



LANCELOTTM



GET INTO SOME HEAVY METAL

Dassoft[®]

LANCELOT

This adventure recreates the tales of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, as related in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*.

The game starts with a different scene of the meeting between Arthur and Lancelot than the one in Malory's tale. It also gives Lancelot a few adventures that Malory ascribed to other heroes of the Round Table. Other than this, the adventure is reasonably faithful to *Le Morte D'Arthur*.

Parts 1, *Camelot* and) recreates Lancelot's arrival at Camelot and his rise to become the best knight in the world.

Part 2, *Logris*, involves the completion of the company of Knights of the Round Table.

Part 3 is *The Quest for the Holy Grail*, the highest achievement in chivalry, in which the best knights come near to God. However, it leads to the demise of the company of the Round Table.

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GETTING STARTED

Lancelot is designed for Amiga 500/1000/2000; Atari ST (520 or 1040); Commodore 64/128; Macintosh (256K minimum memory) and Macintosh Plus; and MS-DOS machines (IBM PC and compatibles, 256K minimum memory).

Before loading the game, format a blank disk to use as a Save-Game disk (consult your computer users' manual for disk-formatting instructions).

- Amiga** **500:** Insert game disk into drive and turn on computer. The game loads.
- 1000/2000:** Insert Kickstart™ disk and turn on computer. When you're prompted for Workbench™, insert game disk. The game loads.
- Drag the picture up (to uncover the text) or down (to see the graphics) using the left Mouse button. You can do this at any time during the game.
- Atari ST** Insert game disk into drive Ø; turn on computer. The game loads.
- You can change the size of the on-screen text. Experiment by typing a line or two of text; *don't* press RETURN. Now, press F1 and F2 until you get the size of text you like.
- Drag the picture up (to uncover the text) or down (to see the graphics) using the left Mouse button. You can do this at any time during the game.
- There is a self-running demonstration game. To see it, press Alternate R when you see the "What now?" prompt. To escape the demo, reboot the game.
- Commodore** Turn on TV or monitor, disk drive, and computer (with C-128, hold down Commodore key while turning on the computer). Insert game disk into drive and close the door. Type **LOAD "*" ,8,1** and press RETURN. The game loads.
- Most of the graphics are on Side 2 of the game disk. If you want to play a text-only game, just start playing. If you want pictures, turn the disk over after the game has loaded and is waiting for your first command.
- Drag the picture up (to uncover the text) or down (to see the graphics) using the ↑ and ↓ cursor keys. You can do this at any time during the game.
- Macintosh/ Mac Plus** Insert your Mac operating system into the drive and turn on the computer. Insert the game disk; double click on the LANCELOT icon.
- Drag the picture up (to uncover the text) or down (to see the graphics). You can do this at any time during the game.

MS-DOS Machines

Insert DOS 2.1 (or later) into drive A; turn on computer. When you see the **A>** prompt, remove DOS and replace it with the game disk. Type **MENU** and press **↓**. Select one of the 23 screen display formats from the menu and press **↓**.

Note: To use the EGA mode, you must have a 128k EGA board. Not all these formats will work on all computers. If a format you've selected doesn't allow the game to run on your machine, reboot and make another selection.

To see a self-running demonstration game, press **ALT R** after selecting the screen display format and before pressing **↓**. To escape the demo, reboot the game.

SAVING GAMES

These instructions for saving and loading games apply to all computers.

SaveTo Disk Use a separate save-game disk to save your games. Do not save games on your game disk. Anytime during gameplay, type **SAVE** and press **RETURN**. Follow the prompts.

To reload a saved game, type **RESTORE** (press **RETURN**), then **YES** (press **RETURN**), and follow the prompts.

RAM Save To save your game in the computer's memory while playing, type **RAM SAVE**. To reload a RAM-saved game, type **RAM RESTORE** and press **RETURN**.

Remember that saving in memory is quick and convenient -- it's an ideal way of saving your position before trying something risky.

Caution: A RAM-saved position will be lost if your computer is turned off, so save to disk occasionally.

GAME COMMANDS

The prompt (**more**) or (**shift**) (depending on your computer) lets you know when there's more text to display than will fit on the screen. Read what's visible, then press any key to continue.

When you see **WHAT NOW?** or **>**, you can type commands. After typing, press **RETURN**.

You can abbreviate commands (**NORTH** to **N**, **SOUTHEAST** to **SE**, **INVENTORY** to **INV**, etc.) and even type several commands on one line (**EAST**, **TAKE ALL**, **WEST**, etc.).

There are four kinds of commands in Lancelot: Movement, Action, Spell, and System.

Movement Type the name of the direction you want to go: **NORTH**, **NORTHEAST**, **EAST** (and the other compass directions), **IN**, **OUT**, **UP**, **DOWN**, **ACROSS**, etc.

Note: The game doesn't know the words **GO** and **RUN**.

