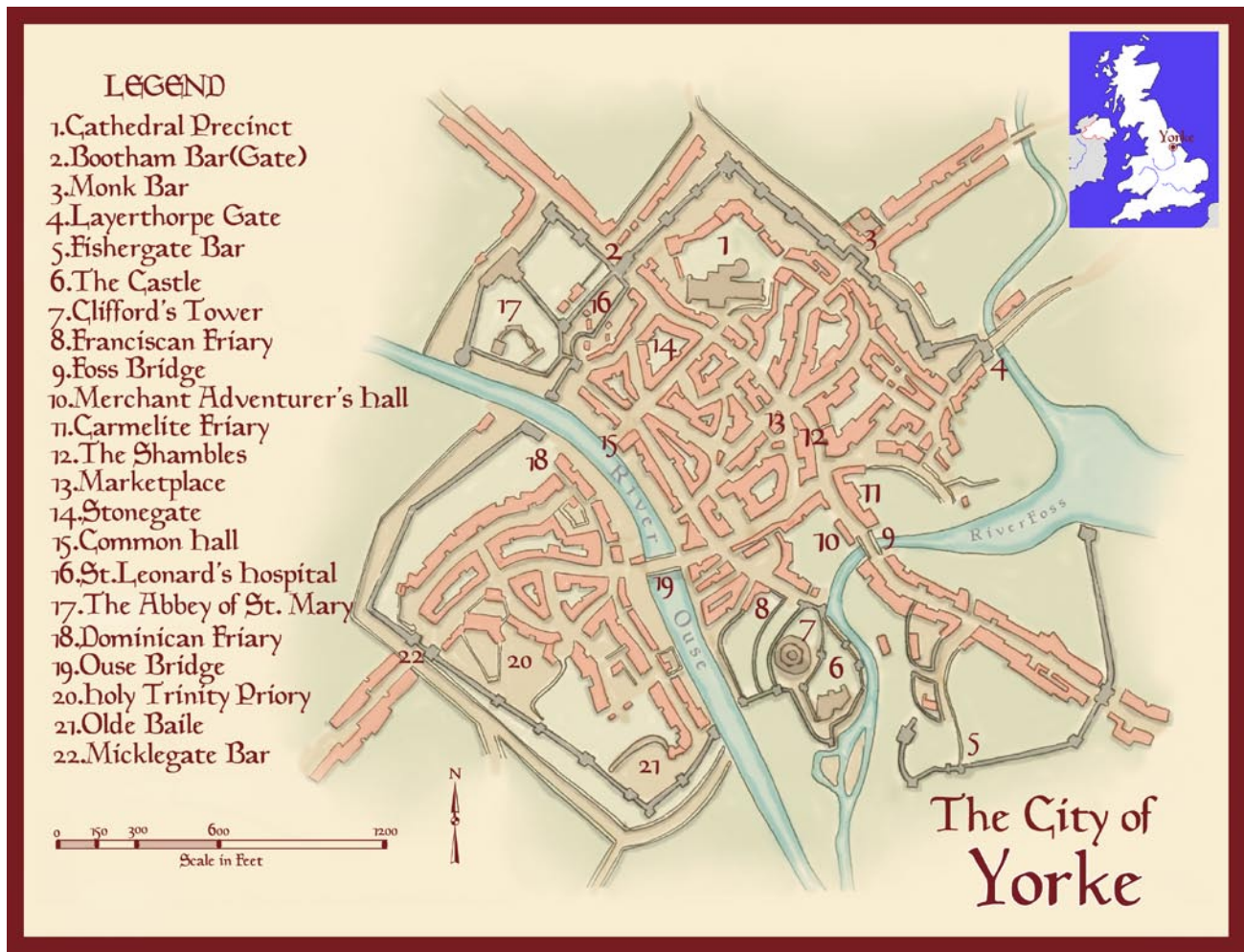
#### 4. LAYERTHORPE GATE

Not nearly as well-defended as the true bars (a term for the principal gates into a medieval city), this postern gate is a simple pair of iron-bound wooden doors.

#### 5. FISHERGATE BAR

This gate is named for its access to the river, and for the fishermen who live in the nearby neighborhoods.

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## 6. CASTLE

This motte-and-bailey castle is the home to the Lord who rules and protects the city on Arthur's behalf, the Warden of the Northlands, Lord Brastias. Having served Uther and his son Arthur with distinction, Lord Brastias is now in his 70's, and is rumored to be in ill-health. Only his influence has prevented a popular uprising against the witches of the city, but mages and those who practice the Old Faith throughout York are preparing for the day the venerable lord passes away, because they fear that day they will have to fight for their lives.

## 7. CLIFFORD'S TOWER

This tower was the original defensive fortification of the city, and predates the current castle. It is named after a man who was hanged here, and is rumored to be haunted.

## 8. FRANCISCAN FRIARY

This Friary was personally associated with Francis of Assisi, and its proximity to the castle leads many visiting dignitaries, including the King himself to take residence here.

## 9. FOSS BRIDGE

This stone bridge is lined with many shops and stalls, including a chapel dedicated to St. Anne, and the city's main market for saltwater fish. A representative of the King is stationed here to collect all appropriate taxes and fees from the fish trade. The Foss has been dammed, and the bulge in the river (at the extreme right of the map) is a lake created by this dam, which is an official royal fishery. Only those with the proper licenses (and according fees paid) are allowed to fish here under penalty of death.

## 10. MERCHANT ADVENTURER'S HALL

This powerful guild, which specializes in foreign trade (and indeed holds a monopoly over such trade and travel), has paid handsomely for a Royal Charter making it independent of all local rules and regulations. Only the King himself may place any limits or restrictions on this guild, which he chooses not to do as long as they support him financially.

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### 11. CARMELITE FRIARY

These monks have a charter to run boats across the King's fishery, and have built a small dock to allow boats crossing the lake to bring supplies to their monastery.

### 12. THE SHAMBLES

This area is the city's butcher market. Those new to the city can quickly find this area because of the charnel smell, blood soaked streets, immense population of bugs, or the sounds of animals being slaughtered when it is open. When it is closed, the area still reeks.

### 13. MARKETPLACE

This area not only hosts a variety of shops, but also an open-air market every Thursday. This area is commonly referred to as the "Thursday market" for just that reason. Vendors can begin selling their wares at 5 a.m., or 7 a.m. in the winter months. A town warden is always present at the Thursday market to assess fees for the vendors, called "stallage", which is a major source of revenue for the city.

### 14. STONEGATE

This neighborhood is one of the most important in the city, and the road leading through this area is an important route for official processions in the city. Many of the buildings in this neighborhood are owned by the Church, and many of the shops here sell religious books. There are also many goldsmiths in this part of the city, who are important allies of the Church, who in turn are some of the biggest purchasers of gold for their elaborate cathedrals.

### 15. COMMON HALL

This hall is the home to the powerful Guilds of the city. In addition to guild meetings, this hall is able to support large gatherings, and the Great Hall is where the city's Mayor is elected every year. When the Lord of York is powerful and well respected, as Lord Brastias is, he will be asked to approve the guild's choice of Mayor. There is no popular vote.

### 16. ST. LEONARD'S HOSPITAL

This facility, run by the Abbey of St. Mary (with considerable help from the other religious institutions of the city), is dedicated to caring for the poor. Alms are collected here, and local farmers are required by law to contribute corn to help the hospital carry on its work.

### 17. ABBEY OF ST. MARY

Home to a powerful and influential order of Benedictine monks, this large, self-contained, and self-governing abbey is a source of tension and bitterness among the rulers of York. There is a separate temple for the use of the monks, so they may worship privately in the center of the enclosed abbey yard.

### 18. DOMINICAN FRIARY

This monastery is dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene.

### 19. OUSE BRIDGE

This bridge was originally built by the Romans. The building at the northwest side of the bridge houses the Mayor and his administrative staff, including the city treasury and gaol. There are numerous shops on the bridge, a chapel, and even one private residence. No area on the bridge may be owned, and are all rented from the city.

### 20. HOLY TRINITY PRIORY

This Benedictine monastery owes its allegiance to Bors, the King of Benwick, who established this monastery during his campaign to aid Arthur during his War of Ascension. Although the locals view it with suspicion for this reason, Bors is a staunch ally of Arthur.

### 21. OLD BAILLE

Although called "old," this small, imposing castle is actually much newer than the Lord's castle, and has only recently been completed. It is controlled by the Archbishop of York, and its stated purpose is to act as a prison for priests and monks who violate the Archbishop's orders or commit other infractions. Many believe it will also act as an Inquisitional Court to root out the city's witches, serving as a place of execution as well when the time is right and the Archbishop feels free to act.

### 22. MICKLEGATE BAR

This gate guards the main entrance to the city from the south, and is the most important and well-defended gate in the entire city. There are only three keys to this gate, in the hands of the Sergeant of the Guard, the Mayor, and Lord Brastias. This gate will be locked at night, but may also be locked during external attack, or internal strife.

### THE INK WELL AND OLD WORLD PARCHMENTS

These book shops are the two most important secret gathering places of the city's mages, who use these places as guild halls to teach their craft to apprentices and to buy supplies. Many meetings have been held here of late to discuss what to do about the Archbishop's growing desire to see all who practice magic killed or driven out of the city. Like the Archbishop, the mages here have decided to wait until the time is right before they take any rash action.

### HENCES

Henges are centers of worship for the Old Faith. The Old Faith includes all those who worship pagan deities, including the island's original giant inhabitants, the later Celtic peoples, and the most recent invader to the island, the Saxons.

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Henges serve as connections for the ley lines that mysteriously transport mana throughout the world, not just in Britain, but on the continent as well. Although the giants descended from Albion can take credit for building the earliest of these, it is unknown where the mana itself comes from, and if the giants actually sought to tap this power from creating these worship centers.

It is known that in relatively recent times, steps have been taken to place henges at locations to benefit one group or another. When Uther asked Merlin to create a grand burial site for his brother, Pendragon, the mightiest mage in the world cast the most powerful spell ever seen in order to move the grand Stonehenge from Ireland to its current location. He did this to enhance the power of the King he served, and redistributed mana throughout the island of Britain in so doing. Had others done this in the past? It is impossible to say. There have been accounts of henges being destroyed during internecine warfare among giants, doubtless humans, even the druids who care for and venerate these sites, would take the same course of action if they felt sufficiently threatened.

### SAMPLE HENCE: SEAHENGE

One of the most bizarre and hotly contested of the henges is Seahenge. While this henge is currently under the nominal care of an enclave of druids, the giants also bear

an ancient claim to this site, considering it their most holy altar to Poseidon. For the time being, these two groups have entered into an uneasy "time share" arrangement, with the druids vacating the site during the holiest days for the descendants of Albion. The giants have no use for the site at other times, since sacrifice to appease their god is more important than constant veneration (a human weakness).

One of the remarkable traits of this site is the use of trees, somehow inverted into the ground, for the pillars and altar of the henge itself. These trees are not only permanent, they are somehow alive, and their roots grow more tangled and gnarled over time.

### MAP KEY

#### 1. CEREMONIAL CHAMBER

This chamber is made of wood, straw and mud, and is quite fragile. Every time the giants use the site they destroy it, so the druids have constructed it of impermanent materials with an eye to ease of reconstruction. This chamber is totally bare, except for the altar itself, where the faithful, when they die, are placed on the altar to be carried out to sea by the high tide.

The giants, when they use the altar, place goats killed for sacrifice, or more commonly vanquished foes.

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## 2. CENTRAL ALTAR:

This is where corpses and sacrifices are laid, to be carried out by the tide.

## 3. BRAZIER

Pots filled with peat are placed here, and lit during the druids' ceremonies. The branches of the inverted trees grasp onto these, and prevent them from being carried out to sea. The druids and loved ones of the deceased will watch the ceremony for a time from the stone benches surrounding the site, but then will retreat as the waters rise, watching from a distance, until the waters rise high enough to extinguish the lights in these braziers.

## 4. WITNESS BENCHES:

This is where witnesses to the ceremony, typically high ranking druids and the family of the deceased, watch during the first part of ceremony. When the tide rises over the benches, all witnesses will file out, down the processional path.

## 5. THE PROCESSIONAL

This is where those who witness the ceremony, but who do not participate, wait for the druids and loved ones of the deceased, bearing torches. When the rising waters cause the participants to leave the site, they will meet with these observers, and the druids will lead all away from the site.

## RUINED CASTLES

Ruined fortifications abound in Arthurian England. Old Roman Garrisons, Castles built in the time of Uther, and more recent Saxon defensive sites may all serve as this most Arthurian dungeon setting (the most commonly encountered type of dungeon in the setting). During Arthur's early reign, nature herself has reclaimed many of these sites, as the rate of forest and plant growth is simply astounding. In a few months, lands can look as if they have never been inhabited, and the erstwhile explorer might find, to his surprise, a castle in the midst of thick overgrowth and seemingly ancient forest.

Often, these castles will be taken as a lair by a monster, such as a giant or dragon. As Arthur's men move to reclaim the Britain of their fathers, lost to Saxon hordes and rampaging nature, they must defeat these foes in order to return the castle to local authorities. This is necessary if the Boy King is to extend his control over the whole of his dominion and protect it from future invasion.

## SAMPLE RUINED CASTLE: TINTAGEL

Regarded by many as the mightiest castle ever devised, Tintagel has never fallen to siege. Only Uther's treachery, combined with Merlin's magic, allowed this castle to

be breached, and even then only the untimely death of the castle's lord, Gorloise, which caused those inside to surrender, allowed the castle, and the prized Igraine, to be taken.

The only approach to the fortress is by a narrow, winding path that makes transport of siege engines difficult. As would-be attackers move up this road, they are subject to bombardment by the so-called Lower Ward, a fine castle in its own right.

If the attackers choose to ignore this outer defense, assaulting the Breastworks in an attempt to gain access to the Inner Ward, the master of the Lower Ward will dispatch footmen to engage the attackers from behind, trapping them against the Breastworks between soldiers from the Lower Ward and yeomen on the walls of the Inner Ward. The number of attacking forces that have met bloody ends this way has led the tactic of bypassing the Lower Ward to be labeled a fool's gambit.

Even after achieving the Inner Ward (no small feat) an attacking force has yet to take the castle itself. Another wall must be bypassed to reach the inner courtyard, and the attackers must then lay siege to the Central Bailey. If the East and West Bastions are ignored, men from these garrisons will again attack from behind, attempting to encircle the siege party, trapping them against the wall.

This is a description of Tintagel at its height, when Gorloise ruled it with an iron gauntlet. After Uther's treachery, the castle falls into disuse for many years, despite its mighty reputation as a flawless citadel. After King Mark comes to power over Cornwall, ten years before Arthur's ascendancy, even he does not use this castle. The reason for this will determine what adventures the heroes must undertake to reclaim the castle.

