



**Pendragon**

# The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

A Pendragon 6th Edition SoloQuest® Adventure



**Greg Stafford**





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## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

A SoloQuest® Adventure

**Authors:** David Larkins, with Greg Stafford

**Editor:** Jeff Richard

**Pendragon Line Editor:** David Larkins

**Design & Layout:** Simeon Cogswell

**Copyediting & Proofreading:** Roberto Mandrioli,  
David Zeeman, and Keith Mageau

**Licensing:** Daria Pilarczyk

**Cover Artist:** Andrey Fetisov

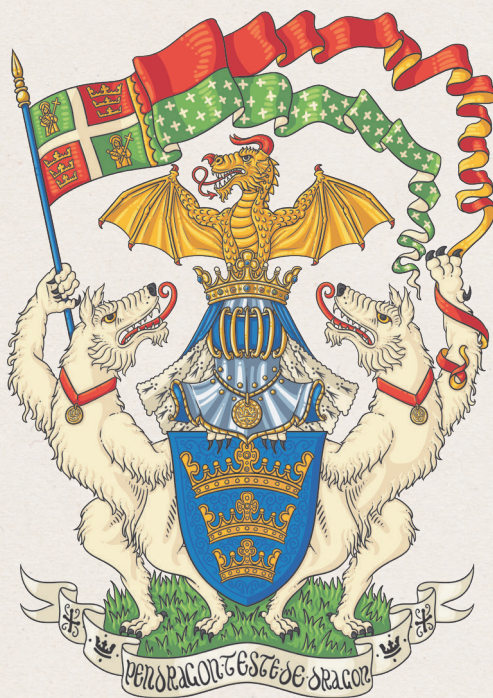
**Interior Artists:** Mathilde Marlot, Mark Smylie

**Heraldic Artist:** Katrin Dirim

**Border Designs, Marginalia, & Graphic Elements:**  
Simeon Cogswell, Kalin Kadiev, & Ash Stellmach

**Playtesting and Feedback:** Todd Gardiner, Roberto  
Mandrioli, Veli-Matti Pelkonen, David Zeeman

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# Contents

|                                                     |          |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>SOLOQUEST.....</b>                               | <b>2</b> |
| Introduction.....                                   | 3        |
| <i>For Players &amp; Gamemasters</i> .....          | 3        |
| Playing Pendragon .....                             | 4        |
| Your Character .....                                | 4        |
| <b>THE ADVENTURE OF THE SWORD IN THE STONE.....</b> | <b>7</b> |
| <i>Doing the Right Thing</i> .....                  | 9        |
| <i>Success &amp; Failure</i> .....                  | 14       |
| <i>Modifiers &amp; Critical Bonuses</i> .....       | 15       |
| <i>Kay Gets His Spurs</i> .....                     | 28       |
| <i>Withholding Damage</i> .....                     | 36       |

## Quest Numbers

|             |    |               |    |
|-------------|----|---------------|----|
| I-2.....    | 7  | 69-74.....    | 26 |
| 3.....      | 9  | 75 .....      | 27 |
| 4-8.....    | 10 | 76-81 .....   | 29 |
| 9-11.....   | 11 | 82-83 .....   | 30 |
| 12-17.....  | 12 | 84-88.....    | 31 |
| 18-19 ..... | 13 | 89-93.....    | 32 |
| 20-21.....  | 14 | 94-96.....    | 33 |
| 22-24 ..... | 15 | 97-102.....   | 34 |
| 25-30 ..... | 16 | 103-104 ..... | 35 |
| 31-36.....  | 17 | 105-107 ..... | 36 |
| 37-40 ..... | 18 | 108-110.....  | 37 |
| 41-42 ..... | 19 | 111-116 ..... | 38 |
| 43-46 ..... | 20 | 117-121.....  | 39 |
| 47-49.....  | 21 | 122-123 ..... | 40 |
| 50-54 ..... | 22 | 124-128 ..... | 41 |
| 55-58.....  | 23 | 129-130.....  | 42 |
| 59-63.....  | 24 | 131-133 ..... | 43 |
| 64-68 ..... | 25 | 134-135 ..... | 45 |





# olo Quest



*he Adventure of the Sword in the Stone* takes place in the fantastical world of Greg Stafford's **Pendragon** role-playing game. Although you normally play **Pendragon** with one or

more friends, for this adventure all you need is a pencil, some dice, and your wits.

You are playing the part of a page serving in the household of a kindly, aging knight named Sir Ector. His manor lies nestled in the wilds of modern-day Wales, in a tiny kingdom called Penllyn. Pages are young boys and girls between the ages of seven and fourteen who learn the ways of courtly life by observing their elders and doing menial tasks for them. After serving as pages, most girls become handmaidens to ladies, though some may pursue a martial path and become squires. Boys almost always become



*"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..."*

— Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*,  
book I, chapter 5



squires, though the runts and third-borns of the family are sometimes sent off to the priesthood. Now that you are fourteen, you are among those pages at court who dream of soon becoming squires to great and noble knights.

Sir Ector has two squires in his service, his sons Kay and Arthur. Squires study the ways of knighthood while they serve. Those who are





## For Players & Gamemasters

This adventure serves as an introduction to the world of **Pendragon** and the game's mechanics. Players and Gamemasters alike may read it.

It also sets up the events of the first scenario in *Book III*, "The Adventure of the Sword Tournament", and provides an alternate viewpoint of one of that scenario's key moments.

confident in themselves, show promise, and who have the right connections may become knights. Most remain squires after age 21 and are called esquires to indicate that they are not in service to a specific knight. Kay is an accomplished squire, brave and brash, and is due to be knighted soon (as he is only too happy to remind anyone who will listen). Sir Ector says Britain will need many more knights with strong arms like Kay's in the years to come.

For these are dark times, indeed. The land has fallen into anarchy and despair. The last High King of Britain, Aurelius Ambrosius, died thirty years ago. His brother, Uther, ruled for fifteen years after that from the mighty kingdom of Logres but never achieved the coveted title of High King. He died, along with most of the nobility of Logres, over the course of one fateful evening, victims all of foul Saxon treachery.

That was fourteen years ago when you were still in your mother's belly. Except for that brief blessed time, you have never known a wholly peaceful world. Raids from the hill folk of the Cambrian interior, border skirmishes with neighboring petty kingdoms, and Irish reavers from the sea trouble your land, particularly in recent years; Logres, they say, may fall to Saxon invaders at any time, its warlords too busy squabbling amongst themselves to mount an effective defense against the barbarians.

Britain cries out for a new High King, for the return of strength, unity, and stability.

But here in Penllyn, on Sir Ector's estate, these troubles seem far away now. A brisk autumn breeze riles up your hair as you step out of the manor hall and spot Arthur and Kay getting set for quintain practice. If only you could join them!

## Introduction

Read the following sections to get oriented, then proceed to the first numbered passage and start reading, following the prompts based on your decisions to other numbered passages in the text. At times you are instructed to make

dice rolls, both for your own character and sometimes on behalf of another. The outcomes of these rolls will also guide you to other numbered passages.

Through a combination of choice and luck you will eventually reach the end of the adventure. At that point, you proceed through a point scoring system to see just what kind of knight you will eventually become—ranging from a wandering mercenary who promises their sword to the highest bidder, all the way to a chivalrous peer of the legendary Round Table!

## ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER WORLD

**Pendragon** is set in a mythical version of Dark Ages Britain. It is Greg Stafford's unique synthesis of centuries of Arthurian tales, a vision of history informed by medieval scholars and troubadours, by Sir Thomas Malory and Edmund Spenser, by Romantic novelists like Tennyson, and by more contemporary visions from popular literature and cinema. All these stories have contributed to this legendary game setting.

Now imagine that is the Year of Our Lord 509.

Britain is a large, verdant island surrounded by turbulent seas and consisting of five geographic regions: The North beyond Hadrian's Wall, Cambria and Cornwall to the west and south, respectively, Cumbria in the middle, and Logres to the south-east. Some smaller islands sit off its coast, and the big island of Ireland lies just to the west. Britain is riddled with many navigable streams and rivers, and its coasts boast many fine natural harbors.

Much of the land is hilly and covered in dense, ancient forests, some rumored to be haunted. Deadly beasts, like the fierce British lions and panthers, have kept the woods dangerous, even where crumbling old Roman roads cross them. Deeper into the heartwoods and marshes live dragons whose occasional sallies wreak terrible havoc upon nearby settlements. Other portions of the forest are set aside as hunting grounds for kings and their followers, who fight monsters more than they fear them.

The people of Britain self-define themselves as one of five distinct cultures—Cymric, Irish, Pict, Roman, or Saxon—and have divided themselves into scores of tiny warring kingdoms; some, like Penllyn, of no greater size than a valley. The most powerful of them all is the kingdom of Logres. It occupies most of southeastern Britain, and holds three of the largest remaining Roman cities. Now, in these dark times, enemies converge on Logres from all sides, her warlords vie for supremacy, and her few allies fear her imminent collapse.

**Pendragon** Britain is a land of adventure and danger, of scheming lords and ambitious ladies, of great passions and



## SoloQuest Introduction

glorious deeds, of mysterious castles and strange, hidden kingdoms, and of savage beasts lurking in shadowy green woods. It is a fabled realm waiting for you to explore.

### Playing Pendragon

There are only two types of dice used in **Pendragon**: The twenty-sided (D20) and the six-sided (D6). You use the D20 to resolve actions as well as test your character's morals and beliefs in times of crisis. The D6 is most often used to determine damage dealt in combat.

The stories of King Arthur and his knights and ladies are filled with characters consumed by their passions and driven by their emotions for good and ill. Throughout the course of this adventure, and later when you play **Pendragon** with your friends, you will find your character's personality at times driving the narrative in surprising directions. Much enjoyment is thus derived from trying to get yourself out of trouble of your own devising!

This touches on the central question underlying all gameplay in **Pendragon**: Finding out what kind of knight you really are.



## GLORY AND HONOR

The measure of all knights is taken by their Glory and Honor values.

Glory is the measure of a knight's notoriety and fame. It only increases with time and is not tied to the knight's inherent moral character—knights like Sir Agravaine or Sir Breuse sans Pitie are infamous for their rotten personalities and questionable behavior, but both achieve high Glory values.

Honor, on the other hand, may fluctuate quite a bit over the course of a knight's lifetime and is dependent on their behavior. Some actions increase Honor; many others decrease it. Honor is a precious commodity and must be closely guarded, for if a knight's Honor ever falls too low, they lose their status and place in society!

During this adventure, you will keep track of the actions that would normally earn you Glory if you were a knight, as well as your Honor value. You do this by placing checks in the boxes next to the indicated Skills, Personality Traits, and Passions. Each box may only be checked once—if you earned a check earlier in the adventure, any further instructions to check the box are ignored. After completing the adventure, you will find instructions on how to tally everything up based on your checks and find out what kind of knight your young character will eventually grow up to become!

## DEALING AND TAKING DAMAGE

As noted earlier, you roll multiple six-sided dice to determine how much damage is done in combat. Sometimes you add a set number to the total (such as rolling 2D6+4 when brawling with a quarterstaff); other times (like when you throw a punch), you simply apply a set number of points of damage (usually between 4–5, depending on your Size and Strength).

Armor protects against damage, but whatever gets through is deducted from the character's Hit Points. Once Hit Points fall below the character's Unconscious threshold, the character is incapacitated; if Hit Points ever fall to zero or less, the character is dying!

Although combat is not the focus of this scenario, there are certain paths you may take that lead to combat. In such circumstances, you must keep track of both your own Hit Points and those of your opponent, as well as make all dice rolls on your opponent's behalf.

## Your Character

A character sheet is provided with this scenario. This is a simplified version of the standard **Pendragon** character sheet, representing your character as a 14-year-old page about to become a squire. You have benefitted from a



lifetime of active and passive instruction in the traditions of your Cymric culture, Christian religion, and the duties of knights and nobles.

Give your character a name. They may be any gender; all children of nobility serve as pages, and some girls choose to then go on to a career as squires and, eventually, knights. If you are having trouble coming up with a name, think of examples from literature or history. Some suggestions are:

*Aeddan (m), Adwen (f), Brian (m), Briant (f), Caradoc (m), Collwen (f), Eleri (f), Eric (m), Geriant (m), Graid (m), Gwen (f), Heledd (f), Hugh (m), Iain (m), Indeg (f), Madog (m), Meleri (f), Morien (m), Nai (m), Nia (f), Owain (m), Padern (m), Pridwyn (f), Rhun (m), Tathan (m), Tydfil (f)*

### CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics are your physical attributes. You have no notable strengths or weaknesses. How these function in play will be covered through events in the scenario but note that they also determine your Derived Characteristics such as Hit Points, Movement Rate, and so forth.

### PERSONALITY TRAITS

Next, look at Personality Traits (often written simply as Traits). These quantify and guide your character's actions. All Traits come in pairs, with two values that sum to 20. The values of each are written on opposite sides of a slash (/), for instance like 13/7. As one Trait rises, the other falls by an equal amount: 14/6, 15/5, and so on. A character tends to act according to the Trait with the greater value.

The **bold** Personality Traits are called your "Religious Traits" and represent the values most important to your religion. Other Traits (those marked with a star) are particularly important for knights.

You may now customize your Trait values. All Traits start at a base value of 10. Your Religious Traits each gain a bonus of +3 points. (Remember that this reduces the opposite Trait by 3 points as well!) Your Valorous Trait begins at 15.

Now choose one Trait and make it 16. This is your Famous Trait—what you are known for amongst your peers.

Finally, distribute 6 points amongst any of the other Traits. No other Trait may be raised above 15, but you are free to put all of your points into a Trait if you wish, so long as it remains under 16.

| NAME                       |            | SKILLS                                         |    | TRAITS                              |                                     |
|----------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>     |            | <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness (5)         |    | <input type="checkbox"/> CHASTE     | <input type="checkbox"/> LUSTFUL    |
| <b>SIZ</b>                 | <b>DEX</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Courtesy (7)          |    | <input type="checkbox"/> ENERGETIC* | <input type="checkbox"/> LAZY       |
| <b>STR</b>                 | <b>CON</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (6)         |    | <input type="checkbox"/> FORGIVING  | <input type="checkbox"/> VENGEFUL   |
| <b>APP</b>                 |            | <input type="checkbox"/> Folklore (7)          |    | <input type="checkbox"/> GENEROUS*  | <input type="checkbox"/> SELFISH    |
| 12                         | 12         | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting (5)           |    | <input type="checkbox"/> HONEST     | <input type="checkbox"/> DECEITFUL  |
| 12                         | 15         | <input type="checkbox"/> Intrigue (7)          |    | <input type="checkbox"/> JUST*      | <input type="checkbox"/> ARBITRARY  |
| 12                         | 12         | <input type="checkbox"/> Orate (7)             |    | <input type="checkbox"/> MERCIFUL*  | <input type="checkbox"/> CRUEL      |
| Base Damage                | 4D6        | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion (5)          |    | <input type="checkbox"/> MODEST*    | <input type="checkbox"/> PROUD      |
| Brawling Damage            | 4          | <b>BATTLE SKILLS</b>                           |    | <input type="checkbox"/> PRUDENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> RECKLESS   |
| Healing Rate               | 3          | <input type="checkbox"/> Brawling (6)          |    | <input type="checkbox"/> SPIRITUAL  | <input type="checkbox"/> WORLDLY    |
| Unconscious                | 7          | <input type="checkbox"/> Charge (6)            |    | <input type="checkbox"/> TEMPERATE  | <input type="checkbox"/> INDULGENT  |
| Movement                   | 17         | <input type="checkbox"/> Two-Handed Hafted (6) |    | <input type="checkbox"/> TRUSTING   | <input type="checkbox"/> SUSPICIOUS |
| <b>HIT POINTS (Max 27)</b> |            | <input type="checkbox"/> Horsemanship (6)      |    | <input type="checkbox"/> VALOROUS*  | <input type="checkbox"/> COWARDLY   |
|                            |            | <input type="checkbox"/> Spear (6)             |    |                                     |                                     |
|                            |            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sword (6)             |    |                                     |                                     |
| <b>NOTES</b>               |            | <b>PASSIONS</b>                                |    |                                     |                                     |
|                            |            | <input type="checkbox"/> Homage (Lord)         | 15 |                                     |                                     |
|                            |            | <input type="checkbox"/> Love (Family)         | 15 |                                     |                                     |
|                            |            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality           | 15 |                                     |                                     |
|                            |            | <input type="checkbox"/> Honor                 | 15 |                                     |                                     |



## SoloQuest Introduction

*For example, if you really wanted to play a Proud character, you could put all 6 points into that Trait, offsetting the +3 Modest bonus and giving you a final total of Modest 7/Proud 13.*

Once you have allocated your points, fill in your final Trait values, remembering that each Trait pair must sum to 20.

### PASSIONS

After finishing with your Traits, move on to Passions. Passions are intense beliefs that may provide inspiration, boosting a single Skill or Trait for a short time. Passions are especially useful in combat or when attempting a difficult task. If Traits represent your personality, Passions represent the values your character holds most dear.

The most important Passion is Honor, and this begins with a value of 15.

There are many other Passions, including Adoration, Devotion, Hate, Station, and Chivalry. For the purposes of your character, we focus on three others aside from Honor: Homage (Lord), Love (Family), and Hospitality. These each start with a value of 15 as well.

For definitions of each Personality Trait and Passion, see “Chapter 3: Traits and Passions” in *Book II*.

### SKILLS

The final step for customizing your character is assigning points to your Skills. As the name implies, Skills are what allow characters to accomplish great deeds in the game. Each Skill has a default value listed on the character sheet in parenthesis. These values are increased in a variety of ways, as outlined below.

Because you are a Cymric knight in training, you add 3 to your Charge, Horsemanship, and Courtesy Skills.