Action Type the name of the action you want to accomplish: **LOOK**, **TAKE THE HARP**, **DROP IT**, **EXAMINE THE CROSS**, **WEAR THE HAT**, **DRINK THE WINE**, etc.

Commands to Others Type the name of the person, then the action: **SIR GAWAIN**, **FOLLOW ME**, etc.

System Type these commands to get information: **INVENTORY** (tells you the names of all items you're carrying); **EXITS** (tells you where all possible exits are from your current location); and **SCORE** (tells you how many points you've earned out of the number of possible points).

Type these commands to control how the game reacts to you: **WORDS** (turns off the graphics and gives you a text-only game); **PICTURES** (turns the graphics back on); **BRIEF** (gives short descriptions of locations); **VERBOSE** (gives complete details about locations); **EXITS ON** (gives the locations of all possible exits automatically); and **EXITS OFF** (gives the locations of exits only if you ask for them).

Type these commands to save and load games: **SAVE** (to disk), **RESTORE** (from disk), **RAM SAVE**; **RAM RESTORE**.

Type **UNDO** to go back a step to your previous action. Type this command over and over to go back several steps.

Type **QUIT** to end the game in progress and start over again.

HINTS

Below are hints for all three games, plus hints for the games in general. If you're really stuck, use the clue booklet included with this game.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Camelot | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lancelot must go to Camelot to be knighted by Arthur.• He must do valorous deeds in Logris to become the best knight in the world.• When he returns to Camelot after achieving fame, he must look to Guinever. |
| Logris | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Despite the Damosel Maledisant's manner, her quest is genuine.• Lancelot must free all the captive knights; then he can command them.• Lancelot must ensure that Galahad comes to Camelot. |

The Quest For The Holy Grail

- Virtue is vital; avoid sinning.
- Galahad is the holiest knight.

General Hints

- To make gameplay simpler, the objects that matter in a location are listed in a descriptive sentence, like, "You can see a shopkeeper and a bunch of herbs." The rest of the surroundings are probably scenery, but make sure by trying actions like, GET TREE, LOOK AT FLOWERS, etc.
- Examine all the objects that you see, and take everything you can. Most objects are useful in some fashion.
- You can solve some puzzles only with cooperation from other people, so get used to giving orders. To cancel orders you've given in error, type STOP after the name of the person you gave the order to (SIR GAWAIN, STOP).
- If you make a mistake and get "killed" or lose a vital object, use the UNDO command; it takes you back in time – hopefully to before the fatal mistake. You can use UNDO many times in succession to step backwards a long way through the game.
- Even weird or dangerous actions sometimes provide clues. Be sure to RAM-Save the game before trying a potentially fatal move.
- You can word a command in many ways. For example, if there were an axe and a ball on the ground, you could take the axe by typing any of the following:
 - > GET THE AXE
 - > TAKE AXE
 - > GET ALL BUT THE BALL
 - > LOOK AT THE AXE AND TAKE IT
- For more game background, read the stories that follow.

King Arthur & The Knights Of The Round Table

The following stories are a condensed version of the Arthurian legend, based on Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*.

THE BIRTH OF A KING

In the days when Uther Pendragon was King of all England, the mighty Duke of Tintagel stood against him and, for a long time, warred against the King.

After many battles, Uther sent for the Duke that they might talk of peace. But he also charged him to bring his wife, Igraine, for Uther had heard she was most fair. And when the Duke and his wife were with Uther, the King declared his love to her. Igraine was much distressed and warned the her husband that they should flee, for the King surely intended her dishonor.

After they secretly departed, Uther was wrathful, both for pure anger and great love of fair Igraine. The Duke heard warning of this and made provision for a long siege. He set Igraine in Tintagel Castle, which was strongly fortified, while he set out for Castle Terrabil.

Ere long, Uther's pavilions and knights surrounded Terrabil and a bitter battle began. But Uther was sick with his love, and remained listless in his tent. His knights were greatly worried. In hope of a cure for the King, one of his men sought Merlin, a wizard renowned for his knowledge of ancient crafts and remedies. And Merlin said that he would help Uther, if Uther would be sworn to reward Merlin in his turn. The noble knight assented that Merlin should have whatever he desired if he could make Uther whole again.

Merlin rode to Uther's pavilion, where he told the King that Uther might spend the night with Igraine, for by Merlin's magic, he would appear to her in the likeness of her husband. In return, Uther must deliver any child born of their union for the magician to raise.

Uther could not hold his patience, and rode out with his party for Tintagel at once. The Duke saw Uther's knights riding hard, as if in retreat, and he left his Terrabil fortress to pursue in all haste. On the field, he met with Uther's remaining men, and was slain ere the King came to the castle of Tintagel. And so, as Uther lay with Igraine, she was already a widow.

Igraine thought her lover that night was her husband; but when she heard tell of the Duke's death she marvelled who that knight who lay with her might be. Even when she assented unto marriage with Uther, to unite their two houses, he did not tell her. And when the child was born, Merlin came, as he had told Uther he would, to take the baby away, reassuring the father he would be well-nourished.

