



**THE WINTER
KING**
QUICK START GUIDE

Shadowbands



THE WINTER KING

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A tabletop roleplaying game about the Dark
Britannia under High King Mordred's iron rule

for the ESTIRPE game system

DESIGNED AND WRITTEN BY

Tomás Sendarrubias
Enrique Camino

EDITING

Marta de la Serna and Francisco Javier Valverde

PROOFREADING

Marta de la Serna

TRANSLATION

Benjamin Rhys Palmer

LAYOUT

Laura Faílde

ILLUSTRATIONS

Juan Alberto Hernández
Andrés Sáez «Marlock»
Alberto Martínez «Kisama»

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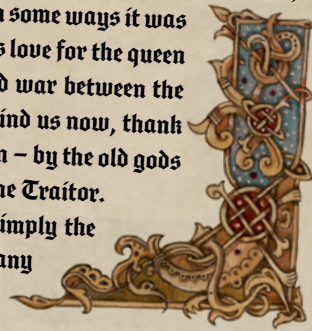
❧ A Twenty-Year Winter ❧



remember as if it were yesterday. We departed Camelot in full knowledge of what awaited us at Camlann. It would be far more than just another battle, a struggle for dominion over land. Our king had brought the Kingdom of Summer to Britannia. He was the embodiment of prophecy, the once and future king, and he had transformed Camelot into a bastion of light, a beacon of hope for a world sliding into darkness after the fall of Rome. But Camelot had been wounded by hatred and betrayal and was teetering on the brink of collapse. Merlin was no longer with us, nor were Galahad and Perceval. Many of the Knights of the Round Table – Arthur's brave dragons – had perished or were lost in their eternal pursuit of the Holy Grail. And yet, as we marched into battle, we drew strength from the knowledge that many of the greatest warriors to set foot in Britannia were still by our side.

On that fateful day, as Camelot's armies advanced through the Kingdom of Summer towards the place our enemies had gathered, we beheld Gawain, his red hair flowing, the torc of Orkney around his neck and the colours of the old North on his cloak. There was Kay, the king's stepbrother and Britannia's finest horseman. The brothers Lucan and Bedivere rode forth too, alongside Aglovale, Geraint, and Bors – the sole survivor of the Grail quest. Leading us were our resplendent king and queen. And riding at the king's right hand was Lancelot, the greatest of us all. His presence stirred our hearts, although we knew that in some ways it was he who had brought us to the edge of the precipice. His love for the queen had caused the death of young Gareth and unleashed war between the Benoic clan and the Orkney clan. That war was behind us now, thank God. Gawain and Lancelot had made peace and sworn – by the old gods and the new – to fight shoulder to shoulder against the Traitor.

In those days, no one spoke his name. He was simply the Traitor. He had been one of us, our brother in many ways. The king's firstborn son, born of what the



old religion deemed sacred but the new religion called sin. Mordred, offspring of the king and his sister, the accursed Morgawse, whose malevolence had inflicted such suffering upon the kingdom. But the serpent turned upon itself, with Mordred murdering his own mother. May God forgive me, but many in Britannia rejoiced at the demise of Morgawse. We knew there was a special place in Annwn for the Queen of the Orkneys, a place where she would suffer immeasurable torments for the evils she had caused. But her venom lived on in Mordred. He was our enemy now. He laid claim to the crown of Britannia, bolstered by those who had thrived in Camelot's shadow, allying himself with the barbarous Saxons, the cruel Angles, and the tenacious Cruithni. Frankish, Vandal and Goth mercenaries had also joined him to plunder Britannia.

And yet, as I have stated, our struggle transcended territorial disputes. We were fighting for a dream, for the dream, for Arthur and Merlin's vision of Camelot. They had brought the kingdom of Summer to Britannia, and we were not ready to lose it. Ahead of us, Mordred's forces assembled on the coast, between the kingdom of Summer, the wilds of Cymru, and the lands of the Cornovii.

That place was called Camlann.

The songs recount how the battle commenced, how, for three days, Arthur and Mordred measured the strength of their forces, and how the Traitor brought forth the old druid Blaise – Merlin's mentor and a grandfather to all – and had him brutally dismembered before our eyes. Oh, the stories tell how one of Mordred's men raised his sword to kill a snake, but what had the Romans and Christians called druids if not snakes? This savagery was more than Arthur could bear, even from his own son, and so the battle began in earnest.

The king led the charge, Excalibur ablaze like lightning in a thunderstorm. The queen rode beside him – Boudicca reborn – leading her people into battle. Lancelot, Gawain, Bors, and the last of Arthur's Dragons thundered behind them. Their power was such that not even the Saxon berserkers could withstand their onslaught. The enemy's lines collapsed and soon our horses waded through their blood.



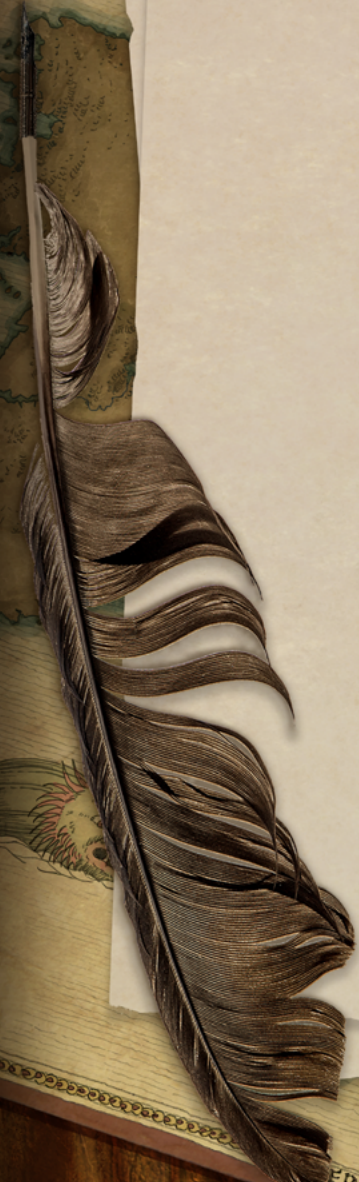
I will not retell the battle in its entirety, for much has been said and sung of the heroics that transpired. How Gawain put the northern tribes to flight before succumbing to a poisoned javelin through his neck; how Bors and Kay saved the king from certain death at the hands of Bretwalda Cerdic's soldiers; and how Queen Guinevere fought in single combat against the Goth chieftain whose laughter at having to face a mere woman was cut short when his severed head tumbled to the ground. Yes, much has already been said about Camlann.

And yet, there are still some truths untold. Nobody has been able to express the depths of our terror when we realised that we had been deceived, that it had all been a ruse, a trap more terrible than we could ever have imagined. Because there, among Mordred's ranks, lurked entities not of this world. No, I do not mean the denizens of the Otherworld, nor those with the blood of the fairies. Nor do I speak of the Saxon valdaermen, savage Pictish sorcerers, or renegade druids who had fallen under Mordred's control. I speak instead of beings of dark, terrible magic; the magic of the ancient gods who roamed these lands long before the Tuatha Dé Danann had set foot in Jerne. Dead warriors rose again to continue fighting. Creatures made of darkness, fire and blood wreaked havoc on our ranks. Kay fell, as did Lucan and Aglovale... only to rise again under Mordred's banner. Despite it all, Arthur, wielding Excalibur, fought his way to his son. The world held its breath as they came face to face – the Summer King and the Winter Prince, the Lord of Light and the Herald of Darkness. Arthur of Britannia. Arthur the Great. Arthur Pendragon. Arthyr ap Uthyr, Ard Reigh de Prydein.

There, before our anguished eyes, Arthur fell by his own son's hand. Excalibur shattering beneath his body as he fell. The sun vanished from the sky and the truth revealed itself: Queen Morgause was still alive. She was there too, wielding her dark magic – the Queen of Air and Darkness. All this time, while we had thought her dead, she had been delving deeper into dark, forbidden magic. She had deceived Nimue, just as she had once deceived Merlin; and now she had attained ancient, dreadful powers. She unleashed a desiccating, poisonous wind that reduced the last of Camelot's forces to ash. Thus perished Bors of Ganis, Lancelot of the Lake, and Queen Guinevere. Only the timely arrival of Arthur's



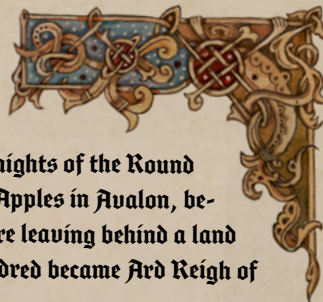
Ag...
Darn...
An...
Las Piedras Colgan...
La Isla de Crista...
Founta Belgaram...
Clauentum...
Sorviodunum...
Caerhyd...
Londinium...
Norwich...
Deva Victrix...
Via Parisorum...
Calle Blanco...
Segontium...
Carbonak...
Emry...
Flowe...
Eidyn...
Camlann...
Tara...
Mordred...
Mistencia...
Lirio...



Eboracum — 1
Lygocallium — 2
Tintagel
Exet
Carlion
Toenes
ae Salis
Ameloe
varia — 9
bry — 10
ter
— 11
— 12
— 13
— 14
— 15
— 16
— 17

other sister, Morgan le Fay, from Avalon prevented our utter annihilation.

The power of Avalon had waned, but Morgan's magic was still powerful enough to disperse Morgawse's malevolent wind, allowing Bedivere and the remaining knights of the Round Table to retrieve Arthur's body and retreat to the Isle of Apples in Avalon, beyond Morgawse's reach. As we departed, we knew we were leaving behind a land that had fallen into shadow. For there, at Camlann, Mordred became Ard Reigh of Britannia – the Winter King.



Some of Arthur's followers chose to remain in Avalon with Morgan le Fay.

Others yielded to the rule of King Mordred.

Some of us vanished, going into hiding because we knew that Mordred would never stop hunting us. Even today, the Winter King will not rest until he has murdered us all: the few survivors of Camlann, the sons and daughters of the knights of the Round Table, and the druids and bards who remember that time and who whisper of the Storm King to come.