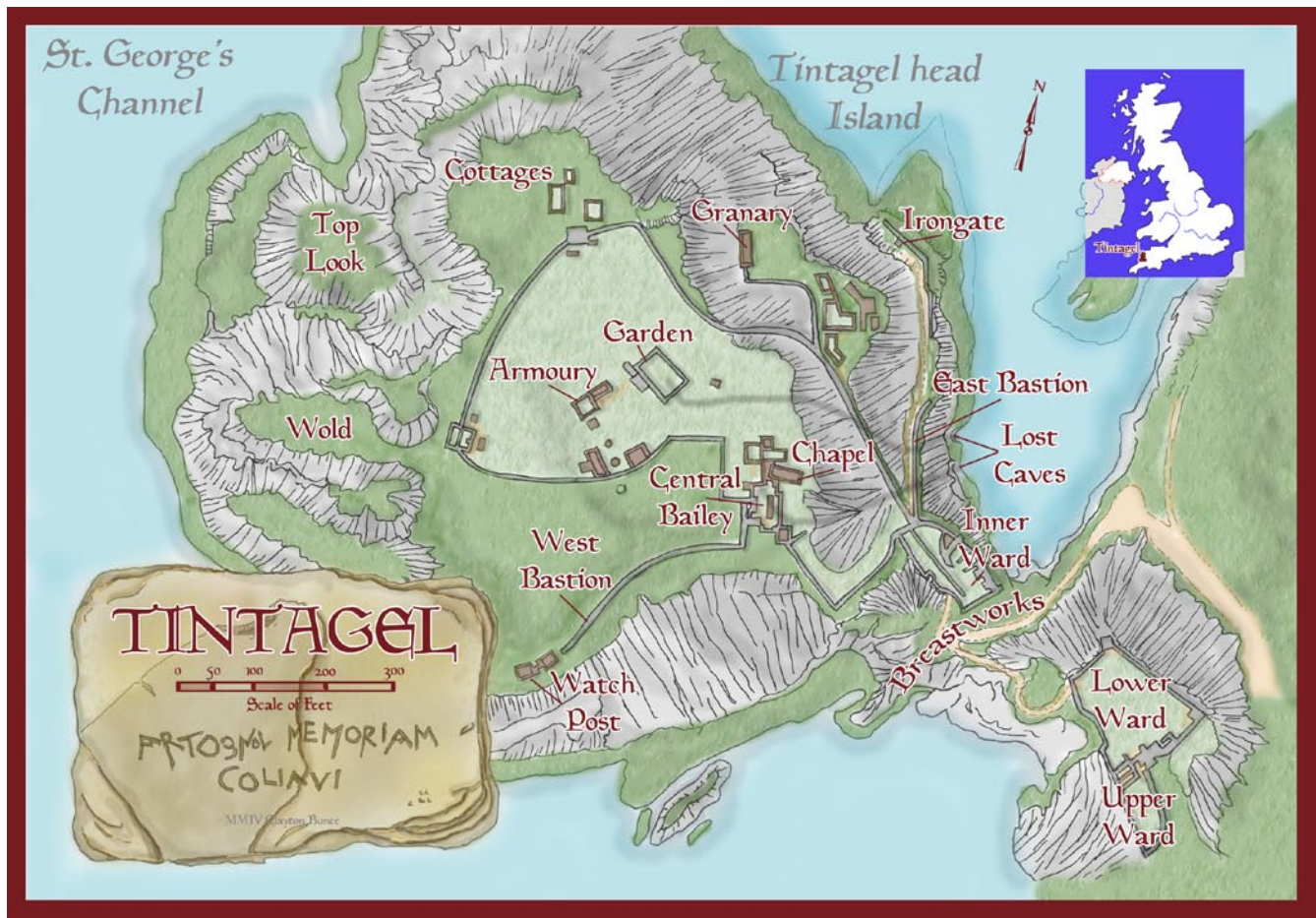
The likeliest scenario would be that the castle is inhabited by a mighty clan of giants. In such a case, although many of the walls and defenses will be in poor repair, rooting out the castle's inhabitants will be almost as bad as laying siege to it at its height. A giant is a mobile catapult, and so the giants will be able to use all of the tactics outlined above in order to rain death down on anyone attempting to retake the castle.

Or the castle could be haunted by ghosts and banshees, echoes of the betrayal of Gorloise.

Regardless of the current inhabitants, King Mark would heap immense honors on anyone who reclaimed this castle and returned it to him. Those who take the castle with the intent of keeping it for themselves will have to bolster its defenses and hire men to defend it quickly, for Mark will certainly attempt to reclaim the castle before it can be repaired, seeing this as a direct challenge to his rule over the area.

Since Arthur and Mark are mortal enemies, Arthur would certainly sponsor such an expedition if he thought it could succeed.

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## MAP KEY

### LOWER WARD

This courtyard is grimy, unkempt, and the home to a group of ogres, currently being lorded over by a single Hill Giant.

### UPPER WARD

This is the Giant's home, from which he ventures out to terrorize the countryside and hunt.

### INNER WARD

A pair of young stone giants reside here, serving as a watch for the lord of the castle. However, these giants have a severe dislike for the ogres and giant in the lower ward, and will wait to raise the alarm until they see the outcome of any fight that breaks out there.

### LOST CAVES

These caves are currently being used by a small band of smugglers and thieves as a base from which to raid the surrounding countryside. They have a near perfect location, since the local forces are too afraid of the giants to investigate these caves.

### CHAPEL

This area has been completely defiled, and is the home to a small band of ragged goblins. However, a careful search (Difficulty 20) of the area will reveal a major relic.

### CENTRAL BAILEY

A family of stone giants, with a leader of Albion's line, have made their home here, and conduct grisly sacrifices by throwing anyone they capture over the cliffs into the ocean home of their god Poseidon.

### CRANARY

This area is used as a makeshift prison for future sacrifices and local women captured for "entertainment" purposes. Garden: This area has been trampled and ruined.

### ARMORY

Another group of goblins make their home here. These goblins have taken advantage of the weapons and armor here (too small and of no use to the giants) to make themselves an extremely well armed and dangerous group of goblins.

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## COTTAGES

This area has been totally ruined and razed.

## TOP LOOK

This area has had an altar erected on it, and sacrifices are hurled from this height to a watery death.



## THE QUEST

The basic unit of adventure in Legends of Excalibur is the *quest*. A quest is a short-term goal that the characters are either asked to solve by a higher authority

(typically a noble with the quest class

ability), or the quest could present itself to the characters, and they could decide to resolve the situation themselves. For example, the characters could come across a fork in the road while traveling to deliver a message for their lord. In the center of the road sits a maiden on the back of a donkey, with a distressed look on her face. If the characters ask what's wrong, she will inform them that her father has just been killed by a giant, who has taken up residence in their castle home, with the intent of raiding the countryside for food and female companionship. The characters have just been offered a quest, one that they are under no obligation, save their honor as gentlemen, to undertake.

## ELEMENTS OF THE QUEST

A quest has three main components: set-up, complication, and resolution. The set-up is the event that gets the players interested and involved in the adventure. The set-up should contain the seed of a dilemma for the characters to solve, and the promise of a reward.

### SET-UP (DILEMMA)

The dilemma is the central action that must be resolved. In a single quest the dilemma is normally fairly straightforward, as in our previous example. There is a giant terrorizing the townsfolk, and it's up to the characters to kill him and put an end to his reign of terror. A dilemma does not always involve combat, but Arthurian legend tends to be action-packed, with frequent clashes against evil men and monsters. However, sometimes a diplomatic touch will be needed.



### SET-UP (REWARD)

The reward can be promised as subtly or as obviously as the narrator wishes. Continuing our previous example, there are several implied rewards that might present themselves to the players' imaginations in the above quest. Is this maiden the heir to the lands attacked by the giant, now that her father has passed away? If so, a character might, through freeing her and her people from this menace, win her heart, and himself a keep and rulership over a small town, thus beginning his advancement into the nobility. All that is necessary in the set-up is the *promise* of a reward. In the previous example, the players' imaginations will do most of the promising.

### COMPLICATION

The complication is everything unforeseen that happens in between the set-up and the resolution. In other words, it's the series of dilemmas the characters must overcome before they can resolve the dilemma posed at the start of the adventure. These mini-dilemmas work in much the same way as the set-up that got the characters involved in the first

*Fair damosel, said Sir Launcelot, know ye in this country any adventures? Sir knight, said that damosel, here are adventures near hand, an thou durst prove them. Why should I not prove adventures? said Sir Launcelot for that cause come I hither.*

*- Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

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place. As the characters move into the lands now controlled by the giant, they encounter a small farm that has been put to the torch by the giant. The barn has been set ablaze, and from inside the heroes hear a cry for help. A new dilemma, one not laid out before the characters in the initial set-up, has just presented itself. If the characters save the farmer, he will tell them that his new bride was taken by the giant to satisfy his lust and that if the characters hurry, they might still catch him. So having resolved one complication (the burning barn), the players have now been offered the set-up to yet another complication, moving the adventure forward. If the characters follow the farmer's advice and hurry up the road toward the keep, they will find not a giant, but a group of ogres that have been bullied into serving the giant, carrying the farmer's wife up the road. A new complication has just emerged, this time with the promise of a reward, the rescue of the woman from the lascivious clutches of the giant.

There is no limit to the number of complications that can be inserted in between the set-up and the resolution. If enough complications arise during the course of a quest, it may eventually be considered more than one quest, if not a whole campaign, a subject covered below.

### RESOLUTION

The resolution is the climactic encounter of the quest. Here is where the characters get to solve the dilemma first posed to them at the beginning of the adventure. Each complication along the way has served to heighten the expectations for this encounter, which will have raised the tension of the resolution up several notches. The heroes now have first-hand knowledge of how vile and wicked the giant and his followers are, making this final encounter even more satisfying for the players to resolve.

### REWARDS

At the end of the adventure, having resolved the final encounter, the heroes now receive a reward of some sort. This could be the items found in the giant's impromptu lair after his death, a chance to win the heart of the new liege lady of the hamlet, or perhaps, she will bequeath upon one of the characters the sword of her father, a weapon of power forged in the time of Uther.

The reward, like the quest itself, should be tailored to the characters taking part in the adventure for maximum effect. If the party undertaking the quest consists of a yeoman, a hermit, and a rogue, then a reward of a magic lance, however powerful, is likely not going to make the players feel like they were justly compensated, since none of them could really use the item to its full effect.

Occasionally, a reward could, in fact, be a set-up to a new quest for the heroes. The lady might know the location of an ancient barrow mound where a saint was buried, offering the priest character a chance to gain a holy relic to aid in his adventures, and offering the rogue the chance to test his skill against the most devious of traps designed to thwart

grave robbers. In addition, the farmer could arrive and give the yeoman a masterwork strength bow that his grandfather had used in the old wars against the Saxons. Now each character has gotten a reward, or at least the promise of a reward, tailored to her individual abilities and personalities. So even though the total power of what was gained is much lower, each player will feel more satisfied with the outcome of the adventure.

### SAMPLE QUEST: THE INVISIBLE KNIGHT

**Length:** Short-Medium

**Era:** Any

**Set Up:** Following a battle, King Arthur, who was slightly wounded, is laying in a tent alone. When the heroes ride by, Arthur calls them over, and tells them he saw a sorrowful knight ride through, and he wishes the heroes to bring him back so that Arthur may hear why he is sad.

**Complication:** The heroes follow the knight and find him in a nearby wood with his lady. When the heroes tell the knight he must come with them, he will only do so if they will swear on their honor to protect him, for someone is out to kill him. The only other way the knight will accompany the heroes is by force. No sooner do the heroes agree to protect him, or they subdue him, but his pursuer, Garlon, the infamous Red Knight, appears out of nowhere and slays the knight they just agreed to protect (or have just rendered unconscious)!

**Resolution:** The heroes' duty is clear: they must avenge the knight they were protecting. If they return to Arthur and ask for instruction, he will certainly ask them to go, and his order will aid the heroes (they will gain Arthur's quest bonus for the remainder of their hunt and combat with Garlon).

**Adjustments:** Garlon is actually on his way to a feast with his father, a noble of some renown. If the Narrator wishes to increase the difficulty and length of the quest, he can have Garlon elude the heroes until he is at the feast. Then the heroes must ascertain who their prey is out of armor, and deal with a host of protective relatives at the same time! Depending on the heroes abilities and the Narrators desire, this could be solved through force (with the heroes apprehending the villain and fighting their way free to Arthur's court), or by the heroes appealing to the honor of Garlon's father (who is actually an honorable man who has no idea what a villain his son is).

### SUPPORTING CAST:

**Sir Garlon, the Red Knight (Lesser Nobility Warrior 4/Expert 6):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 24, parry 24, flatfooted 18 (+0 size, +3 Dex, +2 Str, +8 class); Combat +8; Grap +10; Atk +12 melee (+5/19-20 +3, sword), or +11 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Oath of Fealty: his

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father, the elder Sir Garlon (Virtue), Code of Chivalry-disregard (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 7; SV Tough +6 (+5 Plate Mail), Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6; Str +2, Dex +3, Con +1, Int +1, Wis +0, Cha -1.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Bluff 13 (+12), Gather Information 13 (+12), Handle Animal 10 (+9), Intimidate 13 (+12), Knowledge (civics) 7 (+8), Notice 10, Ride 13 (+18), Sleight of Hand 10 (+13)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (sword), Attack Specialization (sword), Benefit (knighthood), Crippling Strike, Shield Training, Redirect, Sneak Attack x3 (+4 damage), Spirited Charge, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Sword, Plate Mail, Large Metal Shield, Ring of Invisibility (Light Shaping +15 only for Blur or Invisibility effects- usable at will- wearer is fatigued normally)

**Background:** Garlon has grown up with every advantage a young man could want. A kind family, wealth, and positions of importance. However, rather than accept his responsibilities and act for the good of his family, Garlon has become a lout, and a knave, and even, some say, a bandit. His father has refused to turn him out, hoping the young man may yet grow out of his impulsive ways.

**Role:** Garlon is the knavish knight, playing the role of the knight, but acting with no regard for the Code of Chivalry.

### SAMPLE QUEST: THE MACHINATIONS OF MORGAN

**Length:** Medium-Long

**Era:** One Brief Shining Moment or Dream's End

**Set-up:** In recognition for good service, the heroes are



invited to accompany the King's party on a great hunt, along with King Uriens of Gore, the husband of Morgan le Fey. During the hunt, the party spies the White Stag (see the new monsters section for more information), and Arthur, who has chased the beast before, will not rest until it is caught. Soon the King, Uriens, and the heroes are well away from the rest of the hunting party, and lost in deep woods at night. Suddenly, the party finds itself on the shores of a beach, and a grand ship draws to the shore. Twelve beautiful maidens offer the group rest and food.

Regardless of what the heroes would rather do (certainly they will be at least a little suspicious), Arthur, accustomed to strange and wondrous events, will board the ship to eat and drink. Surely the heroes, regardless of their suspicions, will not let him face danger alone. The best way to handle this scenario, guiding the heroes toward the quest with a minimum of railroading is to use Arthur. Should the heroes question him, he has faced situations like this before, with good results, and doesn't see the situation as strange or foreboding.

**Complication:** Despite the Narrators best efforts to make sure the heroes feel like they aren't being herded into a trap, that's exactly what's happening. The food is poisoned with a powerful sleeping drug (Fort save Difficulty 30), with an onset time of thirty minutes. This drug has been incorporated into the food with great care and cunning. On a Notice check (Difficulty 25) the characters might notice that their food has been tampered with. The beautiful maidens will entertain the party during the poison's onset time, and will use all their wit and wiles to encourage the characters to eat and drink and relax.

Should all else fail (particularly once Arthur and Uriens have succumbed to the poison), the maidens have twelve knights on the ship to beat the characters into unconsciousness. However, escape is not impossible, and could even make the quest events that follow more interesting if some of the heroes are captured while others remain free. However, the Narrator should remember that nobility transgressions might apply for characters that retreat, especially without Arthur and Uriens.

**Resolution:** Depending on the events in the ship, this quest will follow two courses. If the heroes were captured, they will be locked in a dungeon with dozens of starving knights, many of whom are on the verge of death. Their jailer tells them that they can be provided with equipment and given the opportunity to fight for their lives. If they accept they will be given plain, normal armor and weapons, and herded into an arena, where they will face another knight similarly equipped. If Arthur or Uriens has been captured, they will be the opponents of choice (and the heroes will only recognize them if they engage in conversation during their duel or with a Spot check Difficulty 20), as Morgan desires to rid herself of both her hated half-brother and her husband.

If the heroes escaped, then they will have to track down Arthur and Uriens, who are at a nearby castle, and free

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them, fighting their way through the knights guarding them. When they arrive they will find Arthur and Uriens locked in combat. Once the two men recognize each other, they will immediately stop fighting and attempt to escape.

### SUPPORTING CAST:

**King Arthur:** Arthur is unchanged from his Who's Who entry.

**King Uriens:** Uriens is unchanged from his Who's Who entry.

**Morgan le Fey:** Morgan is unchanged from her Who's Who entry. Note, however, that Morgan will not actually appear in this quest. She is working quietly behind the scenes, and has no intention of confronting her half-brother directly.



family of giants intent on restoring the rule of the isle to the descendants of Albion, a set-up worthy of weeks of play has been discovered.