But Uther was unable to spend a long and happy life with Igraine. Within two years he had fallen sick of a great malady and died, to Igraine's great sorrow, for she had learned to love him.

The rule of the Kingdom fell into jeopardy, for there was no known heir. Many lords made claim to the throne, and fought bitterly for the right to reign, but none could take the Kingdom by just cause.

THE SWORD IN THE STONE

After years of great feuding, Merlin went to the Archbishop of Canterbury and counseled him that he would find the right-born King. All the lords of the realm and all the gentlemen of arms were summoned to London for a New Year's Day tournament, where the new ruler would be revealed.

Sir Ector, his son Kay, and his adopted son Arthur were among those who rode to London for the jousting, Kay making great excitement, for he was to be made a knight at the tournament.

As they rode to the jousts, Kay discovered with dismay that he had lost his sword, for he had left it at their lodging. He prayed young Arthur to run back to collect it.

Arthur found the inn empty and locked; everyone had already left for the tournament. Trudging dolefully back to his father and brother, he went through a churchyard, where near the high altar, he espied, to his joy, a sword. It was stuck through an anvil, set upon a wide marble stone, and glittered in the winter sunlight.

"I will take that sword," Arthur decided. "My brother Sir Kay shall not be without a sword today of all days." He grasped it firmly and found that it came easily out of the anvil. Hurrying after his party, he never noticed the words that were written in gold about the sword.

But when Arthur delivered the sword to Kay, his brother turned quite pale. For Kay too had seen the sword in the stone in the churchyard, but he had also seen what Arthur had not, the lettering around it, which read:

WHOSO PULLETH OUT THIS SWORD OF THIS STONE AND ANVIL, IS
RIGHTWISE KING BORN OF ALL ENGLAND.

A small smile appeared on Kay's face as he took the sword from Arthur, and so he rode to find Sir Ector. "Look, father," he cried. "I have the sword from the stone. I must now be King of all England."

Sir Ector was no fool. He took Kay and Arthur back to the churchyard, and he made Kay swear upon The Book how he had come by the sword. Kay faltered. "My brother Arthur brought it to me", he said. Ector turned to his adopted son, and Arthur explained how he had taken it. Then Ector replaced the sword in the anvil and told Arthur to pull it out again.

"There is no great skill to it," said Arthur airily, and lifted it smoothly and cleanly out of the anvil.

Then Ector and Kay both tried pulling the sword from the stone for themselves, with all their might, but it would not move. When the two elder men learned full well that the sword would give only for Arthur, they both knelt down to the earth before him.

Arthur was greatly dismayed. "My own father and brother!" he exclaimed. "Why do ye kneel before me?"

"Nay, Arthur, I am not your father, nor of your blood," said Sir Ector gently, and for the first time he told the boy how Merlin had delivered Arthur to Sir Ector as a newborn baby, and charged him to nourish Arthur as his own.

At Pentecost, young Arthur was crowned at Carleon and took on the heavy duties of King of all England.

EXCALIBUR

The early years of Arthur's reign were not easy. Many lords and Kings had no joy of him because of his youth and lowly upbringing and he spent much time in bloody battles, defending his right to the throne. Merlin was ever nearby to help him when he was on the brink of defeat, and after long years, Arthur finally vanquished most of the enemy lords.

As a young man, Arthur fathered two children, Borre and Mordred. Mordred's mother was Margawse, wife of King Lot of Orkney and the daughter of Igraine and the Duke of Tintagel. Though none could know but Merlin, she was Arthur's half-sister, and Merlin blamed the King.

"God will not forgive your foul deed," the magician warned. "You have lain with your sister and on her ye have gotten a child, born on May day, that shall destroy you and all the knights of your realm."

Sore afraid at Merlin's words, Arthur sent for all the children born on May day, and he set them adrift in a ship. The ship was wrecked and the most part of the children perished, but Mordred was washed up alive on a beach, and raised by a good man.

Arthur's battles were long and bloody and oft there was danger that he might be slain, so Merlin thought that Arthur should have his own special sword. He took Arthur on a journey to a wide and still lake, and, in the middle of the waters, an arm, clothed in rich samite silk, rose from the water. The hand was clasping a fair sword.

"This is the sword that shall be yours," Merlin told Arthur. "The Lady of the Lake will come to you, and ye must speak fair to her to get the sword. And indeed the Lady told Arthur to row out in a barge to the centre of the lake to take the sword and its scabbard.

When he returned to the shore, he looked on his new sword and liked it well. Merlin asked him, "Which do you like better - the sword or the scabbard?"

Arthur considered. "The sword," he replied.

Merlin looked at him. "Ye are still so unwise," he said with annoyance. "The scabbard is worth ten of the sword. While ye have the scabbard with ye, ye will never lose blood however sorely wounded ye may be."