Some of us sought refuge in a new life, wandering the roads under the banner of Christ, living under false names. Weathered by age and adversity, we now find solace in the belief that martyrdom leads to salvation. We recognise that the world today has a greater need for love and comfort than it does for the warrior gods of old.

But each of us remembers.

We shall never forget.

And we know that one day...

One day, King Arthur will return.

Brother Athelred
formerly known as Gwydre ap Arthyr





WHAT IS THE WINTER KING?



It is an epic alternate history, drawing inspiration from millennia of Arthurian myths. Camelot has fallen. Mordred reigns as king. Excalibur has been shattered into pieces, and the Knights of the Round Table have all perished or vanished. Every ideal that our High King – Arthur Pendragon – once championed has been extinguished in this Dark Britannia.

But you will battle to achieve victory against the odds. You embody the next generation, inheriting the bloodline and bravery of the old heroes and heroines of the Round Table. You will defy the tyranny and oppression of Mordred and his mother, Morgawse – Queen of Air and Darkness.

You are warriors, scholars, sorcerers, druids, bards... Might you one day earn the privilege to call yourselves knights?

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

A roleplaying game (RPG), such as *The Winter King*, is an immersive exercise in collective imagination. It entails embarking on adventures with companions, collaboratively shaping the narrative through shared decision-making. One participant assumes the role of game master, while the others play as protagonists. When confronted with uncertainty, the roll of dice, coupled with a character's Abilities, determines the outcome.

The best way to understand how it works is to simply play a game. However, for those who would like to get a better idea beforehand, there are plenty of sample games to watch on the Shadowlands YouTube channel.

THE STORIES IN THE WINTER KING

Welcome to Dark Britannia. Arthur has fallen, and the Kingdom of Summer has died with him, marking the end of a utopian era. Under the rule of the High King, the Isle of the Mighty had stood as a beacon in the chaos that followed the collapse of the Roman Empire. Arthur, Guinevere, Merlin, and the Knights of the Round Table had established a realm of justice and tranquillity, warding off war and affliction, yielding bountiful harvests.

Alas, the Kingdom of Summer lies in ruins. As the traditional stories recount, Arthur met his end fighting his son Mordred in Camlann. But in this version of the legend, Mor-

dred did not die alongside Arthur. Instead, he is alive and well and wearing the crown that once belonged to his father. Mordred now rules Britannia as High King from his throne in the city of Venta Belgarum. His is a Kingdom of Winter.

Mordred's mother, Queen Morgawse, has forged a terrible pact with long-forgotten gods, bolstering her son's rule with her formidable dark magic, earning her the title of Queen of Air and Darkness. And so the Otherworld seeps into Britannia, spawning an array of monstrosities – the undead, spectres, and other nightmarish creatures roam the island. With Queen Morgawse ruling the north, Mordred dominating the south, the Saxons wreaking havoc in the east, and the Welsh chieftains at each other's throats in the war-torn west, this is Dark Britannia.

As the title suggests, this is a game of dark fantasy. It is fantasy because while it is grounded in historical reality – the collapse of the Roman Empire – the narrative intertwines with folklore and legend. Saxon warriors, Brythonic priests, and Welsh hunters cross paths with fairies, enchanted forests, bridges made of swords, castles rooted in the Otherworld, horned deities, and even dragons. And it is dark because the world forged by Mordred and Morgawse is steeped in shadows, where the dead rise from their graves to serve their former foes; where creatures of blood and lightning roam the skies and punish any who stray from safety; where sacred sanctuaries dwindle amidst encroaching peril. Dark Britannia teeters on the brink of eternal darkness, as both the High King and the Queen of Air and Darkness harbour a singular ambition: to obliterate Arthur's legacy – Camelot, the Round Table, Avalon, the champions of the Kingdom of Summer and their descendants. Those erstwhile paladins of light must now adopt disguises and conceal themselves to stay alive.

Ultimately, the extent of the fantasy's darkness is determined by the collective narrative forged by those seated around the gaming table. Some tables may tread a sinister and macabre path, where characters are beset by storms, haunted by spectres, bereft of refuge. Conversely, others may revel in the epic grandeur of the world, where heroes engage in titanic struggles, surmount divine challenges, and uphold the beacon of light against encroaching darkness. The spirit of *The Winter King* is that of a lost utopia, a world lamenting the fact that any point in the past was better than this terrible present. And indeed, nothing could be truer.

A NEW GENERATION OF HEROES

Following the clash at Camlann, those who defied Mordred, who remained faithful to Arthur and became stewards of the Kingdom of Summer's memory, were relentlessly tracked down and slaughtered. The few who survived have vanished, their names – Bors, Tristan, Aneurin, Morgan le Fay, and Nimue – mere whispers, for revealing their whereabouts could spell a fate worse than death.

And yet, despite all their efforts, Mordred and Morgawse have not managed to extinguish the light of Britannia completely. Hiding in remote regions, wandering the wilds of the west or the north, or holed up in distant monasteries, the descendants of the warriors who served the Kingdom of Summer bide their time, ready to rise up and lift their swords – or their voices in spell and song – to confront the darkness.

These heroes shall be your characters – the children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and allies of Arthur's champions. They carry within them the bloodlines of Lancelot, Perceval, Gawain, Culhwch, Kay, and even the Lady of the Lake. From their midst shall emerge heroes, anointed by destiny, will, or divine providence. Thus, the player characters in *The Winter King* shall always be hailed as The Heroes. For that is what they are: the courageous few who have chosen to fight against fear and damnation, who hold the seeds of the Kingdom of Summer in their hearts, even if many are too young to have experienced it for themselves.

And maybe, just maybe, they are Britannia's greatest hope.

Among these heroes, four primary bloodlines stand resolute, driven by an unyielding determination to confront and defeat Mordred and Morgawse.

THE BLOODLINE OF LOTHIAN

Descended from the once formidable King Lot of Lothian and the Orkneys, whose sons defied their father to take their places at the Round Table and fight beside Arthur, this bloodline embodies the noble virtues of the Kingdom of Summer. The names of each of the four princes of Lothian – Gawain, Agravain, Gaheris and Gareth – are etched in history and legend. While their descendants share blood ties with Morgawse and Mordred, their allegiance to the light fuels their relentless opposition to the encroaching darkness. From warriors to priests, bards to hunters, the descendants of Lothian stand among the fiercest adversaries to the evil forces of Dark Britannia.

THE BLOODLINE OF BENOIC

Hailing from the lost Armorican kingdom of Benoit, the royal lineage of Benoit found sanctuary in Britannia after their homeland fell to the Franks, portending the fall of Britannia to the Saxons. This bloodline included Lancelot, prince of Benoit, who would come to embody Arthur's government and the Kingdom of Summer.

His bastard brother, Hector, and his cousins, Bors and Lionel, also became pillars of support for the

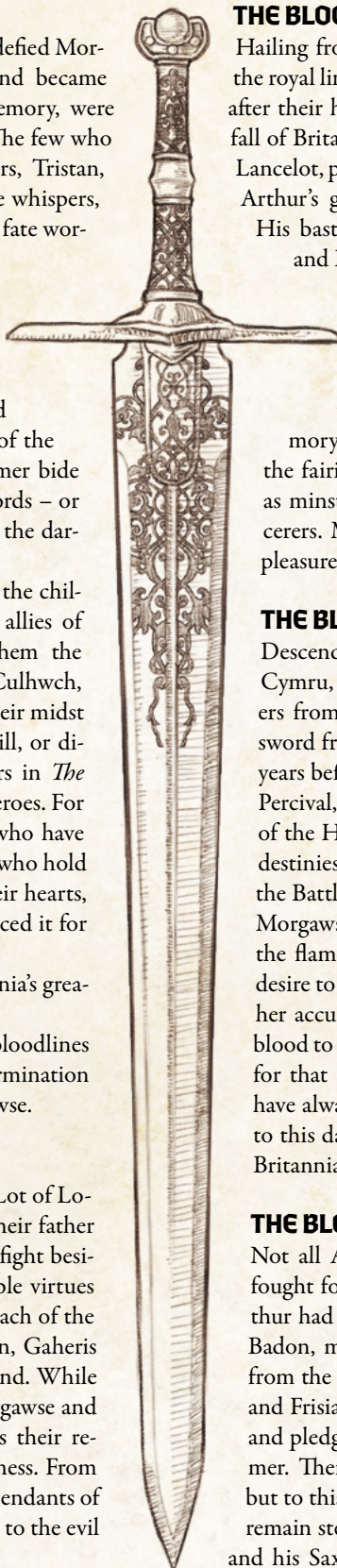
High King. The family's distrust of Mordred and Morgawse long predated Britannia's descent into darkness. After the calamity of Camlann, the family decided to remain in Britannia and preserve the memory of Camelot. Their blood is intertwined with the fairies of the Broceliande Forest and they excel as minstrels, leaders, noble lords, prophets and sorcerers. Members of the Benoit bloodline relish the pleasure of company and the adoration of admirers.

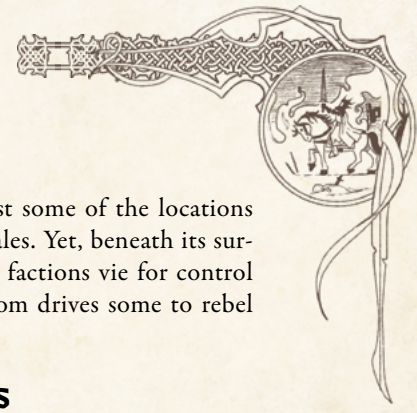
THE BLOODLINE OF WALES

Descended from King Pellinore of Gwynedd, Lord of Cymru, who was one of Arthur's most loyal supporters from the moment he pulled Uther Pendragon's sword from the stone into which Merlin had sunk it years before. Pellinore's sons, Lamorak, Aglovale and Percival, and his daughter, Dintrane, became some of the High King's closest allies. All knew that their destinies were entwined with Arthur's. Even before the Battle of Camlann, they had crossed swords with Morgawse, and her subsequent actions only fanned the flames of their hatred. The Welsh clan's fervent desire to defeat the Queen of Air and Darkness – and her accursed son – borders on obsession. Bound by blood to the kings of the Holy Grail and to their quest for that sacred object, the minds of the Welsh clan have always flirted with madness, and so it continues to this day as they strive against the turmoil of Dark Britannia.