Every family has a certain inborn talent for a particular Skill. Roll 1D6 and consult *Table 1: Selected Family Characteristics* to find out where your natural talent lies, then increase the indicated Skill by +3.

**TABLE 1: SELECTED FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS**

| 1D6 | CHARACTERISTIC  | +3 BONUS TO SKILL |
|-----|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1   | Keen-Eyed       | Awareness         |
| 2   | Well-Bred       | Courtesy          |
| 3   | Perceptive      | Intrigue          |
| 4   | Silver-Tongued  | Orate             |
| 5   | Everyman        | Folklore          |
| 6   | Player's choice | Any of the above  |

Now distribute 10 points amongst your Skills with the limitations outlined below. These Personal Skill additions

represent where you have put your time and attention as you have grown up at court. As with Passions, not all Skills are useful in every scenario! However, some Skills of use only to knights (such as Stewardship) are not included on this character sheet. For definitions of each Skill, see “Chapter 4: Skills” in *Book II*.

### Skill Limitations

When distributing the points listed below, you must follow these rules:

- ✦ No Skill may be raised above 15
- ✦ No Skill with a starting value of 0 may be increased
- ✦ The following Skills may not be raised above the value of the Appeal Characteristic at the time of character creation: Courtesy, Flirting, Folklore, Intrigue, and Orate

Bonuses from your Cymric Skill Modifiers and Family Characteristics may raise Skill values above the limitations set out above.







# The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

1

Sir Ector's manor is built upon the ruins of an ancient hill fort in the country of Penllyn. The hall, Sir Ector's place of residence, is a grand two-story stone building with an entrance on the second floor. On this fine autumnal day, with the harvest done and the air getting chillier, you are enjoying a brief respite from your duties with your friend and fellow page, Alis. The two of you are sitting near the warmth of the central hearth, playing a game of improvised draughts using river pebbles, when the main door to the hall flies open.

It is your friend Arthur, Kay's younger brother, and his fine features are lit up with excitement. He beams at you.

"Kay wants to do quintain practice, and I asked if you could join us, and he said yes!"

You leap to your feet. As a page, you are not allowed to practice martial skills with the squires. Kay, the senior squire of the household, must be feeling magnanimous. The game of draughts forgotten, you and Alis run outside with Arthur.

.....  
*Go to 2.*

2

The knight is, if nothing else, a mounted warrior, and the knight is most fearsome on the battlefield as a part of the massed mounted lance charge. Against this unstoppable force, few enemies may stand.

Learning how to ride your horse into battle takes years of practice. It requires riding at full gallop, holding a heavy shield in one hand and a long wobbly stick in the other, all the while maintaining balance and control of the mount long enough to score a meaningful hit against a target... without falling off afterward!

Squires practice their aim with the lance using a device called a quintain. These vary in construction, from simple to elaborate; Sir Ector's quintain is decidedly the former, but it serves its purpose well enough: A crossbeam atop a post is used to hang an iron disc about the size of a man's face. The distance from the ground may be adjusted, but usually, like today, it is hung at the approximate point where a precise hit is likely to unhorse a knight.

The idea is to execute a charge with a lance and try to score a direct hit on the disc, which is molded in such a way that only by striking the very center will a sonorous gong sound out.







## Doing the Right Thing

Pendragon often confronts Players with dilemmas that are played out using Personality Traits. The Traits on the left-hand side of the column on your character sheet are considered the more “positive” ones for knights from Britain’s mainstream culture and religion. Acting in accordance with these Traits is considered befitting a good Cymric Christian knight but is not always the right thing to do. Behavior that seems advantageous in the moment may come with a hidden cost later on; conversely, some sacrifices may be made entirely in vain.

Traits of 16 or higher (called Famous Traits) often compel behavior in accordance with that Trait unless you roll under the opposing Trait. Other times, you may wish or be asked to roll against one or two Traits to determine a course of action, such as making a Valorous roll to confront a terrifying monster or rolling against Temperate and Indulgent to see if you overeat at a feast. Over time, acting in accordance with a particular Trait raises its value, causing you to act even more so in the future.



As you run out onto the top stairs landing outside the hall, you see that Kay has set up the quintain and brought a small stack of rebated lances—their normally lethal points dulled with a cloth bundle. Your excitement dims when you see that he has also brought out a mechanical hobby horse: A four-wheeled contraption with a saddle on top, which must be pulled by two others in order to achieve momentum and speed.

Kay seems to register your disappointment as you descend the stairs.

“What? Did you think I was going to get Bishop out for this?” Bishop is the name of Sir Ector’s charger, a fine warhorse who has seen many a battle and bears the scars to prove it. “It is enough that the Whelp promised to do my chores for a fortnight in exchange for this favor.”

Arthur looks abashed. Clearly, he did not want Kay to mention this part of the deal. Being an older squire of seventeen winters, Arthur has many responsibilities already. Taking on Kay’s tasks will mean long hours and sore limbs.

*In a situation like this, where it may not be clear how best to respond, you may turn to your Traits for guidance. As long as the Trait is less than 16, you are always free to choose how to act. However, let us see what the dice have to say this time.*

*This is called a Decision Roll, and has you rolling against two (usually opposing) Traits.*

*It is usually obvious which Traits to roll against once you become familiar with their definitions. In this case, look to your Just and Arbitrary Traits. Someone with a high value in Just has developed an objective sense of right and wrong, while an Arbitrary person allows their own biases or self-interest to influence their feelings.*

*Take 1D20 and roll against the value of your Just Trait first. If you roll equal to or less than the value, you are said to have succeeded in that Trait. Rolling the value of the Trait exactly is called a critical success, while rolling a 20 is called a fumble.*

*If you rolled a critical success, put a check next to Just on your character sheet; if you fumbled the roll, put a check next to Arbitrary instead, as a fumble in one Trait is considered an automatic success in the other. If you failed your roll against Just, make a second roll against Arbitrary. As with Just, a critical success here grants a check to Arbitrary and a fumble grants a check to the opposite Trait and is considered a successful Just roll.*

*If you failed both rolls, you must make your own choice between the two.*

*If you choose or succeeded at Just, go to **3**.*

*If you choose or succeeded at Arbitrary, go to **4**.*

## 3

Kay is seven years your senior and has at least two stone of weight on you, but you feel you must say something.

“If this comes at the expense of Arthur having to do all your work for you, Kay, then I don’t want it.” You feel your eyes flash as your heart pounds inside your chest. You would love nothing more than to take a shot at the quintain, but not at the expense of your friend.

Everything is quiet for a moment. You see that Alis has come out on the landing and is watching the whole scene, which makes your cheeks flush bright red. Kay’s expression is one of utter bemusement.

“Fine,” he says at last, with a shrug. For one fleeting moment, you think you might have won this standoff. “I guess this doesn’t matter to you as much as the Whelp said it did. Still, it would be a shame to waste my setting up the quintain. I’ll take a few passes with the lance, and you and the Whelp can pull me.”

*Go to **6**.*



## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

4

Kay is your elder and much bigger than you. You are well acquainted with his temper and know that saying something right now could set him off. You really do not want to risk losing out on this opportunity, so you remain silent. Besides, Alis has come out on the landing and is watching keenly. It would be a shame to disappoint her.

“Right, let’s get this over with,” says Kay, as he hefts a lance and hands it to you. “Get up on the saddle, and the Whelp and I will pull you.”

Go to 5.

5

The lance, lathed from fine ash wood, is more than twice your height, and you must set it against the wooden hobby horse to clamber into the saddle. As you take it up and feel the weight in your hands, you set your eyes on the quintain target.

Arthur and Kay laugh as they pick up the ropes attached to the front of the horse—they are both accustomed to the intricacies of horsemanship and lance practice, so for them this is all a folly. But you are in earnest. You hear Alis give an encouraging call as the two squires heave to and the horse rolls forward.

The small wooden wheels skip along over the uneven turf, and all you can do is try to keep yourself in the saddle. You are moving fast now, and the quintain is getting closer! You start to lower your lance, throwing off your sense of balance. You cannot believe how much the tip is wobbling. And then...

*Make an unopposed Charge roll to see how you fare. To do this, roll 1D20 and compare the result to your Charge Skill, as you did with your Trait roll. Remember that rolling the exact value of your Charge Skill is a critical success while rolling a 20 is a fumble.*

*If you rolled a critical success, go to 7.*

*If you succeed, go to 8.*

*If you fail, go to 9.*

*If you fumble, go to 10.*

6

You cannot help but feel dejected. Arthur catches your eye as you both move to the front of the hobby horse and gives you an encouraging smile. You can see that he is grateful you spoke up, which helps to lift your spirits.

“Don’t worry,” he says. “Before you know it, you’ll be doing this practice so much you’ll wish that quintain had never been built!”

*By making a just decision against your own best interest, you earn a check to Honor.*

Kay hops onto the back of the hobby horse, causing its legs to bow alarmingly. He wields the lance, twelve feet long and made from a single piece of ash wood, as if it were a stick.

“Alright, horsey! Let’s go!” He pretends to put spur to horse, and Arthur laughs. From the landing, Alis shouts out words of encouragement. Your leather shoes dig into the uneven turf as you pull hard. Even with Arthur’s help, this is going to be tough work!

*Make an unopposed STR roll to see how you fare. To do this, roll 1D20 and compare the result to your STR Characteristic, as you did with your Trait roll. Remember that rolling the exact value of your STR is a critical success while rolling a 20 is a fumble.*

*If you rolled a critical success, go to 13.*

*If you succeed, go to 14.*

*If you fail, go to 15.*

*If you fumble, go to 16.*

7

Your grip on the lance tightens, and suddenly the pole feels like an extension of your own arm. You intuit precisely how to shift your weight and position to put the cloth-covered point of the lance...just...so!

The iron disc rings out as loud as a church bell to your ears. You hear Arthur and Alis give cries of delight, and even Kay makes an impressed grunt in spite of himself. You have made a deep impression on your peers.

*Put a check next to your Charge Skill and go to 17.*

8

Although the cloth-covered tip of the lance continues to wobble as you move to contact your target, you move your arm to compensate. The lance strikes the iron disc on the edge with a dull clank, sending it spinning wildly.

At first, you are disappointed, but as you hop off the hobby horse, you see Arthur beaming at you, and even Kay gives you a curt nod. “Not an easy task for one with no practice at it,” he says.

*Put a check next to your Charge Skill and go to 17.*





Try as you might, you cannot get the lance under control! It moves with a mind of its own, it seems, and you watch, powerless, as the cloth-covered tip hits nothing but air. The disc turns lazily in the breeze caused by your passing.

“Unlucky!” Alis shouts from the landing, but Kay laughs.

“Luck has nothing to do with it!” he chor-tles. “It is a test of skill,” he continues, laying a meaty hand heavily on your shoulder, “of which you have none!” He throws his head back, braying with laughter at his own witticism.

.....  
*Go to 17.*

## 10

This is worse than you could have ever imag-ined! You cannot control the willful lance and can only barely stay mounted on the hobby horse, never mind have any hope of hitting your target. Then the front wheels hit a divot in the turf, and you lurch forward...

.....  
*Roll against your Horsemanship Skill.*

*If you succeed, go to 11.*

*If you fail, go to 12.*

## 11

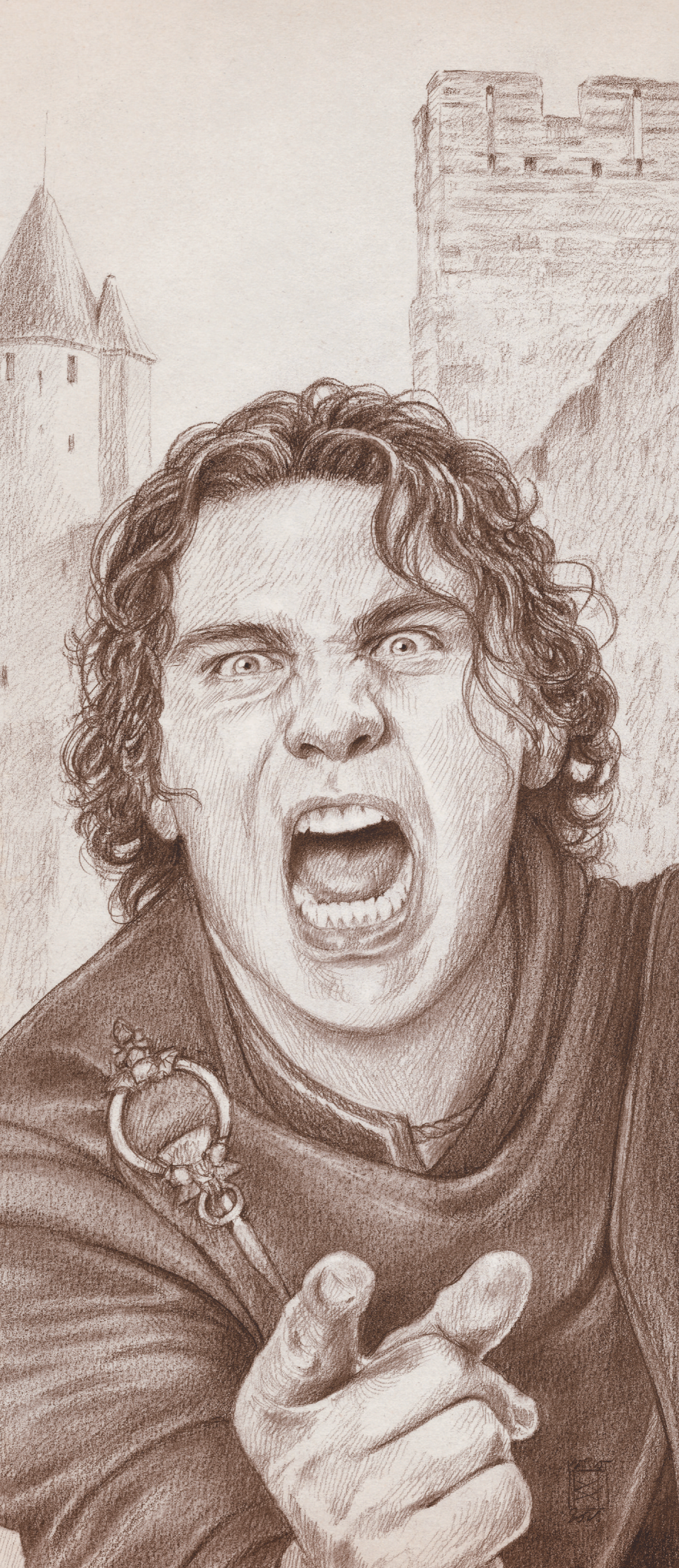
The cloth-covered tip of the lance strikes the ground, and with a stinging crack, the ash-wood shaft shatters! The hobby horse judders to a halt, and Kay is on you at once, pulling you from the saddle and berating you.

“That was one of Sir Ector’s lances! What do you think you’re playing at? Just wait until I tell him!”

Arthur is here now, interposing himself, try-ing to calm his brother, but it seems to little avail.

.....  
*If you rolled a simple Horsemanship success, you were struck by flying splinters from the shattered lance. Roll 1D6 and deduct the result from your Hit Points. A critical success results in no damage!*

*Go to 17.*





## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

### 12

The cloth-covered tip of the lance strikes the ground at an angle that sends all the force back up the shaft and into your body. Instantly, you are launched backward out of the saddle! For a moment in time, the world is topsy-turvy, the wind whistles in your ears, and then you hit the ground hard. As you desperately try to regain your wind, somewhere through the ringing in your ears, you hear Alis's scream, Arthur's shout of concern, and Kay's laughter.

*If you failed your Horsemanship roll, you take 2D6 damage from the fall. Roll 2D6 and deduct the total from your Hit Points.*

Go to 17.

*If you rolled a Horsemanship fumble, you hit the ground at a bad angle, causing potentially severe damage. Take 3D6 damage from the fall!*

*If you took 15 or more points of damage, you have suffered a Major Wound! This will leave you debilitated and cause you to miss the next section of the adventure. It takes a few weeks to heal up, by which time winter has set in, and you are off on a new adventure! Restore your character to full Hit Points and go to 74.*

### 13

As you lean forward and feel the rope grow taut across your shoulder, you think about Kay's humiliation of his brother, how he always calls him Whelp instead of by his Christian name. Your blood boils, and you find a source of strength you never knew you had.

You pull so forcefully that before you know it, you are running forward at full speed, the hobby horse galloping behind you! Then you hear Kay cry out in alarm. Looking back, you see him lying sprawled out on the ground, blinking, the wind knocked out of him.

Arthur and Alis are both doubled over with laughter, but the look on Kay's face as he gets up tells you that you should just keep running...

Go to 17.

### 14

You put everything you have into pulling the horse, and despite the bumpy turf underneath and Kay's bulk, you and Arthur manage to get it up to a decent speed. You can see the cloth-covered tip of the lance sticking out above your head and entertain the ludicrous thought that this is what all warhorses must see in battle...

Then the lance strikes home, the metal disc ringing out to indicate a perfect strike. The horse slows to a stop, and Kay hops off.

"That's how it's done, children," he says, starting to walk off, leaving the tidying up to you and Arthur.

Go to 17.

### 15

The grass is still wet with morning dew, and Kay's bulk is too much for the poor hobby horse to bear. Try as you might, your leather soles slip a few times, and the horse barely trundles forward.

"Oh, methinks we're going to have to put this old nag out to pasture!" Kay says from the saddle. "Move! Move!"

Your face burns with humiliation. How do you feel about this? Roll Modest versus Proud—you may choose which to roll first. If the first roll is a success, do not roll the second Trait. Place a check next to the successful Trait, if any.

Go to 17.