GUENEVER

When Arthur first saw Guenever, daughter of King Leodegrance of Camelot, he knew straightway that he wished to marry her. Arthur thought her the most valiant and fairest lady living.

But, as ever in these early years of his reign, he asked for the counsel of Merlin, for he was still for the most part ruled much by the magician's words.

"In beauty and fairness she is above all women," Merlin assented. "But if your heart was not set, I could find you a damsel of great beauty and goodness, who would certainly please you. But when a man's heart is set, and there is nought that can make him return."

Merlin further advised the King against taking Guenever as his wife, "I warn you, she will be loved by Lancelot du Lac, and she will love him back." But Arthur's mind was set fast on his choice, and so Merlin went forth to King Leodegrance to tell him that King Arthur wanted his daughter for his wife.

Leodegrance, to be sure, was overjoyed. "That is the best tidings that ever I heard," he cried. "And I shall send Arthur a gift, which might please him more than lands, for he has lands enough. I shall give him the Table Round, which was given to me by Uther Pendragon. The Table will seat a hundred and fifty knights, and I will myself send a hundred good knights."

Leodegrance was right. The gift of a hundred knights and the Table Round pleased Arthur far greater than land, and he sent out Merlin to find fifty

accomplished knights to complete the number, while he made preparations for the royalest wedding he could devise. But Merlin could only find forty eight knights of enough prowess to grace the Table Round, and so there were two empty seats.

Then Merlin, by his magic craft, made each of the names of the knights appear in gold lettering in their places at the table, and in just two places was there no name.

As the knights came to Camelot, where the King was wedded unto Guenever, Arthur set out their duties as Knights of the Table Round. He charged them never to commit treason or murder, never to be cruel, never to enter into battle for a wrongful reason whatsoever the reward, but ever to grant mercy when it was asked for, and ever to help ladies, whether gentlewomen or damsels, whenever succor was needed. And every Knight was sworn to this oath and every year at Pentecost they affirmed it again.

MERLIN AND NIMUE

Merlin fell in love with one of the ladies of the lake, called Nimue (sometimes known as Viviane). He became besotted upon her and could not bear to be away from her, and she kept in his company until he had taught her all manner of things she desired to know of his magic crafts.

Merlin also knew that despite all his magic, he would not live long in the earthly world, so he told Arthur prophecies that would befall the young King. He warned him to keep always his sword and scabbard with him, and he told him of the end of his reign and of the last days of the Table Round.

Soon afterward Nimue departed from the court, and Merlin went with her. He followed her wherever she went, and within a while Nimue began to be weary of him.

Then one day Merlin showed her a rock, inside which were marvels wrought by enchantment. Nimue tricked Merlin by subtlety and made him go underneath the rock, to tell her of the marvels, and then, by use of the crafts which he had taught her, she enclosed the rock.

Merlin was not harmed, and spoke happily enough to passing knights, but, no matter what charms Merlin practised to assay to open up the rock, he remained trapped.

SIR LANCELOT DU LAC

As King Arthur's reign drew on, and the deeds of the Knights of the Table Round became ever more renowned throughout the land, so many knights came to the tournaments and jousts.

Some knights who came oft improved their prowess so that they surpassed most of their fellows, but none more so than Lancelot du Lac. Never in any of his fights was he beaten, unless it were by trickery, and he was the knight who was admired most of all by the people after Arthur. And because of his excellence, Queen Guenever favoured him above all other knights, and he favoured her, and many of his great knightly deeds were done for love of Guenever.

Sir Lancelot was riding in Corbin, when he saw the fairest tower he had ever seen. Inside was the lady, Elaine, enchanted to remain in scalding water until the best knight in the world should take her hand. Lancelot rescued her; she thanked him, and he thought she was the fairest lady in the world, apart from Guenever.

Lancelot slew a fiendish dragon nearby, then they rode to Carbonek, castle of Elaine's father, King Pelles. At the celebratory feast, a damsel came into the hall, carrying a golden vessel, which shone richly with a pure and dazzling light. King Pelles knelt in front of the vessel, and prayed devoutly before it, and all the company did the same after him. Lancelot marveled much at this and asked wonderingly what this apparition meant.

"This vessel is the richest thing that any living man could have," replied Pelles. It is the Holy Grail, blessed by Our Lord at the Last Supper." And he left Lancelot to ponder on this marvel. Lancelot found that, after the appearance of the Grail, all the wounds and bruises he had suffered in his joust had healed and that his flesh was smooth and new, and he determined to see the Grail once more before he died.

King Pelles knew it was ordained that Elaine should conceive a child by Lancelot; that the child should be named Galahad; that he would become the best of all knights, surpassing even his father; and that he would be worthy of the Holy Grail. Yet how could it be done, fair though Elaine was, when every man knew that Lancelot kept himself only for love of the Queen Guenever?

Then Dame Brisen, one of the greatest enchantresses that lived at the time, came unto Pelles, and told him that she could work this thing by using her crafts.