THE BLOODLINE OF AELLE

Not all Arthur's allies were Britons. Not all Saxons fought for Cerdic at Camlann. Years earlier, after Arthur had defeated the Saxons at the Battle of Mount Badon, many of the barbarian tribes who had come from the continent – including Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians – took up the banner of Bretwalda Aelle and pledged their allegiance to the Kingdom of Summer. There were Saxons on both sides at Camlann, but to this day, many still bear the banner of Aelle and remain steadfast in their opposition to King Mordred and his Saxon ally, Cerdic. Above all else, they detest





the darkness imposed on the land by Queen Morgawse. The songs might not remember Arthur's Saxon warriors, but even today, there are Saxon shamans, warriors and explorers who remain faithful to the memory of Aelle. They are ready to take up arms to defend the ideals of Camelot – against their fellow Saxons if need be – no matter how much blood must be shed.

KINGDOMS OF WINTER

Dark Britannia has fallen into shadow. From the cliffs of the Saxon shore in the east to the rugged wilds of Wales in the west; and from the wide southern plains to the craggy northern coasts. But the Darkness extends beyond earthly Britannia, reaching into the realms of the Otherworld. At places like the Hanging Stones, Avalon, Celyddon Forest, the peaks of Eryri, and other mysterious sites where ancient stone monuments stand as silent witnesses to forgotten times, the boundaries between worlds blur. The wise tread carefully amidst mushroom circles and enchanted streams, wary of the reflections of willows, oaks, and hazels in the calm waters of lakes. The brave may seek aid from gods and kings who dwell in the Otherworld, but they must beware, for allies of the Queen of Air and Darkness lurk in those shadowed realms as well.

VENTA BELGARUM

Located in the south, it was a vital hub of trade during Roman times when its privileged position gave it dominion over land and sea routes. Today, it is the capital and stronghold of Mordred, the usurper king determined to erase the memory of Camelot. Here, Mordred gathers his forces – loyal Britons, Saxon guards, and fierce Pictish warriors from beyond The Antonine Wall. Probably the most important city in Britannia, Venta Belgarum may also be the only one that recalls what Rome once meant to the Isles of Britannia. But it is also the icy heart of the Kingdom of Winter, and the second most dangerous place for the descendants of Arthur's warriors to venture.

WALES

A land unto itself. Arthur never actually defeated the Welsh in battle. Instead, from the times of Pellinore, they had accepted his rule. Today, many lords of Wales claim that they had never kneeled before the High King, although others would remark that they never stood against him either. Wales is a mosaic of small kingdoms and realms where pre-Roman and pagan traditions persist. From the fertile lands of Dyfed to the pirate-infested Demetian Coast and the snow-capped highlands of Eryri in Gwynedd, Wales is a land of diverse landscapes and hidden wonders. Magical places like the Grail Castle and

the ruins of Dinas Emrys are just some of the locations that the heroes might visit in Wales. Yet, beneath its surface lies a simmering conflict, as factions vie for control and the memory of a lost kingdom drives some to rebel against Mordred's tyranny.

LOTHIAN AND THE ORKNEYS

Many claim that King Lot was a Pict from the Orkneys who gained control of Lothian (the land formerly known as Gododdin, realm of the Votadini) through cunning and betrayal. The kingdom of Lothian, its capital in Dun Eidynd, encompasses the land between the two Roman bulwarks – Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall. It includes the ancient and magical Celyddon Forest, where Merlin sought refuge after the death of his beloved Ganiada, and where Arthur fought the Great Boar, Twrch Trwyth. The Orkneys are a group of islands off the coast. To some, they are merely stone crags; to others, they are sacred. After Lot's death, Gawain chose to keep his place at the Round Table, so Agravain ruled these lands as steward. The Orkneys now serve as the personal domain of Lot's wife, Queen Morgawse. The mound of Maes Howe is her centre of power, and no one in their right mind would approach it unless they intended to kneel before the queen. Some say that the true power of Britannia has always been found in Lothian and Wales, and perhaps there is some truth to that claim.

CAMELOT

Once the heart of the Summer Kingdom, Camelot has been reduced to a haunted wasteland, testament to the triumph of darkness over light. King Arthur's Palace, St. Stephen's Cathedral, the Forest of the Ancient Gods, the Great Hall of the Round Table... all lie in ruins. The Queen of Air and Darkness cast the most terrible of curses on this place, and the dead of Camlann who fell fighting for Arthur have risen from the blighted ground to become the malevolent guardians of this desolate place, under the command of the undead King Rience. In an insult to the memory of the Summer Kingdom and the Round Table, many of the warriors who gave rise to Britannia's most noble bloodlines now stalk Camelot's thorny wasteland as servants of Darkness, alongside all manner of undead creatures and malicious spectres.

RHEGED

Amidst the chaos of Dark Britannia, the realm of Rheged stands as a beacon of resistance against Mordred's tyranny. Once, this kingdom counted itself among Arthur's enemies. King Urien fought alongside Lot of Lothian against the High King. But Urien came to accept Arthur, marrying his sister, Morgan le Fay. Urien has long since

died, and Morgan le Fay went on to become Lady of the Lake after Vivienne's death, but Rheged has remained faithful to the Summer Kingdom. After Camlann, Urien and Morgan le Fay's son Owain – known as the Knight of the Lion – withdrew to *Caer Lial*. There, with the aid of his wife, Lady Lawdys, and the sorceress Lunette, Owain rallied his forces to defend Rheged against Mordred's relentless onslaught. Owain then relocated his capital to *Eboracum*. During the last twenty years, Owain has made Rheged one of the few places where those loyal to Arthur can find refuge. It is known to all that Lord Bedivere, one of the warriors closest to Arthur – and he who cast *Excalibur's* remains into the lake to keep it from Mordred and Morgawse – now rules *Caer Lial*, keeping watch over *Hadrian's Wall*. There may be other survivors of *Camlann* guarding the kingdom's borders... for much vigilance is needed. Everyone knows that Rheged is a realm under siege, caught between Mordred's anvil and Morgawse's hammer. Only time will tell if Rheged can withstand the darkness that threatens to consume *Britannia*.





QUICK REFERENCE RULES



Here you'll find a quick reference guide to the rules of *The Winter King*. It doesn't cover all the mechanics included in the Corebook, but it will help you play your first games.

TASK RESOLUTION

A player character (PC) in *The Winter King* is defined by five **General Abilities** and two **Combat Abilities**, which will determine most of the rolls in the game.

When there is uncertainty about the outcome of what you're trying to do, roll the dice to test one of these Abilities. In *The Winter King*, only six-sided dice (referred to as 'd' from now on) are used. Roll the number of dice indicated by your Ability. Don't add up the results; read each die individually. Each 5 counts as a success, and each 6 counts as two successes. If you have at least one success, you achieve what you set out to do. Each additional success can enhance the result of your action.

Additionally, each of the five General Abilities may have associated **Specialities**; these are actions that your character excels at. If what you're trying to do falls within one of your Specialities, you can roll any dice that did not yield successes one more time.

Combat Abilities do not have Specialities. Instead, they have Masteries, which unlock special mechanics for your PC. These are included in the Corebook.

THE SEVEN ABILITIES

These are the Abilities that define your character. In parentheses, we indicate some of the most common Specialities for each, if they have them:

General

- ☛ **STRENGTH:** Physical power, endurance, stamina, and anything related to pushing your body (Specialities: *Feats of strength, Resistance, Climbing, Speed...*).
- ☛ **DEXTERITY:** Balance, stealth, hand-eye coordination (Specialities: *Discretion, Acrobatics, Lockpicking, Sleight of hand...*).
- ☛ **WISDOM:** Knowledge accumulated by the character (Specialities: *Detecting lies, Streetwise, Cartography, Politics, Religion...*).
- ☛ **CHARISMA:** Anything that involves influencing other people or beings (Specialities: *Oratory, Persuasion, Deception, Intimidation...*).

- ☛ **DEDUCTION:** Drawing conclusions from data (Specialities: *Archives, Orientation, Tracking...*).

Combat

- ☛ **FIGHTING:** Melee fighting, armed or unarmed.
- ☛ **RANGED WEAPONS:** Use of bows or thrown weapons.

Difficulties

If the game master decides that there are external factors that could alter the chance of success, they may add or subtract dice from the player's roll. Factors to consider include time constraints, the difficulty of the action, the attitude of the person the character is interacting with, and so on.

If the difficulty reduces the dice to 0d, the player can still try but will need a lot of luck. In such cases, roll 2d and keep the worst result.

Difficulty	Roll
Easy Task	Roll +1d / +2d
Difficult task	Roll -1d / -2d
Extremely difficult task	Roll -4d

EXAMPLE ROLL

Gwendolen tries to convince one of Mordred's guards that she is not the rebel they seek. Her Charisma is level 3, so she rolls 3d and gets 1, 4 and 5. One success is enough to make the guard leave her alone, although he might remember her face later.

The game master may determine that, since there is an active search for Gwendolen underway, the guard has been given a description of her, making her task more difficult and reducing her Charisma roll by 2d. Left with just one die, she rolls a 3: failure.

If Gwendolen has the Deception Speciality, she can re-roll. If she does so and gets a 6, she's achieved two successes and the guard will walk away without giving her a second glance.

OTHER RELEVANT RULES FOR TASK RESOLUTION

Opposed Rolls

Each contender rolls as many dice as their level in the Ability they are using, potentially rerolling if they have Specialities. Whoever gets more successes wins, with a tie resulting in neither side achieving their goal.

Extended Rolls

A task may not be able to be accomplished “all at once”, due to its magnitude or complexity. In this case, the game master must determine how many separate successful rolls are needed to consider this task completed. Any “extra successes” will allow this task to be completed faster than previously assumed.

If it makes it easier, you may think of extended rolls in terms of “it requires X number of successes”, and make the player roll as many successive turns as may be needed in order to achieve that number of successes.