## THE CAMPAIGN

### FROM QUEST TO CAMPAIGN

A campaign is a series of quests, one leading to the next. As discussed in the complication portion of the discussion on quests, there is no limit to the number of quests that could make up a campaign. Like the complications found within individual quests, the campaign serves to heighten expectation and anticipation of the next evening's adventure, serving as a lure to keep the players engaged for a long period of time.

### ELEMENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN

A campaign shares many of the elements of an individual quest, and is composed of set-up, adventures, recurring themes, supporting cast, and resolution phases.

### CAMPAIGN SET-UP (DILEMMA)

A campaign set-up is similar to the set-up used for an individual adventure. A dilemma is introduced, and a reward is promised or implied for resolving the dilemma. However, the dilemma needs to be much broader in scope, since it will be the focus of many adventures. For example, looking at the quest to slay the giant discussed earlier, as a set-up for a whole series of quests, taking months or even years of gaming to resolve, this seems a poor choice. However, if all of Britain were besieged by a

### CAMPAIGN SET-UP (REWARD)

As with the dilemma introduced by a campaign set-up, the reward promised should be much broader in scope. Often such rewards will not be a simple offering of a magic item or experience, but something much more integral to the characters, and indeed to the campaign environment itself. In the case of an invading army of giants, the most tangible reward for resolving the dilemma is to live free from servitude to such vile and honorless creatures. The consequences for failure would be an almost complete reimagining of the campaign setting, with the Round Table and tales of the deceptions of Mordred and Morgan le Fey replaced by a Britain whose destiny lies in the hands of inhuman monsters.

### ADVENTURES

Adventures, along with recurring themes, take the place of the complication phase seen in the individual quest. Each adventure is a quest of its own, and at the resolution of each adventure, the characters should, if successful in their tasks, move closer to the resolution for the campaign. If you picture an individual quest as a train heading toward a destination, then a campaign could be viewed as a roller coaster. You are still heading in a (more or less) straight line toward a destination. However, your trip is longer, and filled with the peaks of victories, and the valleys of defeats of the individual quests. When you are at the peaks, you can sometimes glimpse your destination, which not only increases the anticipation of your arrival, but also makes it a little easier to plot your course.

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## INTERLUDES

As exhilarating as a good roller coaster can be, there are limitations to the linear style of story telling, and occasionally the campaign is better served with a side trek or mission that does not lead the characters closer to their ultimate goal. This helps keep the campaign fresh and the players guessing. These adventures could be red herrings, where the players are led to believe solving the conflict of the quest will move them closer to the resolution, or they could be a way to break the tension of a series of harrowing quests, in the form of a tournament, or perhaps even more simply a celebration. These interludes give the players a chance to explore their characters without the pressure of feeling like they must succeed to keep the campaign moving along.

For example, after several tense adventures, including a disastrous encounter with an Albion's Bloodline giant, the invading giants might need to regroup, with one of their most important leaders slain. In this vacuum, the giants take to squabbling amongst themselves about who will take the fallen leader's place, and there is a lull in the campaign. During this lull, the lady in distress that started the entire campaign could invite the characters back to her tiny kingdom for a feast. This would give the players a chance to see how their characters' efforts have improved the campaign world. They could reunite with the farmer and his wife, and find that the woman they saved has a new baby, named after one of the player characters. Those heroes with an eye toward marrying the liege lady they saved would be given another opportunity to reacquaint themselves.

## RECURRING THEMES

Campaigns can be more fun than a series of unconnected adventures because, as stated earlier, the players' anticipation towards the resolution of their adventures is allowed to build every week. This "wait for it" style of storytelling is a basic cinematic technique, used by dramatists as skilled as William Shakespeare. In Henry V, as an example, two priests are seen discussing King Henry, how the faults of his youth have blossomed into a marvelous and glorious reign. The audience, perhaps subconsciously, is left wondering, "Who is this rogue turned king? Will he live up to the high expectations raised by these priests, or will he dash them?" and when Henry does enter, all eyes are on him. While every adventure in a campaign is a form of this recurring theme, making certain adventures very similar reinforces the story to an even greater degree.

For example, the invasion of Britain by the giants could have been spurred on by an elite group of descendants of Albion who are priests in a cult of Poseidon, the Greek god who was Albion's father, and a well-known mythological patron of giant-kin. Early in the campaign, the characters could tangle with these very dangerous giant adepts. In doing so, however, they would hear about the leader of the invasion, a leader that the giants whom the heroes face

would rather die than disappoint. A leader whose very name is whispered in awe and reverence among the lesser ogres who serve as the foot soldiers to the invaders. As the heroes work toward their goal, they will hear about this leader again and again, and will subconsciously wonder to themselves, like the play audience described above, if he will live up to the hype. Recurring themes also serve as a kind of built-in backstory for the campaign. Some of the players may have been asking themselves, as the campaign progressed, why the giants have invaded now, what new source of leadership and cohesion have they found to unite their squabbling factions and turn against their true enemy: mankind. The encounters with the priests of Poseidon will answer these natural questions, in a way that eliminates the need for a lengthy and boring exposition on the narrator's part. This is known as "show don't tell" storytelling, and it is one of the most elegant and effective means of getting your point across.

## SUPPORTING CAST

Every quest will have a cast of characters for the player characters to interact with, even if that cast is as small as a single knight guarding a bridge who will not let the heroes cross until they defeat him in single combat. When running individual quests, unless a member of the supporting cast is expected to meet the heroes in combat, it is not really necessary to know much about him or her. For example, the farmer and his wife discussed earlier do not need to be fully realized characters to serve their function in the story. In a campaign however, it is important that the supporting cast, both friend and foe, be given extra attention, often including a history and a statblock.

The reason for this is that any narrator character who will be a recurring feature of the campaign, even one the characters will interact with as an ally needs a framework of consistency, both in terms of abilities and personality. The players have less to cope with than the Narrator, and will usually have a more clear memory of individual events. If the narrator character was a fearsome warrior who helped bail the heroes out when they were in over their heads last month, the players will notice if he seems cowardly the next time they meet him. Having a set of statistics, along with a personality profile of the characters becomes more important the more time the player characters will get to spend with that character. Preparing these ahead of time will also allow the narrator to put some thought into making the narrator character a little different, a little more distinctive and interesting.

For example, it might turn out that the tiny realm where the campaign began is important to the overall plans of the invading giants, because of the many ancient barrow mounds containing tombs in the hills surrounding the liege lady's keep. One of these mounds contains an artifact that will allow the giants to tap into the ancient henges that form a network of energy across Britain. The island's giant inhabitants originally constructed the first of these henges,

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and this device, given to the giants by Poseidon himself, will allow their priests to tap the limitless energy coursing through the land concentrated in these structures. Thus, as the heroes battle against this invasion, they will find themselves needing to return to the tiny kingdom again and again, and the liege lady the characters met in the first adventure will become a regular narrator character in the campaign. Because of this, the narrator will want to detail her abilities and personality. Is she a high enough level noble to give the characters quest bonuses on adventures taken at her behest? Is she secretly a powerful enchantress who will be able to teach the party's hedge mage new powers, or construct powerful weapons to reward the party with? Does she have a dry sense of humor? All of these things will make her more and more interesting as the characters spend more time in her realm, working with her, and of course, attempting to win her heart.

### RESOLUTION

Eventually, all the adventures, the interludes, the recurring events, the encounters with the supporting cast, will lead the heroes to one final encounter: the campaign's resolution. Sometimes this event will mean the end of the stories revolving around the current set of player characters. More often, however, it is a momentous event that moves the campaign in a new direction. While changing the lives of the characters that participated in the campaign forever, they will have more adventures ahead of them, more quests and campaigns to undertake, before their stories finally end.

For example, after finding the barrow that the giants have been seeking and uncovering the artifact the priests of Poseidon hoped to use as a weapon to rid Britain of its human "infestation" and reclaim their rightful place as rulers of the isle, the heroes will be confronted by the leader of the giant insurgency. Retreating to the castle they themselves raided in the campaign's first quest, the heroes hold off the giant and his followers as long as they can, before he finally breaches the walls, and is killed in a deadly showdown with the player characters.

The story could end here, with the characters retiring, taking positions at court, or even marrying the liege lady of the tiny hamlet. However, if the narrator and players wish to continue the stories of these characters, a mysterious stranger could be seen in the moments before the giants breach the castle walls, watching the battle. As the characters are recuperating, they will see the mysterious stranger again, who reveals himself to be none other than Merlin the magician! He will tell the characters that the artifact they recovered, now awakened, has caused the ley lines connecting the mysterious stone circles littered around the island to go crazy, and the magical energy building within the land will soon enshroud the island in a storm that will never end, but will instead grow more and more savage, until the isle is lost beneath the waves.

There was another such object, long ago, and it too caused an island to sink beneath the waves: the isle of

Atlantis. The characters must sail west, and take the artifact to the precise spot where Atlantis met her watery end, and let the item fall to the bottom of the sea. Only when it is near its mate will the storms wracking the island abate. There is only one mariner who knows where the island's final resting place is, a Saxon explorer who has sailed far to the west, finding new lands and bringing back wondrous treasures. The characters must find him, and convince him to aid them. If they return to London, Merlin will be waiting for them with arrangements for a ship and crew. Even as the characters set out on this new journey, storm clouds gather in the east...

### THE ARTHURIAN CAMPAIGN

The advice presented above, for all its usefulness, is general advice that would apply equally if one were running a campaign set in any fantasy world or historical setting. With the groundwork for individual quests and campaigns behind us, let us now look at the techniques unique to the Arthurian setting that the narrator should consider when designing his adventures. In this section we will focus on the use of existing Arthurian canon, of which there is an almost limitless (and indeed ever growing) supply, coupled with the avoidance of that same canon.

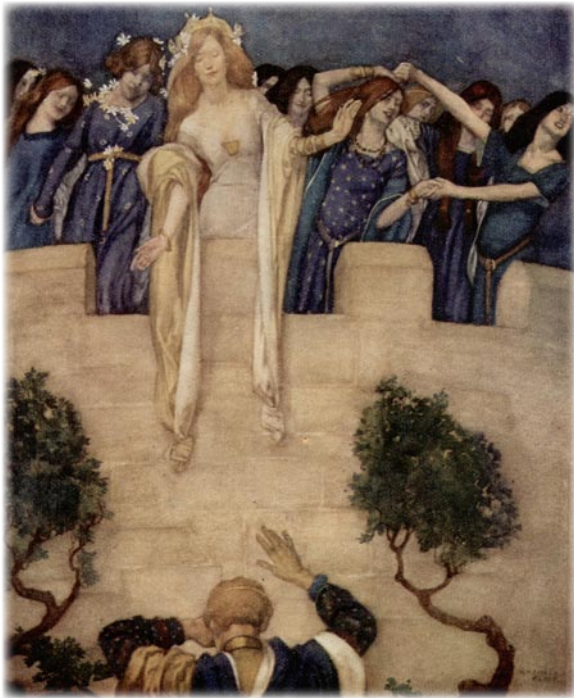
### THE USE OF ARTHURIAN CANON

Arthurian legend is absolutely packed with adventure nuggets. On every page of the typical tale is the seed for a quest that could occupy one or more nights of adventuring for your gaming group. These quests come in a great variety as well, from rescuing maidens, to fighting for one king or another in a great dynastic struggle, to participating in a grand joust, to undertaking a spy mission, the amount of adventure material in a copy of *Le Morte d'Arthur* or *Idylls of the King* is truly astounding. Taking these adventure seeds, using the supporting casts described in the tales, removing the central characters from them and replacing these with your player characters, you could run adventures and campaigns forever. Many of the quests and campaigns presented later in this section are drawn directly from Arthurian legend. However, there are some considerations that must be considered before taking this tack, namely, the handling of "name" narrator characters and the integrity of events as presented in the canon.

### IMPORTANT NARRATOR CHARACTERS

For the narrator running a campaign within even a loose framework of Arthurian legend, some narrator characters are essential. For example, if Lancelot is killed, what effect would that have on Arthurian "history" as we know it? If he does not live to have his affair with Guinevere, then Mordred might never get his chance to rally his forces and attack Arthur, which means Arthur's reign could go on for far longer. Very quickly the campaign has gone off the

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tracks of the stories and legends as we know them and into uncharted territory. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but most narrators would prefer to stay within at least a loose framework of the stories, since that is part of the appeal of playing with a given setting. A Narrator of Legends of Excalibur would no more want to have Lancelot die before his time than a narrator of a Forgotten Realms™ campaign would want a nuclear device to turn the city of Waterdeep™ into a smoldering crater.

Therefore the issue of important narrator characters is of critical importance, especially in cases where the player knows a little bit more about “future” events than he should. There are two ways of handling this: story protection, and story flow. Each solution offers challenges and advantages to the Excalibur Narrator.

### STORY PROTECTION

One way to handle critical narrator characters is to grant them a special “story immunity” to a premature death or removal from the campaign. Fate is a wonderful mechanic for doing this without the necessity of invoking Narrator fiat, and simply ruling the character unkillable.

For example, Morgawse in Arthurian legend is the mother of Mordred by her half brother Arthur. The narrator is currently running the “War of Ascension” campaign (detailed below), and at a critical point in the war, the players decide, on their own initiative, to attempt a daring raid on the castle of King Lot of Lothian, the leader of the rebellion against Arthur. Cut off the head, and the body dies, they reason. Little do they know that Lot is not currently at home. However, several other Narrator Characters, including the aforementioned Morgawse, but also her oldest son, Gawain, are in residence at the castle when the player characters attack.

Knowing Morgawse to be Lot’s key advisor, with her second sight abilities, the characters decide, having penetrated the castle through their skill and bravado, and finding Lot is not there for them to kill, to at least rob the rebel King of his most important advisor. As they move in for the kill, Gawain, a boy of 14 but already strong and brave and in training to become a knight, leaps into the room with a sword to defend his mother. The Narrator has himself quite a situation to unravel here, but has three main options on how to handle this unforeseen turn of events.

First, he could simply invoke Narrator fiat, and insure that Morgawse and Gawaine survive the encounter by having endless waves of soldiers come to the queen’s rescue, having a raging fire overtake the castle and separate the characters from their prey, or even using the time honored technique of the “mysterious death” where it seems the characters have killed Morgawse, only to encounter her again at a later time.

This certainly makes life easier for the Narrator, who now does not have to rewrite the rest of Arthurian legend around these two critical characters for the rest of the campaign, but it is unlikely to be very satisfying to the players involved. Characters are the driving force of any campaign, and their ability to do the unexpected, to change the world and times in which they live, is the main thing that makes a good campaign far more enjoyable than the best computer game. You can’t do something *completely* off the boards in even the best computer game, you can only take those actions the designers of the game anticipated you would take, and programmed into the game. A role-playing game should be different. However, especially if mysterious death is used, such a solution can be dramatically feasible, but the narrator must always take care that the players never see behind the curtain, never feel like they are props in a story they cannot change.

Secondly, the narrator could decree that Morgawse is in fact *fated* to be Mordred’s mother, and allow her to spend fate points, helping to insure she survives the encounter. Gawaine could similarly be considered fated to perform actions described for him later in the tales. This option grants critical Narrator Characters some extra protection, without removing the characters entirely from the mix. They can kill her; it will just be more difficult.

### STORY FLOW

Lastly, the narrator could decide to allow the story to “flow around” Morgawse and Gawain if they are killed, allowing logical characters to take their place for critical events, keeping the general backdrop of Arthurian legend intact, while the specific details of events mutate in keeping with campaign events. For example, in the Boorman movie *Excalibur*, Morgan le Fey, not Morgawse, is the mother of Mordred by her half brother Arthur. After Morgawse’s death, the narrator could easily have Morgan take the place of her sister in mothering Mordred, and the campaign could proceed without a hitch. Likewise, if Gawain is killed, the

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narrator could have his younger brother Agravaine take his place, battling the Green Knight, being a foil and rival for Lancelot, and so forth. This option is especially desirable if the players know as much or more about Arthurian canon as the narrator, since from that point on they are in uncharted waters, and will not know if they successfully prevented Mordred's birth, or if he will somehow still come into being. With this option, the narrator is in much the same boat as the narrator of a time travel game. He knows the future, and has to decide if he will allow it to be changed by the appearance of the player characters. If the heroes in a time travel game decide to kill Hitler before 1938, for example, the Narrator has much the same choices to make as he does here.