Lancelot was given wine, which had Brisen infused with potion to make him blinded with lust, and when he was taken unto Elaine's chamber, he thought that she was Guenever, and lay with her until morning.

Elaine knew well that the child she carried from that night was born to be the noblest knight in the world, and when he was born, she christened him Galahad, and kept him well and nourished him. But Lancelot was shamed by the trickery, and left the castle that same morning to continue his travels.

Some months after, Arthur decreed that a feast be held.

Elaine deemed it right that she should attend the feast and bring the baby Galahad with her. She came with her servant Dame Brisen, and a retinue of twenty knights, and was so richly attired that all of Camelot agreed she was the fairest lady ever seen in that court. All, that is, save Lancelot, for fear of Guenever's fury.

Elaine was heavy of heart that Lancelot would not speak kindly to her, nor look at her, and went unto Brisen for advice. The enchantress assented to work her special powers so that Elaine might lie again with Lancelot that night.

When the court had retired, Guenever commanded Elaine to sleep in a chamber near her own, and she bad Lancelot to come unto her in the night. "Or else I am sure," chided Guenever, "ye will go to your lady Elaine's bed, for have you not got a son by her?"

But Brisen's enchantments were stronger than Lancelot's promises; she came to Lancelot in the likeness of one of Guenever's maidens, and led him to Elaine's chamber instead of Guenever's. Lancelot thought that it was Guenever he held in his arms, for so Brisen had devised it.

Then Guenever sent her servant to summon Lancelot to her, but the servant came to the Queen and said that she had found Lancelot's bed cold and empty. The Queen went nigh out of her wits with wondering where he was. She was not long in doubt, for Lancelot had the habit of talking in his sleep, and through the walls, she could hear his voice in Elaine's room.

Then was Guenever nigh mad with anger and with pain. She knew not what to do, but then she coughed so loudly that Lancelot awoke, and he heard her cough. Then he knew too that he lay not with his queen as he had thought and ran out of Elaine's chamber, only to meet a white-faced Guenever in the passageway.

"Thou false traitor knight!" she cried. "Never more wilt thou abide in my court; never will I let thee come into my sight again!" Lancelot could not bear the anger of her words and, filled with shame and the loss of his love, he leapt from the castle window.

Lancelot ran mad in the forests, sometimes tended by hermits and village folk, more often living off berries and plants. Only after many years did he return to King Arthur's court.

THE COMING OF THE HOLY GRAIL

Each year, the Knights of the Table Round came to Camelot for the high feast of Pentecost, to relate their deeds and the marvels they had seen. But still the Table was not complete, for the last place, the Seige Perilous, was not filled.

Then one year the knights had found, according to the custom, that their names were written about the Table Round in gold lettering, but this time there were new words written above the empty Siege Perilous.

FOUR HUNDRED WINTERS AND FOUR AND FIFTY ACCOMPLISHED
AFTER THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST OUGHT THIS SIEGE
TO BE FULFILLED.

"It seemeth me," said Sir Lancelot who had accounted the time between the birth of Christ unto that day itself, "This siege ought to be fulfilled this very day, for this is the feast of Pentecost after the four hundred and four and fifty year."

And the other knights agreed, and they ordained to cover the Siege Perilous with a silken cloth, so that the letters could not be seen until the rightful knight came unto the Table.

As they set themselves in their own places at the table the next evening to be served their feast, an old man accompanied by a very young, fresh-faced knight, unarmed, save for an empty scabbard at his waist, came unto the hall at Camelot.

And as the other knights set all eyes upon the two, the elderly one led the young boy right up to the Table Round, and he led him to the Siege Perilous, where beside sat Sir Lancelot.

The old man lifted up the silken cloth, which showed that the words inscribed in gold had changed again. Now it read:

THIS IS THE SIEGE OF GALAHAD THE HIGH PRINCE.

The old knight set his young charge surely in that seat, and departed, so that the boy was in the centre of the others' looks. Many marvelled that one so young did dare sit in that siege, but Lancelot knew him as his own son, and his heart swelled up with pride.

The next day, King Arthur took Galahad to a lake near Camelot, where the court had found a sword set into a stone in a lake. This sword was inscribed with lettering, which read that only the best knight in the world could pull the sword clear.

Now, many thought that this knight must surely be Sir Lancelot, but Lancelot had remembered the sins of his love for the Queen, and had said he was unworthy to try the sword. Sir Gawain and Sir Percival were both knights of great renown, but when they tried to lift the sword, it would not move.

Now Arthur was sure that Galahad was the rightful owner of the sword, and so it was, for Galahad lifted it cleanly and easily, and it fitted perfectly into his empty scabbard.

Then Arthur organised a great jousting tournament, that Galahad might test his skill against the other knights. And Galahad acquitted himself superbly, and many good knights of the Table Round were unhorsed by the young man, save two whom he did not fight, Lancelot and Sir Percival.