Chain Rolls

You can make one action influence another in a variety of ways, depending on the goal you seek. There are three ways to invest the extra successes in a roll (i.e. all successful rolls beyond the first) to boost the next roll:

- ☛ **QUALITY:** Any successes from the first action are added as extra dice in the second. For example, examining armour with Wisdom before repairing it with Dexterity.
- ☛ **SPEED:** The first roll’s successes set the maximum number of dice you can roll for the second. For example, when combining two actions in a single combat turn, like leaping behind cover with Dexterity before shooting your bow with Ranged Weapons.
- ☛ **HINDRANCE:** The first roll’s successes subtract dice from the second. For example, distracting a soldier with Charisma to hinder his Combat action against your ally.

PERCEPTION ROLLS

In traditional roleplaying games, characters possess scores in ‘passive skills’, which are not triggered by the character but by the game master. These skills primarily serve for player characters to gather information, with examples like Perception or Listen.

In *The Winter King*, we prefer these situations not to rely on dice rolls but rather on the game master’s discretion based on the narrative’s value. The decision of whether characters hear a noise or not hinges on what makes more sense or adds greater dramatic impact to the story.

If a player attempts to use one of these passive skills (e.g., ‘I approach the door, put my ear to it, and listen to what’s happening inside’), it is up to the game master to determine

if the character receives the information and to what extent, always adhering to logic and rewarding clever ideas.

COMBAT

A conflict in *The Winter King* unfolds as a series of combat turns where two or more sides pursue competing interests. Each player character (PC) acts once per turn, with timing determined by their Initiative score, as detailed below (the values of which will already be noted in your Character Sheet):

What are you attempting?	Initiative
Engaging in melee combat?	Initiative = Dexterity + Fighting
Opting for ranged combat?	Initiative = Dexterity + Ranged Weapons
Was your ranged weapon ready at the start of the turn?	Initiative = Dexterity + Ranged Weapons + 2
Performing a non-combat action?	Initiative = Dexterity x 2
Casting magic?	Initiative = Dexterity x 2
In case of a tie?	PCs always act before NPCs

COMBAT CHOREOGRAPHY

A combat sequence initiates when one character attacks another. On a combatant’s Initiative turn, they may take a deliberate action and move up to 7 metres. They can do this in any order they choose: moving and then performing the action, performing the action and then moving, or performing the action while moving.

A combatant targeted by an opponent’s Melee Attack (see next section) must choose how to react, effectively taking their Initiative turn at that moment. Consequently, characters with low Initiative are often limited to reacting to faster opponents.



MELEE ATTACKS

A combatant within 7 metres of an opponent can opt for a melee attack as their deliberate action. The target responds with an opposed roll. Both choose from the following manoeuvres:

- ✦ **DAMAGE:** Fight roll. If you succeed, you deal the Damage indicated by your weapon.
- ✦ **DEFEND:** Can only be used as a reaction to aggression. Fight roll and, if desired, reroll as many dice as your Fighting value. If you succeed, you take no Damage.
- ✦ **SHOVE:** Fight roll. If you succeed, you displace the target a distance (in metres) equal to half your Strength. If the target collides with something solid, it takes half your Strength value in non-lethal Damage (see 'Damage' section).
- ✦ **INCAPACITATE:** Fight roll – 1d. If you succeed, roll for non-lethal Damage. Reroll odd-numbered dice. Only mark Incapacitation (see 'Damage' section).

MULTIPLE ATTACKS

A character who has more than one engagement per turn (e.g., they have attacked an enemy and then been attacked

by another opponent) rolls 2d fewer in each successive engagement, cumulatively. This means that in the second engagement of the same turn they would roll 2d fewer, in the third they would roll 4d fewer, and so on. If this results in 0 dice or a negative number, refer to the 'Difficulties' section. However, regardless of how many engagements a character may have, they can only choose the Damage manoeuvre once per turn.

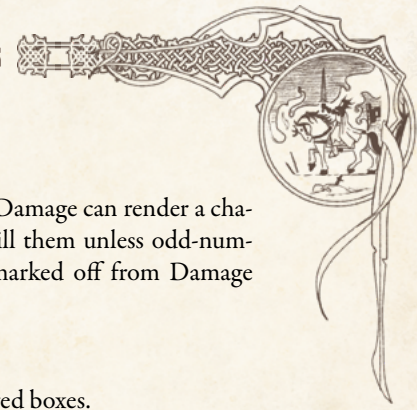
ADVANTAGE POINTS

If you outperform your opponent in an opposed combat roll, you will cause the intended effect, according to your chosen manoeuvre. And what are additional successes used for? Additional successes in opposed combat rolls grant Advantage Points, which can be used as follows:

USE 1 ADVANTAGE POINT TO:

- ✦ Gain Initiative against the same opponent next turn.
- ✦ Add 1d to the next opposed Fight roll against the same opponent.
- ✦ Allow an ally to add 1d to their Fight roll against the same enemy.
- ✦ Add ½ metre to a successful Shove result.
- ✦ Add 1 die to the Damage roll.





RANGED ATTACKS

Upon reaching their Initiative turn, a combatant more than 5 metres away from any opponent can opt for a ranged attack. They select a target and roll dice equal to their Ranged Weapons value.

The game master may add or subtract dice based on factors such as distance, cover, and visibility (see the 'Difficulties' section above).

If at least one roll is successful, the Damage indicated by the weapon is dealt. Every additional success aside from the first one will allow you to add 1d to the Damage value.

Shooting at a Target Engaged in Melee Combat

When shooting at multiple individuals grappling, the player should roll to hit as normal. If successful, randomly determine who suffers the Damage, with equal chances for all. If any combatant is Massive (see next page), each point of Massiveness increases their chances of being hit. For example, if a human PC is grappling with a Massive 1 creature, there's a two in three chance that the creature will be hit, and a one in three chance that the human will be hit.

DAMAGE

Once an attack has landed, it's time to determine the wound inflicted. Each weapon specifies the number of Damage dice to roll. If fighting unarmed, only 1d is rolled.

To interpret the Damage roll, consider each die separately and mark the corresponding boxes on the Character Sheet's two registers.

VITALITY TRACK

This track contains eight numbered boxes: **1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 6**.

When a Damage die matches a number, mark off the corresponding box. If it's already marked, disregard it as a minor wound or a previously damaged area. When all boxes are marked off, the character dies.

Penalty for Wounds: Once a character is injured, they cannot roll any more dice than the highest unmarked number on the Vitality Track. For instance, if the 6 box is marked, they cannot roll more than five dice, and so on.

Trauma: Some weapons have a Trauma value, typically 6, which means that they cause severe wounds. Attacks made with such weapons directly mark that Trauma number off the Vitality Track, as well as one Incapacitation Track box (if it is an even number). Since Trauma values act as extra Damage points, remember to mark Damage rolls as usual.

Non-Lethal Damage: Unarmed attacks cause non-lethal Damage. The Damage roll is carried out as usual, but only even results are considered, marking both the Vitality and Incapacitation boxes simultaneously. If the entire Inca-

pacitation box is filled, non-lethal Damage can render a character unconscious, but it won't kill them unless odd-numbered Vitality boxes are already marked off from Damage received previously.

INCAPACITATION TRACK

This track contains four unnumbered boxes.

The Incapacitation Track doesn't measure how close you are to dying, but rather your ability to keep fighting and enduring. Mark off one box for each even number on the Damage dice. If all boxes are marked, the character is incapacitated.

VITALITY AND INCAPACITATION FOR NPCs

Some adversaries in *The Lay of the Green Knight* have Vitality multipliers. The weakest may have a Vitality of x0.5, meaning that they only have four Vitality boxes (1-2, 3-4, 5 and 6) and two Incapacitation boxes, while the most formidable may have a Vitality of x1.5, totalling twelve Vitality boxes and six Incapacitation boxes. In the corebook you will find even tougher monsters, with a Vitality of x2 or higher.