### 16

The grass, still wet with morning dew, feels like ice beneath your leather soles. You slip and slide, and it is only through Arthur's heroic effort that the hobby horse begins moving forward at all. Then, horrified, you feel your foot slip out from under you, and you pitch forward onto the ground!

Even worse, the horse now has sufficient momentum to continue rolling forward, and before anyone can do anything, it barrels right over your leg. You howl in pain as Kay curses your clumsiness, though, to his credit, he is the first at your side to make sure you are not too grievously injured.

*Roll 1D6 and deduct the result from your Hit Points, then go to 17.*

### 17

Without warning, the air is split with the blast of a horn. Your petty concerns and squabbles pop like a soap bubble as you all turn to see the lord of the manor, Sir Ector, riding up from the village of Caer Gai, his household knight, Sir Jonas, riding behind him.

Most knights in Britain serve in the household of a lord, thus their name. They are also called bachelor knights, from "bas chevalier"—low knight. They are, nonetheless, members of the nobility, and to reach even their rank puts one in an exclusive group of warriors sworn to defend those



who cannot defend themselves and pledge their swords to the service of a nobleman or lady.

Sir Ector, an aging knight, looks to be in good humor. He reins his horse to a halt near to where you were practicing and hops down.

"I have word that our king, Mawan, and his court are to pay us a visit in two days' time, to stay with us through the Feast of St. Andrew. Tomorrow we go a-hunting for boar—the king must have a grand feast of welcome when he arrives!"

Quintain practice is over. A boar hunt is always an event that requires the support of the full household, and you, Alis, Kay, and Arthur rush to follow Ector into the hall and find out what is expected of you.

Go to 18.

## 18

Today marks a week before the Feast of St. Andrew, and the morning dawns chill and gray. You rise from your customary "bed"—a soft pile of straw in the corner of the hall that you share with the other pages—and help the squires get the hearth fire stoked up, among other menial tasks.

Sir Ector is also up and moving about, preparing for the hunt in consultation with Sir Jonas. Hunting is Ector's favorite sport, and he employs a huntsman—a gnarled old specimen called Glyn—to help him in his efforts.

Glyn is up in the hall at dawn, along with Dai, the dog boy, to discuss the day's prospects. Considering the season, all agree that boar will be the most likely quarry, but they will not know for certain until they see the tokens.

The hunt, you have gathered, has a lexicon all its own, with words like "unhaboring," "fumes," "abay," and so forth. Although you have seen many hunts set out from Ector's hall, this is to be the first time you are invited along on one, and your stomach is far too unsettled to take the bread and small ale on offer for the morning's fast breaking.

Arrangements are made, and the hunting party assembles outside the hall. The knights and squires are dressed in their gambesons, thickly-quilted cloth armor that provides some small protection against the beasts of the wild. Each carries a special spear, called a boar spear, which features a long, sharp iron head and a sturdy metal crosspiece, positioned about eighteen inches down the shaft and intended to prevent the wild boar from running up the spear and goring the hunter. Sir Ector has spun fireside tales of companions lost to the savagery of the boar and its razor-sharp tusks, and your blood runs cold as you think of what it would take to bring down such a wild beast.

You walk alongside Dai, who has his hands full managing the estate's pack of baying running hounds. To your other

side lopes Arawn, the great shaggy cú, or wolfhound, who is a great favorite of everyone in Ector's household. He is as big as you but as gentle as a lamb. His presence reassures you; for he is as brave and true as any noble knight.

The air is fresh from the rains overnight, and as you walk across the vale, the clouds begin breaking up, allowing some golden sunlight through. To the east, you see golden rays reflecting off the surface of Llyn Tegid, the mighty lake that forms the headwaters of the River Dee. It is said that beneath its waves lies a sunken city, and some nights you can see the lights of the buildings down in the depths. (That's what Kay's always claimed, at least. You and Arthur have snuck out a few times but haven't seen anything so far.) Aside from the scattered towns and villages and their farm and pasture lands on Sir Ector's estate, most of the vale is light woodland, and you are making for one such patch of forest now.

Glyn and his assistants from Caer Gai got a head start earlier, and you see them approach bearing the "fumes" (excrement) of a boar inside the rim of their hunting horns.

Go to 19.

## 19

Sir Ector dismounts and confers with Glyn the Hunter about the best approaches, the location of the boar's lair, and so forth. The air is electric with anticipation.

Kay approaches you. You see he is holding a sausage link; he tears it apart with his teeth and offers you half. "You should eat something. Hunts can last all day." Kay does have his moments of compassion.

As you eat, he explains the different calls of the huntsman's horn—how it is used to gather the hounds, to signal the other hunters, and to announce the death of the quarry, in addition to sundry other uses. Every knight and squire carries a horn, for hunts often range over vast distances, and it is easy to get separated. Arthur has drifted over during the conversation as well, listening to Kay while leaning against a spear.

"You should stick nearby to me and Sir Ector," says Kay. "If you get separated, just listen for our call. Once we've taken the boar, you will help bring it back to the hall."

Just then, Glyn signals the Finding—the opening stage of the hunt where the beast is "unhabored," and the chase begins. The hounds set up a tremendous racket and nearly pull Dai off his feet as they begin moving towards the woods. The knights mount up, and Kay and Arthur rush towards their horses as well before Arthur stops, turns, and hands his spear to you.

"In case you run into any trouble," he says, his face grim. You feel a wave of gratitude wash over you. It is not as sophisticated as the knight's boar spears, but it is better than nothing!



## Success & Failure

Refer back to this page if you forget what some of the various die-roll outcomes mean.

In **Pendragon**, there are two types of rolls—unopposed and opposed.

Unopposed rolls are a single D20 roll against one of your Statistics. Your roll will either succeed or fail. If you roll the value of the Statistic exactly, this is a critical success. If you roll a 20, this is a fumble (unless your Statistic is also 20!).

Opposed rolls involve two D20 rolls against two Statistics. Each roll is read the same as an unopposed roll; then, the results are compared:

- ✦ If you succeed and your opponent fails, or if you both succeed, but your die roll value is higher, this is a Win.
- ✦ If your opponent succeeds and you fail, this is a Loss.
- ✦ If you succeed, but your opponent's die roll value is higher than yours, this is a Partial Success.
- ✦ If you both fail, this is a Mutual Failure.
- ✦ If you both roll the same value on the dice or both score a critical success, this is a Tie.



Gripping the spear, you break into a trot on foot, keeping up as the knights canter towards the woods.

Soon you are among the trees, the dead leaves of autumn crunching softly beneath your shoes. The bracken and branches are not so bad here, and you keep an eye on the knights as they press ahead, dogs and huntsman in the lead.

It is not long before you hear a blast from Glyn's horn—the quarry is found, and the chase is on! You see signs of movement deeper in the woods and go that way, your breath ragged in your throat and coming out in great white puffs.

More horn blasts, now from multiple hunters. Dogs barking and howling, echoing among the trees. Shouts fading into the distance. You look around. You are all alone...

.....  
*Make an opposed roll of your Hunting Skill versus the boar's Avoidance Skill of 10. You are trying to both succeed at your own roll (Hunting) and roll better than the boar's outcome if he succeeds at his Avoidance roll. This is called winning the roll. If you and the boar both succeed, but he rolls better than you, then this is a partial success. If you fail your roll and the boar succeeds, this is a loss. If you both fail your rolls, this is a mutual failure. And rolling a 20 means you have fumbled your roll!*

*For this opposed roll, there is no penalty if you fail or lose your Skill roll, apart from the simple consequences of failing—but this is not always the case!*

*If you roll a critical success, check Hunting and go to 20.*

*If you win the roll, check Hunting as you stumble into a clearing and come face to face with an angry boar! Go to 35.*

*If you manage a partial success, go to 37.*

*If you fail or lose the roll, go to 39.*

*If you fumble, go to 46.*

# 20

You enter a clearing ringed by golden-leafed mulberry trees. Then you see it: In the shelter of one of the great trees, a pair of hateful porcine eyes staring out at you! A terrific snort sets the leaves and your knees to quivering, and then—without further preamble—a massive boar as big as yourself comes charging out! Its blade-like tusks glimmer even in the dim woods and look like they could gut you with a single swipe.

.....  
*Make a roll against your Valorous Trait. This is a mandatory Decision Roll that any character must make in a situation like this, regardless of how Valorous they may be!*

*If you succeed, go to 21.*

*If you fail, roll against your Cowardly Trait.*

*If you succeed, go to 22.*

*If you fail, go to 34.*

# 21

As if by instinct, you drop the point of your spear towards the charging boar and brace the butt-end with the arch of your right foot. Half a heartbeat later, the beast crashes into you!

.....  
*Proceed to your combat roll. Make an opposed roll: Your Spear Skill versus the boar's Charge attack of 15. If you rolled a critical success with your Valorous Trait in the previous section, add +5 to your Spear Skill for this roll only. The loser will take damage!*

*If you roll a critical success, go to 23.*

*If you win, go to 24.*

*If you roll a partial success, go to 25.*

*If you lose, go to 26.*

*If you fumble, go to 27.*

*If both you and the boar fail, go to 31.*

*If the boar rolls a critical success and you do not, go to 32.*

*If you and the boar tied (rolled the same result), go to 33.*



## 22

You freeze in terror, unable to move or defend yourself. The boar is on you half a heartbeat later!

*The boar now makes an unopposed attack roll against you using its Tusks Skill of 15. If it succeeds, you take 5D6 damage, or 9D6 if the roll was a critical success! Your padded aketon provides a meager 2 points of Armor Protection: Subtract 2 points from the damage done to you, then deduct the difference from your Hit Points.*

*If you took more than 15 points of damage, or if your Hit Points are less than or equal to your Unconscious value of 7, and no worse than -2 Hit Points, then you are later found, insensate and feverish, and brought back to the hall, where you spend the next few weeks recovering from your injuries. Restore your character to full Hit Points and go to 74.*

(Because of the way the First Aid Skill works, characters may survive even if they are reduced to zero Hit Points or fewer, in which case they are said to be Dying.)

*If you are reduced to -2 or fewer Hit Points, sadly, your adventure ends here under the slashing tusks and trampling hooves of a wild boar. Bravery is no substitute for skill at arms.*

*(Some wounds are too great for First Aid to save. Characters reduced beyond the capacity for healing are Dead.)*

*Otherwise, go to 35.*

## 23

The spear strikes the boar square in the jowls and buries itself deep! This is a telling blow, indeed.

*When you roll a critical success in combat, you do extra damage. Some weapons, such as the spear, also add to the number of damage dice you roll under specific circumstances.*

*For example, your normal weapon damage is 4D6, but because you had time to set your spear against a charging opponent, you can actually use their damage against them! In this case, a boar normally does 5D6 damage, so that is what you roll in this instance.*

*Next, add 2D6 because you are wielding the spear two-handed and then add 4D6 for the critical strike.*

*Roll 11D6 and tally up the points. This is how much damage you inflict!*

*Go to 28.*

## Modifiers & Critical Bonuses

Most of the time in **Pendragon**, when you are told to add or subtract a number, you apply this modifier to the value of a Statistic (Characteristic, Trait, Passion, or Skill). Thus, when told to “roll against Hunting with a +5 modifier,” you increase the value of your Hunting Skill and roll against that.

*For example, if your Hunting Skill is normally a 12 and you have a +5 modifier, your Hunting Skill effectively becomes 17 for this roll.*

No Statistic may ever go above 20. If the modifier would raise the value above 20, take the difference of the amount above 20 and apply that as a positive modifier to your die roll. This die-roll modifier is called the critical bonus.

*For example, if that modifier to Hunting had been a +10 instead, this would make your effective Hunting Skill 22. Since the maximum value of the Skill is 20, we take the excess 2 points and apply them as a critical bonus to the die roll: You roll a 13 and add 2, making your final result a 15.*

The critical bonus does two things: It makes it more likely that you will beat an opponent in an opposed roll and increases the chances of a critical success, as any result that totals 20 or more when your Skill value is 20 is considered critical.

*For example, with a +2 critical bonus, the range of die roll results that indicate a critical success increases to 18–20. That is, you roll a critical success on an 18 or higher instead of just 20.*

## 24

The spear strikes the boar in its meaty shoulder, the shaft bending dangerously—but it does not snap.

*Your normal weapon damage is 4D6, but because you had time to set your spear against a charging opponent, you can actually use their damage against them! In this case, a boar normally does 5D6 damage, so that is what you roll in this instance.*

*Next, add 2D6 because you are wielding the spear two-handed.*

*Roll 7D6 and tally up the points. This is how much damage you inflict!*

*Go to 28.*



## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

25

The spear tip only grazes the boar's tough hide. You barely have a moment to register the gravity of your error when the boar crashes into you!

*In combat, a partial success can sometimes provide a special benefit. If you had a shield ready, for example, or a parrying weapon, such as a sword, you would gain some extra points of Armor Protection.*

*Sadly, that is not the case today. Go to 29 to find out how much damage you take.*

26

You watch in dismay as the boar neatly avoids your spearpoint. You barely have a moment to register the gravity of your error when the boar crashes into you!

*Go to 29 to find out how much damage you take.*

27

The boar's momentum is too much! It knocks your weapon aside, breaking the shaft as if it were a tree branch beneath its thundering hooves. And then it crashes into you with the force of a runaway boulder.

*Go to 29 to find out how much damage you take.*

28

The boar has a naturally tough hide, much tougher than that of a person.

*The boar's hide grants it 5 points of Armor Protection: Subtract 5 from your damage total and then subtract the difference from the boar's Hit Points total of 31. For example, if you rolled 25 points of damage, the boar's hide provides 5 points of protection, so only 20 points of damage make it through.*

*Normally, reducing an opponent's Hit Points to below their Unconscious threshold, or doing more damage than their CON score in a single blow, is enough to stop them in their tracks.*

*If you dealt more than 25 points of damage (the boar's CON) or reduced the boar to 8 or fewer Hit Points (its Unconscious value), go to 30.*

*If you did neither of these, go to 35.*

*If you came to this entry because you tied the boar's roll, return to 33.*

29

You have been hit by the boar's charge, which can crush bones and rend flesh upon impact.

*Roll 5D6 to determine how much damage it inflicts. If the boar scored a critical success, add +4D6 to the dice rolled. Your padded aketon provides a meager 2 points of Armor Protection: Subtract 2 points from the damage done to you, then deduct the difference from your Hit Points.*

*If you took more than 15 points of damage, or if your Hit Points are less than or equal to your Unconscious value of 7, and no worse than -2 Hit Points, then you are later found, insensate and feverish, and brought back to the hall, where you spend the next few weeks recovering from your injuries. Restore your character to full Hit Points and go to 74.*

*(Because of the way the First Aid Skill works, characters may survive even if they are reduced to 0 Hit Points or fewer, in which case they are said to be Dying.)*

*If you are reduced to -2 or fewer Hit Points, sadly, your adventure ends here under the slashing tusks and trampling hooves of a wild boar. Bravery is no substitute for skill at arms.*

*(Some wounds are too great for First Aid to save. Characters reduced beyond the capacity for healing are Dead.)*

*Otherwise, go to 35.*

30

By all rights, the boar should be dead, but, to your horror, you see it struggling on at the end of your spear. As this weapon lacks the crossbar of the boar spear, the creature is pushing itself forward, driving the spear deeper into its flesh as it attempts to slash you with its tusks. It is all you can do to keep it pinned. Your arms are shaking from the effort. It seems you must perish at the hands of your slain foe...

And then, from thin air, a whinnying horse and a flash of iron! The boar collapses, its head almost completely severed. You look up. It is none other than Sir Ector, sword in hand, backlit by the sun-dappled forest. His look of alarm quickly turns to one of celebration.

"Well done! Well done, indeed!" cries Sir Ector, jumping from his saddle and taking you into a rib-crushing embrace. Kay rides up and gazes down, incredulous, at the carcass.

"By all the saints!" he exclaims.

"Yes, indeed!" says Ector. "I'd say all the saints were on your side today!" he says, tousling your hair.

*Check your Honor and go to 53.*



## 31

The boar is nearly upon you when you shut your eyes, bracing for impact—which never comes. Instead, you feel the beast rush past you, feel its hot, reeking breath and the shuddering ground beneath its charge. Somehow, intentionally or not, the beast veered off at the last moment!

Go to **35**.

## 32

Nothing could have prepared you for the sheer strength of this beast's charge. Your spear brushed aside like a mere twig, it slams into you, and you hear ribs crack under the impact.

Go to **29** to find out how much damage you take; remember to add +4D6 to the total because of the boar's critical success.

## 33

Everything happens in a split second: You see your spear strike home, burying the point deep into the beast's flesh, but a split second later the boar is crashing into you as well!

When you score a tie result in combat, both combatants inflict their regular damage values, with no other modifiers, against each other.

Because you set your spear, you use the boar's momentum against it. Roll 7D6 and tally it up, then go to **28** to determine how badly you wounded the boar. After doing so, return to this entry.

Roll 5D6 to determine how much damage the boar inflicts. If it scored a critical success, add +4D6 to the dice rolled. Your padded aketon provides a meager 2 points of Armor Protection: Subtract 2 points from the damage done to you, then deduct the difference from your Hit Points.

If you took more than 15 points of damage, or if your Hit Points are less than or equal to your Unconscious value of 7, and no worse than -2 Hit Points, then you are later found, insensate and feverish, and brought back to the hall, where you spend the next few weeks recovering from your injuries. Restore your character to full Hit Points and go to **74**.

(Because of the way the First Aid Skill works, characters may survive even if they are reduced to 0 Hit Points or fewer, in which case they are said to be Dying.)

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(Some wounds are too great for First Aid to save. Characters reduced beyond the capacity for healing are Dead.)

Otherwise, go to **35**.

## 34

When making a Test between two Traits or Passions, you may sometimes try again after an initial failure.