### AVOIDING ARTHURIAN CANON

For many Narrators and their players, changing Arthurian events will alter the feel and tone of the campaign, disrupting the very things that made them want to play Legends of Excalibur to begin with. Oftentimes, rather than attempt to deal with the situations presented above, where the narrator has to choose between allowing players their freedom or keeping events intact, the narrator will decide to avoid the existing stories altogether, while still using Arthurian Britain as the setting for his campaign. Examples of this style of quest and campaign can be found in this book, right alongside the aforementioned quests and campaigns drawn from Arthurian lore. One example of this style of campaign (an extreme one at that) is the campaign used in the examples of the previous section. Although giants are absolutely rampant in Arthurian legend, there has never been a tale of a cult of giants who worship Poseidon invading Britain, and the heroes of Arthurian legend have never set sail to find the lost continent of Atlantis. However, by placing the campaign in the right time frame, there's no reason why there couldn't be.

Another, more traditional example can be found in the campaign section below, in the form of the "Childhood of Arthur" campaign. This campaign draws heavily on established canon, but places the characters squarely into one of its most notable gaps: the time between the birth of Arthur and his ascension to the throne by drawing Excalibur from the stone. Here the narrator still has to deal with some important characters, such as "Wart", King Lot, Morgawse, and Sir Kay. However, there are no events to interfere with the characters' interactions with these personages, and unless the campaign is intended to last longer than twelve years of game time (we are told that Uther dies when Arthur is two, and do not hear from the boy again until he is a squire, probably around the age of 14) the narrator really doesn't need to concern himself with the flow of the story. The characters attempt to guard and train the boy Wart, and protect him from the machinations of Lot and Morgawse, while in the service of Sir Ector.

In the first example, the narrator has crafted a

completely new story, requiring very few of the established characters or events of Arthurian legend. In the second, he has drawn heavily from the characters of the stories, but has room to craft a wide range of new events never before covered (at least not in any detail) by Arthurian legend.

Most campaigns will (and should) include a mixture of both of these styles to achieve the maximum fun and playability, while keeping the tone of the tales that have thrilled us for over a thousand years. An example of this can be found in the Guinevere subplot of the "Cameliard" campaign described below. We are told in Malory and Tennyson that Arthur was asked to come to Cameliard to aid King Leodegrance, and that in the process he both rescues the beleaguered ruler and meets Guinevere, his future wife. Tennyson further tells us that Leodegrance has some hesitation before giving his permission for Arthur to marry his daughter, since the King's descent from Uther is still in some question. The Cameliard campaign brings all of this into the campaign description. However, it fills in the gaps, showing how Arthur actually wins Guinevere's heart, with the help of the heroes!

### SAMPLE CAMPAIGN: THE CHILDHOOD OF ARTHUR

#### SET UP

**Era:** Rise of Arthur

When Arthur is born, Merlin takes the boy to be raised by Sir Ector, a minor knight known for loyalty and piety. Uther heaps wealth and gifts on the knight, and bestows some talented, loyal knights on the boy for his protection, but otherwise obeys his pact with Merlin and has no contact with the young Arthur.

The heroes are assigned to the court of Sir Ector, and told to guard the man's son. They are given very little information beyond that, except for being asked to swear a solemn oath to King Uther that they will not leave the boy's side, will give their life for his, and will not leave Sir Ector's side under any circumstances, even to come the aid of the King himself.

The heroes for this adventure should be moderately experienced when the campaign begins, but the style of play could accommodate a wide range of power levels (2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> level).

*I know a Lord of yours in this land, that is a passing true man and a faithful, and he shall have the nourishing of your child, and his name is Sir Ector.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur Book I Chapter III*

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## ADVENTURES

Sir Ector, as a knight known for solemnity, piety, and valor, has many pages and squires training in his court. It's a veritable boarding school of young boys and girls training for knighthood. The heroes, as Arthur's protectors, are often assigned to see to his mundane training, seeing him through horsemanship, falconry, hunting, tilting and so forth. For further information see "A page's life for me?" in the Training of a Knight section of the Player's guide for more information.

Arthur is small for his age, and since his parentage is unknown, and it is assumed he is the orphan son of a knight killed in the wars, the boys quickly set him as a mark for teasing, giving him the nickname "Wart".

There will also be visits from Merlin. He will check on the boy's progress, talk to the heroes about how he's doing, and then begin a miraculous form of training to show the boy to view the world from different perspectives: he will change Wart into the shapes of different kinds of animals, and Wart will actually have adventures in these different forms. As his chosen bodyguards, Merlin will "allow" the heroes to guard the king on these adventures.

Soon after Wart's arrival, King Uther will become deathly ill, and his kingdom will begin to decline. Barbarian attacks and banditry will become increasingly common as

the campaign progresses. A rich estate like Sir Ector's will be a target, and the heroes will be called upon to deal with everything from monster incursions to barbarian raiding parties to horse thievery.

As part of the training for the older squires and knights, Sir Ector will attend the New Year's tournament every year in London, where knights will assay for the Sword in the Stone. This will give the heroes a chance to unwind and also find out a little about the increasingly troublesome events of the world.

## RECURRING THEMES

Soon after Arthur is spirited away, Uther, on his death-bed, proclaims Arthur, his child with Igraine, to be his heir. This announcement is met with mixed emotions by his subjects: some believe the child in fact died during birth, and that the announcement is an attempt to forestall the inevitable civil war and barbarian incursions that will result upon the King's death; others believe the child is Igraine's by Gorloise, or the product of Merlin's sorcery.

King Lot, and his bride Morgawse, however, know differently, and will stop at nothing to find the boy and kill him before he can seek to retake his father's throne. Lot is the King of Lothian (present day Scotland), and, while he never consorted with the barbarians, was one of the

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last nobles to yield to Uther. Only the offering of Igraine's daughter, Morgawse, in marriage caused the wily old Lot to join Uther's cause, but now that the King's health is failing, Lot sees his way clear to take the rule of England. Morgawse, a powerful sorceress, who possesses "the sight", like all women in her family, has told Lot that Arthur will be King in time. Lot is determined not to let that happen.

As the campaign progresses, Lot's spies and Morgawse's seers will locate the boy in the tiny manor house of Sir Ector, at which point attempts to kill the child will become more and more frequent. At first these attempts will be very subtle and indirect. However, as the campaign draws to a close, the heroes will become aware that the attacks on the manor by bandits and barbarians are not isolated events. Captured bandits will tell of the vast monies they were paid to kill the insignificant boy. Either through their own investigations, or by confronting Sir Ector (or both), the heroes should learn in time who it is they are guarding and why it is so important that Lot's attempts to kill him fail.

Tracing these attacks back to Lot should be the main recurring theme of this campaign, and while the heroes might be able to force a showdown to insure Arthur's safety, if the narrator plans to run campaigns in the Eleven Lords' War timeframe (see below), he should insure that Lot live beyond this campaign. Morgawse should be kept alive if at all possible, since she is the mother of Mordred (see the section on important narrator characters for more information and advice on how to handle situations like this).

### SUPPORTING CAST

The following are the main supporting characters for this campaign, as they appear toward the middle of the campaign, where most of the action will take place. Narrators who needs stats for the very beginning or very end of the campaign should adjust these stats up or down accordingly.

**Wart (Age 10) (Lesser Nobility Ordinary 1):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense 10, flatfooted 10 (+0 size, +0 Dex, +0 class); BAB +0; Grap +1; Atk +0 melee (+2/19-20 +3, knife), or +0 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Oath of Fealty: Sir Ector (Virtue), Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Impulsive (Vice); Fate/Destiny Be king of all Britain/Be betrayed by those he loves most; SV Tough +2, Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str +1, Dex +0, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +2.

**Core Ability:** None

**Skills:** Diplomacy 4 (+6), Handle Animal 4 (+6), Ride 4 (+6), Sense Motive 4

**Feats:** None

**Possessions:** Knife

**Description:** Wart is small for his age, but already extremely intelligent, handsome, and charismatic. He is a quiet boy, and tends to listen much more than he talks. This gives many of the older squires the opinion that he is

either timid or stupid, but his words and actions indicate otherwise.

**Kay (Age 14) (Lesser Nobility Warrior 1):** Medium-size humanoid; Init -1; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 13, parry 17, flatfooted 10 (+0 size, -1 Dex, +2 Str, +1 class); Combat +1; Grap +3; Atk +0 melee (+5/19-20 +3, Sword), or +0 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Oath of Fealty: Sir Ector (Virtue), Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Hot-headed (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 3; SV Tough +4 (+2 Studded Leather Armor), Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +0; Str +2, Dex -1, Con +2, Int +1, Wis +0, Cha +0.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Handle Animal 4, Intimidate 4, Notice 4, Ride 4 (+3)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Shield Training, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Sword, Studded Leather Armor, Large Metal Shield

**Description:** Kay is a tall, gangly boy, and has a classic teenager's combination of size and clumsiness. Especially in armor, which he is still learning to wear, he is a disaster waiting to happen, something that makes him the target of jokes, but only behind his back (he is a big lad for his age, and he is Sir Ector's oldest son). The closest thing he has to a real friend is Wart, who seems to be the only one who doesn't laugh at Kay behind his back while praising him to his face. While his clumsiness holds him back in the saddle, Kay is already an accomplished swordsman, something many of the older boys have found out to their dismay in practice.

As a headstrong young man, Kay is sometimes a little too eager to put his fledgling skills to use in defense of his family and friends. Any attempt on Arthur could cause Kay to take matters into his own hands, adding to the heroes' problems as they attempt their own intervention.

**Sir Ector:** Sir Ector is unchanged from his Who's Who entry.

**Salazar de Cazador (Criminal Expert 8):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +8; Spd 40 ft; Defense dodge 20, parry 17, flatfooted 16 (+0 size, +4 Dex, +1 Str, +6 class); Combat +6; Grap +7; Atk +10 melee (+4/19-20 +3, sword), or +10 ranged (+4/20 +4, bow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Word is your bond (Virtue), Mercenary (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 6; SV Tough +3 (+2 Studded Leather Armor), Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +2; Str +1, Dex +4, Con +1, Int +1, Wis +0, Cha -1.

**Core Ability:** Expertise

**Skills:** Acrobatics 10 (+13), Bluff 10 (+9), Climb 10 (+10), Diplomacy 10 (+9), Disable Device 10 (+11), Disguise 10 (+9), Escape Artist 10 (+13), Ride 10 (+14), Sleight of Hand 9 (+12), Stealth 10 (+13)

**Feats:** Acrobatic Bluff, Armor Training (light), Evasion, Improved Initiative, Improved Speed, Night Vision, Sneak

# - ARTHURIAN ADVENTURING -

Attack x4 (+5), Uncanny Dodge, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Sword, Bow, Masterwork Studded Leather Armor

**Description:** A Spanish mercenary, Salazar is willing to do anything for money. Some of his Saxon allies put him in touch with King Lot, who wants a boy named Arthur found and killed. All Salazar needed to know was how much gold he would get for the deed. He doesn't know who the boy is, and he doesn't care.

**King Lot of Lothian:** King Lot is unchanged from his Who's Who entry.

**Queen Morgawse:** Queen Morgawse is unchanged from her Who's Who entry.

**Merlin:** Merlin is unchanged from his Who's Who entry.

## RESOLUTION

This campaign will end once Arthur, Kay, and Ector travel to London at New Year's for Kay's first tournament as a full-fledged Knight in his 18<sup>th</sup> year. There will likely be a last, full-scale assault on the heroes by Lot along the way, but once Arthur and Kay reach London fate will take over, Arthur will draw the sword from the stone, and become King. However, Lot will now gather other lords with him reluctant to be ruled by a boy and begin an open rebellion. The young King will now need the heroes even more, and their old enemy Lot will become even more powerful and aggressive.



## SAMPLE CAMPAIGN: WAR OF ASCENSION

### SET UP

**Era:** Rise of Arthur

The War of Ascension begins almost the moment Arthur's coronation as King is confirmed at New Year's in London. After drawing the sword Excalibur from the stone, great crowds of peasants gather, along with many great lords and knights, to see Arthur tested. Important persons present at this "test" are the Archbishop of Canterbury, King Lot of Lothian, King Uriens of Gore, Sir Ector, Sir Kay, Sir Ulfius, and Sir Brastias. While the commons watch, Arthur draws the sword again and again. Other characters of note, particularly King Lot and King Uriens also attempt to draw the sword, failing each time. This display only ends when the commoners begin a hue and cry for Arthur to be crowned, begging his forgiveness for the length of the delay. Sir Ulfius then knights Arthur, and the Archbishop crowns him king. Arthur retires to Carlion in Wales to begin the arduous task of rebuilding a kingdom laid waste by banditry, petty rule and barbarian invasions, as well as appointing officers and addressing the needs of his subjects.

A festival and tournament are called to celebrate the beginning of Arthur's reign at Pentecost (50 days after Easter). This festival will contain jousting, horse races (a traditional Pentecost entertainment), and, most importantly, the formal announcements of Arthur's important court officers, and the formal swearing of fealty by the important lords of Britain. At the festival however, it quickly becomes apparent that the lords are not there for fun and games, with Lot, Uriens, and many other petty lords arriving with close to three thousand men. After an initial defeat, Lot manages to draw even more rebellious lords to his cause, until eleven of the most powerful nobles in England, leading a force of nearly fifty-five thousand men against the "beardless boy king".

### ADVENTURES

The War of Ascension campaign is, first and foremost, a war, and should offer the promise of glorious battles allowing characters to gain fame and fortune. The enemy outnumbers those loyal to Arthur by almost ten to one, so only the superior might and nobility of Arthur's troops will allow them to win the day. This campaign allows the characters the satisfaction of helping to build a kingdom, putting down the rebellious lords (whose banditry has caused many of Britain's current problems) and restoring stability and prosperity to the realm.

*Diplomatic Relations:* This long quest could be a mini-campaign unto itself if the narrator wishes to flesh it out. Ban and Bors, two brother kings ruling the French nation of Benwick are besieged by the evil Claudas, much as Arthur is besieged by his rebellious nobles. Merlin advises that a truce be entered with the brothers, that if they aid Arthur in

## - ARTHURIAN ADVENTURING -

putting down his rebellion, then Arthur will aid them with all his might in their struggle against Claudas.

The heroes are asked to take on the role of diplomats. Due to enemy intelligence, their mission is known to the enemy, and they will have to win several fights (or use stealth and subterfuge) to reach their ship. Once the heroes cross the channel, they will have to win even tougher fights to reach Ban and Bors, as the rebellious lords, unable to prevent the heroes from leaving England have informed Claudas of the heroes' arrival and their intentions.

Once the heroes reach Ban and Bors, they will have to engage in a different sort of battle, one of diplomacy. As Arthur's representatives, the heroes must convince Ban and Bors not only of Arthur's sincerity and willingness to keep his bargain, but also of his ability to win his war, thus being able to support the brothers in turn.

After achieving the support of the brothers, the heroes will then have to make another dangerous trip through Claudas' men, and another through the forces of the rebel lords, to inform Arthur of their success to allow him to prepare for the arrival of his reinforcements.

### RECURRING THEMES

As military missions (with a decidedly fantasy medieval bent) these adventures, or variations on them, could occur again and again. War has a rhythm and also a routine to it, even though danger and terror are sprinkled into the mix as well. Groups of characters especially suited to one of these quests could find themselves doing it again and again, essentially becoming the Arthurian equivalent of a special operations unit.

**Hold the Line:** The heroes are sent to reinforce the castle of a lord friendly to Arthur with a small force of men. The castle, and the support of the lord who rules it, are both critical strategically to Arthur's fledgling reign. An attack by an overwhelming force is expected shortly, so the heroes have to insure the keep is properly equipped and fortified, and then repulse the attack.