That evening the knights were again come unto the hall in Camelot for their supper, every man in his place at the Table Round, and this time there were no empty seats.

Scarcely had they sat down, when there was a great cracing and a crying of thunder that shook the very walls of Camelot, and in the midst of this clamour a great burst of light flooded into the hall, like a sunbeam that was seven times clearer than daylight.

Then all the knights felt themselves filled with the grace of the Holy Ghost. They beheld one another to be fairer than ever they were before, and they were struck dumb by the brilliance of the light.

Then came into the hall a golden centre to this light, and it was the Holy Grail, covered in a cloth of white samite, so that none could see the vessel underneath. And with the Grail came all manner of meat and drink that the knights loved best.

As the Holy Grail crossed over the length of the hall it vanished as suddenly as it had come, and in the sudden emptiness of the hall after its passing, the knights all burst into voice at once.

Sir Gawain, ever impetuous, leapt to his feet and spoke unto the company. "One thing has beguiled us this evening," he cried. "We could not see the Holy Grail because it was so preciously covered. And I will vow here and now, that tomorrow without delay, I will go out in quest of the Holy Grail. I will labour for a year and a day, or longer if needs be, and I shall not rest until I have seen the Grail more openly than it has been seen here."

The other knights were greatly inspired by this and once Gawain had sat down, each of them rose and made vows such as he had done. And as they were rejoicing and making great plans for their quest, only Arthur was silent.

For Arthur remembered the prophecies and teaching of the soothsayer Merlin, and he knew that many of his knights would never return, and the Table Round would never be restored.

THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL

The quest for the Holy Grail continued for many years, and all the knights who set out to seek the Holy vessel had many marvelous adventures, but none more than Sir Lancelot who was to see the Grail at Castle Carbonek, or Galahad whose destiny was to fulfil the quest.

Lancelot rode hard for several days, until he came unto an old chapel, where he thought to find himself rest.

He tried to enter therein, but could only reach the altar, richly arrayed in silk and with six great candles set into a fair silver candlestick. He could find no entry to the chapel itself and at last, tired and dismayed, laid himself to sleep on his shield at a stony cross outside.

He was half wakened some time after when two fair white palfreys rode up to the cross. The palfreys bore a litter which carried a sick knight, that moaned in pain for the Holy Grail to come to heal him.

Lancelot stirred, still half asleep, for it seemed to him that he could not rise into wakefulness, and he espied the candlestick from the altar carry itself, as if floating, unto the cross. It was followed by a silver table, and the shining holy vessel of the Holy Grail, although Lancelot could see none that was bearing it aloft. He heard the sick knight sit up and welcome the Holy Grail, and he saw him kneel down to the ground to touch the vessel and kiss it. Then the knight rose up again whole and healed. The Holy Grail remained at the cross for a long while before it glided back into the chapel, and yet still had Lancelot no power to follow it.

After some hours Lancelot woke fully. He recalled how the sick knight had been healed, but it was as though it were all a dream. And even as he thought this, a voice came to him, and told him to withdraw from the holy place in which he had been sleeping, for he was unworthy.

Lancelot was sore unhappy and wept at these words, and the more unhappy still when he discovered that his horse and helm and sword had been taken away by the healed knight, yet he knew well the message.

"My sin and wickedness have brought me unto great dishonor. When I sought worldly adventures and worldly desires, I achieved them. Now I have taken up a holy adventure and my old sin has come back to shame me, so that I have no power when holy blood appears before me."

With much sorrow, Lancelot departed from the cross on foot and went unto a hermitage where the hermit would hear his confession. The hermit counseled Lancelot that his shame in God's eyes had to do with his sinful love for Guenever, and that he should forswear his lust for her. And Lancelot fully repented of his earthly sins, and with the hermit's blessing set out to start his quest afresh.

After many months, Lancelot came unto the water of Mortaise, where he laid down to rest. A vision came to him in his sleep and told him to enter the first ship that he could find. Lancelot arose and went to the strand, where he found a ship without either sail or oar and he entered and a great feeling of peace and joy overwhelmed him, and he remained with the ship for over a month.

Then one day, somewhat weary of the small ship, he was sitting on the shore when he heard a thundering of hooves, and a most seemly looking knight on a fair horse galloped up to the shore. He dismounted and, taking his saddle and bridle with him, went straight into the ship.

Lancelot followed, curious about this self-assured young man, and made himself known to the young man, whereupon the knight revealed that he was Sir Galahad, Lancelot's own son. There was much rejoicing between them as the two embraced, and told each other of their adventures.

Galahad had ridden from Camelot into strange lands. Many adventures befell him and always he was successful in his endeavors and gained much in knightly experience. He had defeated many knights in fair combat, he had given support to the defenders in a great siege at a castle, and with their comrades Sir Bors and Sir Percival, he had been set adrift to sea in a boat which had beached them in the marshes of Scotland, there to do battle with many knights who had challenged them.