If you still wish to fight the boar, roll Valorous again. If you succeed, you steady yourself (after a moment's hesitation): Go to **21**.

If you wish to run away or fail your second Valorous roll, retreat deep into the trackless woods by turning to **46**.

## 35

Everything has gone deathly still. The boar is circling the clearing, eyeing you. You keep your spear up in guard position as you turn, matching the boar's movement. Blood thunders in your ears, and your breath comes in ragged gasps. You are hoping the boar will simply run off, but instead, it stops. It paws the ground, lowering its snout and brandishing its tusks, snorting with rage. It means to kill you first.

Then, a great throaty bark and Arawn the wolfhound is bounding into the clearing! In an instant, he is on top of the boar, his great teeth tearing at its gray hide, drawing rivulets of crimson. The boar wheels, trying to get at Arawn. You cry out, but the noise of galloping hooves overwhelms you.

Sir Ector and Kay ride past you to either side, and swiftly their boar spears join Arawn in harrowing the beast. Again and again, they drive the great spear blades into the boar's flesh until, at last, it collapses under the assault.

As Kay blows the signal for the *mort*, Sir Ector dismounts and runs over to check on you. Arawn gets to you first, covering your face in great slobbery dog kisses.

If you were wounded by the boar, go to **36**.

Otherwise, go to **53**.

## 36

Sir Ector examines your wounds, a look of concern knitting his weathered features.

Healing in *Pendragon* comes slowly, as a general rule. Whenever you lose Hit Points, you regain a number every week equal to your Healing Rate until you are back to your starting total.

You record every loss of Hit Points from combat as individual wounds. Each wound may be tended to by using the First



## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

*Aid Skill. Only one roll is made per wound. If the roll fails, you must rely on natural (or magical) healing. If the roll succeeds, you may immediately restore Hit Points equal to your Healing Rate, and if the roll is a critical success, you may add an additional 3 points to that! (You cannot regain more Hit Points than you lost from the wound, of course.)*

*Sir Ector now makes an unopposed First Aid roll for your wound from the boar. His Skill value is 12. If he succeeds, restore the appropriate number of Hit Points (3 or 6, depending on his level of success). If he fumbles, you lose a further 1D3 Hit Points!*

*If your Hit Points are now equal to or less than your Unconscious value of 7, you lose consciousness from the pain of Ector's fumbling. You are brought back to the hall, where you spend the next few weeks recovering from your injuries. Restore your character to full Hit Points and go to **74**.*

*If you are still conscious, go to **53**.*

### 37

You are sure the boar and the hunting party must be nearby, but you have encountered a nearly impenetrable wall of bramble and mulberry trees. You might be able to weave your way through, though...

.....  
*Roll against your Awareness Skill to find a path amongst the bracken.*

*If you rolled a critical success, you spot a game trail and follow it to a clearing beyond. Go to **20**.*

*If you succeed, you think you can either weave your way amongst the brambles (with a successful DEX roll) or push your way through by brute force (with a successful STR roll). Choose which Characteristic to roll against. If you succeed, you do indeed get through the bushes—only to come face to face with the boar in the clearing on the other side! Go to **35**.*

*If you fail the roll, you could not find a way through and must double back. Go to **39**.*

*If you fumble the roll, go to **38**.*

### 38

Your supposed path through only leads you into a thicket of sharp brambles that scratch at you, causing 1D6 points of damage! Fortunately, your padded aketon affords some protection: Reduce the amount of damage rolled by 2 points. If this reduces the rolled amount to 0 or less, you take no damage at all.

You double back and attempt to find an alternate path, but it is no use. Soon you realize you have become hopelessly lost.

.....  
*Go to **46**.*

### 39

You wander the woods for what feels like hours. The day is growing long. From time to time, you hear the distant call of a hunting horn and turn in what you think is the right direction, but then another call sounds from a completely different direction.

You are beginning to despair of ever finding your way out of the woods when suddenly you spot a remarkable scene up ahead: A great mossy rock juts from a cliffside. Under the overhang, there is a lean-to hut, its boards green with moss. A ragged hemp cloth curtain hangs in the doorframe. There is no sign of anyone about.

.....  
*Do you wish to investigate the hut? If so, go to **40**.*

*If you go back the way you came, roll Hunting:*

*If you succeed, you hear the sound of hunting horns and follow them to a clearing, where Sir Ector and Kay have downed the boar. Go to **53**.*

*If you fail, go to **46** and wander deeper into the woods...*

### 40

You push aside the ragged curtain and enter the hut. There is a pile of straw in the corner that seems to serve as a bed, and the only other pieces of furniture are a three-legged stool and a small cabinet, both roughly carved. The rock of the cliff overhang forms the ceiling and three walls.

You see a cave mouth in the far wall, and you can just make out the flickering of a feeble flame somewhere within its darkened depths. The sound of chanting is also discernible.

.....  
*Roll Religion, and if you succeed, go to **41**.*

*If you fail the Religion roll, you may decide whether to press on. If you do, go to **42**.*

*Otherwise, you may leave the hut to go back the way you came, roll Hunting again.*

*If you succeed, you hear the sound of hunting horns and follow them to a clearing, where Sir Ector and Kay have downed the boar. Go to **53**.*

*If you fail, go to **46** and wander deeper into the woods...*



## 41

After listening for a few minutes, you recognize the chanting. Someone is reciting *lauds*, prayers of adoration, in Latin. You have heard of holy hermits who sometimes take up lives of sanctified solitude in the woods, and this must be one of those very men!

.....

*If you wish to enter the cave and find the hermit, go to **42**.*

*Otherwise, leave the hut to go back the way you came and roll Hunting again.*

*If you succeed, go to **37** and try to find your way through the mulberry bracken again.*

*If you fail, go to **46** and wander deeper into the woods...*

## 42

The cave passage is narrow and twisting and nearly pitch dark. Only the light of the hermit's candles in the chamber ahead provides any sort of illumination.

You emerge into a makeshift chapel. The chamber is shaped like a beehive, and water drips from cracks in the ceiling, soaking into the pebbly ground. Across from you is a crude altar festooned with images of Christ on the cross, the Apostles, and the Virgin Mary. Many small beeswax candles burn on the nooks and railings of the altar.

In front, kneeling, is a raggedy man, his head bowed. He is whispering and rocking back and forth as he does so, lost in holy ecstasy. Despite the simple surroundings, the room seems filled with an otherworldly sensation; the air seems thicker here, almost sweet.

.....

*Either choose between or roll against your Spiritual and Worldly Traits. If you roll, you may choose which to roll first. Do not roll against the second Trait if you succeed at the first. A critical success means you place a check next to the Trait.*

*If you succeed at Spiritual, check the Trait and go to **43**.*





## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

*If you succeed at Worldly, check the Trait and go to 44.*

*If neither roll succeeds, you must choose how to act (i.e., if you feel Spiritual go to 43; if you feel Worldly go to 44).*

### 43

You kneel and clasp your hands in prayer, listening as the hermit finishes the liturgy. You possess only the most basic knowledge of your faith—like most members of the gentry, you only attend church on the major holy days and are untutored in your letters—but you feel swept up in the moment and meditate on the effigy of Christ looking down at you from the altar until the hermit concludes.

With the final “amen,” he stands and turns to face you, smiling.

.....  
*Go to 45.*

### 44

Like most members of the gentry, you rarely attend church, only attending on major holy days and remaining ignorant of the written word of the Bible. Not knowing how much longer he intends to drone on, you clear your throat loudly. “Excuse me...”

The hermit continues his prayers. “Hello?” you call, but no response. Frustrated, you stomp out of the hovel.

.....  
*Roll Hunting:*

*If you succeed, you hear the sound of hunting horns and follow them to a clearing, where Sir Ector and Kay have downed the boar. Go to 53.*

*If you fail, go to 46 and wander deeper into the woods...*

### 45

“What brings you to my humble chapel, my child?” he asks. He is an older man, rugged-looking with a shaggy mop of hair and bushy beard. Something about his bearing, however, reminds you of Sir Ector.

You tell him of your misadventure in the woods and of your separation from your party.

The hermit listens with sympathy, then, taking up a large candle and blowing out the rest, leads you back to his cell.

“I can set you on the right path,” he says with a twinkle in his eye, “but not before I have fed you and seen to your care.”

He bids you sit on the solitary stool, then departs and is gone for a quarter-hour, returning with a small basket overflowing with freshly-picked greens. “I have a small garden patch near the stream,” he explains. The bounty

includes parsley, lettuce, and watercress, all of which he tosses together in a wooden bowl. He also has a gourd filled with fresh stream water, all of which he offers you.

“You should have some bread, as well,” he says, and he opens his cabinet door to fetch a half-eaten loaf from within. Your eyes light upon something else, however. Inside the cabinet, a slightly rusted mail hauberk and a sword in its scabbard. The hermit notes your gaze.

“Indeed, I was once a knight much like your lord, Sir Ector. I held many estates and had a fine wife who blessed me with twelve sons.” He pauses. You think he may be on the verge of tears, but he composes himself and continues. “I lost all of my sons in just a few short years. The Four Horsemen visited my hearth again and again. When my youngest, my last, when I lost him...I lost myself. I took leave of my senses and lived as a wild man in the woods for...months? Years?”

“At last, I found my wits again thanks to the grace of the Lord. I saw a vision deep in the forest. A silver stag. Between its great antlers, a glowing apparition: A grail covered in shimmering samite. I knew myself once again and knew my life’s remaining years were to be devoted to holy contemplation out here in the wilds.”

The hermit takes a deep breath, then smiles at you again. “All done? Good. Let me show you the way back.”

Thanks to the hermit’s directions, you head off in the right direction and soon hear the sound of the *mort* being blown on a horn—the boar is dead!

.....  
*Go to 53.*

### 46

Wandering amongst the misty bows of the forest, you can only be sure of one thing: You are nowhere near where you should be.

No birds sing here; no hares bolt at the sound of your approach. Only endless woodland everywhere you turn. The day is growing long, and a chill fog rises, slowly soaking your hose and tunic. But at last, you spot sunlight! You head for it, grateful at least for the promise of fresh air and a chance to perhaps get your bearings.

Yet, as you approach what you now see as a small clearing in the woods, you feel the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. You pause at the edge, noting the ring of toadstools that runs around the boundary of the clearing, and a small mound of earth in the center.

.....  
*Roll Folklore.*

*If you succeed, go to 47.*

*If you fail, go to 48.*





## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

47

You remember your old nursemaid, a kindly woman from the village on your parents' estate, telling you tales of the Good Folk. How there are certain places in our world where they may pass through from their realm with ease, and how those who follow them back to the Other Side are sometimes never heard from again. How there exist certain charms and wards to keep oneself safe from their attention, and how one must never, *ever* accept a gift offered by them. To even talk with them is to court disaster.

.....

*Forewarned, go to 48.*

48

The clearing looks so benign in the afternoon sun, almost inviting.

Do you dare enter?

.....

*If so, check Reckless and go to 49.*

*If you decide to turn back, you find Sir Ector and Kay, eventually, their quarry dead at their feet. Go to 53.*

49

As soon as you step across the ring of toadstools, the clearing erupts in a raucous riot of tinkling laughter and chatter. Tiny, winged folk, not much bigger than a sparrow, dance and cavort around the mound in the center of the ring. The air seems alive with a sparkling crystalline light you did not notice prior to entering, and the leaves on the trees around you seem much more vivid—in fact, it almost seems as if the trees themselves are laughing along with the wee folk.

The creatures notice you immediately but do not seem alarmed, even though you tower over them. One of them even flutters up to you and proffers its delicate hand.

"You look tired," it says, its voice tinkling with cheer. "Accept the gift of our hospitality. Take my hand."

.....

*If you remembered your nursemaid's tales by succeeding at the Folklore roll and wish to ward yourself for protection, go to 51.*



## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

Otherwise, roll Trusting versus Suspicious.

.....  
*If you succeed at Trusting, you accept the pixie's offer. Check the Trait and go to 50.*

*If you succeed at Suspicious, you refuse politely. Check the Trait and go to 52.*

### 50

You take the pixie's hand, and it leads you into the clearing, towards the mound in the middle. As you walk, you feel yourself growing smaller and smaller, until, at last, you are the same size as the pixie!

Years later, when you at last emerge from the woods, not a day older than when you had entered, the local townsfolk of Kay's Fort (as Caer Gai has come to be known) are astonished to realize that you are that young page who disappeared during a hunt, "back when old Sir Ector was still alive!"

Of your time with the Good Folk, you remember little, and that which you can recall you would sooner forget.

.....  
*Your adventure ends here. Go to 134 to tally up your score.*

### 51

Your mind races with the memories of what your nursemaid told you, but most of the wards you think of—salt, church bells, St. John's wort—are, of course, nowhere to be found. Then you remember inside-out clothing!

You quickly pull off one of your leather gloves, turning it inside-out as you do so, and then put it back on. The fluttering pixie immediately seems confused and reacts as if you had vanished! Then, with a loud popping sound in your ears, you quite suddenly find yourself standing alone in a dreary meadow. The leaves are once again drab and mostly dead, the sunlight wan.

Crossing yourself for good measure, you run out of the clearing. Soon after, your heart skips a beat when you at last hear the blast of a hunting horn and the howl of hounds. You head in the direction of the sounds, confident you will soon be reunited with the rest of the hunting party.

.....  
*Go to 53.*

### 52

You are well-versed in the rules of courtesy and make your best excuses for why you must leave, but this only seems to anger the little ones. They rise up into the air like a swarm of angry bees, buzzing and clicking, their faces turning into the most horrific visages.

You stumble back, but they rush at you!

You turn and run, stumbling, arms windmilling. You run and run and run, long after the sound of their angry buzzing fades.

And then you hear it: the sound of the *mort* being signaled on a hunting horn. The boar is dead, and now you know which way to go!

.....  
*Go to 53.*

### 53

The boar lies dead, its blood soaking into the leaf-strewn ground. The barking and whimpering of the hounds forms a chorus in the background, but they know to hold back; their reward is soon to come.

Sir Ector takes a stout, sharp blade and begins the "unlacing" of the beast, first disemboweling it before cutting it into four quarters, plus the head. Some of the boar's insides are now thrown to the dogs, while others are set aside for use in the forthcoming feast.

Kay blows a complex pattern on his horn to signal the conclusion of the hunt. Spirits are high, and there is much laughter and singing as the parts are gathered for transport back to the hall. You and Arthur hoist a pole between you, from which hang the boar's hindquarters.

You arrive back at Sir Ector's hall as the sun begins its descent to the horizon and a chill westerly wind picks up, blowing great gray clouds across the sky.

Within, the hearth fire blazes, and you, Kay, and Arthur warm your hands, beaming at each other.

"Wash up, wash up!" barks Sir Ector. "No time for dilly-dallying—the king arrives tomorrow and there is much to be done!"

.....  
*Go to 54.*

### 54

The morning dawns under patchy rain clouds, and all you want to do is stay snuggled under your bearskin blanket and rest your aching muscles.

Roll Energetic versus Lazy. If you succeed at Energetic, check the Trait and get up in spite of your weariness. If you succeed at Lazy, check that instead; it takes Kay's admonitions, loudly accusing you of being a layabout, to roust you out of bed. Regardless of the outcome, you are soon hard at work, attending to your morning chores.

Returning to the hall around sext (noontime), you find the household hard at work, laying out the trestle tables and setting up the hall for the grand feast. There is a high



table, where the King and Sir Ector will sit with their favored guests, and two other tables set perpendicular to that, forming a rough “U” shape.

Go to 55.

## 55

As the boar meat roasts over a spit, filling the hall with a mouth-watering aroma, you help Kay and Arthur in setting up the trestles and benches and in laying out fresh hay on the floor. Then Kay, entrusted with his father’s keys, retrieves the silver and fine linen from the lockbox in Ector’s solar, and the three of you set out the service.

Sir Jonas, meanwhile, is busy setting up the dresser, a side table where the food is prepared for presentation at the table. With ritualistic care, he sets out the pewter goblets, ewers, and hanaps. He also sets up the aumbry, a special cupboard where Sir Ector’s finest platters are displayed for all to admire. These gold plates, craftily inlaid with pearls and stones, are far too valuable to be used for mere dining!

You watch as Ector’s tapestries, taken outside for freshening up one final time before the onset of winter, are hung again. They depict scenes of hunting, of battle, of courtship and the finer things in life. You have studied these tapestries many times over the years, for they hold the promise of the life ahead of you. A life of honor, glory, and valor.

Your reverie is broken by Arthur, who runs into the hall. “The king approaches!”

Go to 56.

## 56

King Mawan of Penllyn is a young man, dark of hair, with steely blue eyes, and a scruffy beard just thick enough to cover his chin. He is typical of the kings of these parts; more a tribal chieftain and warlord than anything. He has come with a small train of knights, warriors, ladies, maids, attendants, and grooms, all of whom quickly fill the hall.

As Sir Ector bows the king into his hall to the accompaniment of a trumpet fanfare, offering him rosewater to wash his hands and face, your gaze falls upon the most remarkable member of the king’s entourage: A dirty runt of a boy, dressed in goatskins—a herder by the looks of him. He catches your gaze, winks at you, then disappears amongst the throng.

Your attention is drawn by Sir Jonas, who serves as Ector’s steward—an officer who oversees the estate’s food,

fields, and flocks. He is doling out assignments for the pages and squires.

*Roll Courtesy. If your Lazy Trait succeeded earlier, your Skill is at –5 due to Kay calling you a layabout.*

*If you succeed, check the Skill and go to 57.*

*If you fail, go to 58.*

## 57

Your spirits soar as Sir Jonas tells you that he thinks you have grown courteous enough to serve at the table!

You stand by as food is brought out by other pages from the kitchen and laid on the dresser. The roasted boar’s head, its mouth stuffed with the small russet apples native to Penllyn, is the centerpiece of the high table.