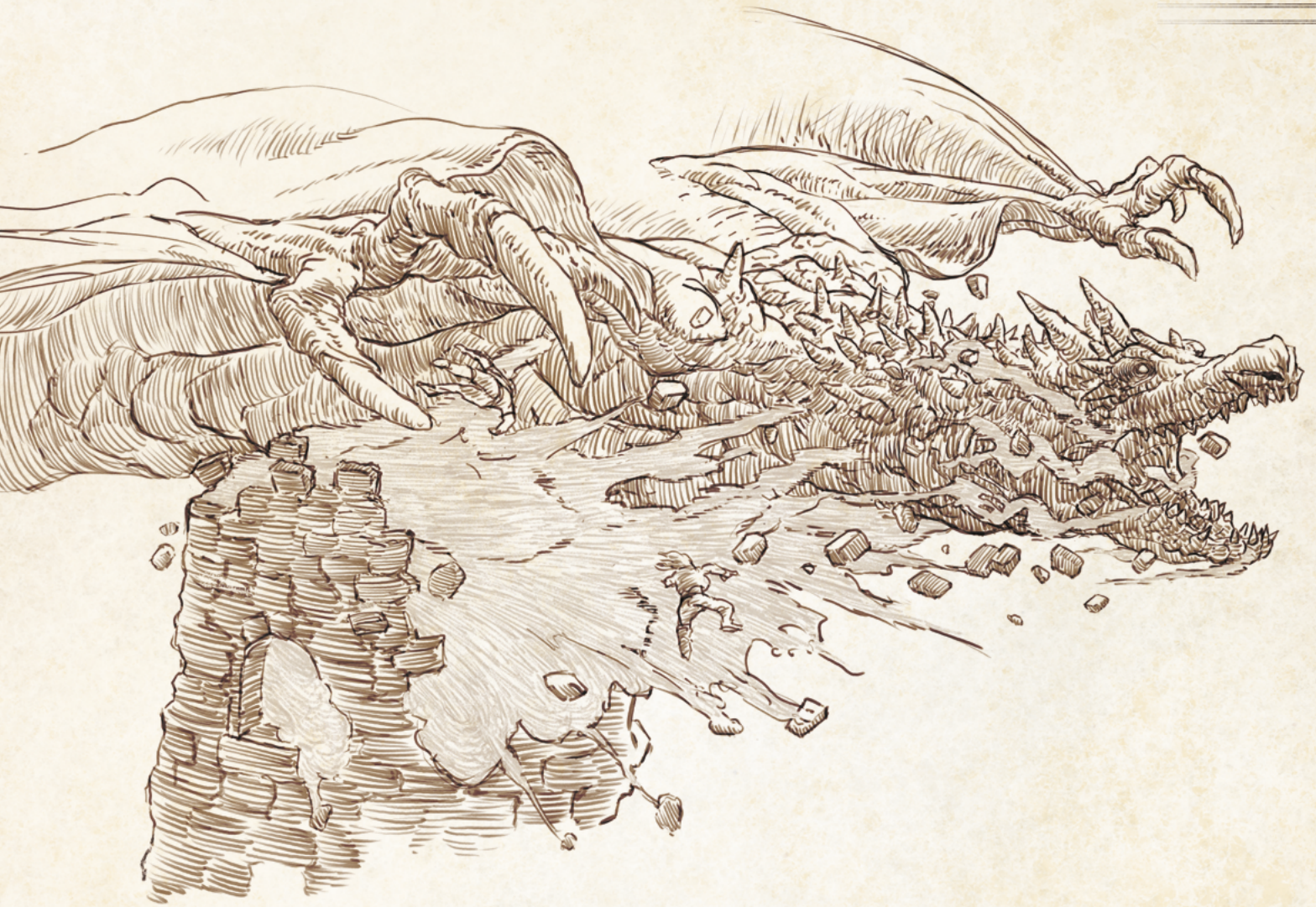
PROTECTION ARMOUR

Putting layers of protection between you and your enemy is a good way to increase your chances of survival. The most common type of armour in *The Winter King* is **flexible armour**, such as leather and chainmail, which directly subtracts Damage from the opponent's roll before it is made, typically -1d or -2d.

There is also **rigid armour**, which includes breastplates and full armour. This type of armour reduces the strength of an attack while adding an extra Resistance Track, which works like Incapacitation. However, if all the armour's Resistance boxes are depleted, the protection will become a hindrance. From then on, all Incapacitation Damage is doubled (Vitality Damage continues to function normally).

SHIELDS

Shields subtract -1d from incoming Damage, added to the armour's reduction. However, using a shield leaves the character off balance. In their next turn, the PC may only choose the Defend manoeuvre.



MASSIVE OPPONENTS

Any creatures significantly larger than humans possess the Massive characteristic, indicated by a numerical value. Subtract this value from Capacity, Manoeuvre, or Damage rolls targeting the creature.

The exception to this rule is when attempting to hit a Massive creature with a ranged weapon. The target's large size

makes a ranged weapon more likely to hit it, so add as many dice to the roll as the creature's Massiveness value.

In melee combat, the creature adds as many dice to its Damage roll as its Massiveness value.

You can use the following table as a reference:

MASSIVE OPPONENT TABLE

MASSIVENESS VALUE	CREATURE/OBJECT
Non-Massive	<i>Person, wolf, door</i>
Massive 1	<i>Horse, bear, wardrobe</i>
Massive 2	<i>Giant boar, large wagon</i>
Massive 3	<i>Twrch Trwyth, the Howling Beast, peasant's hut</i>
Massive 4	<i>Dragon, giant, wealthy merchant's house</i>



EXAMPLE OF COMBAT

Selwyn, a seasoned warrior, and Deochan, a skilled hunter, are up against two undead knights corrupted by Morgause's dark magic. The companions' quest hangs in the balance as they fight for their survival.

Turn 1

Selwyn is unyielding. Her Dexterity value of 3 and Fighting value of 4 combine to give her an Initiative of 7. She acts first, choosing to move and strike one of the undead with her sword in a Damage manoeuvre. She rolls 4d – corresponding with her Fighting value – but is not too lucky this time, getting 1,3,3 and 5: just one success. Her elusive opponent rolls 2d for his Fighting value and gets a 4 and 5, meaning that they tie. Their weapons clash, with neither fighter prevailing.

Deochan has a Dexterity value of 2 and a Ranged Weapons value of 2, but he readied one of his javelins before the fight, so he can add +2 to his Initiative for a total of 6. He sets his sights on the opponent, who has not yet engaged, and hurls his javelin. He can roll 2d for his Ranged Weapons value, and the game master allows him to add another 1d as his target is out in the open and running in a straight line (showing the disregard for self-preservation typical of the undead). Deochan gets a result of 2,5 and 6: a very good hit of three successes.

It's time to roll for Damage. 2d are rolled for the weapon's base Damage value. Another 2d are added for the two additional successes achieved. The result is 1,5,5 and 6. Three of the opponent's Vitality boxes are marked off (discounting the repeated 5), as is one Incapacitation box (since there's only one even number, the 6). The being is wounded but remains a threat.

The undead knights have a Dexterity value of 2 and a Fighting value of 2, making their Initiative value 4. The first has already used his deliberate action to react to Selwyn, so cannot act. The second undead knight charges at Selwyn with a Damage manoeuvre. Since Selwyn has already acted this turn, she must opt to Defend, subtracting -2d from her roll. The undead gets 3 and 6 (two successes) and Selwyn gets 1 and 4 (no successes). Our PC must prepare to receive Damage, while her opponent generates two Advantage Points in Melee Attacks (one for each roll, unlike with Ranged Attacks).

The spectral knight rolls 5d: three for his sword's base Damage value, and two for his Advantage Points. He could use the Advantage Points for another purpose, like gaining Initiative, but the undead are not known for their strategic thinking. Selwyn is protected by rigid armour, so -2d are subtracted from the roll. Result: 2, 3 and 6. Selwyn marks off three boxes on her Vitality Track, including the 6, meaning that she won't be able to roll more than 5 dice until she has healed. And, because she obtained two even numbers, she must also mark off two boxes on her armour's Resistance Track (though thanks to her armour she won't have to mark off any Incapacitation boxes).

Turn 2

Once again, Selwyn is the first to act. Determined to finish off her wounded foe, she opts for the Shove manoeuvre. She rolls her Fighting 4d and gets 3 successes (and 3 Advantage Points) against 0 from the enemy. She displaces the opponent 1.5 metres (half Selwyn's Strength value). She decides to save the Advantage Points for later.

Deochan is out of javelins, so he takes his spear and charges into melee combat. He uses a Damage manoeuvre against the undead knight who was just pushed by Selwyn, rolling 2d for his Fighting value. Selwyn uses her 2 Advantage Points to aid her companion, adding 2d to their attack against their unbalanced opponent. The hunter gets two successes, while his opponent, who responds with -2d due to it being his second encounter of the turn, again gets 0 successes. The Damage roll yields an even number, so the undead warrior's second Incapacitation box is marked off. Since he is a minor enemy with 0.5 Vitality he is now out of the fight. Deochan's spear pierces the creature's corrupted flesh, doing severe damage.

One undead warrior remains standing, but his chances against these heroic opponents are slim indeed...



MAGIC

Magic exists in Dark Britannia, with diverse cultures harnessing it in a variety of ways. There are Welsh druids, Saxon shamans, Christian miracle workers, sorcerers of high magic, and so on. Each magic tradition yields distinct effects, but all magicians essentially derive their powers from similar sources. Every magical effect results from performing an Arcane Action and directing it towards a Target.

On the pre-generated Character Sheets you'll find a list of spells and their effects, including the number of dice that must be rolled for each spell, as well as their Action and Target values. As with Ability rolls, a 5 indicates success, while a 6 indicates two successes. The number of successes in a roll determines the Magnitude of the spell. The greater the Mag-

nitude, the more powerful the magic, and the higher the toll on the spellcaster's body (see next section).

The Winter King: Corebook includes rules for crafting your own spells on the fly by combining Actions and Targets.

MAGIC FATIGUE TRACK

This track contains six unnumbered boxes.

Manipulating the energies required to perform magic takes a toll on the body. This is represented in the Magic Fatigue Track. Each time a magic practitioner rolls a 5 or 6 when casting a spell, they must mark off a box in their Magic Fatigue Track. Some Scholars or magic creatures only cross out boxes when they roll a 6, but such cases are rare.

If you should mark off a Magic Fatigue box, but can't, mark off the box with the lowest value still available in your Vitality Track instead. If that box is an even number, mark off a box in your Incapacitation Track as well.

When all your Magic Fatigue boxes have been marked off, you can no longer invoke magic. All boxes are recovered at dawn after a night's rest.

Overexertion: You can voluntarily mark off Magic Fatigue boxes to enhance a spell. Add one die to cast the spell for each box marked off.

RULES YOU'LL FIND IN THE COREBOOK

In this Quick Start Guide we've outlined the basics of *The Winter King* system. This should be enough for your first test games. However, in the Corebook you'll find advanced game mechanics for resolving complex situations and adding greater richness to your adventures, including:

- ✿ **BLOODLINE POWERS:** The protagonists of *The Winter King* have inherited abilities from the heroes of yore, meaning they can invoke powers beyond the reach of normal humans. To do so, however, they must adhere to the code of conduct of their bloodline.
- ✿ **MASTRIES:** These are skills associated with different types of weapons, marking the difference between an accomplished warrior and someone wielding a sword for the first time.
- ✿ **NEW USES FOR ADVANTAGE POINTS:** Make your successes more spectacular with special manoeuvres that require 2, 3, or 4 Advantage Points.
- ✿ **LIMITLESS MAGIC:** More spells, more examples, and a magic system that allows you to craft your own spells on the fly... assuming your body can pay the price.
- ✿ **JOUSTING RULES:** What would a story of chivalry be without the spectacle of two worthy contenders testing their skills with a lance? We've created detailed mechanics for replicating a jousting tournament, including rules for determining which way the crowd's favour is leaning.
- ✿ **RULES FOR BIG BATTLES:** Relentless sieges, pitched battles, and charging armies. These are all an essential part of the Arthurian myth and play a prominent role in *The Winter King*, which uses a system designed to give prominence to the Heroes while the conflict rages around them.