Lancelot made great joy to hear his tales. His own quest had been tortuous, with little success, and he took much pride in his son. For a full six months, Lancelot and Galahad voyaged together in that boat, encountering many perilous adventures.

But never did they come near the Holy Grail, that was the true nature of their quest and so Galahad then left the ship to seek the vessel as he was ordained.

This made Sir Lancelot sad, for he was alone and downhearted, but he prayed daily to God that he might still see some tidings of the Holy Grail. The ship carried him over the sea, he knew not whereto, but trusted it to steer him safely.

After a month at sea, the ship beached at midnight beside a fine castle. A postern opened out towards the sea and a voice bade Lancelot to enter in. Lancelot armed himself and went to the gate, for here, so he thought, might at last be his adventure.

As he neared the castle, Lancelot saw two lions on guard. He drew his sword, but it was smitten from his hand and a voice chided his evil faith, that he put more trust in weapons than in his Maker.

He entered the castle without further challenge, but inside he could find no door or gate which would open. But behind one door he could hear sweet and reverent singing, and he knew full well that the Holy Grail was in that room. Lancelot fell to his knees and prayed to God to show him at least some part of the Grail.

He looked up from his prayers and was filled with awe to see the chamber door swing slowly open. From inside shone out a great light, that was the clearest, purest light Lancelot had ever seen.

Lancelot looked up and into the chamber, and there was the silver table, and the Holy Grail covered in red samite and all the ornaments of an altar, and a priest who seemed to celebrate mass. Lancelot could not bear to stay outside, and taking a deep breath, he strode into the room where the Grail was.

As Lancelot reached out to touch the Grail, a scorching wind threw him down. His body would not move, and then he felt hands all about him, that carried him out of the room and left him in the passageway.

The next morning the people of the castle found Lancelot's body outside the chamber door. He was taken to a bedchamber, where he lay without stirring.

Lancelot awoke on the twenty fifth day and learned that he had achieved as much of the Holy Grail as he would ever see, and Lancelot understood and thanked God for that which he had been allowed.

Elsewhere, Galahad, since departing from the ship, had many further adventures before he met again with Sir Percival and Sir Bors. The three of them then rode together until they came to the Castle Carbonek. When they entered within, King Pelles was full glad to see them, for he knew that now the quest for the Grail would be achieved.

King Pelles, his son Eliazar, and the three Grail knights sat down to dinner, but before they could eat, a voice came to them. "There are two among you that are not in the quest for the Holy Grail, and therefore you both should depart."

King Pelles stood up. The moment had come, and with a single look at Galahad he and his son slipped away. Scarce had they gone, when a man and four angels appeared before the knights. The angels set the man down before a table of silver and on the table the Holy Grail appeared.

The man, who was dressed as a bishop, set about the ritual of the celebrating of mass. He kissed Galahad and bade Galahad kiss his fellow knights, which he did and then the bishop vanished away.

The three knights sat at the table in full dread of what might next happen. They looked up and saw a man come out of the holy vessel, a man with open wounds bleeding freely, as did those of Jesus Christ, and he offered the holy vessel to Galahad.

Galahad knelt and received his Saviour, and Our Lord then told Galahad that he must depart with Bors and Percival the next morn-ing to the sea, where he would find a ship waiting for him.

On the morrow, the three knights set off, and after three days came to a rivage where they found a ship waiting for them. On board the ship they found a table of silver and the Holy Grail covered in a cloth of red samite. The three knelt down and prayed with much reverence.

The ship took them across the water to the city of Sarras. They disembarked and, taking the table of silver, went into the city where they remained for a full twelve months.

On that day at the year's end, the man in the likeness of a bishop came to Galahad and Bors and Percival, and he had the Holy Grail with him. They celebrated mass, and the man revealed himself to the knights as Joseph, son of Joseph of Arimathea, and now Galahad knew that his time on earth was near an end.

Galahad kneeled before the table which held the Holy vessel and made his prayers, and as he did so, his soul departed quickly and quietly to Jesus Christ. The watching Percival and Bors perceived a great multitude of angels take it up to heaven. They saw too that a great hand came down and took the Vessel and bore that up to heaven as well. And this was the last that any earthly man saw of the Holy Grail.

THE DEATH OF ARTHUR

When the Holy Grail had been achieved and that part of the knights that still lived had come back unto the Table Round, it seemed that the Kingdom would be as great as it had been before.

But Sir Lancelot soon forgot his repentance and his vows of the quest. Soon he began to resort unto Queen Guenever again, and truly the love that was between them was so great that they spent many hours together privily. Arthur was told, but he wished only for peace, and would not believe unless Sir Lancelot was taken with the deed. So Agravain and Mordred, who hated Lancelot, lay in wait with twelve knights and trapped him in the Queen's chamber.

Though he had none armour, shield, sword nor spear, Lancelot fought free and escaped, slaying all but Mordred, who fled to the King. Guenever was sentenced to the fire, but Lancelot returned to rescue her and they left Logres for Lancelot's lands in France.