Your job is to prepare and serve hippocras, a hot spiced wine popular during the colder months. You have done this before for Sir Ector at Yuletide and go about your new duty with practiced ease.

Having filled a pitcher, you begin moving amongst the knights and ladies, who keep you very busy filling their cups. The aroma of the food already out on the table is intoxicating, and your stomach grumbles resentfully. You know that you will have to wait until after the feast for your portion, but this is cold comfort as your eyes wander over roasted boar in ginger sauce, marrow fritters, meat jellies (formed into the shape of Sir Ector’s coat of arms), lampreys in sauce, custard tarts, almond omelets, herb fritters, sliced cheeses, and haslet—the roasted entrails and genitalia of the boar.

You need some sort of distraction from all the food!

*Do you wish to try and impress the nobles of King Mawan’s court? Go to 64.*

*Or do you prefer to eavesdrop on the conversation at the high table? If so, go to 69.*

## 58

Sir Jonas looks you up and down. “Kitchen duty, I think,” he says dismissively.

Kitchen duty! Ever has this been your fate, and you know that it means lots of hot, sweaty, thankless work, all while getting barked at by Rhys, Sir Ector’s disagreeable cook.

You leave Kay and Arthur to serve at table and make for the kitchen, which is on the ground floor, separated by the stone exterior wall, to prevent the spread of fire in case of an accident.

You find Rhys and his kitchen boys hard at work, laboring over a variety of bubbling pots. You and Alis are to deliver



## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

the finished dishes to the hall and lay them on the dresser. Right on cue, Rhys starts shouting orders at you:

“Mark that you keep your grubby little fingers out of it, too!” he barks, as you heft a charger, or large platter, onto your shoulder.

Deftly, you navigate the stairs up from the kitchen, Alis ahead of you, but a devilish thought gives you pause. You know that you will not be getting any of this food until the end of the feast when it is cold and congealed. Perhaps you should sneak a little bite of this tasty boar’s meat and gravy?

.....  
*Roll your Temperate versus Indulgent Traits. If you succeed at the first roll, you do not roll the second.*

*If you succeed at Temperate, check the Trait, resist temptation, and go to 59.*

*If you succeed at Indulgent instead, check the Trait, have a nibble, and go to 60.*

*If you fail both, you may decide for yourself, but you do not receive a check.*

59

You shake the devil away and keep moving. This is a royal feast! No time to be messing about.

In fact, you redouble your efforts and make sure to get your dishes to the dresser while they are still piping hot.

You watch as Sir Jonas serves at the high table, presenting the finest cuts of meat and the upper crust of the fresh-baked parsley bread to the king and his lord. Once he finishes, he approaches you.

“You acquitted yourself well. I suppose I must have misjudged you.”

.....  
*Go to 57.*

60

This time the devil wins, and you nip a juicy morsel of boar’s meat, popping it into your mouth. Your eyes roll back in your head at the mouth-watering taste, but the pleasure is fleeting—trying to pilfer food and climb stairs while balancing a heavy charger all at once seems to be asking for too much of your balance and coordination!

.....  
*Make an unopposed DEX roll.*

*If you fail, go to 61.*

*If you succeed, go to 62.*

61

With a lurch and fast-swelling panic, you lose your balance on the steps. To keep from tumbling backward to your certain death, you throw your arms wide in a panicky windmill. Fortunately, you manage to grab hold of the wall and steady yourself. Unfortunately, the charger goes clattering down with a terrific crash, splattering you with gravy and grease.

Rhys flies up the stairs faster than a fox after a coney.

“You clumsy fool!” he bellows, boxing you about the ears. Then Sir Jonas joins the fray, running down from the hall.

“Can you not carry a simple charger?” At least he separates you from Rhys, who looks ready to kill. “Go muck out the stables and see to the king’s horses! You’ll be sleeping in the hay loft tonight, I assure you!”

.....  
*Go to 63.*

62

You regain your balance and hustle to catch up with Alis, trying to look as beatific as possible. That was a close call!

.....  
*Go to 59.*

63

You spend the next couple of hours tidying up the stables and seeing to the horses. Fortunately, you and Arthur had already mucked them out that morning in preparation for the king’s arrival, so there is really not much else to do.

With the chill night descending, you clamber up to the hay loft and make a bed for yourself. It is actually quite pleasant up here, warmed by the heat of the animals, and you are just starting to drift off when you are jolted awake by the sound of the stable door banging open and peals of drunken laughter.

Peeking over the loft’s edge, you see a knight and lady of the king’s entourage enter, smiling and laughing. It is clear that they are in their cups and looking for a bit of privacy. Your face flushes red with embarrassment, but they seem not to have noticed you.

“Tell me, Sir Caradoc,” says the lady with a half-teasing tone, “whether you intend to win the tournament in Londinium like you boasted back in the hall?”

“Careful who you mock, my lady!” says Caradoc, feigning hurt feelings. “You know too well that were I to win that tournament; I shall be acclaimed High King of Britain!”

“May as well be you as any!” she says, laughing, as she draws him into a kiss.

.....  
*Go to 74.*



## 64

You put all your effort into your task, trying your best to anticipate the needs of every knight and lady, all the while smiling, bowing, and chatting as appropriate.

.....  
*Make an unopposed roll against your APP Characteristic. Appeal measures not just your physical looks, but also the impression you leave on others through your natural charm and wit...or lack thereof!*

*If you roll a critical success, go to 65.*

*If you succeed, go to 66.*

*If you fail, go to 67.*

*If you fumble, go to 68.*

## 65

Although normally a page serving at table is expected to remain invisible except when needed, you cannot help but draw attention to yourself—for all the right reasons. Your witty bon mots and sparkling enthusiasm soon draw you into conversations at the high table, and one of the women in King Mawan's entourage takes a special shine to you.

"Sir Ector," she says, her eyes twinkling in good-natured jest, "I hope you intend to knight this young page in due course."

"Why is that, Lady Meleri?" asks Ector.

"I am still in need of a champion to bear my favor at the Londinium Tournament!"

The high table erupts in laughter.

"Come here, young page," says Meleri, her eyes kind. "One day, I am sure, you will indeed fight in a tournament, and perhaps a lady will give you her favor then." She pulls an embroidered kerchief from her sleeve. "You wear it on your arm, like so," she says, tying it around your right biceps. "And in so doing, whatever honors you attain on the field accrues to the lady fair."

Another knight at the table speaks up. "A shame your page is not eligible to fight in the tournament, Sir Ector. Who knows? You could have the future High King of Britain as a member of your house!"

"Well, Kay will be knighted by then," says Ector, seeming to take the joke seriously, "so there is hope yet. As long as someone wins the tournament, I will be happy."

.....  
*Note "Lady Meleri's favor" on your character sheet and go to 74.*

## 66

"You there! My cup grows empty."

You hustle over with a pitcher to refill this knight's cup. He is one of King Mawan's men and is a stranger to you. As you pour, you sense he is looking at you.

"Are you a page or a squire of this household?" he asks.

"A page, sir."

"But soon to be squired, I expect?"

You nod.

"Very good. You have good bearing about you. Sir Ector does his house proud. They say Kay will make a fine knight. He'll be fighting in the tournament, I expect."

You give the knight a blank look.

"The tournament! Surely you know of it. Why every knight in Britain is going to attend, or so they say. And who wouldn't, I ask you? The prize for winning is only acclamation as the new High King of Britain!"

You return to the dresser to refill your pitcher, mulling this over. To think, Kay, the High King of Britain! What a world! You laugh to yourself as you return to serving at table.

.....  
*Go to 74.*

## 67

The hippocras is going down well—and a little too quickly, it seems. The revelers at the table all want their cups refilled, and they all want you to pour for them first. It is too much. In the middle of a pour, another knight tugs at your sleeve, and some of the mulled wine splashes all over a lady's skirts. She cries out in dismay, and Sir Jonas is there like a hawk, pulling you away whilst offering his most profuse apologies to the lady.

.....  
*Go to 63.*

## 68

Sir Ector calls for more hippocras. "Watch this," you say to Arthur as you head to the high table.

Unfortunately, you never get there. Your feet betray you, and you stumble! You manage not to fall flat on your face, but to your horror, you watch helplessly as the pitcher flies from your fingers and shatters on the floor. The entire hall goes silent, and you feel yourself flush crimson red as all eyes fall upon you.

"Come with me," says the hissing voice of Sir Jonas in your ear.

He leads from the hall to the main door. "Go muck out the stables, and don't bother coming back until morning."

.....  
*Go to 63.*



69

As you move amongst the revelers, you do your best to stay invisible. This is what is expected of a page serving at table, of course, but it also allows you to eavesdrop on the conversations of various lords and ladies. Most of the talk seems to be centering on some sort of upcoming event in Londinium.

.....  
*Make an unopposed Intrigue roll to find out what you overhear.*

*If you score a critical success, go to 70.*

*If you succeed, go to 71.*

*If you fail, go to 72.*

*If you fumble, go to 73.*

70

“Sir Ector, will you fight in the Londinium Tournament?”

“Ah, yes, but I have no ambition to be High King.”

“But your son Kay will be knighted by then, yes? Will he fight?”

“If he so wishes.”

“As long as he stays out of King Lot’s way. Lot covets the crown above all else, or so I hear.”

“All this trouble of a tournament, just because the Supreme Collegium cannot seem to make up its mind.”

“Well, there is always that sword in the courtyard at St. Paul’s. The one stuck in the stone—”

“I heard it was an anvil.”

“Well, whatever it is, none have pulled it forth as of yet. I think it is just a devilish prank of old Merlin...”

.....  
*Go to 74.*

71

“Sir Ector, will you fight in the Londinium Tournament?”

“Ah, no. I have no ambition to be High King.”

“But your son Kay will be knighted by then, yes? Will he fight?”

“If he so wishes.”

“As long as he stays out of King Lot’s way. Lot covets the crown above all else, or so I hear.”

.....  
*Go to 74.*

72

“Sir Ector, will you fight in the Londinium Tournament?”

Your mind wanders as Sir Ector gives his answer. Tournament? Isn’t that where knights pretend to fight each other? Anyway, what of it? Londinium is so far away that it may as well be Rome or Jerusalem.

.....  
*Go to 74.*

73

There is much talk of a High King being crowned in Londinium at Yuletide, but you have no head for politics, and most of it means little to you.

Still, it will be nice to have a High King again, you suppose...

.....  
*Go to 74.*

74

It has been a month since you left home in the company of Sir Ector, Sir Kay, and Arthur, and for the entire time, you have endured chill wind and rain, and blowing snow, leaving you wet, cold, and miserable. You have thought often of home, dreaming of the warmth of the hearth and good company. Alis made you promise to tell her of the sights of Londinium, so you have that much to look forward to when you return, at least.

Your journey began on the rough trail that follows the course of the River Dee out of Penllyn to the City of Legions. You did not linger long in that thriving seaport, with its merchants and travelers from all over the world (or so it seemed to you) before turning southeast along the old Roman road to the kingdom of Cameliard. At Carohaise Castle, you turned south and entered the great kingdom of Logres, passing over the Chiltern Hills and through the Roman cities of Corinium and Silchester. The latter part of the journey has been unsettling, like riding through enemy territory, thanks to the constant threat of Saxon raiders in this region—since the defeat of King Nanteleod of Escavalon at the Battle of Netley Marsh two years ago, the Saxon kings of the southeast coasts have grown increasingly bold.

Sir Ector has had plenty to say about the current political situation during your journey. What you have managed to absorb is that the fractious warlords of Britain are doomed to fall one by one to the ambitious Saxons and that the land is in desperate need of a leader who can unify everyone. Nanteleod was the last and best hope for someone to accomplish this by force of arms. Now, by mutual agreement, a tournament is to be held at the old capital city of Londinium, on the border of the Saxon kingdoms. The winner, it has been agreed, will be named High King, with great expectations to bring the Saxons to heel.





## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

Last night you slept in the stables of Castle Staines, where you were surprised to find that the steward in service to Sir Ulfius, the famous Duke of the Vale, was himself a Saxon! Ector explained to you that the Saxons of the county of Berroc have long been allies of the Cymri—your people.

.....  
*"It's the kings and warlords, Saxon and Cymri alike, who visit so much woe upon our lands," he said with a sigh, staring into the hearth fire of the great hall at Staines. You and Arthur listened attentively. "The Saxons have their own style of High King, which they call a Bretwalda. Their kings fight amongst themselves as much as they fight us. And our own counts and dukes, inheritors of our proud Cymric and Roman traditions, lay siege to each other's castles or usurp thrones from those too weak to hold their claim. Everyone scrambles for the prize, and for what? Power and wealth. That is all they care for!"*

Go to **75**.

## 75

This morning you were already on the road when the sun came up, and the day dawned cold but clear over frost-rimed fallow fields and woodland. It is around midday when you first catch sight of Londinium, situated on the mighty River Thames. The greatest city in all of Britain, its stout Roman walls present an impressive edifice, and within, you see countless rooftops, towers, and church spires, as well as the truly magnificent Basilica of St. Paul.

"How can so many people live so close together?" asks Arthur in wonder, echoing your thoughts.

Several Roman roads feed into Londonium. The one you are on, Watling Street, forms the northern boundary of the grounds marked out for the big New Year's tournament. You see a veritable town made of tents, riotous in color, hosting many of the visiting knights and lords due to fight on the morrow. The excitement in the air is palpable.

Watling Street passes through the city walls at Newgate, which—despite its name—is centuries old. Riding beneath the gate, you note a niche at the apex of the arch: A carven relief



## Kay Gets His Spurs

Kay realized his great ambition on St. Andrew's Day. This is how it happened.

King Mawan took up position in Sir Ector's hall, garbed in his finest cloak and tunic, his court assembled behind him. You, Arthur, and the rest of the household lined up near Sir Ector, who looked almost as nervous as Kay.

The man of the hour stood, pale and resolute, in full armor. On his left arm he bore a shield, while with his right arm he held his helm. He wore neither sword nor spurs.

The king called Kay forth. Kay handed his helm and shield to his father and stepped up.

“My people, I am so pleased to be here on this holy day to see such a worthy young man join the ranks of glorious knighthood. Squire, tell me your name.”

"Kay, sire."

**“Have you come before me shriven of your sins and ready to take upon a new life?”**

"Aye."

“Then take this, the last blow you shall ever suffer without recourse.”

With that, King Mawan slapped Kay hard across the chops. The sound reverberated through the hall, and you saw one of Kay's fists start to clench before he mastered himself.

**“Kneel before me, Kay.”**

As Kay kneeled, Sir Jonas stepped forward with a sheathed sword.

**“Do you acknowledge me as your true and rightful liege?”**

"Yes, sire."

“Do you pledge homage and fealty to me and swear your sword to me, to be forever at my service?”

"I so pledge."

Mawan unsheathed the sword and touched the blade to each of Kay's shoulders.

“Then I dub thee Sir Kay, and give this, my sword, to you to be wielded in my name. Arise, Sir Knight.”

The king belted Sir Kay's sword about his waist as Arthur—now Sir Kay's squire—moved forward to attach his spurs. Sir Ector then gave back the shield and helm.

Sir Kay turned to face the rest of the hall, and everyone cheered. Afterward, he demonstrated his prowess by leaping into the saddle of his charger in full kit without the use of stirrup or rein. The whole affair was topped off with another wonderful feast.

There was one other change that day: With Kay no longer a squire, Sir Ector was in need of a new one, and so you were promoted as well!

depicting the Trojan hero Corineus overthrowing the giant Gogmagog. Sir Ector told you this story during your journey, and you reflect that ever since the arrival of Brutus and his Trojans, Britain has seen many waves of “invaders” from across the sea.

You are shaken from your reveries by the sight of the street beyond the gate. Buildings as high as three stories crowd in from either side, and in the street itself throng men, women, children, horses, asses, dogs, pigs, all in what seems a great swirling tumult of jostling, shouting, squealing, braying racket.

“Kay, go see about lodgings, there’s a good lad,” says Ector, seeming a bit overwhelmed himself. “We will wait for you in the courtyard of St. Paul’s, just ahead.”

There is little need for Ector to point out the location of the famous cathedral, for it is easily the greatest structure in the city, dwarfing even the citadel of the White Tower and Lud's Castle, the two great Roman stone forts on the banks of the Thames.



Sir Kay and Arthur carefully guide their mounts through the throngs as you and Ector make for the cathedral.

As soon as you enter the courtyard, the noise and chaos of the city seem to fade. You dismount, grateful for an opportunity to stretch your sore muscles, then begin tending to the horses.

You have barely started on your tasks when Sir Ector calls you over to some sort of monument erected right outside the cathedral's massive front doors.

As you approach, you see a strange marvel: A great stone block surmounted by an anvil. Driven into the anvil is a sword, still bright and sparkling in the sunshine. Sir Ector brushes aside a bit of snow on the shaded side of the block and points to some letters carved into the rock.

Like most members of the knightly class, you lack clerical education and do not know your letters. Nor does Sir Ector, for that matter, but he has heard others tell of the inscription's words:

"It says something like, 'Only the true king can pull me forth,' or words to that



effect. Many knights, including the best in the land, have tried, but all say that it will not budge in the slightest.”

*If you encourage Sir Ector to try pulling the sword, go to 76.*

*If you would like to try pulling the sword yourself, go to 77.*

### 76

Sir Ector demurs at your suggestion.

“No, not I,” he says. “Such a lowly knight as myself, High King of Britain? I think not!” He chuckles. “Ah! Here comes Kay.”

*You have learned an important lesson today. Check Modest and go to 78.*

### 77

As Sir Ector strolls over to examine the relief carvings around the doors to the cathedral, you approach the sword in the stone. With a quick look around, you reach out and take hold of the hilt. The white leather wrapping feels cold in your hands. You pull as hard as you can, but what Ector said is true; it feels like the sword is fused with the great iron block of the anvil.