**THE WINTER
KING**



**THE LAY OF THE
GREEN KNIGHT**

Shadowlands



THE LAY OF THE GREEN KNIGHT

THE STORY SO FAR

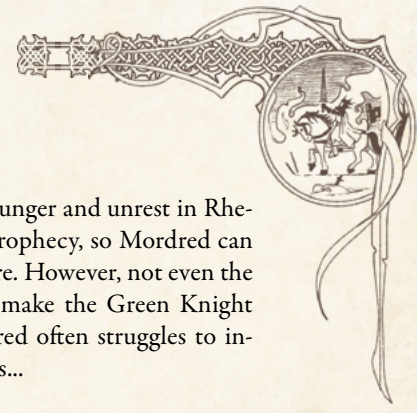
Twenty years have passed since the Battle of Camlann, where King Arthur perished at the hands of his treacherous son, Mordred. Aided by his mother, the sorceress queen Morgawse, Mordred crushed all remaining resistance and ascended to the throne as the High King of Britannia, forcing the few surviving members of the Round Table and their families to submit or go into hiding. From his stronghold in Venta Belgarum, King Mordred reigns over Britannia, while Queen Mother Morgawse extends her magic dominion from the Orkney Islands. Amidst this turmoil, only a handful of independent enclaves persist, most of them within the realm of Rheged, under the rule of King Owain ap Urien.

Long before, when the sorceress Morgan le Fay was still wed to King Urien of Rheged, and her brother had just risen to the throne of Britannia, Morgan used her powerful magic to summon an ancient being – the Green Man. This entity was a manifestation of Cernunnos, the pagan god of the forests once revered by Celtic chieftains in forgotten ti-

mes, long before the first Romans set foot on the Isle of the Mighty. Morgan le Fay sent the creature to test her recently-crowned brother's worthiness for the throne. However, she hadn't accounted for the fact that a small court of loyal warriors was already coalescing around Arthur. So when the Green Man appeared at Camelot in the guise of the Green Knight, it was not Arthur but his nephew Gawain, son of King Lot of Lothian and Queen Morgawse (before she had become the Queen of Air and Darkness), who rose to meet his challenge.

Arriving at Camelot during a festive gathering, the Green Knight introduced himself as Bertilak and issued his challenge: he would permit a warrior to strike him with a weapon, on the condition that the same blow would be reciprocated a year hence. With a grim smile, Gawain accepted, delivering a blow so forceful it severed the Green Man's head. To the astonishment of the court, Bertilak calmly retrieved his head and departed. When he returned the following year, everyone thought Gawain's death was certain, but instead of beheading the warrior, Bertilak took Gawain





to his fairy domain, a place between worlds, known as the Green Chapel. There, Gawain was tested for his loyalty to Arthur and to his host. He was offered great kingdoms of his own if he betrayed Arthur, while Bertilak's beautiful wife (who was just another manifestation of Cernunnos) tried to seduce him. Gawain passed the Green Knight's trials, and when Bertilak finally claimed his blow, he merely grazed Gawain's neck with his axe and sent him back to Camelot.

Impressed by Gawain's valour and integrity, the Green Man bestowed his blessings upon Britannia, foreseeing Arthur's potential as the realm's greatest king. Few besides Morgan le Fay herself knew how crucial Bertilak's blessing was, for the generosity of the forests and fields of Britannia laid the foundation upon which Arthur built his peace, helping his Kingdom of Summer to flourish. Harvests were plentiful, the weather was mild, and the lords and warriors were too filled with food and contentment to think about war.

Yet, Arthur's demise on the battlefield three years prior prompted Morgan le Fay to summon the Green Knight once more, this time to judge her nephew Mordred, the usurper. What Morgan hadn't considered, however, was that Morgawse's formidable magic power shielded Mordred, even from an entity as powerful as the Green Knight. And so, ensnared by Morgawse's magic, the Green Knight was beheaded by Mordred who then burned his body before it could re-attach its head. Following his mother's counsel, Mordred preserved the head, which was still endowed by its divine nature with the gift of speech. They imprisoned the Green Knight's head in a desecrated shrine on the Isle of Vectis. Bertilak's head gives Mordred two great powers. It can be used to control the weather, something that Mordred wields as a weapon, assailing the lands of his foes with

great storms, seeking to provoke hunger and unrest in Rheged. Bertilak also has the gift of prophecy, so Mordred can turn to him for advice on the future. However, not even the Queen of Air and Darkness can make the Green Knight speak straightforwardly, so Mordred often struggles to interpret Bertilak's cryptic utterances...

THE STORY TO COME

Though Bertilak is not Cernunnos himself but rather an aspect of the god, his absence has plunged the Great Forest, the Otherworld realm ruled by the horned deity, into turmoil. Its unrest is now seeping into Britannia. A priestess of Cernunnos will come to the Heroes for help. She is seeking a descendent of Gawain's bloodline, as he is still revered in the Great Forest as the best of Britannia's knights. She will implore the Heroes to come to Bertilak's aid. To do so, they must venture into Venta Belgarum, Mordred's stronghold, evading pursuers while following the clues that will lead them to the Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus. There, an old monk will recall the High King's encounter with the Green Knight, and the trap that Bertilak fell into. Following the trail from the monastery, the Heroes will find their way to the Sanctuary of Cernunnos, on the Isle of Vectis, where they must defeat Queen Morgawse's guardian to liberate Bertilak from captivity.

SOME NOTES BEFORE STARTING

For this adventure, players may choose predefined heroes or create their own. But at least one of them should belong to the Bloodline of Lothian, descended from Gawain or his kin.

The adventure may commence anywhere in Britannia, with *Caer Gwent* (now *Newport*) in southern Wales serving as the default starting point. It is close enough to *Venta Belgarum* to not require a long journey, but at the same time, the High King's hold over the realm is not yet suffocating. For the purposes of this adventure, the Lord of *Gwent* is *Prince Corbin ap Teudrig*. Although he nominally pledges allegiance to the High King, it is widely known that he has friendly alliances with the kingdom of *Rheged*, as his father, *Teudrig*, was one of the members of the Round Table and a companion and friend of *King Owain of Rheged*.

The proximity of *Venta Belgarum* and the cursed remnants of *Camelot*, now ruled by *King Rience*, poses a constant threat to *Caer Gwent*, tempered only by the nearby presence of *Caerleon* and its sorceress queen, *Lady Nimue*, maintaining a precarious balance on the brink of conflict.



CANTO I

A CALL FOR HELP



These are the first days of spring in Caer Gwent. After a long winter, warmer days are here at last. For the inhabitants of Gwent, the season has been exceptionally harsh and lingering. The first snows arrived in early October and only very recently, in mid-April, did the last flakes fall. Even now, with the Bealtaine festival (1st May) past, the nights retain a chill. Nevertheless, the snow-capped mountains begin to yield to the sun's warmth, and the streams, once frozen, now babble with life. Despite this, provisions remain scarce, and weariness plagues the people of Caer Gwent, prompting Prince Corbin to propose an activity that blends necessity with enjoyment: a hunt in the nearby forests for boar and deer.

And so, at dawn, Lord Corbin and his hunting companions gather at the stockade encircling the city and prepare to leave Caer Gwent. The sun hangs low in the sky and the north wind blows cold. The breath of our Heroes forms misty clouds as they ready themselves for the hunt.

THE HUNT

Prince Corbin leads the hunt into a dense forest southwest of Caer Gwent. Stretching toward the Severn Sea (today's Bristol Channel), it is a lush woodland teeming with beech, oak, elm, and holly trees. Crisscrossed by meandering streams, the soil is rich with centuries of decomposing vegetation. Though the forest abounds with hares and other small game, Prince Corbin sets his sights on returning with boar and deer by day's end. He announces this to the participants, offering a carved bronze bracelet to the hunter who secures the first piece of game and a short sword adorned with an opal for the one who brings the deer with the broadest antlers or the boar with the longest tusks. A successful **Wisdom** roll reveals the superficial value of these rewards, serving only to indulge the victors at the evening's celebration in Caer Gwent.

Divided into groups, the hunting party navigates the forest, with our heroes forming their own small hunting party among them. Despite the rigors of winter and the looming spectre of war, the participants are in high spirits, eager for a day of camaraderie and adventure. Their focus on the hunt is occasionally interrupted by distant songs emanating from other parts of the forest as some hunting parties indulge in

early libations of cider and beer. The hunt can be as intense or as relaxed as the Heroes wish, and this could be a good opportunity to test the rolls and options of the game. **Dexterity** rolls may be required to leap over streams, **Charisma** rolls to soothe nervous horses, or **Deduction** rolls to track elusive prey through the dense undergrowth. And if you want to test the combat system, an unexpected confrontation with a bear may provide a thrilling challenge.

WHO BEARS THE BANNERS?

The hunt is a good opportunity to establish the aesthetic you envision for *The Winter King*, particularly if this session will serve as an introduction to your campaign. However, feel free to alter it at your discretion later. Gwent, situated on the outskirts of Britannia, holds no central prominence – it lacks the wealth, power, and influence to dictate trends. If you opt for a more historically-grounded adventure, the hunting party will be relatively modest, with the warriors of Caer Gwent clad in leather armour, armed with longbows and hunting spears, and accompanied by a few dogs and a handful of servants. If you choose an aesthetic closer to the work of Thomas Malory, the knights of Gwent will join the hunt in elegant, albeit antiquated, attire, accompanied by fine hunting hounds, minstrels, and attendants, while Prince Corbin's grand banners flutter in the breeze.

AN UNFORESEEN ENCOUNTER

Midway through the hunt, the heroes are startled by a sudden noise, and a wounded deer emerges from the trees. Its fur glistens silver, and its eyes, an extraordinary clear blue, fixate on the hero of the Lothian lineage. Two arrows protrude from its back, blood staining its hide crimson. Upon closer inspection, the heroes discern a striking human quality in its gaze.