**Escort Duty:** The heroes are assigned to escort a crucial supply shipment to Arthur's forces. The shipment could be food, weapons, medicine or any other vitally needed materiel for Arthur's army. The attackers could be bandits, barbarians, or rebel forces. Award bonus experience for the percentage of goods successfully delivered to friendly forces (amount should be based on a percentage, since all of a small valuable shipment could still swing the course of the war).

**Supply Raid:** The reverse of a convoy escort, the heroes are ordered to intercept a shipment bound for the forces of the rebellious lords, and either return it to friendly forces for their use, or destroy it if that is not possible. Award bonus experience based on the percentage of goods successfully returned.

**Homefront:** Many smaller towns and villages are staying carefully neutral, having seen petty lords come and go

often since Uther's death. Not having seen Arthur or the circumstances of his drawing the sword, these villages think of him as just another robber baron till they see proof to the contrary. However, swaying the hearts and minds of the people is just as important as military defeat over the barons. The heroes are sent to an important village on a diplomatic mission to convince its headman to throw his support behind Arthur.

**Intelligence Gathering:** The heroes are sent on a dangerous mission to ascertain the position of enemy forces, and also to try and determine where they plan to strike next. A perfect adventure for a party of characters, as this mission could require stealth, charisma-based skills, and combat for the heroes to gain close access to the enemy forces, then return home with the information.

### SUPPORTING CAST

**King Arthur (Age 16) (Lesser Nobility Warrior 2/Expert 4):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 20, parry 22, flatfooted 15 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +3 Str, +5 class); Combat +5; Grap +8; Atk +12 melee (+11/17-20 +5, Excalibur), or +7 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Oath of Fealty: Sir Ector (Virtue), Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Impulsive (Vice); Fate/Destiny Be king of all Britain/Be betrayed by those he loves most; Conviction 5; SV Tough +19 (+10 Scabbard, +6 Armor), Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +8; Str +3, Dex +2, Con +3, Int +4, Wis +4, Cha +4.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Bluff 9 (+13), Diplomacy 9 (+13), Disguise 6 (+10), Handle Animal 9 (+13), Intimidate 9 (+13), Knowledge (history) 9 (+13), Knowledge (supernatural) 4 (+8), Notice 9 (+13), Ride 9 (+13), Sense Motive 9 (+13), Survival 6 (+10)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Benefit (nobility), Fascinate (Diplomacy), Inspire (awe), Inspire (courage), Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Crossbow, Excalibur (see the description of this sword in the chapter on supernatural items), Scabbard of Excalibur (+10 Toughness saves), Full Plate, Priwen (Lg. Metal Shield, otherwise see the chapter on supernatural items), Warhorse, Ron (Arthur's lance, see supernatural items below)

**Description:** Seen here halfway through his civil war, Arthur is already an exceptional warrior and leader, and is obsessed with uniting his kingdom. In battle he seems much more powerful than he really is, both because of his fate, and because of the impressive arsenal of weapons given to him by Merlin. There is little doubt that, despite his age, Arthur is in his element, defeating his foes, and using his considerable charm and statecraft to win over the neutral to his cause.

# - ARTHURIAN ADVENTURING -

**King Carados (alternately called the King of Carados) (Barbarian Warrior 10):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 22, parry 22, flatfooted 20 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +2 Str, +10 class); Combat +10; Grap +12; Atk +13 melee (+6/19-20 +4, Battleaxe), or +12 ranged (+5/19-20 +4, Spear); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Bloodlust (Virtue), Arrogant (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 7; SV Tough +8 (+4 breastplate), Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +2; Str +2, Dex +2, Con +3, Int +0, Wis -1, Cha +1.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Intimidate 13 (+14), Notice 13 (+12), Stealth 13 (+12), Survival 13 (+12)

**Feats:** All-out Attack, Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (Battleaxe), Attack Specialization (Battleaxe), Improved Critical (Battleaxe), Light Sleeper, Rage x2, Seize Initiative, Startle, Tough, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Masterwork Breast Plate, Battleaxe, Light Horse

**Description:** Carados is a Saxon lord who rules a Saxon fiefdom in a partially conquered Britain. He sees the rise to power of a strong King as a direct threat to his position, and has allied himself with Lot's rebellion strictly out of personal interest. He cares little for concepts such as "honor", and prefers to fight on foot.

**King of the Hundred Knights (Noble Warrior 10):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 24, parry 25, flatfooted 20 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +0 Str, +10 class); Combat +10; Grap +10; Atk +11 melee (+3/20 +4, warhammer), or +11 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Protect the faithful of the One God (Virtue), Self-righteous (Vice); Fate/Destiny Lead a rebellion against Arthur/Will die in the final battle of that rebellion; Conviction 7; SV Tough +6 (+3 chain mail), Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +6; Str +0, Dex +1, Con +3, Int +0, Wis +3, Cha +4.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Bluff 13 (+17), Diplomacy 13 (+17), Intimidate 13 (+19), Ride 13 (+14)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Benefit (nobility), Dedicated (One God), Favored Opponent (Infidels), Improved Disarm, Lay on Hands, Leadership, Shield Training, Smite Opponent (Infidels), Spirited Charge, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Bind, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Chain Mail, Large Metal Shield, Warhammer, Crossbow

**King Lot:** King Lot is unchanged from his Who's Who entry.

**King Uriens:** King Uriens is unchanged from his Who's Who entry.

**Sir Kay, Seneschal of Britain (Age 20) (Lesser Nobility**

**Warrior 3/Expert 2):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 17, parry 21, flatfooted 14 (+0 size, +0 Dex, +3 Str, +4 class); Combat +4; Grap +7; Atk +4 melee (+6/19-20 +3, sword), or +4 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Oath of Fealty: King Arthur (Virtue), Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Hot-headed (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 5; SV Tough +9 (+6 Full Plate), Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str +3, Dex +0, Con +3, Int +2, Wis +0, Cha +2.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Diplomacy 8, Handle Animal 8, Intimidate 8, Notice 8, Ride 8, Sense Motive 8, Survival 8

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Benefit (knighthood), Inspire (competence), Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Track, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Full Plate, Large Metal Shield, Sword, Crossbow, Lance (damage as spear, cannot be thrown), Warhorse

**Sir Brastias:** Sir Brastias is unchanged from his Who's Who entry.

## RESOLUTION

Eventually, the war will come to a head, and a climactic battle will be fought. Lot is destined to die in this battle, and if the heroes have tangled with him sufficiently for him to qualify as an arch-nemesis in the campaign, they should get the opportunity to do the deed themselves. If one of the heroes kills Lot, his son, Gawain, too young to participate with his father in the war, will swear an oath of vengeance on the man responsible. This could put the heroes in the unenviable position of having an enemy ostensibly on the same side of their battles for Arthur (although Gawain will not challenge the character for no good reason, he will look for any good reason to come along).

When Lot is killed, the rebel army will break and flee. Although Arthur puts out an offer for the noblest of the rebels (particularly Uriens) to receive amnesty if they swear fealty to him, none of them take him up on the offer, and as the bulk of Arthur's army (particularly knights such as Brastias, Ulfius, and King Pellinore) leave to aid Ban and Bors, things are very much unresolved. One of the few who accepts this offer is Morgawse, who comes to court with her oldest son Gawaine. During this disastrous visit, Morgawse and Arthur have a dalliance, during which Mordred is conceived.

## SAMPLE CAMPAIGN: CAMELIARD

### SET UP

**Era:** Rise of Arthur

Already beset by a nature gone wild, like many other areas of Britain in the era between Arthur and Uther,

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Leodegrance has also been under attack from the Saxons. When Uriens returns from his unsuccessful campaign to unseat Arthur, he decides to add Leodegrance's lands to his own and attacks. Now in desperate straights, Leodegrance appeals to the new King for aid.

Although the majority of Arthur's forces have been sent to France to fulfill the promise made to Kings Ban and Bors. When the call for aid comes from Leodegrance of Cameliard, Arthur goes with a small group of newly dubbed knights to aid the lord, a powerful, influential Duke who served his father Uther, and a man who could greatly increase Arthur's standing among the rebellious lords of Britain.

Cameliard makes a perfect beginning to an Excalibur campaign. There will be many wilderness adventures to overcome against wild bears, boars, even lions (which have never existed historically in Britain, but appear in Arthurian legend). Also there are bandit lairs to raid and destroy, and barbarians to drive out. Finally, there is a military campaign to conduct against Uriens. Since most of his elite knights are away, this gives low-level heroes a perfect chance to shine, get to know their King, and catch his attention as followers of merit, worthy of dangerous, glory-bringing assignments in the future.

### ADVENTURES

*The Wolf Lord:* One of the first tasks the characters will have to undertake is reclaiming Cameliard from the wilderness. Like many areas of Britain between Uther and Arthur, the land, with no king to tame it, has grown wild, turning against the men and women who live on it like an indigenous host attempting to repulse an invader. Old trails will have to be cleared of choking overgrowth, and wild boars, bears, wolves, and even lions pose a threat to the farmers and townsfolk of Cameliard.

However, as the heroes continue their fight against a wilderness gone berserk, they will come to realize that there is a malevolent force controlling the animals and directing their attacks. Eventually the heroes will have to find and confront the Wolf Lord in his lair if they are to tame the berserk animals of Cameliard.

*Barbarian Raiders:* After the animals are dealt with, the heroes will need to clear out the pockets of Saxons hiding in the wilds of Cameliard. These small groups are conducting a guerilla campaign, striking innocent townsfolk from stealth, and then retreating into the wilds when they meet heavy resistance. As the heroes tame the rampant

*And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,  
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,  
And none or few to scare or chase the beast;  
So that wild dog and wolf and boar and bear...  
And ever and anon the wolf would steal the children and devour...  
Then his brother king Urien assail'd him; last a heathen horde,  
Reddening the Sun with smoke and earth with blood,  
And on the spike that split the mother's heart,  
Spitting the child, brake on him, till, amazed  
He knew not whither to turn for aid...  
But- for heard of Arthur newly crown'd...  
Sent to him saying, "Arise and help us thou!  
For here between the man and beast we die."*

*-Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

overgrowth and wild animals scourging the countryside, finding their leader, the Saxon Caladwold, will prove much easier.

*Invading Army:* Seeing the weakness of Leodegrance, Uriens, his neighboring lord, recently returned from an unsuccessful campaign against Arthur, decides to take Leodegrance's lands for his own. This will give the heroes the first chance to tangle with Uriens' young bride, Morgan le Fey, who is the secret source behind many of Leodegrance's problems and a dangerous advisor to Uriens.

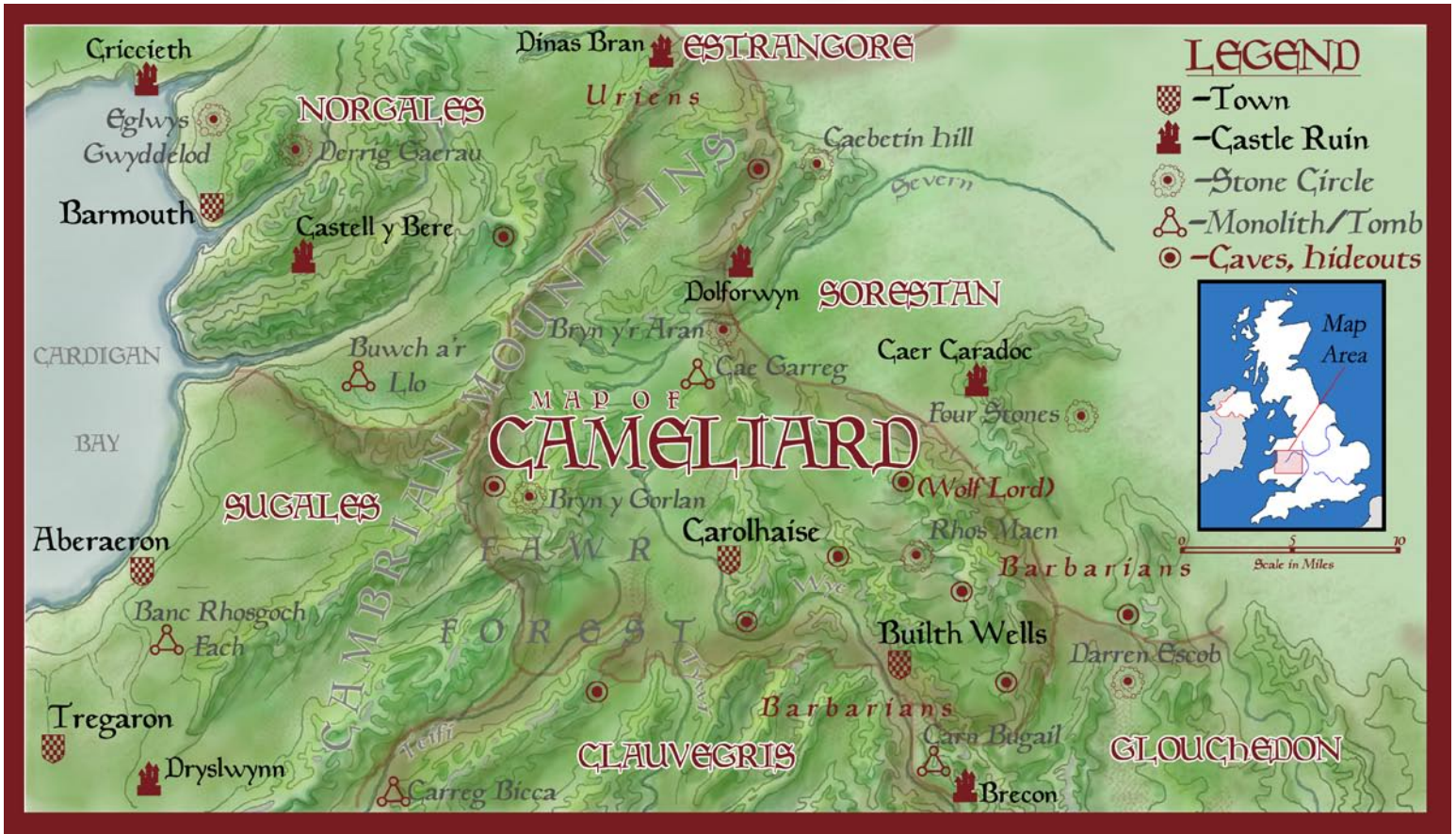
### RECURRING THEMES

*Guinevere:* From the moment Arthur sees Guinevere, he is head over heels in love with her. However, she is not so quick to return the sentiment. Worse, her father, Leodegrance, while unwilling to join the rebellion against Arthur, shares some of the same concerns about his parentage that Lot and Uriens have expressed, and the same distrust of Merlin, and refuses to let Arthur see his daughter, much less court her, until the matter of Arthur's legitimacy is settled to his satisfaction.

Therefore, in the grand tradition of Cyrano, the heroes will be drafted into the role of go-between for the King to the woman he loves. He will have them ferry letters for her, in secret, while he meets with her father. These adventures should be played for comedic affect, with the heavily armored knights attempting to be subtle. Worse, the love poetry Arthur is having the heroes take to Guinevere is awful. If they read it, do they replace it with better poetry? If there is a bard in the party, this is an encounter where he could far outshine his knightly companions, winning a Queen for his King.

Once the King wins her love, there are secret meetings for the heroes to arrange as well, serving their King's heart while avoiding the wrath of a protective father, and a rash, over protective brother, Gotegrin. In fact, while

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Leodegrance will be easily swayed, given the critical aid Arthur is providing, and the majesty clearly evident in the young King, Gotegrin could be a real problem for the characters. If they are caught aiding Arthur, while he can do nothing to the aspiring King, he can and will challenge the heroes. Depending on their honor, nobility, and conduct, this challenge could be to the death.

Finally there is the matter of keeping Guinevere safe. A constant theme in all Arthurian legend is Guinevere's propensity to be kidnapped, and this campaign should prove no exception. Throughout the campaign, she will be kidnapped by the various factions the heroes are battling against, including the Wolf Lord, the barbarians, and Uriens himself. Lastly, when it becomes clear that Arthur intends to marry Guinevere, and that both she and her father are agreeable, the romance subplot culminates with Guinevere being kidnapped by her brother Gotegrin!