*That was mighty presumptuous of you! Check Proud and go to 78.*

### 78

Sir Kay enters the courtyard.

“I found an inn with a room available—last one in Londinium, or so the old crone who runs the place claimed! Father, I think every knight in Britain has come for this tournament!”

Kay’s eyes are bright with excitement, and as the shock of the city has begun wearing off, you can understand why. Save for Rome and Jerusalem, Londinium must be the greatest city in the world! The excitement is infectious.

You help lead your mounts through the streets to the inn’s stables, get them unpacked and settled in, and report back to Sir Ector outside the inn itself.

“I expect you’ll be wanting to see the city, then?” he asks. “Take the afternoon to explore, but mark that you are back by suppertime!” You cannot believe your fortune as he hands you two silver pennies. “Just in case you find a souvenir,” he says with a wink.

*You have a few hours to yourself in one of the world’s great capitals. What would you like to do?*

*To examine the tournament grounds outside the city walls, go to 91.*

*If you would prefer to wander the streets for a bit first, go to 79.*

### 79

The city beckons! Where to?

*Visit the citadel of the White Tower; go to 80.*

*Check out Dowgate Market; go to 81.*

*Stroll through the city’s Jewish Quarter; go to 84.*

*Visit the field of Pen Bran, where the head of a god lies buried outside the walls; go to 87.*

*If you have already visited two of these sites, go to 90.*

### 80

The great limestone walls of the White Tower keep watch over the eastern approaches of the city. Of Roman construction, this citadel dwarfs any castle or hall you have seen before.

Sir Ector told you of this place. Before the Romans, it was called the White Hill. Brutus the Trojan was buried here. Later, when the Romans came to Britain, the emperor declared that the city of Londinium would enjoy exactly the same laws it had under the previous king and that he would suffer no man to do it or its residents any harm. To further win their loyalty, he built the White Tower to house his garrison and act as a refuge of last retreat. It is famous for the great ravens that live here, reputedly until the island is going to fall to invaders. Even now, you see some circling above the towers.

As you stand gawping, you are nearly bowled over by something heavy hitting you from behind.

“Out of the way, fool!” A sergeant bellows at you, red in the face with fury. “What do you mean by standing around in the middle of a busy street? You want to get run down?”

He sends you scurrying away with a flurry of foul curses as a pack of stray dogs nips at your heels, barking furiously.

*Check Prudent and go to 89.*

### 81

Dowgate, also called Watergate, is the primary trading port on the River Thames. Ships, boats, and rafts all crowd the docks here to load and unload their goods to trade; vendors and merchants hawk their wares from countless stalls and tents, offering seemingly anything you could desire. Perhaps you will find a souvenir here to take home to Alis?





Even during the winter, the trade into and out of Londinium flows as freely as the Thames. You wander amongst the stalls, taking in the aromas of spices from Far Araby and roasting meat from the food vendors, and marveling at the piles of fine wares on display when your path is blocked by a warty old man dressed in filthy, stinking rags. His watery eyes seem to stare right through you to your very soul. He smiles, revealing a bank of crooked teeth, as he leans upon his walking stick. He seems somehow familiar to you.

"Spare some money for a poor old beggar, master?" he inquires, the stale smell of his breath washing over you.

.....  
*Give the beggar a silver penny? Go to **82**.*

*Ignore the request and push past the beggar? Go to **83**.*

## 82

You reach into the purse hanging from your belt to fetch a penny—only to find nothing in there! At some point, while you wandered the market, some sticky-fingered thief made off with your money.

The beggar chuckles at your dismay. "Seems you have a bit of my luck, young master," he says. "But despair not! Fortune is often found where you least suspect it." Before you can react, he reaches behind your ear and withdraws an old Roman gold solidus! "Keep this, do not spend it, and you will come into wealth many times its value."

You begin to stammer your gratitude when you are interrupted by the cry of an alewife. "You stay away from that child, Merlin, you old coot!" she says, barreling in between you. "We don't need any of your Devil-spawned sorceries here; no we do *not*!"

The "beggar" takes the alewife's assault in good humor, merely tugging at his forelock and walking off, laughing. And then it strikes you: This was the same person who accompanied King Mawan's party, though back then, he went about in the guise of a simple goatherd!

.....  
*Your intentions were good, and you were rewarded beyond your wildest expectations! Check Generous and go to **89**.*

## 83

Trying your best to avoid the beggar's penetrating gaze, you push past and disappear into the crowd as fast as possible.



“Curse you! Not even a penny to spare for an old man? May the devil take your thumbs!”

The beggar’s colorful curses follow you all the way out of the market, drawing many reproachful stares.

.....  
*Check Selfish and go to 89.*

## 84

Londinium is a cosmopolitan city, indeed. Sir Ector mentioned that the city even has its own Jewish Quarter, and you have come to see for yourself.

As you walk the quiet streets of the quarter, you realize that your half-formed expectations of seeing some kind of slice of the Holy Land here in Londinium were woefully naïve. This looks much like the rest of the city, perhaps a bit more prosperous than some quarters but otherwise unremarkable. The people on the street speak the same language as you, wear the same clothes, and seem to be much the same.

As you stand taking all this in, you are startled by the splash of water right next to you: soapy bathwater! Looking up, you see the face of a horrified young woman looking down at you.

Moments later, she rushes out of the house. “I cannot apologize enough!” she says, genuinely remorseful. “How can I make it up to you?”

.....  
*Choose between or roll Forgiving versus Vengeful. You may choose which to roll first. If you succeed at the first roll, do not roll the second.*

*If you choose or succeed at Forgiving, check the Trait and go to 85.*

*If you choose or succeed at Vengeful, check the Trait and go to 86.*

*If neither roll succeeds, you may choose how to act.*

## 85

You assure her that there is no use getting so upset over such a simple mistake, but the maiden—who introduces herself as Joiette—insists on inviting you inside. “My father was just calling us to the midday meal, and I insist you break bread with us.”

Over your protestations, Joiette leads you into the townhouse, where you meet her father, Samuel, as well as her three siblings. An hour later, you leave with your belly full of delicious food, promising to pay a visit whenever you are back in the city.

.....  
*Check Hospitality and go to 89.*

## 86

You know accidents can happen, particularly here in the city, but...some of that used bathwater splashed into your mouth! Blech!

You spit at the feet of the young lady and storm off, leaving her watching you through streaming tears.

.....  
*Go to 89.*

## 87

During your journey, Sir Ector spoke briefly of a field outside the city walls called Pen Bran. “The Druids and pagans say the head of the old god Bran lies buried there,” he said, looking uncomfortable with what he clearly felt was borderline blasphemous talk.

He spoke no more of it during the trip, but you resolved to take a look for yourself, if possible.

You pass by the massive Holy Trinity Priory and through Aldgate. A passing crofter points you in the right direction, and soon you find yourself standing in a small meadow. The battlements of the White Tower look down on you from the south, flocks of ravens circling above the ancient citadel.

There is nothing terribly remarkable about this spot. Had you not heard of it, you would never have suspected there was something special about this field.

You are not the only one here, though. Through the chill air, you hear the strumming of a harp, clear and lovely. Looking around, you see a man of early middle years sitting under the boughs of a small oak tree growing at the edge of the field. He wears a fine woolen cloak woven in a checked pattern and seems lost in the melody he is plucking out on his lap harp.

.....  
*If you wish to approach the man, go to 88.*

*If you wish to head back into the city, go to 89.*

## 88

You approach the man, who looks up as you draw near, though he does not cease his playing. He seems friendly and invites you to have a seat beside him.

The melody changes and the man begins to sing a haunting dirge. His song tells of Bran, lord of the pagan underworld, whose life was full of marvels but who saved his greatest marvel for his death.

In his last fight, Bran was mortally wounded, but rather than despair, he gave his friends strange instructions: To cut his head off and bury it just outside Londinium. He



## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

prophesied that no invaders could harm Britain as long as his head remained buried there.

Thus, his friends decapitated him and set his head at a table like an honored guest.

For seven years, the wondrous head entertained them with song, stories, and riddles, and they did not perceive the passing of time; thus, they failed to comply with Bran's request. Then his six companions regained their senses. As ordered, they buried Bran's head outside Londinium, where it lies to this day.

.....  
*If you wish to give the bard one of your silver pennies in thanks for his performance, check your Generous Trait.*

With his song concluded, the man stands, gives you a friendly nod, and walks off across Pen Bran, disappearing through a bank of hawthorn trees on the far side.

.....  
*Check Folklore and go to 89.*

89

The city beckons. Do you wish to continue exploring it? Remember that you have to be back in time for supper!

.....  
*If so, go back to 79. If you have been here before, check Reckless.*

*Otherwise, go to 91 to take a look at the tournament grounds.*

90

The shadows are growing longer, and you realize with a sinking feeling that you have tarried too long in the streets!

You run back to the inn and find Sir Ector in the common room with Sir Kay and Arthur, finishing their supper.

"Get lost, did you? I do not look kindly on tardiness. We are off to stroll the tournament grounds, but you are to remain here without supper and see that our mail is cleaned and made ready for tomorrow's events. Once you are done with that, you may come find us on the tournament grounds if we have not already returned.

Skipping the meal is the worst part of the punishment; both Ector and Kay keep their armor in good order, and there is little to do in the way of cleaning the harnesses. You regard the hauberks, each made up of countless small chain links. You resolve to be a better squire to Sir Ector and, in so doing, earn the right to one day don your own suit of armor.

At last, you set out for the tournament grounds at a run. A village of tents has grown up between Newgate and Ludgate, and it is here you expect you will find your party.

.....  
*Go to 93.*

91

To the east of Londinium proper, between Watling Street and Fleet Street, a large area of untilled fields has been marked out for the big New Year's tournament.

The concept of a "tournament" was the subject of much debate between Sir Ector and Sir Kay on the journey here. It is something new, something unfamiliar, and so Sir Ector is naturally suspicious. "Tis but a Frankish thing! A custom from the continent!" he would sniff derisively. "No substitute for a proper battle. You use blunt weapons, you know! Where's the challenge in that?"

"We use blunt weapons when we practice at home," Kay would counter. "I'm rather looking forward to the opportunity to go up against some of the greatest knights in Britain without having to risk life and limb. It sounds like jolly good fun! Besides, we do enough of the real thing—too much if you ask me. These tournaments, if they catch on, could be a good way for us to work out our aggressions without having to go to war all the time."

Now, walking the grounds, you spot several interesting sights to explore.

Looking at the tents, you note several well-known standards flying from tent poles—perhaps you might encounter a famous knight while walking the aisles?

Then there is the market, where you see vendor stalls and some kind of entertainment taking place. Judging from the shouting and cheers, as well as the barking of large dogs, you would guess it is a bull-baiting contest...

Lastly, and most curiously, you spot a corral filling with squires armed with staves. If you did not know any better, you would say that a fight is about to break out!

.....  
*Go to 92.*

92

Where would you like to go?

.....  
*To take a stroll amongst the knights' tents, go to 93.*

*To check out the market and animal fights, go to 96.*

*To see what's going on with the squires in the corral, go to 103.*

*If you have suffered an injury and require treatment, go to 120.*

*If you have seen enough for the day, go to 121.*

93

The tent city hosts the overflow of knights and their entourage who could not find lodging in the city. Row upon row



of colorful tents and pavilions, from tiny to palatial, create a veritable labyrinth populated by martial men and women. Pennants fluttering from each tentpole display the arms of the knight residing within.

Squires run to and fro on missions for their lords. Knights sit outside their tents, chatting with compatriots, strumming their harps, or playing games of skill to pass the time.

You pause outside one large tent, parti-colored yellow and blue, which you recognize as the heraldry of the Count of Salisbury. A knight is stepping out of the tent, and although you realize you are blocking the way, you cannot help but gawp.

Although you are aware that women may become knights, they are almost unheard of where you come from. But here, in the flesh, is a woman-knight! She is obviously a veteran of many years' fighting. Her steel hair nearly matches the iron of her armor, her hands are rough and knotted, and you spot a couple of small but nasty scars on her face.

Following her is a young man, about Arthur's age but dressed as a knight. He is almost the mirror image of the other: Fresh-faced, unblemished. But he shares her martial bearing, and they are clearly at ease with each other. It is also intuitively obvious that he is her social better.

.....  
*If you wish to talk to the man, go to 94.*

*If you wish to talk to the woman, go to 95.*

*If you wish to get out of their way, go to 92.*

### 94

You apologize to the young man for getting in the way.

"Think nothing of it, child," says the young man. "I think we are all in each other's way for the time being." He looks around at the packed aisles before looking down at you again. "I am Sir Robert, Count Salisbury. Who are you, and whom do you serve?" he asks with a friendly smile.

You tell him, then ask if he plans to fight in the tournament.

"Certainly! I intend to do my best, though I mark my odds of winning poorly. As long as we get a king out of this, I will be happy. Our land bleeds without one."

Robert tells you a bit of his county, hard up against the Saxon kingdom of Wessex and subjected to raids and crushing tribute payments ever since the death of his father, Roderick, 15 years ago. "My mother managed as best she could, with the able help of her council of knights—including Dame Aspara here—but last year, after the Battle of

Netley Marsh, I insisted on taking my birthright as count, though there be no king to crown me!"

He barks a short, sardonic laugh.

.....  
*If you wish to talk to Dame Aspara, go to 95.*

*Otherwise, go to 92.*

### 95

You give the woman-knight a courteous bow.

"A well-mannered young squire!" she says. "You could teach a few others around here a thing or two about deference and courtesy."

"Using your methods, Dame Aspara?" asks her young companion, winking. "I still feel the sting of your rod across the back of my neck!"

She snorts derisively. "It was good enough for your father, and it was good enough for you, too!"

"Nonsense—you fought alongside my father. You never tutored him."

"No, but we still taught each other much about the ways of the sword and lance and what it means to be a knight. Those lessons which raise welts and scars tend to last longer than those that do not."

"Fair enough, I suppose!"

Before you can stop yourself, you blurt out a question: "You served under King Uther, then?"

Aspara's face grows grim. "Two kings, in fact. I first swore my sword to King Aurelius, the Pendragon; may the saints preserve him. And his brother, Uther, yes."

You sense you have touched upon a sensitive topic, but she gives you a smile to show there are no hard feelings.

"I take my service very seriously. I am a descendent of the Amazons, you know. My ancestors served the Romans in Cornwall and Brittany, and I continue their tradition and honor their memory in my every word and deed."

.....  
*If you already talked to Dame Aspara's companion, or do not wish to, go to 92.*

*If you wish to talk to Dame Aspara's companion, go to 94.*

### 96

As you move amongst the market stalls, you clearly hear savage barking, angry bellowing, and excited cheering that marks a bull-baiting contest. You know of these by reputation but have never seen one yourself. Your understanding is that a bull is secured by a chain, and a pack of alaunts—mastiff-like war dogs—is set upon it, harrying it until it collapses from blood loss, at which point it is butchered and roasted.



## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

Bets are placed on how long the bull will last, how many dogs will be injured or killed, and other gruesome unknowns.

It is perhaps a mercy that the tight-packed gaggle of peasants blocks your view of the scene if the horrible sounds coming from within the ring are any indication.

As you listen, you see a familiar face walking towards you out of the crowd: It is Arthur! He is fighting back tears.

"It's awful!" he exclaims as he approaches you. "The bull, the dogs... A hunt is one thing, but this is butchery!"

An idea of how to cause a bit of mischief and perhaps make things right forms in your mind—you could cause a distraction, allowing Arthur to sneak back and free the bull from its chain. This would bring the baiting to an end but could cause a great deal of mayhem.

.....  
*If you wish to go ahead with this fiendish plan, go to 97.*

*If you instead turn away in disgust and leave the market, go to 92.*

97

As Arthur moves back into the crowd to get into position, you clamber up on top of a large barrel of ale and clear your throat.

In order to catch the audience's attention, you will have to succeed at an Orate roll. Before making the roll, you may attempt an unopposed Merciful Trait roll: A success earns a check, but with a critical success, check the Trait and add +5 to Orate before rolling. (Although Traits do not confer Inspiration to the same degree as Passions, a critical success at the right moment can impart a small bonus, as here.)

.....  
*If you succeed at Orate, go to 98.*

*If you fail, go to 99.*

98

You know it will take something really compelling to distract this crowd from their blood sport, and the idea quickly presents itself.

"Oyez! Oyez! The Lord Mayor sends his regards and the following announcement: Until further notice, all contests pitting animal against animal, or animal against man, are herewith banned within an eight-furlong radius of the city walls!"

As you had hoped, your little speech pulls most of the crowd's attention, but you very quickly realize your miscalculation as you see the sea of angry faces looking up at you. Many begin hurling abuse at you, and a few hurl clods of dung picked up off the ground as well.

Then all is chaos as Arthur slips the bull's chain from its post, and the frenzied animal charges into the crowd! It is every person for themselves!

Your blood turns to ice as the crowd scatters, and you see the bullock charging straight at you!

.....  
*Make an opposed roll of your Movement Rate versus the bull's Charge Skill of 10.*

*If you win or tie, go to 100.*

*If you lose, go to 101.*

*If you fumble or the bull rolls a critical success, go to 102.*

99

The crowd is too caught up in the spectacle and ignores you. Arthur is not able to get to the chain. Arthur appears upset and asks to be left alone for a while.

.....  
*Go to 92.*

100

The bull crashes into the barrel you are standing on, but you have already leaped up and grabbed the overhead awning. Thankfully, it holds your weight long enough to allow the bull and dogs to charge past.

As sergeants and knights come streaming in, you make yourself scarce.