For himself, Arthur desired only peace with Lancelot, for he had loved him well in earlier days. But Arthur listened to the counsel of Gawain, who was his nephew. And Gawain was mad for vengeance, for Lancelot had slain his bretheren in the rescue.

So Arthur took his army to France, leaving Sir Mordred to rule England in his absence, for Sir Mordred was his own natural son. And Arthur also put his wife Queen Guenever under Mordred's governance.

All the while Arthur was waging battle in France, Mordred made mischief at home. He forged letters the which he said had been sent from France, telling of Arthur's death in battle, and was himself crowned at Canterbury.

Next Mordred announced his plan to take Guenever as his wife. The Queen was passing sad, but she hid her heart and agreed to the wedding. Mordred trusted Guenever well and gave her leave to go to London, to buy all manner of things for their wedding, whereupon she went straight to the Tower of London and stocked it for a long siege.

When Arthur heard of all these deeds, he summoned his knights and turned for England to be avenged upon Mordred. The battle between them was bloody and vicious, but Arthur's courage and his men's prowess prevailed and, although many good knights died, Arthur's armies were victorious, though Sir Gawain was killed. Mordred retreated to Salisbury.

The final battle was assigned for Salisbury on the day after Trinity Sunday. The night before, Arthur could not sleep; his heart was heavy with the decline of his Kingdom and the enmity of Lancelot. At last he fell to sleeping fitfully, and as he slept, he dreamed, and it seemed that the ghost of Gawain appeared to him.

"I have come to warn you of your death," said the Gawain of Arthur's dream. "If ye fight with Mordred as ye both have assigned, doubt not that ye will be slain. But within the month, Sir Lancelot and all his noble knights will come to England to your rescue."

When Arthur woke, he called his two most trusted knights remaining, Sir Bedevere and Sir Lucan, and charged them to make a truce with Mordred. After some hours it was agreed, and the two leaders arranged to affirm the treaty betwixt their armies on Salisbury Field, and each should bring just fourteen knights.

Arthur and Mordred met, and were agreed. But it chanced that an adder slithered out of a heath bush, and it bit one of the knights on the foot. He drew his sword to kill the snake and the knights of the armies, that had been so wary, saw the point of the sword glinting in the sun and shouted, "Treachery!"

Suddenly all was bugles blowing and trumpeting, and the two hosts set upon each other in the most doleful battle of them all, until both armies were destroyed. Arthur slew Mordred and was himself wounded unto death.

The King turned to Bedevere, last of his knights, "I have not much time left," he said painfully. "Therefore, take my sword Excalibur and throw it into yonder lake." Bedevere took the jeweled sword and went down to the lakeside, but he hid it behind a tree. "I have done as you ask," he told Arthur.

"What saw thou at the lake?" asked Arthur. "Sire," replied Bedevere, "I saw nothing but waves and the wind on the water." "Then thou art lying," said Arthur heavily. "Go again, and quickly, for thy tarrying puts my life in jeopardy."

So Bedevere returned to the lake, and took up the sword and after a moment's hesitation, hurled it as far into the depths as he could. As he looked across the water, he saw a fair arm and a hand rise out of the lake and it caught the sword as it fell."

Arthur was satisfied. He charged Bedevere to take him down to the lakeside, where a barge drew alongside the water's edge. In the little barge were a number of fair ladies, all with black hoods, and when they saw King Arthur they wept and keened greatly. Bedevere placed the weakened King into the barge, where the ladies received him with great mourning.

Arthur struggled to speak. "Bedevere, I must go into the vale of Avalon to be healed of this wound." And Bedevere watched the barge as it sailed away.

EPILOGUE

When Queen Guenever heard that Arthur was slain, and of the bloodshed on Salisbury Field, she stole away to a nunnery at Almesbury, and spent the rest of her days in penance for her sins.

As Gawain had prophesied in Arthur's vision, Lancelot landed at Dover within a month, having heard of Mordred's treachery. He was too late to save Arthur, but was determined to see his lady Guenever again. For seven days he was on the road and on the eighth he came to a nunnery. As he entered the cloister, a nun dressed all in black and white saw him there and swooned.

They spoke together for a short time, and when Lancelot saw that Guenever had taken to a life of penance, he decided that this should be his destiny, too. He took to his horse, weeping for the loss of his love, and rode until he came to the hermitage at Glastonbury, where he took on a monk's habit.

Lancelot saw Guenever just once more, many years later. One night, a vision charged him to ride with all haste to Almesbury. This he did, but he was too late, Guenever was dead but a half hour since. Without his lady, Lancelot would eat but little meat, nor drink, until he sickened more and more and dwindled away. Within six weeks he too was dead.

Of King Arthur there is little more to be told. Some say he rests in Avalon. Others say he is not dead at all, but sleeping and will come again, with his Knights of the Table Round, when the need is greatest.

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