*Evil Twin:* Further complicating the Guinevere subplot, there is the matter of Gwenhwyfach, Guinevere's half sister. A Welsh fairy seduced Leodegrance while his wife was pregnant with Guinevere, and Gwenhwyfach was the result. She is capricious, seductive, with powerful magical abilities, and is identical to Guinevere physically. Not even her father or brother can tell them apart. She lusts for King Arthur, and will try to take Guinevere's place whenever possible, especially during the early stages of the relationship when Guinevere's interest for the young King is lukewarm. This will cause confusion, and generally serve

to make Guinevere look bad in the heroes' eyes, since one minute she will be ready to surrender her honor to the King before marriage, while the next she will be cold and aloof. Solving this mystery will be a key to bringing the lovers together, as Gwenhwyfach's interference will cause nothing but strife between Arthur and Guinevere.

*Family affair:* Caladwold's younger brother has been captured by the Wolf Lord while on a scouting mission. Should the heroes rescue him (requiring the party to fight their way to the crumbling castle used as a lair by the creature and his followers), Caladwold will feel obligated to the characters, and his personal sense of honor will cause him to do almost anything they ask, including packing up and heading home.

*Morgan le Fey:* This will give the heroes their first chance to tangle with Morgan, and get a feel for what a subtle and dangerous opponent she is. Indeed, it may be some time before they realize she is their true enemy. The Wolf Lord was trained by Morgan, and she also provides magical support and lends her future sight to the barbarians plaguing Cameliard. To learn either of these events, the heroes will have to capture and interrogate opponents. If they just slay them in battle, the heroes might never learn of Morgan's involvement.

Morgan has also caught the eye of Gotegrin, and has been feeding him false information about Arthur, intensifying his dislike for the boy King. Worse, Gotegrin has been taking these "insights" back to his father, so Morgan is an indirect

## - ARTHURIAN ADVENTURING -

source of some of Leodegrance's concerns. Again only asking the right question of the right person, in this case Gotegrin, will reveal Morgan's hand in events.

### SUPPORTING CAST

**Caladwold (Barbarian Warrior 5/Expert 6):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +5; Spd 40 ft; Defense dodge 27, parry 19, flatfooted 19 (+0 size, +5 Dex, +0 Str, +9 class); Combat +9; Grap +9; Atk +13 melee (+3/19-20 +3, sword), or +13 ranged (+1/19-20 +3, Throwing Knife); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Loyal (Virtue), Vengeful (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 8; SV Tough +4, Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +5; Str +0, Dex +5, Con +4, Int +1, Wis -1, Cha +2.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Acrobatics 8 (+13), Bluff 14 (+16), Climb 8, Intimidate 14 (+16), Jump 8, Notice 14 (+13), Stealth 14 (+19), Survival 14 (+13)

**Feats:** Dodge Bonus x3, Improved Speed, Inspire (fear), Inspire (fury), Leadership, Night Vision, Rage, Sneak Attack x3 (+4 damage), Track, Weapons Training

**Possessions:** Sword, 4 Throwing Knives

**Description:** Caladwold is an ambitious young Saxon. Hearing of the fertile lands in Britain ripe for the taking, Caladwold carefully chose Cameliard to be the start of his new dominion, feeling Leodegrance too weak to withstand him. The truth turned out to be far different, and the small band of Saxons has been forced to retreat into the wildlands of the small kingdom, where they conduct a guerilla war, but mostly live the life of bandits. Many of Caladwold's followers are related to him in some way, including his companion, Banak (Warrior 10), who is his younger brother.

Caladwold has a deep sense of honor that will cause him to take extreme risks, charging headlong into any battle. The characters should recognize him, despite his frothing, bloodied, frenzied style of fighting as a worthy opponent. Family is very important to Caladwold, and all his relatives, and the characters could very well ransom him and his younger brother to their father, a quite important and wealthy Danish noble. However, this could have unfortunate side effects if the characters kill or mistreat Caladwold, as the Dane's many sons will come looking for their brother, and when they do, will begin seeking vengeance on those who killed him.

#### Guinevere

**Guinevere:** Guinevere is unchanged from her entry in the Who's Who section.

**Gwenhwyvach (Noble Adept 8):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 21, parry 14, flatfooted 14 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +0 Str, +4 class); Combat +4; Grap +4; Atk +6 melee (1d6+0, weapon), or +6 ranged (1d6+0, weapon); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Forgiving (Virtue), Vain (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 6; SV Tough +1, Fort

#### And Guinevere

*Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;  
But since he neither wore on helm or shield  
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,  
But rode a simple knight among his knights,  
And many in richer arms than he,  
She saw him not, or mark'd not if she saw,  
One among many, tho' his face was bare.  
But Arthur, looking downward as he passed,  
felt the light of her eyes into his life  
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on...*

*-Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

+8, Ref +9, Will +11; Str +0, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +2, Wis +1, Cha +5.

**Core Ability:** The Talent

**Skills:** Bluff 11 (+16), Diplomacy 11 (+16), Gather Information 11 (+16), Knowledge (supernatural) 11 (+13), Notice 11 (+12), Sense Motive 11 (+12)

**Supernatural Powers (Save Difficulty 19):** Bliss (+16), Dominate (+16), Heart Shaping (+16), Mind Touch (+16), Suggestion (+16)

**Feats:** Attractive, Banter, Benefit (nobility), Connected, Contacts, Lucky, Subtle Power

**Possessions:** Rich clothing

**Description:** The daughter of Leodegrance and a nymph, Gwenhwyvach is identical to Guinevere physically, and her polar opposite mentally. Flirtatious, manipulative, lustful, and spiteful, she hates and despises her sister, desiring everything she has. Gwenhwyvach will be particularly eager to marry Arthur, seeing power and fame and wealth, and will do anything to kill Guinevere and take her "rightful" place as Arthur's bride. If any of the characters discover the reason for Guinevere's "mood swings" toward Arthur, Gwenhwyvach will go to Gotegrin as Guinevere and tell them one of the heroes has made an unwanted advance toward her, or even implicate them in cooperating with the Saxon leader Caladwold (this will be especially convincing if the characters convinced him to leave peacefully). One of the characters may then end up facing Gotegrin in a trial by combat to the death.

**King Arthur (Age 20) (Lesser Nobility Warrior 4/Expert 7):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 24, parry 26, flatfooted 19 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +3 Str, +9 class); Combat +9; Grap +12; Atk +17 melee (+11/17-20 +5, Excalibur), or +11 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Oath of Fealty: Noblesse Oblige (Virtue), Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Impulsive (Vice); Fate/Destiny Be king of all Britain/Be betrayed by those he loves most; Conviction 8; SV Tough +19 (+10 Scabbard, +6

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Armor), Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +14; Str +3, Dex +2, Con +3, Int +4, Wis +4, Cha +4.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Bluff 14 (+18), Diplomacy 14 (+18), Disguise 9 (+13), Handle Animal 9 (+13), Intimidate 14 (+18), Knowledge (history) 12 (+16), Knowledge (supernatural) 9 (+13), Notice 14 (+18), Ride 14 (+18), Sense Motive 14 (+18), Survival 14 (+18)

**Feats:** Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (Sword), Benefit (nobility), Fascinate (Diplomacy), Inspire (awe), Inspire (courage), Lucky, Mass Suggestion, Master Plan, Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Standard Bearer, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Crossbow, Excalibur (see the description of this weapon in the chapter on supernatural items), Scabbard of Excalibur (+10 Toughness saves), Full Plate, Priwen (Lg. Metal Shield, otherwise see supernatural items below), Warhorse, Ron (Arthur's lance, see supernatural items below)

**Description:** Having solidified his hold over Britain to a large extent, the Arthur seen here has begun to make leaps and bounds as administrator, ruler, and king. He is much more comfortable delegating to others, and that will be his role in the Cameliard campaign, as a leader who assigns quests to the heroes. Many of these will be military in nature, such as rooting out the Wolf Lord and confronting Caladwold and his followers. However others will have the characters act as intermediaries with Guinevere, while Arthur runs interference, tying up Leodegrance in "war council". Any hint of hesitation or self-doubt is gone, and the Boy King is now simply a King, secure in his place as ruler of an ever more united Britain.

**King Leodegrance:** King Leodegrance is unchanged from his Who's Who entry.

**King Uriens:** King Uriens is unchanged from his Who's Who entry.

**Morgan le Fey (Age 22) (Noble Adept 10/Expert 5):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 20, parry 18, flatfooted 18 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +0 Str, +8 class); Combat +8; Grap +8; Atk +10 melee (+1/19-20 +3, knife), or +10 ranged (+1/19-20 +3, knife); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Word is your bond (Virtue), Disregard Oath of Fealty: Arthur (Vice); Fate/Destiny Aid in the downfall of Arthur/Be spurned by the only man she will ever love (Accolon); Conviction 10; SV Tough +1, Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +10; Str +0, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +5.

**Core Ability:** The Talent

**Skills:** Bluff 18 (+23), Diplomacy 18 (+23), Disguise 18 (+23), Gather Information 18 (+23), Intimidate 18 (+23), Knowledge (supernatural) 10 (+12), Concentration 18 (+20), Medicine 10 (+12)

**Supernatural Powers (Save Difficulty 20, prime ability**

**Cha):** Beast Link +18, Dominate +18, Heart Reading +18, Heart Shaping +18, Mind Touch +18, Plant Shaping +18, Scrying +18, Teleport +18, Wind Shaping +18

**Feats:** Animal Empathy, Attractive, Connected, Contacts, Fascinate (Bluff), Inspire (complacency), Subtle Power, Suggestion, Well-Informed

**Possessions:** Knife

**Sir Gotegrin (Lesser Nobility Warrior 10):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 24, parry 27, flatfooted 20 (+0 size, +1 Dex, +3 Str, +10 class); Combat +10; Grap +13; Atk +11 melee (+6/19-20 +3, sword), or +12 melee (+7/19-20 +4, lance), or +11 ranged (+3/19-20 +3, crossbow); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices Oath of Fealty: Leodegrance (Virtue), Code of Chivalry (Virtue), Impulsive (Vice); Fate/Destiny; Conviction 7; SV Tough +10 (+6 full plate), Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2; Str +3, Dex +1, Con +3, Int +0, Wis -1, Cha +1.

**Core Ability:** Determination

**Skills:** Handle Animal 13, Intimidate 13, Ride 13, Survival 13

**Feats:** All-out Attack, Armor Training (light), Armor Training (heavy), Attack Focus (lance), Attack Specialization (lance), Benefit (knighthood), Cleave, Die-hard, Favored Opponent (Saxons), Shield Training, Spirited Charge, Tough, Vehicular Combat (Ride), Weapon Training

**Possessions:** Sword, Crossbow, Lance (as spear, cannot be thrown), Large Metal Shield, Full Plate

### Wolf Lord

*And ever anon the wolf would steal  
The children and devour, but now and then,  
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat  
To human sucklings; and the children, housed  
In her foul den, there at their meat would growl,  
And mock their foster-mother on four feet,  
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,  
Worse than the wolves*

*-Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King.*

**Wolf Lord (Barbarian Adept 10):** Medium-size humanoid; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense dodge 21, parry 15, flatfooted 15 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +0 Str, +5 class); Combat +5; Grap +5; Atk +7 melee (1d6+0, weapon), or +7 ranged (1d6+0, weapon); FS 5 ft /5 ft; Virtues/Vices none; Fate/Destiny; Conviction; SV Tough +1, Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +10; Str +0, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +1, Wis +4, Cha +2.

**Core Ability:** The Talent

**Skills:** Diplomacy 13 (+15), Intimidate 13 (+15), Notice 13 (+17), Stealth 13 (+15), Survival 13 (+17)

**Supernatural Powers (Save Difficulty 19, prime ability Wis):** Beast Link +17, Body Control +17, Nature Reading +17, Self-Shaping +17

**Feats:** Animal Empathy, Canny Dodge (Wisdom),

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Improved Speed, Light Sleeper, Night Vision, Rage, Track, Trackless, Trailblazer, Weapon Training

**Possessions:** An unusually intelligent, wily member of his race, this wolf-man has been receiving aid and instruction from none other than Morgan le Fey as she attempts to help her husband conquer Cameliard. With his power increasing daily, the wolf lord now commands a sizeable pack of wolves and dire wolves, and has taken up residence in an abandoned castle overrun with forest.



## CONVERTING PUBLISHED ADVENTURES

One last topic that needs to be addressed is the subject of published adventures.

Although the goal of the Campaign Guide is to provide the Excalibur narrator with all the tools he needs to run a campaign, there is still a wealth of adventure material made by some very fine companies for the narrator to take advantage of. However, the feel of Excalibur is quite different from most fantasy adventures, which are more based on the works of Tolkien than they are of Malory. With a few adjustments, however, any adventure can be modified to fit seamlessly in a Legends of Excalibur campaign, and below, you will find some tips and hints to pick the right adventure and modify it in the least amount of time. The main elements to consider when selecting a published adventure are the setting, the challenges, rewards, and the adventure's tone, each of which is discussed in greater depth below.

## SETTING

The setting of adventure determines almost everything else about the adventure. An adventure set in an uncharted wilderness is not going to be one of political intrigue, nor is it going to pit you against an evil aquatic emperor bent on conquering the surface world. The main settings, discussed below, are the dungeon, wilderness, and city adventure.

**Dungeons:** Dungeons in the traditional sense are rare in Arthurian legend. However, castles are the location of numerous adventures in the tales. Therefore, the narrator can take the dungeon, have it go up instead of down, and convert almost any dungeon into a castle adventure. Since most dungeons are drab and in poor repair, the castle will not be a living breathing castle, but Arthurian legend is full of rotting, crumbling castles swallowed by the forests that run rampant between the reigns of Uther and Arthur.

**Wilderness:** Arthurian legend is rife with wilderness adventures. It seems as though you can walk into any forest and find a giant, or a ruined castle, or an evil enchantress. Knights in the tales, in their desire for fame and glory, as well as a desire to "clean up Britain", often go plunging into the nearest desolate forest they can find (and they never seem to have to go far) just looking for trouble, and they

always seem to find it.

**City:** Cities are popular settings for adventures, allowing characters to confront thieves' guilds, get caught up in politics, and all sorts of other skullduggery and mayhem. This setting includes both the glistening metropolis and the wretched hive of scum and villainy. City adventures are rare in Arthurian legend, primarily because of its focus on the knights taming the wilderness of Britain. However, there are many large cities in Arthurian Britain (discussed in the Gazetteer below), including London, already a thriving metropolis, Bath, with its medicinal springs, which has been a favorite recreation stop since the Romans built their bath facilities there during their occupation of the island, and Canterbury, with its magnificent cathedral devoted to the One God. Tournaments and jousts are often held near major cities, including one of the largest, at New Year's outside London. While attending these events, the characters could get sucked into any sort of city adventure. Further, this would be a good time to throw in the occasional dungeon, in the form of a sewer trek.

## CHALLENGES

The challenges of an adventure are the obstacles that must be overcome for the characters to survive and succeed. Typically these obstacles take the form of monsters and narrator characters each of which is discussed below.

**Monsters:** Many types of monsters appear in Arthurian legend, and these are detailed in the monsters section later in this book. Simply make sure that the monsters are appropriate for the setting, and change the inappropriate monsters as necessary. This can usually be done with little work and without changing the overall focus of the adventure. Two monsters that deserve special attention here are the goblinoid and undead. Both are favorites of adventure writers, especially low-level adventure writers, and neither occur with any frequency in Arthurian lore.

Goblinoids are reduced to only goblins. There are no orcs, no gnolls, no kobolds, and no bugbears. However, it is easy enough to replace these in adventures. Simply make them ruffians, robber barons, or bandits if they are sophisticated enough to pass as (awful) representations of humanity. Usually this will require nothing more than changing their descriptions when the characters encounter them, although the narrator could also easily replace their statistics with those found in the narrator character tables presented later.

Undead are reduced to spirits, such as banshee and ghosts, along with the occasional (and extremely rare) wight or ghoul. There are no skeletons or zombies, and definitely no vampires. While there are representations of these creatures in other forms of fiction written at the same time as Arthurian legend, they do not appear in the tales, and would be as out of place (especially the vampire) as a kiai-shouting, nunchaku-wielding monk. Again, in the case of the skeleton or zombie, the change is easily made to a human opponent by a change in description,

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with the zombie-horde leading necromancer becoming the enchantress with her thralls of fallen knights.