.....  
*Go to 92.*

101

The bull smashes into the barrel under your feet before you have a chance to leap out of the way. In the next instant, everything is flipping, rolling turmoil as you are cartwheeled over the bull's back. You land hard on the ground, but your pounding heart forces you back to your feet in an instant. More screams from the market and the sound of stalls coming down testify to the ongoing chaos you've helped unleash.

As sergeants and knights come streaming in, you make yourself scarce.

.....  
*Take 2D6 points of damage and go to 92.*

102

The bull smashes into the barrel under your feet before you have a chance to leap out of the way. Unfortunately, you are



knocked backward by the impact, and in the next instant, you see the bull bearing down on you!

.....  
*Take 7D6 damage as you are trampled by the bull.*

*If you somehow manage to avoid a Major Wound or Unconsciousness, seek out the ministrations of a barber by going to **120**.*

*If you are killed, incapacitated, or rendered unconscious, your adventure ends here. Go to **134** to tally up your score.*

## 103

As you approach the corral, you see many knights gathered around the fence, laughing and yelling encouragement to the squires within. You tug at the mailed sleeve of a nearby knight and ask what is going on.

“Eh? Why this is the bohort! A chance for squires to have a bit of fun bashing each other with sticks. You should join!”

.....  
*If you would rather not get knocked about, check Prudent and go back to **92**.*

*Otherwise, check Reckless and get ready to join by going to **104**.*

## 104

You run to the inn and grab your gambeson and helmet, donning them as you hustle back to the tournament grounds. By the time you arrive, the bohort is underway.

You clamber over the fence, and a knight hands you a quarterstaff. No sooner have you turned to face the field than a much older, larger squire is coming right at you, his staff raised on high!

.....  
*The quarterstaff is a versatile weapon and functions unlike others in that you get to choose which Skill you wish to use to wield it in combat. You may wield it like a Spear, making jabbing motions with the tip; like a Sword, holding one end with both hands; or as a Two-handed Hafted weapon, with your hands positioned approximately one-quarter of the way in from each end. How you wield it determines which Skill you roll*





## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

against (as indicated) and how much damage you do. You may change grips in between Combat Rounds, if you wish, with no penalty. The Spear grip is best when you are using a shield, which you do not have here, and so there is little point to using this grip today. The Sword grip is best for inflicting the most damage, and the Two-handed Hafted grip is best for a balance between damage and protection.

Go to **105**.

### 105

Fights are divided into a series of Combat Rounds. Each is a short, elastic unit of time—basically, the time required to think of and perform one action in melee. Melee rounds continue in succession until everyone is done fighting, either through incapacitation, death, surrender, or flight.

Once you have decided on your grip, make an opposed roll against the appropriate Skill based on your grip versus your opponent's Sword Skill of 10 (as that is the grip he has chosen and will use throughout the combat).

If you roll a critical success (and your opponent does not), check your Skill and go to **106**.

If you win, go to **107**.

If you both succeed at your rolls and tie, go to **108**.

If you roll a partial success, go to **109**.

If you lose, go to **110**.

If you fumble, go to **111**.

If your opponent scores a critical (and you do not), go to **117**.

If you both fail, go to **118**.

### 106

Your quarterstaff connects with a solid, bone-rattling blow! He cries out in shock in pain. The crowd of knights erupts into cheers!

Your damage depends on the Skill you used this Combat Round: For Spear, inflict Brawling Damage; for Sword, Brawling Damage +2D6; for Two-handed Hafted, Brawling Damage +1D6.

Because this is a critical Brawling success, add +2D6 to your damage dice before rolling.

## Withholding Damage

You may choose to withhold the force of your blow by rolling fewer damage dice. You must make this decision prior to rolling against your Weapon Skill. Bonus damage dice from critical successes may not be withheld.

**Make a note of the number of Combat Rounds you withhold damage dice, as this will figure into your score at the end of the adventure.**

Note that your opponent in this fight will never opt to withhold damage dice.

Your opponent is wearing a gambeson and open helm, which give him 5 points of Armor Protection. If he succeeds with his Skill roll, he also gains 2 points of Parry protection.

Subtract his total Armor and Parry Protection values from your rolled damage, then reduce his Hit Points by the difference. He starts with 30 Hit Points, has a Major Wound value of 15, and an Unconscious value of 8. Remember that if he takes more damage than his Major Wound threshold or is reduced below his Unconscious value, the fight is over.

Is he dead? Go to **112**.

Is he unconscious or incapacitated? Go to **113**.

Is he at half or fewer Hit Points? Go to **119**.

Otherwise, return to **105** and fight another round unless you wish to yield, in which case go to **114**.

### 107

You manage to weave past your opponent's defenses and connect! The squire grunts in pain.

Your damage depends on the Skill you used this Combat Round: for Spear, inflict Brawling Damage; for Sword, Brawling Damage +2D6; For Two-handed Hafted, Brawling Damage +1D6.

Your opponent is wearing a gambeson and open helm, which give him 5 points of Armor Protection. If he succeeds with his Skill roll, he also gains 2 points of Parry protection.

Subtract his total Armor and Parry Protection values from your rolled damage, then reduce his Hit Points by the difference. He starts with 30 Hit Points, has a Major Wound value of 15, and an Unconscious value of 8. Remember that if



# 109

You block and counter most of your opponent's blows, but one does get past you at the last instant. Fortunately, you deflect some of the force of the blow with your staff.

.....  
Your opponent inflicts 2D6+5 damage with his blow.

You are wearing a gambeson and open helm, which give you 5 points of Armor Protection. If you are using your staff with the Two-handed Hafted Skill, you may add 4 points of Parry Protection; if you are using the Sword Skill instead, you may add 2 points of Parry Protection. (The Spear Skill does not provide any Parry Protection under any circumstances.)

Subtract your total Armor and Parry Protection values from his rolled damage, then reduce your Hit Points by the difference. Remember that if you take more damage than your Major Wound threshold or are reduced below your Unconscious value, the fight is over.

Are your Hit Points below your Unconscious value? Go to **115**.

Did you suffer a Major Wound, or are your Hit Points at zero or below? Go to **116**.

Otherwise, return to **105** and fight another round unless you wish to yield, in which case go to **114**. If you are at fewer than half your Total Hit Points and choose to keep fighting, check Reckless.

# 110

Your opponent is too quick for you and manages to connect with a solid blow before you can fend him off.

.....  
Your opponent inflicts 2D6+5 damage with his blow.

You are wearing a gambeson and open helm, which give you 5 points of Armor Protection.

Subtract your Armor Protection value from his rolled damage, then reduce your Hit Points by the difference. Remember that if you take more damage than your Major Wound threshold or are reduced below your Unconscious value, the fight is over.

Are your Hit Points below your Unconscious value? Go to **115**.

Did you suffer a Major Wound, or are your Hit Points at zero or below? Go to **116**.

Otherwise, return to **105** and fight another round unless you wish to yield, in which case go to **114**. If you are at fewer than half your Total Hit Points and choose to keep fighting, check Reckless.

he takes more damage than his Major Wound threshold or is reduced below his Unconscious value, the fight is over.

Is he dead? Go to **112**.

Is he unconscious or incapacitated? Go to **113**.

Is he at half or fewer Hit Points? Go to **119**.

Otherwise, return to **105** and fight another round unless you wish to yield, in which case go to **114**. If you are at fewer than half your Total Hit Points and choose to keep fighting, check Reckless.

# 108

You see an opportunity and take it, but you leave yourself open to his counter. Even as your blow connects, you feel the impact of your opponent's quarterstaff!

.....  
In the event of successful tied rolls (including tied critical successes), you both take damage. Only the Armor Protection value applies for purposes of reducing damage. Parry Protection does not.

Your damage depends on the Skill you used this Combat Round: For Spear, inflict Brawling Damage; for Sword, Brawling Damage +2D6; for Two-handed Hafted, Brawling Damage +1D6.

Your opponent inflicts 2D6+5 damage with his blow.

You and your opponent are both wearing a gambeson and open helm, which gives you both 5 points of Armor Protection.

Subtract his Armor Protection value from your rolled damage, then reduce his Hit Points by the difference, then roll his damage and do the same for your own Armor Protection. He starts with 30 Hit Points, has a Major Wound value of 15, and an Unconscious value of 8. Remember that if either of you take more damage than your respective Major Wound thresholds or is reduced below your respective Unconscious values, the fight is over.

Is he dead? Go to **112**.

Is he unconscious? Go to **113**.

Are your Hit Points below your Unconscious value? Go to **115**.

Did you suffer a Major Wound, or are your Hit Points at zero or below? Go to **116**.

Otherwise, return to **105** and fight another round unless you wish to yield, in which case go to **114**.



## 111

You take a wild swing at your opponent and leave yourself wide open for the counterstrike. Worse, he stomps on your staff as he does so, snapping it in half! The crowd cheers at your humiliation!

.....  
*If your opponent succeeds, he also inflicts 2D6+5 damage with his blow.*

*You are wearing a gambeson and open helm, which give you 5 points of Armor Protection.*

*Subtract your Armor Protection value from his rolled damage, then reduce your Hit Points by the difference. Remember that if you take more damage than your Major Wound threshold or are reduced below your Unconscious value, the fight is over.*

*Are your Hit Points below your Unconscious value? Go to 115.*

*Did you suffer a Major Wound, or Did you suffer a Major Wound, or are your Hit Points at zero or below? Go to 116.*

*Otherwise, the loss of your weapon disqualifies you from the bohort. Leave the field and return to 92.*

## 112

Your opponent drops like a sack of rocks under your assault, lying prone on the field. What starts as a celebration quickly turns solemn as you see the fast-spreading pool of blood soaking into the earth beneath him. The squire's knight hops the fence, takes one look at his charge, and tenderly scoops him up—the barbers may still be able to save him.

.....  
*If your opponent's Hit Points are between 0 and -2, his life is saved! If he has -3, -4, or -5 Hit Points, roll 1D20; on a result of 20 (a critical success for the barber), he is saved.*

*Otherwise, he dies. Make a note of whether your opponent lived or died, then leave the field and go to 92.*

## 113

Your last blow hits your opponent on the temple. His eyes roll back in their sockets, and he collapses to the ground. You are victorious! The crowd gasps at your fighting ability!

.....  
*Do you wish to keep going? If this is your first victory, you have time to fight another opponent before the bohort ends. Return to 105 and start a new combat. This time, you are fighting an opponent using his staff as a Two-handed Hafted weapon with a Skill of 10. He has 24 Hit Points, an Unconscious value of 6, and a Major Wound threshold of 12. He wears a nasal helm*

*and gambeson, giving him 6 points of Armor Protection, and does 1D6+4 points of damage. Remember, also, that his grip gives him 4 points of Parry Protection with a partial success.*

*If you have already fought two opponents, or wish to quit the field, hand in your weapon and go to 92.*

## 114

This is more than a friendly exercise! This isn't a bohort; it's a brawl! Blood and the sounds of cracking teeth fill your ears. You know there is no dishonor in yielding, and so drop your staff—but before you can shout "I yield!", your opponent has already begun his swing. Time to duck!

.....  
*Make an opposed roll of your Movement Rate versus your opponent's Weapon Skill.*

*If you win, you dodge under the swing. Your opponent apologizes. (If you still have more than half your Hit Points, check Cowardly.) Go to 92.*

*If you lose or tie, your opponent inflicts 2D6+5 points of damage (or 6D6+5 if he scored a critical success!). Your opponent apologizes profusely as they check to see if you are okay.*

*Are your Hit Points below your Unconscious value? Go to 115.*

*Did you suffer a Major Wound, or are your Hit Points at zero or below? Go to 116.*

*Otherwise, return to 105 and fight another round unless you wish to yield again, in which case you may stay on this entry and try your luck. If you are at fewer than half your Total Hit Points and choose to keep fighting, check Reckless.*

## 115

Whack! Your opponent connects. There is a brief flash of pain and then darkness. You are knocked out clean and dragged from the field, where you are revived with a splash of water to the face.

You may want to seek out a barber for treatment after such a beating...

.....  
*Go to 92.*

## 116

Pain like you've never known, the sound of something cracking inside your body, and then oblivion.

You are dragged from the field in grave condition. Knights call for aid, and a passing noblewoman answers



the call. Fortunately, she has the gift of healing, so you may just survive...

.....  
*If your Hit Points are between 0 and -5, you are not beyond help. Roll against the lady's First Aid Skill of 20. With a success, restore 3 Hit Points (equal to your Healing Rate). With a critical success, restore 6 Hit Points. If you are now at 1 Hit Point or more, you survived! Unfortunately, you are too beaten up to continue with the adventure. Go to 133 and tally up your score.*

*If the lady was unable to restore you to positive Hit Points, you pass away under the walls of Londinium; your part in the story ends here.*

## 117

With a masterful strike, your opponent connects with a particularly fleshy and vulnerable part of your body, which makes a dismaying crunching sound as pain explodes from the point of impact.

.....  
*Your opponent inflicts a whopping 6D6+4 points of damage from the critical strike!*

*Subtract your Armor Protection value from his rolled damage, then reduce your Hit Points by the difference. If you succeeded at your roll and are using your staff with the Two-handed Hafted Skill, you may add an additional 4 points of Parry Protection; if you are using the Sword Skill instead, you may add 2 points of Parry Protection. (The Spear Skill does not provide any Parry Protection under any circumstances.)*

*Remember that if you take more damage than your Major Wound threshold or are reduced below your Unconscious value, the fight is over.*

*Are your Hit Points below your Unconscious value? Go to 115.*

*Did you suffer a Major Wound, or are your Hit Points at zero or below? Go to 116.*

*Otherwise, return to 105 and fight another round unless you wish to yield, in which case go to 114. If you are at fewer than half your Total Hit Points and choose to keep fighting, check Reckless.*

## 118

With a flurry of whacking, cracking blows, you fend each other off. You circle around, looking for a fresh opening and catching your breath in the process.

.....  
*Go to 105.*

## 119

You have sorely wounded your opponent. He throws down his staff! "I yield!" he cries.

.....  
*Do you wish to keep going? If this is your first victory, you have time to fight another opponent before the bohort ends. Return to 105 and start a new combat. This time, you are fighting an opponent using his staff as a Two-handed Hafted weapon with a Skill of 10. He has 24 Hit Points, an Unconscious value of 6, and a Major Wound threshold of 12. He wears a nasal helm and gambeson, giving him 6 points of Armor Protection, and does 1D6+4 points of damage. Remember, also, that his grip gives him 4 points of Parry Protection with a partial success.*

*If you have already fought two opponents, or wish to quit the field, hand in your weapon and go to 92.*

## 120

Limping and wincing from your wounds, you seek out a tent near Ludgate. Passing under the painted shingle depicting a snake with a head at each end, entwined around a staff and biting itself, you find the barber within bandaging a knight who managed to stab himself while training.

"Have a seat, and I shall be with you shortly," says the barber without looking up.

The minutes pass like hours, but eventually, the old man shuffles over to you and begins poking and prodding at your wounds with a copper probe, muttering to himself the whole time. His breath smells strongly of garlic. You distract yourself from the pain by focusing on his wispy white whiskers.

He shuffles off and begins grinding up a poultice in his massive marble mortar. On the table next to him are displayed freshly-blooded knives, saws, and drills, the grim tools of his trade.

You faint.

.....  
*The barber has a First Aid Skill of 18. Roll on his behalf for each wound. On a success, you restore a number of Hit Points equal to your Healing Rate; a critical success restores your Healing Rate plus 3 points. A fumble aggravates the wound and causes you to lose an additional 1D3 Hit Points. Each wound may only be treated once.*

*Once you are done, go to 92.*

## 121

The day, which began so early and has been so full of wonders, is catching up with you at last. Your senses buzzing, you



## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

make your way back to the inn and collapse into sleep at the foot of Sir Ector's bed. Tomorrow, the tournament begins in earnest. By the end of the day, Britain will have a new High King!

Go to **122**.

### 122

The day dawns overcast and cold, but the city is already up to greet the weak sun; such is the excitement for the New Year's tournament. Your morning at the inn is spent in a flurry of activity: Gathering the equipment needed for the tournament fight, helping Sir Ector prepare his hauberk, helm, and shield, feeding and preparing his charger down in the stables...that, and countless other tasks, which keep you running about nonstop until the sun is peeking up over the rooftops.

Arthur is every bit as harried and hurried in his duties for Sir Kay, so it is with some sense of relief that you both mount your rouncys and fall in line behind your knights. You exchange smiles, letting your agitation give way to excitement.

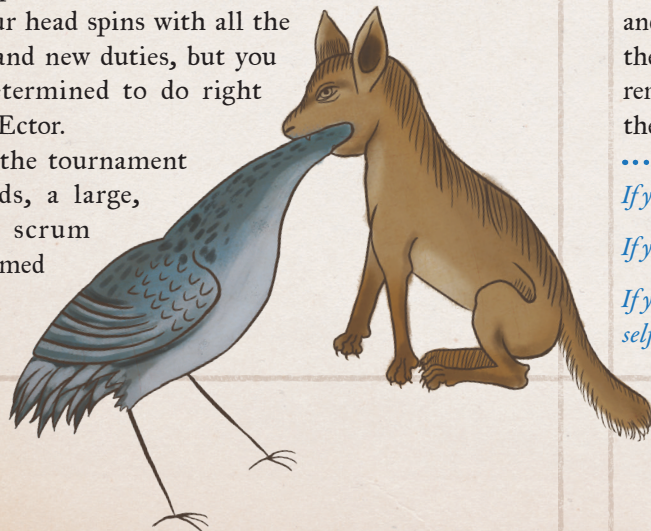
Along the way, Sir Ector briefs you:

"We are to be divided into two cohorts, the Red Knights and the Blue Knights, and we'll fight a mock battle called a *melee*. Knights earn tally marks for performing great deeds on the field, such as knocking an opponent off their horse, taking a foe captive, or even performing a particularly thrilling display of martial prowess. The Lord Mayor of Londinium himself and the guild masters of the city sit as judges and keep a record of our marks. At the end of the day, the knight with the most tally marks is declared the Knight of Honor—and in this instance, acclaimed the new High King of Britain!"

