

## A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO ARTHURIAN LEGEND



### 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 which 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 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, Lochrine, Albanect, and Camber.

According to legend these events took place approximate 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.

## 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, 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.

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 joustward, 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 Cameliard, the 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*

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 afeard of him because he was a devil's son, and she could not besgift 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 greatstone. 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 smouldering 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 all the 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  
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.

## WHO'S WHO IN ARTHURIAN ENGLAND

### ACCOLON, SIR

Consort of Morgan Le Fay.

### 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*

## 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.

## BLAISE

Merlin's teacher and mentor; resides in Northumberland.

## DACONET (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*

## DUBRIC, HIGH SAINT

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

## ECTOR, SIR

Adopted father of King Arthur, father of Sir Kay.

## EDWARD AND HUE, SIR(S) (KNIGHTS PERILOUS)

Robber knights who always fought together.

## GAHERIS

Younger brother of Gawain serves as his squire.

## 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*

## 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*

## 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*

## MARK, KING

King of Cornwall.

## 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*



## 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*

## MORCAWSE, QUEEN

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

## NIMUE, LADY

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

## PALAMIDES, SIR

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

## PELLAM, KING (THE GRAIL KING)

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

## 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*

## RIENS, KING

King of North Wales.

## TOR, SIR

Illegitimate son of King Pellinore; raised by Aries the cowherd; a great knight of Arthur's court; later made an Earl by Arthur.

## 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.