The narrator should further note that when undead are encountered (and again it should be rare), the fact that many of the powers and class abilities (such as turn undead) dealing with undead have been removed from the roles will make these encounters *much* more difficult. Therefore, it is recommended that these creatures be avoided, save for the occasional banshee, ghost, or barrow wight.

**Narrator Characters:** Narrator characters are the most common form of opponent found in Arthurian lore, and are almost always appropriate. Changes will need to be made to class abilities, but for the most part, a simple alteration of the narrator character's spell list will be all that is needed for the narrator character to appear seamlessly in the campaign. Again, the narrator character tables, along with the countless detailed statblocks found in the Campaign Guide will assist the narrator in making these transitions as painless and quick as possible.

## REWARDS

Sometimes questing is its own reward, but players usually like a little something tangible to go with their experiences. Money and magic items from opponents, otherwise known as the time honored tradition of "killing things and taking their stuff" is well and good, and certainly has its place in Arthurian adventuring. However, there are some rewards of a kind not found in the typical fantasy game worth including in your game as well.

**Ransom:** Not nearly as bad as its modern connotation, this was in fact considered one of the privileges enjoyed by combatants "of quality" (members of the Lesser Nobility and the Royalty) in medieval times. Killing an opponent was all well and good, but why do that when you could get his king or his relatives to pay you for his safe return? Exceptional combatants could expect their liege to pony up for their safe return, while others might have to wait for years while their family tried to raise the money to secure their freedom. For captured characters, this might remove them from the campaign for a time, although other party members could certainly raise funds themselves. For characters capturing defeated enemies, this is a way for them to earn some extra gold.

Assume a captured foe of the lesser nobility will fetch a wealth award of +1 per level. Captured members of royalty will fetch twice this amount, or +2 wealth award per level.

If a character is captured, a d20 roll under the character's level indicates that his liege has agreed to pay the ransom himself. If the player fails this level check, then he is on his own, and must rely on friends and family to raise the expected sum. Every month of captivity, the player may reroll his level check to see if his liege has changed his mind. It was not unheard of for a captive to wait over a year for ransom.

## TONE

An adventure's tone is both the hardest element to pin down, but is also the most important element of making any published adventure fit into an Excalibur campaign. In many respects this element deals with the *why* of an adventure more than the setting or the objective or the challenges to overcome. In other words, taking on an adventure for revenge of a fallen comrade, or on behalf of a point of honor, will go much further to giving the adventure an Arthurian tone than changing where the adventure is set. This element, in addition to altering the setting and the encounters of an adventure, even slightly, will lead to almost any published adventure feeling like it belongs in the campaign.



## JOUSTING

The usefulness of the lance charge as a military tactic has long been questioned. Certainly an attack of this sort was very impressive, and inflicted a great deal of "shock and awe" on an opponent, but the ability of shock warfare to contribute toward decisive victory, from the lance charges of the Middle Ages to the carpet bombings of World War II, is a subject of some debate by scholars and theorists of military strategy.

In the words of one such scholar: "The heavy cavalry charge of this sort was, for several centuries, regarded as the principal shock attack of a battle and, although its efficacy has with good reason been challenged by a number of modern historians, it clearly impressed many observers throughout its long history and was taken seriously by at least some military theorists until well into the seventeenth century."<sup>1</sup>

While the value of the lance charge in battle may thus be questioned, there can be no doubt of the appeal of the spectator sport derived from the lance charge: the tilt or the joust. This sport, filled with pageantry and spectacle, allowed knights to practice their skills, showcase themselves to potential brides or employers, and even, in many cases, to win substantial prizes. These tournaments, which feature prominently in Arthurian legend, are the subject of this section.

## BASIC TERMINOLOGY

Historically, jousts may be divided into two broad categories: those fought "at large" and those fought with the aid of a "list".

A joust fought at large was one in which the combatants simply ran at one another in an open field, with or without a blunted lance, for sport. This dangerous pastime is handled under the normal combat rules. If a jousting lance is used, then the damage will at least be nonlethal, but these

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**TABLE 4-1: JOUSTING CHECK**

Jousting Check	Description	Lances (hit / dismount)	Dismount Check
1	Horses collide*	Disqualified	20
2-5	Hit horse	Disqualified	10
6-10	Clean Miss	None	None
11-15	Low hit	1/6	10
16-20	High hit	1/6	15
21-25	Helm hit; Helm removed	10/15	15
26-30	Helm hit; Helm not removed	10/15	15
31-40	Helm hit; Helm removed, head grazed	20/25	20

\*Only possible if not using a list.

matches were also held with standard lances on occasion, with a predictable number of accidental injuries and deaths resulting.

A joust fought with a list entailed the use of some barrier, of cloth (for impromptu matches) or of wood (for areas specifically designed for jousting). This barrier served both as a guide to the horses (as head on collisions were a dangerous, even fatal consequence to knight and horse of jousting at large), but also to subtly alter the angle of attack, which caused the lance to break more frequently, and caused significantly less damage than jousting at large.

## THE JOUSTING CHECK

All jousts, regardless of the conditions of victory (which will vary from joust to joust and which are covered below) will consist of a series of jousting checks. As the combatants pass, each will make a jousting check, and the results of both checks are applied. A jousting check is performed as follows: 1d20, plus your combat bonus, plus all normal lance attack modifiers. In addition to this, the rider with the higher quality horse gains a +2 bonus, and the rider with the better Ride skill gains a +2 bonus.

## CONDITIONS OF VICTORY

Jousts are scored in *lances*. Each joust may score on each pass, and at the end of three passes, the joust with the most lances wins.

Several results below call for a dismount check. This is a ride check, which must exceed the Difficulty listed or the rider is dismounted. Being dismounted increases the lances scored by five.

Damage (lethal or nonlethal) is only done if the Jousting check is greater than the opponents Defense. Scoring lances and dismounts are still possible even if the rider take no damage. If damage is inflicted by the attack, it is recorded, and may not be healed until after all three passes have been completed. If a joust cannot continue because he has been rendered unconscious or killed, he is disqualified.

**Horses Collide:** This is the worst possible result of a jousting pass, and often results in serious injury to horse and rider. There have been reported incidents of head-on collisions resulting in the deaths of both horses and both riders. This is one reason why lists were first used. This jousting check inflicts lethal damage on both horses and both riders as if each were the successful target of a trample attack (both mounts must check to see if they are tripped and if so, both horse and rider suffer damage as if the target of the Overrun feat).

**Hit Horse:** This jousting check results in automatic defeat, and inflicts nonlethal damage on the horse.

**Clean Miss:** Rather embarrassing, but no other result.

**Low Hit:** The lance has struck your opponent on his thigh through his shield, inflicting nonlethal damage, and scoring one lance (or six if the hit dismounts your opponent).

**High Hit:** The lance has struck your opponent above his shield and as high as his neck, inflicting nonlethal damage, and scoring one lance (or six if the hit dismounts your opponent).

**Helm Hit:** A very desirable hit. In combat, lancers were taught to aim for the horse's shoulder or the knight's head. During jousts lancers wore helmets very loosely, or even only fixed in place with wax holding the chin strap, so their helmet would simply fly off on a head hit, and result in far less damage. This joust check inflicts nonlethal damage, and scores ten lances (or 15 if your opponent is dismounted).

**Helm Hit (not removed):** This means that the helmet did not come off as it was supposed to, resulting in lethal damage, but no more lances.

**Helm Hit (Head Grazed):** This is an automatic critical hit, inflicting lethal damage and was greatly prized. Some tournaments even awarded extra points if teeth were knocked out by such a hit.

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## SUPERNATURAL ITEMS

Arthurian legend is filled with items of great power. These items have been created through the years to aid one side or another in the struggle for power. Many of these items were crafted by Merlin himself to aid Uther, and later Arthur.

### DOLOROUS SWORD

The dolorous sword is a powerful weapon, and this power lures brave warriors to their deaths again and again. No one knows where the sword came from, and as its appearance changes with each new wielder, no one can say when it will reappear. However, the death and woe that follow in the blade's wake are inescapable.

The dolorous sword is a longsword +3 that can either add its bonus to attack and damage rolls or the wielder's toughness saves. This bonus can be allocated once each round as the wielder sees fit as a free action (so one round the wielder could apply +3 to attack and damage rolls and the next round +1 to attack and damage rolls and +2 to toughness saves and so forth).

The weapon also curses the wielder, giving him a destiny to kill the person he loves best in the world. Each day the wielder uses the sword, even for a single stroke, he gains a destiny point. Any fate points the character spends go into this new destiny, not any other destinies the character may possess.



*Ye shall slay with the sword the best friend that ye have, and the man that ye love most in the world, and the sword shall be your destruction.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

### DRAGON HELM

A helmet passed down for generations, and from Uther to Arthur. Gold, with a dragon crest, the helm projects the noble's auras out much further than normal, granting him success as a leader in battle.

The character that wears the dragon helm has the area and duration of all inspire effects (those granted by the Inspire feat) increased by a factor of 5.

### EXCALIBUR

The most powerful sword in the history of the world, Excalibur is a +5 Longsword (granting +5 to attack and damage rolls). The weapon's critical threat range, as well as the damage it inflicts on a critical are also increased by 2 (meaning the weapon threatens criticals on a roll of 17-20 and inflicts +5 damage on a successful critical hit). The weapon also sheds a brilliant light away from the wielder when drawn, causing all characters facing toward the wielder to succeed in a Fortitude save (Difficulty 20) or be blinded for 1-10+5 rounds.

This weapon may only be wielded by a great hero and often disappears if found or wielded by one who is not worthy of it. Once the weapon disappears beneath any body of water it automatically appears in the court of the Lady of the Lake. Should the sword be broken, its pieces appear there, where it will magically mend itself within 24 hours. If a worthy hero is alive, the Ladies of the Lake will then return the mended blade to him.

The weapon is known under many different names. Excalibur, its English name, is frequently translated to mean "cut steel", however, Caladwylch, the sword's Welsh name and Caladbolg, its Irish name, are both translated to mean "hard lightning".

At the age of 14 Arthur drew Excalibur from the stone and anvil in London, where it had rested since Uther's death. He wielded the blade his entire life, losing it only twice: once it was stolen from him, and once it was broken. Upon his death at the hands of Mordred, Arthur commands the sword be thrown back into the waters, returning it to the care of the Ladies of the Lake.

*I beheld Excalibur... the sword  
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,  
And Arthur row'd across and took it- rich  
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
Bewildering heart and eye- the blade so bright  
That men are blinded by it- on one side,  
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,  
'Take me', but turn the blade and ye shall see,*

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*And written in the speech you speak yourself,  
'Cast me away!' And sad was Arthur's face  
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,  
'Take thou and strike! The time to cast away  
Is yet far off.' So this great brand the King  
Took, and by this will beat his foemen down.*

*-Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

### GALATINE

A mighty sword fashioned for Gawain by his mother Morgawse. Terrified that she might lose her son in service to Arthur, as she lost her husband in war against him, she fashioned this sword from her own blood and tears and sorrow, to watch after her son after she was gone.

Galatine is a longsword +3 whose bonus can be divided up as the wielder wishes between attack and damage rolls and Toughness saves. The wielder can reallocate the sword's bonuses from round to round (so one round the wielder could apply +3 to attack and damage rolls and the next round +1 to attack and damage rolls and +2 to toughness saves). The sword also grants the wielder the Die-hard feat, automatically stabilizing him should he begin to die.

Galatine also enhances the wielder's Strength score in the daylight hours before noon. As the sun rises higher in the sky, so does the fortunes of its wielder. As the sun sets, the wielder's fortunes wane. From 6 am to 8am the wielder's Strength increases by +1, from 9am to 10 am by +2 and from 11am to noon +4. From 1pm to 2pm the wielder's Strength suffers a -1 penalty, from 3 pm to 4pm -2 and 5pm to 6 pm -4. From 7pm until 6am the wielder's Strength score returns to normal.

### HOLY GRAIL

The Holy Grail, a wooden vessel which only appears to the most worthy and pious and is the subject of the greatest quest ever undertaken by Arthur's knights. The grail is needed to cure the Dolorous Stroke, a blow struck on the Grail King by the Lance of Longinus (see the entry for this item below). The Dolorous Stroke lays waste to three kingdoms in Northern Britain, a region where the land has been robbed of all energy. Nothing grows, and the use of powers is nearly impossible in this region, which is also inhabited by foul creatures of every description. Worse, the Wasteland is slowly growing, necessitating the pursuit of the Grail to restore the land.

Merely seeing the Grail will heal a creature of all wounds, including healing all poison and disease, even non-magical diseases or otherwise incurable diseases. The only exception to this is the Dolorous Stroke, which requires the completion of a special ritual to heal (see below).

**Worthy users of the Grail:** The grail can only be commanded by a person of the highest character. Although the Quest Knights chosen to find the Grail are the best the

Round Table has to offer, most of them are not even worthy to see the Grail. Whether a character is worthy to see or attain the Grail is at the discretion of the narrator though only characters who have led extremely pious lives should be considered worthy.

The achiever of the Grail varies from story to story, meaning that it is quite possible for a hero to achieve the Grail, since the stories themselves do not agree on who accomplishes the task. The Grail is variously achieved by Percival (the original Grail story is from Chretien de Troyes' *Perceval*), Gawain, Bors, Galahad, or (in *Le Morte d'Arthur*) Galahad, Percival, and Bors together. If an unworthy character comes within sight of the Grail, that character will fall into a deep sleep, at which time he will disappear, transported out of the Wasteland.

**Healing the Dolorous Stroke:** The Grail resides in the Grail Castle, at the heart of the Wasteland. There, Amfortas, the wounded Grail King, helplessly watches an endless procession of woe, every night through his castle, that anyone visiting the castle will be allowed to watch. A squire bears the Lance of Longinus, two squires bear 10-pronged candelabras, and finally a maiden bearing the Grail. If any worthy user watching this procession asks the Grail King (also called the Fisher King) the key questions, "What is the Grail?" and "Who does it serve?" then the Grail King will be healed, and the Wasteland will be restored.

*The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord  
Drank at the last sad supper with his own.  
This, from the blessed land of Aromat—  
After the day of darkness, when the dead  
Went wandering o'er Moriah- the good saint  
Arimathaeon Joseph, journeying brought  
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn  
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.  
And there awhile it bode; and if a man  
Could touch or see it, he was healed at once,  
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times  
Grew to such evil that the holy cup  
Was caught away to Heaven, and disappeared.  
-Alfred Lord Tennyson, Idylls of the King*

### LANCE OF LONGINUS

This is the lance used by a Roman soldier to pierce the side of Christ while he was on the cross. Like the Holy Grail, the descendants of Joseph of Arimathea have guarded it since their arrival in Britain. The stewardship of these two items is the hereditary responsibility of all the Fisher Kings. The last of the Grail Kings, Pellam, is wounded by the lance, laying waste to three kingdoms, and creating the Wasteland.

The lance is a +5 lance. The damage inflicted by this lance is permanent, and can only be healed by the Holy Grail. Use of the lance is a grave sin that always leads to the attacker suffering a nasty death (often within moments of using the lance).

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*And at the last he entered into a chamber that was marvellously well dight and richly, and a bed arrayed with cloth of gold, the richest that might be thought, and one lying therein, and thereby stood a table of clean gold with four pillars of silver that bare up the table, and upon the table stood a marvellous spear strangely wrought.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

## MORGAN'S MANTLE

Created by Morgan le Fey in an attempt to assassinate Arthur, this mantle appears as glorious velvet, gem studded cloak worth a fortune (20 Wealth). When worn, however, a Fortitude check must be made each round (Difficulty 30) or the wearer bursts into flames, immediately dying.

*And then he said unto the damosel that came from his sister, Damosel, this mantle that ye have brought me, I will see it upon you. Sir, she said, It will not beseem me to wear a king's garment. By my head, said Arthur, ye shall wear it or it come on my back, or any man's that here is. And so the king made it to be put upon her, and forth withal she fell down dead, and never more spake word after and burnt to coals.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*

## PRIWEN

Arthur's shield, ever stainless, bearing a picture of the Virgin Mary. This shield grants the wielder a supernatural resistance of 25.