"As squires, you are to ride onto the field with us, but you are not to fight. Your job is to hold back and look for ways to assist us—to replace a broken lance, to drag us off the field if we're knocked out, or to escort any prisoners we may capture back to the recet, which is our end of the field."

Your head spins with all the rules and new duties, but you are determined to do right by Sir Ector.

At the tournament grounds, a large, noisy scrum has formed



around tables where harried heralds are assigning overexcited knights to their cohorts. Ector and Kay dismount and take their place at the back of the mob when you notice that Ector is without his sword. You grab it from his charger and hustle forth to help him belt it around his thick waist. He grunts in approval.

"Whelp, fetch my sword," says Kay absentmindedly. Arthur turns pale.

"I...I...forgot it back at the inn, Kay!"

Kay's face turns crimson with anger.

"Oh, Arthur!" says Ector disapprovingly. "Quick now, there's a good lad; go back and get it, or your brother will be without his sword on the field!"

Arthur is off like a dart, shouting promises to be back with the sword in a twinkling.

Minutes pass by. Ector and Kay give their names to the heralds and are assigned to the Red Knights. Kay keeps looking about for Arthur with murderous eyes.

"What could be keeping that inattentive fool?" He turns to you. "Go find the Whelp and bring him back with my sword, or so help me..."

You do not need to be told twice.

Go to **123**.

### 123

Most of Londinium is at the tournament, and you run through Newgate and down the city's empty streets. It is quite eerie, really. The city, filled with so many people just this morning, is now as quiet as a cemetery.

Your heart is in your throat when you reach the inn. You find Arthur, but he sits against the front door, head on his folded knees. He looks up at your approach, and you see his eyes are rimmed red.

"They closed up the inn!" he wails and bangs the door with his fist. "Everyone is at the tournament! I can't get Kay's sword! Oh, what am I to do?"

Your mind races and several solutions suggest themselves. You could try to break into the inn. This is an emergency, and surely the Lord would forgive some petty larceny in the name of fetching Kay's sword. But then you suddenly remember that there is another sword that no one is using, the one in the cathedral courtyard!

If you want to break into the inn to fetch Kay's sword, go to **124**.

If you wish to tell Arthur about the sword in the stone, go to **125**.

If you wish to go retrieve the sword from the stone yourself, go to **126**.



## 124

You tell Arthur to wait that you'll fetch Kay's sword by hook or by crook. You lack either of those implements, but you do have your trusty dagger. You walk down a filth-choked alley, hop a low wall, and find yourself within the darkened back courtyard of the inn. Although the front door is tightly secured, the latch on this back door is easily pushed aside with a bit of skillful knife work. (This bit of breaking and entering does earn you a check to Deceitful, however.)

You enter the warm confines of the inn and make your way to Kay's footlocker. Luck is with you, as Kay forgot to lock it in his rush to leave this morning. Inside, you find his sword, still in its scabbard.

Reemerging onto the street, you look around but see no sign of Arthur. You were scarcely gone a moment, it seems, yet he is nowhere in sight.

Then you hear a shout from down the street, in the direction of St. Paul's Cathedral. You see Arthur trotting up the lane, a big grin on his face—and a shining sword in his hand!

"Where did you—" you start to ask, but Arthur does not stop to chat.

"Come on!" he shouts. "If we run, we can make it back before the melee starts!"

Go to 128.

## 125

You pull Arthur to his feet.

"Sir Ector showed me another sword in the courtyard of St. Paul's down yonder, but...."

You were about to say, "it was stuck in an anvil," but before you can finish your sentence, Arthur bolts down the empty street toward the cathedral. "He will see for himself soon enough," you say to yourself as you take off after him.

You arrive at the empty courtyard gate in time to see Arthur approaching the sword in the stone, his hand extended.

A light snow begins to fall.

Go to 127.

## 126

Arthur is desperate. You simply must retrieve that sword for him!

Telling Arthur that you'll be right back, you march down to the courtyard of St. Paul's. There, you find the sword reposing in its strange spot of honor, the cold winter sun reflecting off its steel.

Rubbing your hands together and flexing your neck, you approach. A bit of strength is all that's needed, surely. To think that someone wasted a perfectly good sword in setting up this tawdry tourist attraction. Feh! (Check Proud for thinking you know better!)

You put your hand on the hilt, plant your feet, and *heave*—to no avail. It will not budge.

You clamber halfway up the rock and try moving the sword by placing both hands under the crossbar—but only manage to slice the side of your left hand on the blade as you struggle. It's still sharp, even after all these years!

"What are you doing?" The voice is Arthur's. You see him standing at the courtyard gate, a quizzical expression on his face.

You tell him about seeing this sword the day before with Sir Ector. "I thought if I could pull it out, you could give it to Kay."

Arthur beams. "Here, let me try."

You know he is being generous and trying to save you from embarrassment, but you step aside and let him approach.

A light snow begins to fall.

Go to 127.

## 127

You watch as he steps up to the stone, reaches out, and lightly closes his hand around the sword's hilt. There is a sound of steel scraping on metal, and your mouth falls open as Arthur pulls the sword straight out of the anvil as if it were from an oiled scabbard!

Arthur's face splits into a wide grin, and he beams at you. "You've saved my skin, no mistake!" he says, and off he goes again, this time back to the tournament grounds.

You follow in mute shock. Surely someone must've loosened it...

Go to 128.

## 128

You arrive back at the tournament grounds to find Sir Kay pacing up and down the sidelines; most of the knights are already on the field, and the sound of cheering crowds fills your ears. The melee has begun!

"What in the name of Jesu took you so long?" he bellows. In the next moment, he sees the sword in Arthur's hand. "And whose sword is that?"

"I found it, Kay!" says Arthur, fighting for breath. "It's a good sword, I promise."



## The Adventure of the Sword in the Stone

Kay takes it in his hand and gives it a couple of swings, looking impressed despite his anger.

Before he can say anything else, though, Sir Ector rides up and practically jumps off his horse. "Kay! Where did you get that sword?" His eyes are wide with astonishment.

"I found it, father," says Kay, without hesitation.

"*You* found it?" asks Ector, somewhat incredulous.

"Well, no...he did." Kay points to Arthur, and Ector takes his youngest son by the shoulders, looking him square in the eye.

"Is what Kay said true, son?" asks Ector, his voice husky with emotion.

"Yes, father! Please don't be mad at him! This is all my fault! I stole the sword from the courtyard of St. Paul's! I shall put it back at once if you'll only let me!"

Arthur's wails of protest draw the attention of several nearby knights who themselves had not yet entered the melee. One, an aging man of regal bearing who wears the arms of Cameliard on his surcoat, rushes forward.

"What's that? He's drawn it? The sword? The sword in the stone?"

Others quickly take up the cry.

"The sword! He's drawn the sword!"

Go to **129**.

## 129

The news spreads like fire across ripened wheat fields.

"I don't believe it!"

"I have to see this for myself!"

"Make him draw it again!"

"To the churchyard!"

Then all is madness. A throng of people surges away from the tournament grounds towards the city. Sir Ector throws Arthur on the back of his nervous rouncy.

"Ride for St. Paul's and put the sword back, lad! Put it back!" Ector says, with fear in his eyes. "You'd best do the same," Ector shouts at you, "lest you be trampled! Hop on!"

You swing into the saddle behind Arthur and join the press of knights streaming through Newgate. Fortunately, with your head start, you can avoid the worst of the press.

Go to **130**.

## 130

Murmuring crowds of horses, commoners, clergymen, knights, squires, lords, and ladies pack St. Paul's courtyard and surround the cathedral steps in a wide arc. Luckily, you

and Arthur made it just in time before they arrived. You dismount and approach the anvil and stone with Arthur.

A single horn sounds. The crowd suddenly grows quiet as you see two wizened old men being escorted from the rectory to the top of the cathedral stairs behind the anvil and stone. One is dressed in a gilded bishop's cassock, the other in ragged, filthy robes.

"It's the Archbishop! Saint Dubricus!" someone shouts from the crowd.

"*Ave Sanctus Dubricus! Ave!*" cries a pious Roman lady, hands clasped.

The old man kindly smiles and makes the Sign of the Cross in the air. Dozens of people drop to their knees to accept the blessing.

"And that's Merlin, the Archdruid of Britain, standing next to him! Why is *he* here?" says Sir Ector with a haunted look, finally catching up to you and Arthur, with a mounted Sir Kay close behind. You notice that Merlin and Ector are looking at each other with deep meaning.

Then, with the crowd looking on, Arthur replaces the sword. It slips back into its slot in the anvil with a metallic hiss. He steps back and watches the courtyard fill with more knights, fresh from the tournament melee. Many are dripping sweat, and some nurse minor wounds.

Arthur looks very young all of a sudden, beside the sword in the stone.

A mighty man, powerful of build and arrogant of aspect, jumps from his saddle. You know this man by reputation: It is King Lot of Lothian, one of the greatest warriors in all of Britain.

He shoves Arthur aside.

"If this thing is going to move, it'll move for me!" he declares to the crowd.

"Lot! Lot! Lot!" his household knights chant in encouragement.

He grabs the hilt with both mailed hands and puts all his bear-like strength into the effort, but the sword will not move. He tries again, with no success, his face now red with exertion and frustration.

"Let the boy try!" shouts someone (was it Merlin?), and then many more shout in agreement.

"Yes, let the boy try!"

Lot stares down at Arthur with angry eyes and steps aside to rejoin his knights.

Sir Ector, now beside Arthur, nods to him, and Arthur lays one hand gently upon the sword and easily pulls it from the anvil. The crowd—noble and commoner alike—gasps. He then slides it back in place.

Another knight dismounts and shouts, "It is my turn! I, King Uriens of Gorre, shall pull the sword!" and pushes



## 132

his way to the rock. Like Lot before him, Uriens grabs the sword and tugs, pulls, and then tries to manhandle it free, giving his full armored shoulder to the task, but the sword does not budge.

As Uriens walks away, flustered, the lad again steps up and pulls the sword effortlessly free.

"The High King!" shouts someone. "He's the High King! It's the prophecy!"

"The boy drew the sword!" shouts King Leodegrance to the crowd. "This boy is the *Pendragon*!"

A few people in the crowd lower to their knees.

"Not while I live!" shouts Lot, who draws his own sword and strides towards Arthur. His bodyguards dismount and fall into place a few steps behind him.

You were the one who saw Arthur pull the sword the first time. You now see Lot advancing with murder in his eyes. You know the right thing to do is to speak up in Arthur's defense, but can you summon the courage in this moment of decision?

.....  
*Make a Valorous versus Cowardly roll.*

*If you succeed at Valorous, check the Trait and go to 131.*

*If you succeed at Cowardly, check the Trait and go to 132.*

*If you fail both, you may choose your course of action.*

## 131

"Wait!" you cry, arms wide, standing between King Lot and Arthur. Lot halts, turning his furious gaze on you. You swallow hard, then continue.

"I saw Arthur—this youth here—pull the sword the first time. None of you could pull it when you tried. He is our new king!"

Lot takes two steps towards you and strikes you with his mailed left hand, inflicting 6 points of damage! It is like being struck by a boulder. You feel your back teeth crack, and you drop to the ground as blood gushes from a gash on your cheek.

The blow ignites the passions of all assembled, and a terrific melee suddenly breaks out as knights from many different kingdoms rush towards the cathedral steps. Through a sickening red haze, you see Arthur pull the blade once more, and it seems to your eyes that the steel flashes with a strange ghost-light. Arthur then steadies himself against the anvil and defends himself against Lot!

.....  
*Go to 133.*

Arthur looks at you, his eyes desperate for your help, but you are frozen in place.

Just then, a brave knight who is still mounted spurs their horse forward, blocking King Lot's advance. A clang of steel is heard as Lot strikes out and connects hard with the knight's shield, and they grunt in shock and pain despite its blunted edge.

The blow ignites the passions of all assembled, and a terrific melee suddenly breaks out as knights from many different kingdoms rush the cathedral steps. You see Arthur pull the blade once more, this time to defend himself against one of Lot's knights!

.....  
*Go to 133.*

## 133

Now King Leodegrance and his men, and a half dozen other kings and many, many knights swarm between King Lot and Arthur.

"The boy drew the sword!" says Leodegrance, "He is by right the Pendragon of Britain!"

"No beardless boy shall ever be my king!" shouts King Lot.

"Nor mine," says someone. "Nor mine!" come other voices.

"I say, he is my king!" shouts Leodegrance, and he suddenly kneels before Arthur and proffers his sword. Arthur, with tears streaming down his face, gently takes it, saying, with a strangely mature countenance, "As I am king, I accept your offer."

Lot, seeing that he and his men are surrounded and outnumbered, throws his blunted sword to the ground with a clatter. "I'll be back with a sword that won't fail me," he says, baring his teeth, and leaps atop his horse. His guards pivot and spur their steeds, nearly trampling those left in the crowd. Others are doing the same, and a reproachful howl goes up from the crowd as they go.

"Hail King Arthur!" shouts Sir Ector, thrusting his sword aloft.

"The Whelp?" cries Sir Kay, looking astonished.

"Hail King Arthur!" echoes the crowd, and now Kay joins in as again, "Hail King Arthur!" And again:

"HAIL KING ARTHUR!"

You look up to see Archbishop Dubricus on the cathedral steps and catch him nodding and smiling at Merlin, who smiles back and bows his head. Merlin's eyes suddenly dart to yours, and he winks at you, then disappears amongst the throng.







You shake your head in amazement at the cheering crowds who have now lifted Arthur on their shoulders. It looks like your dear friend Arthur, with whom you have shared a bench, mucked stables, and polished armor, is now to be the High King of Britain!

*But what will be your fate, young squire? If you successfully freed the bull, tried to pull the sword from the stone for Arthur, or defended Arthur against King Lot, go to **135**.*

*Otherwise, you have seven years of service at Sir Ector's side ahead of you, and in time you may well be knighted. Your actions during this adventure presage your future:*

*What kind of knight would you like to be?*

*Go to **134**.*

## 134

You have played a part, however small, in the birth of a new era. The Boy King, as Arthur will soon be called, has many challenges ahead, but his reign will leave its mark on Britain—and the world—forever.

*Go through the prompts on **Table 2: Story Awards** and tally up your points, positive and negative, then compare them to the totals given on **Table 3: What Kind of Knight are You?** Your final score determines how far you are fated to rise in the knightly hierarchy. (If you died during the adventure, you may still tally up your points—legacies are an important part of the **Pendragon** game-play experience, and you may view your total as to how fondly you are remembered.)*

## 135

“We must knight you first, I suppose,” Sir Ector says to Arthur amidst the jostling and tumult. Arthur nods slowly as everything sinks in, then turns to you.

“And I will need a squire I can trust,” he says, a twinkle in his eye. You grin at each other.

You have seven years of service as the king's squire ahead of you, and in time you may well be knighted. Your actions during this adventure presage your future:

What kind of knight would you like to be?

*Go to **134**.*

**TABLE 2: STORY AWARDS**

| REWARD | ACTION                                                            |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| +2     | For each Skill check                                              |
| +3     | For each Passion check                                            |
| +2     | For each Chivalrous Trait check                                   |
| +1     | For any other Trait check (except as noted below)                 |
| +2     | If you killed the boar single-handed                              |
| +3     | If a noblewoman gave you her favor                                |
| +1     | If you set the bull free                                          |
| +1     | For each round you withheld damage dice in the bohorth            |
| +1     | For each opponent defeated in the bohorth                         |
| +2     | If you told Arthur about the Sword in the Stone                   |
| +3     | If you tried to retrieve the Sword in the Stone before Arthur     |
| +3     | If you defended Arthur in the face of King Lot's anger            |
| +5     | If King Arthur made you his squire                                |
| -5     | If you lingered in the lands of the Good Folk                     |
| -1     | For each check opposed to a Religious or Chivalrous Trait         |
| -1     | If you were tardy returning to Sir Ector after exploring the city |
| -1     | If your bohorth opponent died                                     |
| -1     | If you broke into the inn to get Kay's sword                      |
| -1     | For staying quiet as King Lot attacked Arthur                     |

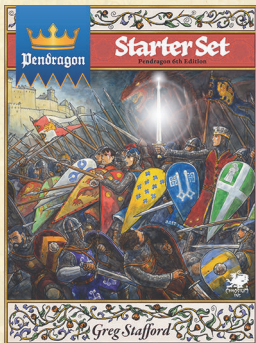
**TABLE 3: WHAT KIND OF KNIGHT ARE YOU?**

| POINTS       | RANK                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Less than 0  | <b>Esquire:</b> You never achieve the rank of knight and spend the rest of your life in service to better folk than you.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 0–6          | <b>Household Knight:</b> You are knighted by Sir Ector (or King Arthur) and spend your life in service to him as a bodyguard and confidant.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 7–12         | <b>Vassal Knight:</b> You are knighted by Sir Ector (or King Arthur) and, in time, are granted an estate of your own as a reward for your loyalty and service.                                                                                                                                                               |
| 13–18        | <b>Banneret:</b> You are knighted by Sir Ector (or King Arthur) and, in time, marry well, becoming the wealthy lord of several far-flung estates.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| More than 18 | <b>Knight of the Round Table:</b> You are knighted by Sir Ector (or King Arthur) and go on to a great career; you are among the first to receive the personal invitation of the king to join his esteemed martial order, the Knights of the Round Table, a few years hence. Your name is destined to be remembered in tales! |



# Hail, Brave knight!

Take up your sword and discover your place in the beginning of Arthur's legend.



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