Suddenly, the deer transforms into an elderly woman dressed in simple untanned deer skins. She collapses at the

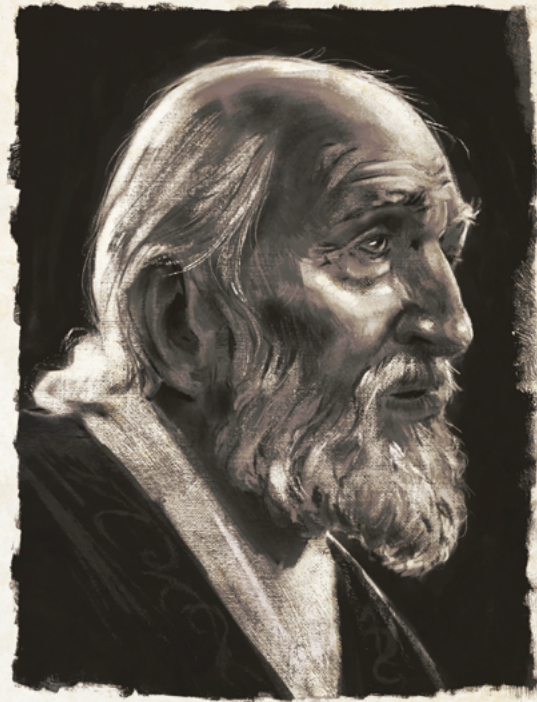
feet of our Heroes, her bright blue eyes fixed on the descendent of Gawain. Her weathered face bears tattoos which a **Wisdom** throw will identify as belonging to the north Welsh tribes of the Gwynedd mountains. She wears various trinkets made of bone and wood. If the Heroes attempt to finish the deer off, it will suffer new wounds as it transforms.

'*Blood of Gawain,*' the old woman says, stretching out her hands towards the Hero of Lothian lineage. Her words are interrupted by the arrival in the clearing of the Prince and his warriors, for it was they who shot the deer, unaware of its true nature. They fall into stunned silence when they see this woman with Corbin's arrows piercing her back. Her name is Isewyn and she comes from Caer Seiont, in northern Wales. She has been traveling south for weeks in search of a descendant of Gawain. Unless one of the heroes can perform healing magic, the priestess's time is about to run out. **Wisdom** (*Healing*) will allow them to assess the wound and deduce that the prince's arrows have wounded her severely.

THE STORY OF THE GREEN KNIGHT

Isewyn can convey the following information to the heroes and will answer as many questions as you deem fit. (If the heroes manage to heal the priestess, the conversation can be calmer and less rushed. But even if she does not die once her message is delivered, Isewyn will not accompany the group, instead choosing to return north).

- ✱ Isewyn is a priestess of Cernunnos, the god of the forests whom the Celts worshipped in pre-Roman Britain. (The pagan Romans may have associated Cernunnos with one of their own gods, Vertumnus. The Christians believed him to be Satan). Isewyn has observed many strange omens. Her readings of the flights of birds and the livers of animals tell her that the Great Forest – Cernunnos's Otherworld realm – is suffering from a great absence. In recent months, Isewyn has dreamt of the Great Forest incessantly. In her dreams, the trees are all rotting, and she sees a green man with an antlered helm leaving the forest and walking towards a huge castle. Before disappearing, the Green Knight turns towards her and says, 'Gawain's blood may free me.'
- ✱ Though unaware of the exact events involving King Arthur, the Green Knight, and Gawain, Isewyn recognizes the Green Knight as an aspect of Cernunnos. She believes his absence from the Great Forest is the cause of its ailment and of the bizarre climate tormenting Britannia. Sadly, unless the Heroes have been able to heal her, Isewyn will die as soon as she conveys this information.

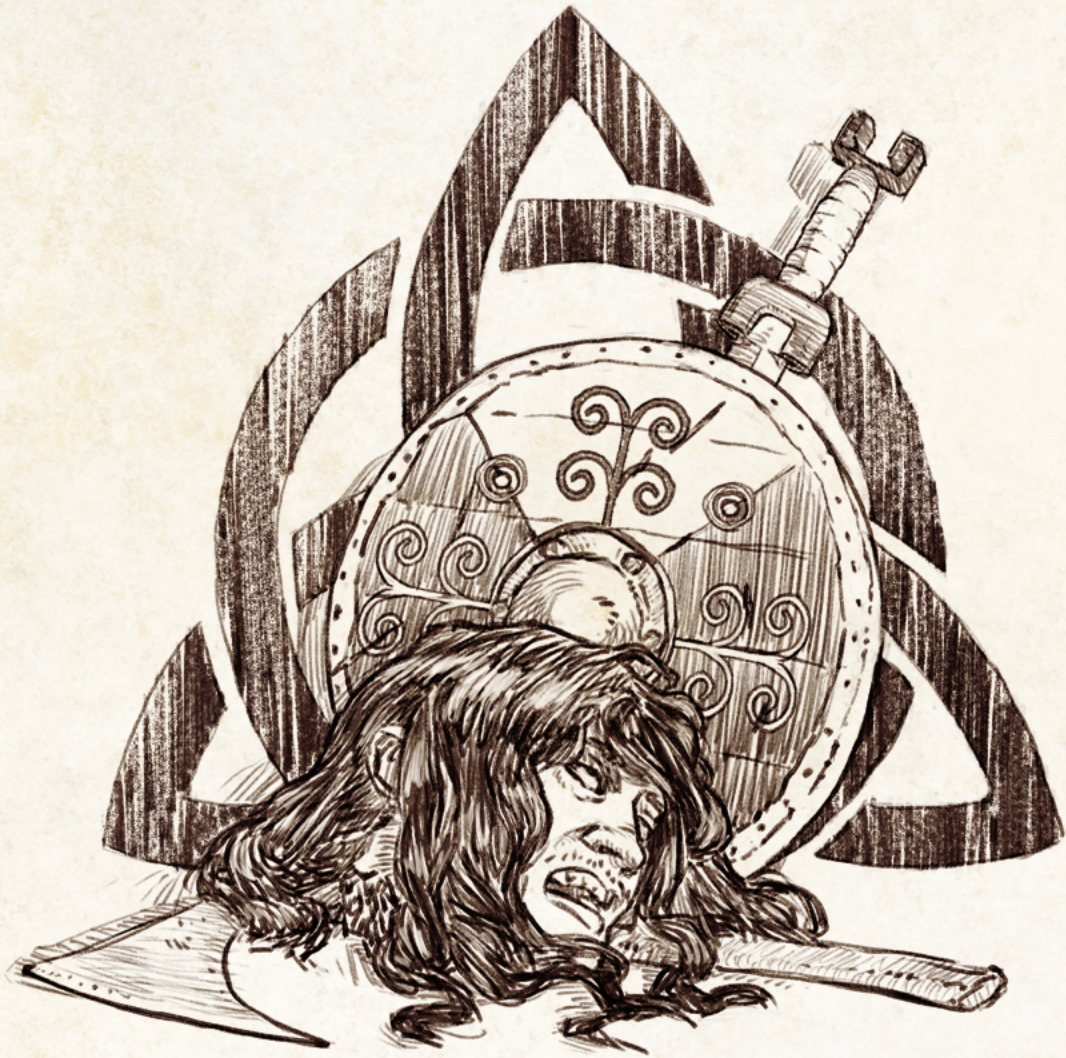


Lord Corbin

Prince Corbin can fill in the rest of the story because his father was at Camelot when Bertilak came before Arthur. Teudrig told his son how Bertilak had come to Camelot on behalf of the old gods to judge Arthur's fitness for rule, recounting how Gawain had taken up the challenge on Arthur's behalf. Teudrig never knew the details of the challenge thrown down by the Green Knight. But he attested that the Prince of Lothian had successfully passed the Green Knight's test, observing that from that moment on, the climate of Britannia favoured Arthur's reign, bringing wealth and abundance, ushering in Arthur's Kingdom of Summer. And although Corbin's father converted to Celtic Christianity in his later years, he never lost the conviction that the Green Knight was a manifestation of Britannia's ancient powers.

If the heroes don't deduce it for themselves, Corbin can lead them to the conclusion that if Bertilak had tested King Arthur, he likely attempted the same with Mordred. This could explain Bertilak's disappearance and the adverse climate assailing Wales, Cornwall, and Rheged in recent years. The Heroes will remain unaware of Morgan le Fay's involvement unless they happen to encounter the Lady of Avalon later.

In the event of Isewyn's demise, Corbin arranges a pagan burial, prompting disapproval from his Christian chaplain. Seeking redemption for the death of the priestess, Corbin implores the heroes, led by the descendant of the Bloodline of Lothian, to investigate the Green Knight's disappearance. He urges them to journey to Venta Belgarum, Mordred's capital, to uncover clues about Bertilak's fate.







CANTO II

THE CITY OF THE TRAITOR KING

After handing over Camelot to the undead King Rience, Mordred established his capital in Venta Belgarum. Founded by the Belgae tribe, who took advantage of the hill to build their fortress, this ancient settlement was developed by the Romans into a city, which they called Venta Belgarum (the City of the Belgae). It gradually became the most important city in Roman Britannia. In fact, in one possible future – if Britannia ever emerges from the darkness of Mordred's rule – Venta Belgarum will become Wintanceaster, capital of Wessex, stronghold of Alfred the Great, King of the Anglo-Saxons. But before that happens, assuming it ever does, many decades must pass.

For now, Mordred's Venta Belgarum is the largest city in Britannia and a prominent market, despite lacking a seaport. The River Isca (modern-day Itchen) runs close to the city, allowing some river traffic and providing the city with sufficient water and power for its numerous mills and fulleries. Venta Belgarum is connected by land routes to the port of Clausentum, one of the most important in all Britannia. From here, goods from all over Britannia and the rest of Europe reach the city, linking Mordred's realm to the those of the Franks, Goths, Vandals, and Saxons, and even to great Constantinople. However, Britannia's instability under Mordred's rule has adversely affected trade, casting a shadow over the city's prosperity.