## RON

Arthur's Lance, described by Geoffrey of Monmouth as "well devised for slaughter," also called Rhongomyniad.

Ron is a +5 lance.

## ROUND TABLE

Merlin creates the Round Table at Uther's request to aid him in unifying Britain. It is an enduring symbol of equality and justice. The table seats 150 knights, and its seats are called *sieges*. Twelve of the sieges may only be occupied by the most virtuous of knights. These sieges represent the apostles, and each chair of the twelve requires more nobility than the next. Only Segurant, Pellinore, and later Lancelot, could sit in the twelfth siege, on the right hand of the *Siege Perilous*. The twelve knights who occupy these sieges are referred to as the Grail Knights, as they are destined to search for this mysterious object. A thirteenth siege, named the *Siege Perilous* by Merlin represented Christ, and would kill any knight who sat in it. Only Galahad ever occupies the *Siege Perilous*.

During Uther's reign, only fifty knights occupied the table. These knights were known as the Knights of the Old Table, which implies that the table was ancient even then.

Segurant, Ulfius, and Brastias are the only three knights of the Old Table mentioned in the tales.

Upon Uther's death, King Leodegrance inherited the table. King Leodegrance hosted a grand fellowship of knights, the Century Legion (see knightly orders for more information) heroes of the dark age between Uther and Arthur at this table.

When Arthur marries Leodegrance's daughter, Guinevere, Leodegrance gives him as a dowry not only the table, but the 100 knights of the Century Legion as well. Arthur fills the remaining fifty seats.

Only virtuous knights may sit at the Round Table. In game terms if a character possesses both the Benefit (knighthood) feat and the Code of Chivalry virtue he is eligible to sit at the table. Each of the twelve sieges of the Grail Knights requires a more spotless character. The ability to sit in these sieges is at the discretion of the narrator. Any hero sitting in a siege he is not worthy to sit in must make a Fortitude save (Difficulty 30) or be struck dead.

Sitting at the Round Table grants the benefits of the Inspire (courage) feat with a duration of 10 days. All diseases are also cured when a worthy character sits at the table. If a character shares stories of his adventures, he may learn from his mistakes, under the tutelage of his fellow knights, and the King and Queen. This has the effect of completely restoring the hero's conviction.

As the knights recount their tales, the King and Queen may also set tasks or challenges before them relating to their experiences. For example, when Gawain related his tale of accidentally killing a maiden, Guinevere required him to take a vow championing women and their causes. Gawain upheld this vow for the remainder of his life.

**A final note:** Arthur never sat at the Round Table. Rather, his throne overlooked the table.

## SCABBARD OF EXCALIBUR

This item grants the wearer a +10 bonus on all toughness saves. The scabbard was considered more valuable than Excalibur itself and rendered Arthur virtually impossible to kill. Late in Arthur's reign Morgana succeeds in having the scabbard stolen.

*Then Sir Arthur looked on the sword, and liked it passing well.*

*Whether liketh you better, said Merlin, the sword or the scabbard?*

*Me liketh better the sword, said Arthur. Ye are more unwise, said Merlin, for the scabbard is worth ten of the swords,*

*for whiles ye have the scabbard upon you, ye shall never lose no*

*blood, be ye never so sore wounded; therefore keep well the*

*scabbard always with you.*

*-Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur, Book I, Chapter XXV*

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## WATER OF PARADISE

This potion, comprising waters from the Garden of Eden will instantly heal all damage on a wounded character as well as curing the effects of poison or disease.

*And Priamus took from his page a vial full of the four waters that came out of Paradise, and with certain balm anointed their wounds, and washed them with that water; and within an hour after they were both as whole as ever they were.*

*Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur*



## BESTIARY

### CREATURES FROM THE BESTIARY

To give the narrator some guidance both in the formation of his own adventures, and translation of published adventures, a list of monsters appropriate for Legends of Excalibur games are included below. Where necessary, some notes on that monster are provided. Following this is a selection of completely new monsters drawn from the tales themselves.

### ANIMATED ARMOR

These constructs are used as guards in the castle lairs of evil magicians and enchantresses. They are also sometimes found at the scene of tragic battles where the spirits of knights killed dishonorably or left unburied in the field cause them to rise up and attack those who come too close.

### ASSASSIN VINE

These carnivorous plants are rampant during the earliest days of Arthur's reign, and are indicative of the revolt of nature that occurs after the reign of Uther. With the help of Arthur's knights, and a steady campaign of burning, these creatures are consigned to desolate bogs after the War of Ascension.

### BASILISK

These creatures inhabit deep caves and desolate bogs, and are sometimes used as guardians by intelligent swamp creatures that prefer to lair in these inhospitable locations.

### CENTAUR

Centaur are rarely encountered on the isle of Britain. For brave knights who venture far from home however, these creatures can be commonly encountered and are dangerous opponents.



### CHIMERA

These beasts prefer caves, or jagged mountaintops for their lairs. Early in Arthur's reign these creatures are a constant threat to livestock and man alike, but are driven to near-extinction by the Knights of the Round Table after the War of Ascension.

### CYCLOPS

These creatures are rare in Britain but are common in Europe and on desolate islands too small to appear on any map.

### DIRE ANIMAL (ALL)

These creatures are another product of the revolt of nature, and reflect the animals that have no fear of man, hunting them like any other prey. Arthur's knights have standing orders to hunt any creature that has taken to eating humans, and later in Arthur's reign, these creatures can only be found in the most remote unsettled areas. Note that in Arthurian legend, creatures appear that never (to our knowledge) existed historically in Britain. Most notably are the frequent references to lions. Bears, extinct in Britain today are also common opponents. Most common of all these natural terrors, however, are the wolves, which lead packs of lesser wolves in well-coordinated attacks on farms. Children are often spared in these attacks, and raised by female dire wolves as Wolf Men (see the Wolf Lord above and the barbarian bloodline for information on these feral humanoids).

During the Rise of Arthur era, all Dire Animals encountered will have a bonus of +1 Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. These creatures have had their fill of manflesh, and are strengthened by the lack of a king. They have no fear of man, seeing him as a foodsource and nothing more, and will attack on sight.

During the One Brief Shining Moment era, these creatures will be rarer, and gain no bonus to their ability

# - ARTHURIAN ADVENTURING -



scores.

During the Dream's End era, these monsters will begin to grow in numbers, but will not regain their ability bonuses until after Arthur's death.

## DRAGON

Dragons are frighteningly common in Arthurian legend, second only to giants as central opponents of the Round Table. These creatures prefer the most inaccessible mountaintops, deepest caves, or dankest swamps for their lairs. Arthurian dragons are identical to their bestiary counterparts.

## DRYAD

Forests near henges teem with these reclusive fey folk. They will never participate in combat unless their symbiotic plant is threatened.



## DWARF

Dwarves are common foils for knights in Arthurian legend, and are often seen pursuing relationships with human maidens. If the narrator wishes to include non-human races in his game, characters may select dwarf as their background, using the standard background provided in the True 20 core rulebook.

## ELF

Elves are beautiful members of the fey race that reside in a place known as the Otherworld. Arthur has visited this strange place with Merlin's assistance, and is on good terms with Oberon, the King of the fey. Occasionally, Oberon will send one of his followers to the mortal world on a mission of some import. If the narrator wishes to include non-human races in his game, characters may select elf as their background, using the standard background provided in the True 20 core rulebook. Arthurian elves may additionally choose from the Gray Elf, Wild Elf or Wood Elf backgrounds with the narrator's permission.

## ETTIN

These loathsome creatures are descended from titans, and are thus bitter enemies of the giants, who are descended from Poseidon. Any time a giant encounters an Ettin, the inevitable result is one killing the other.

## FIEND (ALL)

These creatures are unfortunately common and are found as the result of being summoned by a adept or even wandering free. Merlin was sired by an incubus and Roman adepts seem especially good at summoning and striking bargains with these foul creatures.

## GARGOYLE

These creatures love to take residence in the many abandoned castles that dot the British countryside. They will use these abandoned structures as bases from which to hunt, and will defend them to the death from anyone foolish enough to seek shelter in their home.

## GHOUL

These creatures are extremely rare, and are always encountered near old burial mounds in the hills around Britain, left over from bizarre rites and ceremonies conducted in the distant past. With the lack of undead turning and anti-undead spells, these creatures are even more dangerous than usual when encountered.

## GIANTS (ALL)

Giants are easily the most common monster found in Arthurian legend. They are seen in the role of wandering monsters ravaging the countryside, robber bandits who have taken up residences in abandoned castles and extract

# - ARTHURIAN ADVENTURING -



tribute from all those who live nearby, and even soldiers serving with armies on both sides of a battle. Arthur's war with Rome is an excellent example of this, where the Roman army has entire *units* of giants on its side. Giants are normally villains in Arthurian legend, but there were giants who went so far as to swear fealty to Arthur, including one that guarded Camelot itself.

The existence of giants in Arthurian Britain predates mankind, and the first henges were constructed by the followers of Albion, legendary giant-king of Britain to honor Poseidon. Many giants trace their blood back to this venerable leader, and long for a day when the island was theirs alone, free from the meddlesome interference of mankind.

## GIANT EAGLE/GIANT OWL

These intelligent creatures are often willing to aid the virtuous, and are well known for their hatred of the draconic and giant races. These creatures will come to the aid of anyone involved in a fight with giants or dragons, if they are in the area.

## GOBLIN

The only goblinoid to appear in any number, these loathsome little killers are common early in Arthur's reign, especially in Lothian, where they aid King Lot in his battles. After Arthur consolidates his power, and Lot is succeeded by Gawain, the numbers of these creatures are dramatically reduced.

## GREEN KNIGHT

These creatures do exist in the deep forests and dank swamps of the Arthurian world but have no relation to the legendary Green Knight who tested Sir Gawain.

## GRIFFON

These creatures hunt horses, and are thus hunted by Arthur's knights later in his reign.

## HAG (ALL)

These creatures all (unfortunately) can be found in the swamps and seas of Britain. If three hags join together, in addition to the covey abilities described in the Monster Manual, they can make Prophecy skill checks once per day, at a +15 modifier.

## HELL HOUND

These creatures are often found in the service of demons or hags. Occasionally roving packs of these fiends are seen hunting through the countryside.

## HIPPOCRIFF

These creatures are hunted by dragons and griffons, and are slowly becoming extinct. They can be domesticated when captured, and make powerful aerial mounts.

## HYDRA

These creatures are found in caves and abandoned castles early in Arthur's reign, though after his knights have tamed the wild countryside they are forced to retreat deep into the bogs of Britain.

## NIGHTMARE

These creatures are normally summoned by mages from the depths of the netherworld to serve as mounts. They can also be seen in the service of hags or particularly powerful mages.

## NYMPH

Though wild and unpredictable, nymphs can be convinced to aid those in need on occasion. Interacting with a nymph requires the Animal Empathy feat. They are too wild to use interaction skills otherwise.

## OCRE

Another common monster, Ogres are often found in the company and service of giants, hags, and even human warlords. Their brute strength and lack of intelligence make them excellent hirelings for such beings.

## PEGASUS

Although these creatures appear frequently in Greek mythology, their appearance in Arthurian tales is credited to Merlin, who is said to have created these creatures. This could indicate that he summoned them, given that Greek mythology was assumed true in the context of Arthurian legend (the Goddess Diana is said to be the godmother of Nimue for example). Otherwise these noble steeds are

# - ARTHURIAN ADVENTURING -



identical to their bestiary entry, including the ability of a worthy champion to tame one and use it as a mount.

## SHADOW

Shadows hate all that is good and noble. They gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls against any character with the

## SPRITE (ALL)

Rarely encountered, these creatures are part of the court of Oberon and are almost always on a mission for their King when encountered. This isn't to say they won't try to have fun while on their mission, often at the players' expense. They consider themselves allies of Arthur's court, and will aid any servants of Arthur (those who have an Oath of Fealty directly with Arthur) they encounter if they need assistance.

## TROLL

These loathsome creatures are found deep in swamps, and are consumed by hatred of all that is good and noble. Each round of combat, a troll has a percentage chance to go berserk (as the warrior rage feat) equal to the highest nobility of the creatures he is fighting. These creatures are often found in the service of hags, evil mages and black knights, especially when there is the prospect they will get to destroy something noble.

## UNICORN

These creatures are the epitome of grace and purity. Late in Arthur's reign, Mordred's knights hunt these creatures to extinction (or near-extinction) because of their affinity for Arthur and his knights.

## WILL O' WISP

These creatures live in the most fetid swamps, and will attempt to kill anyone they encounter, feeding on their pain and misery.

## WINTER WOLF

These creatures exist only in Saxon lands. However, they are often brought along with Saxon raiding parties, much to the dismay of British forces attempting to repel these invaders.

## WYVERN

These creatures are unfortunately rather common, and will often be found in the service of true dragons. Black Knights have also been known to domesticate these ferocious creatures by besting them in combat, and then keeping them well-fed with still living prey.



## NEW MONSTERS

Many unique and unusual monsters fill Arthurian tales. Many of these are already included in game books and have been noted above. However, some monsters exist which have never been detailed before, and these are noted below.

## CATH PALUG

**Type:** 4<sup>th</sup> level Animal

**Size:** Large

**Speed:** 50 ft.

**Abilities:** Str +7, Dex +3, Con +4, Int -5, Wis +1, Cha -2

**Skills:** Acrobatics 0 (+7), Jump 0 (+15), Stealth 3 (+7), Survival 4 (+5)

**Feats:** Night Vision, Trailblazer

**Traits:** Pounce, Scent

**Combat:** Attack +5 (+2 base, +3 Dex) melee (+9/20 +3, bite), Attack +1 (+2 base, +3 Dex, -4 secondary attack only on a charge) melee (+8/20 +3, claws), Grapple +12, Defense Dodge/Parry/Flatfooted 15/19/12, Initiative +3

**Saves:** Toughness +6, Fortitude +8, Reflex +7, Will +2

**Pounce:** When charging the Cath Palug can attack with both bite and claws as if it possessed the Two-Weapon Fighting feat.

**Scent:** The Cath Palug can detect hidden enemies and track by scent.

## - ARTHURIAN ADVENTURING -

**Skills:** Cath Palug have a +8 racial bonus to Jump and Stealth checks as well as a +4 bonus to Acrobatics checks.

**Description:** These fierce swamp cats are built like leopards, only much larger, ranging from 6-9 feet long and weighing well over 500 pounds. Females are slightly larger than males, and are sometimes found accompanied by a single pup, which will not fight.

However, the pup's presence grants the female the Dedication feat as a bonus feat, focused on the welfare of the pup. Despite their size, Cath Palug are extremely quiet and stealthy, as the creature's slick black coat almost seems to absorb light, and prefer to pounce from surprise.

### WHITE HART

**Type:** 6<sup>th</sup> level Supernatural Beast

**Size:** Large

**Speed:** 60 ft.

**Abilities:** Str +5, Dex +0, Con +4, Int +1, Wis +0, Cha +3

**Skills:** Acrobatics 9, Jump 9 (+14), Notice 9 (+13)

**Feats:** Lucky, Night Vision (bonus feat), Trackless, Trailblazer

**Traits:** Darkvision 60', Damage Reduction 2/vice

**Combat:** Attack +5, Grapple +14, Defense Dodge/Parry/Flatfooted 15/20/15, Initiative +0

**Saves:** Toughness +6, Fortitude +12, Reflex +8, Will +5

**Object of worship:** The white hart is an important symbol to those who worship the Old Faith. Those with the Dedication feat for the Old Faith gain the benefits of that feat when defending a white hart.

**Skills:** White harts receive a +4 racial modifier to Notice skill checks.

**Description:** An important symbol of the Old Faith, the white hart finds itself at the heart of an intense battle over the hearts and minds of the people between the Old Faith, and the followers of the One God. As an object of worship, it is revered by the druids, and often hunted and killed by the followers of the One God. This has led these magnificent creatures to be slowly driven to extinction.

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