THE JOURNEY TO THE CITY

King Mordred is no fool. He may have surrounded himself with people of dubious moral character, and he may be cruel and quick to crush all who resist him, but he upholds the law as he sees it, maintaining a semblance of order within the triangle of Venta Belgarum, Clausentum and Sorviodunum. His soldiers patrol the roads and keep them free from bandits and highwaymen... although they are often bandits and highwaymen themselves. Mordred's soldiers will avoid reaching for their weapons unless they have the upper hand. They are corrupt and unscrupulous, but too cowardly to target great nobles or important merchants. However, solitary travellers or small groups are liable to find themselves being 'persuaded' to pay exorbitant fees for the right to journey along the royal roads. And those who resist the soldiers' demands are often never seen again.

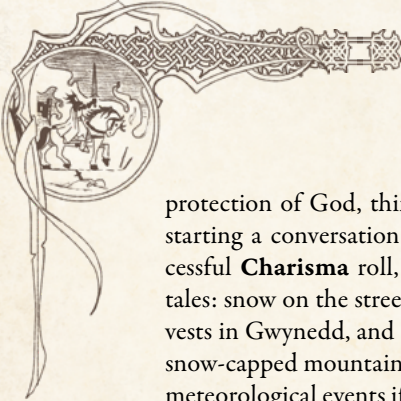
The journey to Venta will vary depending on where the Heroes are starting from. The following describes the encounters they will have on the road from Caer Gwent, but they can be adapted to other routes as needed.

The journey on horseback can take four to seven days, depending on the weather. At some point, the Heroes will have to cross the Severn Estuary. Any fisherman or boatman will grant them passage for a few coins. On this journey, the following events, and any others that you wish to include, may unfold.

CROSSING THE ESTUARY

Upon reaching the shores of the Severn, they will encounter a one-eyed ferryman preparing a flat-bottomed barge for departure. Four or five travellers are waiting as the man and two children load various bags and trunks onto the back of the barge. If you ask anyone, they'll tell you that he is Finn, a former Irish pirate who now ferries people and goods across the estuary. The barge has enough space for the Heroes and their mounts. Initially, Finn (who speaks **Brythonic** with a strong Irish accent) will ask for an extraordinarily steep price, looking askance at the horses. However, if one of the Heroes makes a **Charisma** roll (the Trade Speciality may be helpful) and succeeds, they will secure a notable discount. If more than one Hero tries to negotiate, Finn will become irritated and refuse to budge on the fare, leaving the Heroes to either pay up or find another way across.

Among the passengers are two nuns, Fabia and Danila, bound for their convent, and a silversmith named Ciardan, accompanied by his bodyguard, Gwynn, on a silver procurement journey southward. Notably, none are headed to Venta, ensuring the Heroes cannot join a caravan that might arouse suspicion among High King Mordred's soldiers. As the nuns take their seats, they begin speaking quietly in Latin. At first it sounds like they're praying, but gradually, the Heroes realise that they're chatting. If one of the PCs knows Latin, they'll be able to understand what the nuns are saying. If none of the PCs know Latin, they should at least be able to make out the occasional word in Brythonic, such as place names and references to storms and gales. Apparently, the two nuns have travelled through much of Wales and are discussing the strange weather they have experienced. They are hopeful that upon reaching Christian lands under the



protection of God, things will return to normal. Through starting a conversation with the nuns, or achieving a successful **Charisma** roll, the Heroes may hear some strange tales: snow on the streets of Caerdydd in April, ruined harvests in Gwynedd, and floods from the early thawing of the snow-capped mountains of Eryri. You can add more bizarre meteorological events if you wish, from raining frogs to tornadoes of red dust. The Heroes should associate these events with High King Mordred's abuse of Bertilak's power. It soon becomes clear from the conversation that all the places mentioned by the nuns are – to put it mildly – unsympathetic to Mordred's rule.

ENCOUNTER WITH A PATROL

A day's journey away from Venta, the Heroes encounter one of Mordred's patrols along the royal road. Emboldened by the fact that they outnumber the Heroes two to one, the captain of the patrol orders the Heroes to halt. He asks some routine questions about where they've come from, what they're looking for, whether they're carrying anything of value, how long they mean to stay in Venta, and where they're going afterwards. Once the Heroes have answered enough of the captain's questions, he will do a quick headcount and demand that the Heroes pay him an exorbitant tax for using the royal road. A successful **Wisdom** roll will ensure that the Heroes know that there is no such tax; road maintenance is charged for at the toll houses, not by gangs of roving soldiers. The question is, are the Heroes willing to stand up to Mordred's men? If the Heroes confront the captain with the truth, he will burst into laughter and claim that the law has changed. It will be obvious that he is lying.

A direct challenge will lead to an armed confrontation, in which the Heroes are outnumbered two to one. However, Mordred's soldiers will flee once half of them have been defeated. If the soldiers reach the city before the Heroes and alert the authorities, our Heroes might find trouble waiting for them in Venta Belgarum. There will be soldiers looking for them at the city gates, and they will have to enter stealthily. Using **Wisdom**, **Deduction**, **Dexterity**, or **Charisma** rolls, they can hide in a wagon, bribe a guard, change their appearance, or any other good idea they may come up with. If they don't want to cross the city gates, they could always find a farm, an inn, or some other traveller from whom to gather information to redirect or guide them.

ARRIVAL AT VENTA BELGARUM

At long last, the heroes reach Venta Belgarum. Under Mordred's rule, the city has sprawled far beyond the hill it occupied in the time of the Belgae, along the wide plain that separates the hill and the valley of the Isca. The city is surrounded by a high stone wall (perhaps the first of its kind that the Heroes have seen). On top of the hill looms King Mordred's imposing fortress, adorned with his emblems; these could be large silk banners or round wooden shields, depending on the kind of atmosphere you want to create. The emblems depict the double-headed eagle of the House of Lothian (the crest of King Lot, the man who raised him) and the double crown of Arthur (Mordred's real father). Other places of interest in the city are the Basilica of St Peter (a Nicene-style church near the citadel), and the grand market, occupying several streets and squares between the citadel and the river, where practically anything can be bought for the right price.

Unravelling the mystery of Bertilak's whereabouts proves a daunting task amidst the chaotic urban tapestry of Venta Belgarum. The city's cacophony of noise, pungent aromas, and bustling crowds may overwhelm Heroes unaccustomed to such environments, warranting a penalty of -1d to their **Deduction**, **Wisdom**, and **Charisma** rolls while traversing its streets. Furthermore, depending on their previous encounters with Mordred's soldiers and their mode of entry into the city, stealth or deception may be required to evade unwanted attention. A successful **Dexterity** (with *Stealth* Speciality) or **Charisma** (*Deception*) test may facilitate inconspicuous passage through the city. However, the pervasive loyalty to Mordred among the

populace demands caution, with potential interference from his guards if the Heroes draw too much notice. These soldiers will belong to Mordred's elite guard, making them more formidable opponents than those on the road. Also, keep in mind that three years have passed since the Green Knight came to the city, so it's possible that nobody at the city gates remembers him, assuming he even entered through the gates.

Locating information about Bertilak amidst Venta Belgarum's labyrinthine alleys proves elusive. The Heroes must seek out individuals close to the High King's inner circle who might possess knowledge of Mordred's encounter with the Green Knight. Three potential candidates emerge, their identities discoverable through various sources, including tavern gossip, marketplace rumours, or an audience with one of Mordred's chieftains. Even if the Heroes end up locked in the cells beneath the castle, they could encounter an old guard, falsely accused by Mordred's treacherous followers, who will happily direct the heroes towards any of these three people.

Getting close to one of the three candidates will require a combined **Charisma** roll with 7 successes in total, with each Hero conducting interviews with different people, like

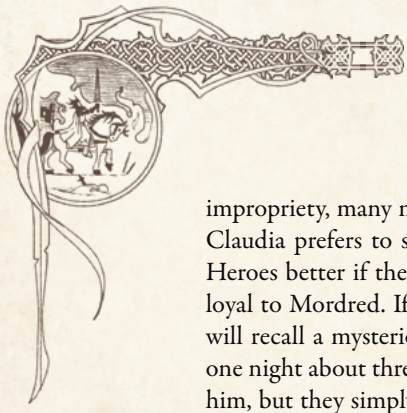
short scenes from a movie. Note down each result of 1 on the players' rolls; if at any point the total of 1s exceeds the total of successes, the Heroes' inquiries will draw the attention of the guards. (Depending on how the encounter with the guards on the road or at the gate went, the chances of our Heroes ending up in the dungeons are quite high).

THE THREE CANDIDATES

These are the three individuals who may know the details of Mordred's encounter with the Green Knight:

- ✱ **Claudia the Numidian:** Mordred's concubine for many years. She is a woman of Roman lineage, descended from legionaries who arrived in Britannia from Africa and Egypt. She has been ousted from Mordred's favour due to the manipulations of his wife, Queen Nuala, who was jealous of Claudia's influence. However, Claudia is relieved to have left Mordred's castle with her head still on her shoulders, and she has prospered under the reign of the High King, so she won't speak with the Heroes if she thinks doing so will cause her harm. Claudia runs a brothel in a grand villa with a Roman court near Isca, and although many of her neighbours gossip about her





impropriety, many more come for her men and women. Claudia prefers to speak in Latin and she will like the Heroes better if they appear wealthy and pretend to be loyal to Mordred. If the Heroes can get her to talk, she will recall a mysterious Green-hued visitor who arrived one night about three years ago. The guards tried to stop him, but they simply froze, unable to prevent him from reaching the High King. What transpired between Mordred and that strange man in the green armour stayed between them... or was there someone else there? At the last minute, Claudia will remember that Mordred's confessor, Brother Gildas, was there too. If the Heroes ask where they can find him, she will say that he was replaced by Abbot Martinus of St Peter's some time ago. But she thinks Gildas joined the Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, a day's journey eastward from Venta Belgarum.

✱ **Nicolas of Arelate:** A Gallo-Roman merchant who came to Britannia to escape the Frankish raids on Roman Gaul. He soon became one of Mordred's main advocates for negotiating with foreign merchants. Nicolas is now an old man, spending his retirement in a villa on the northern outskirts of Venta Belgarum, far from the High king's court. Haunted by regret over his support for Mor-

dred and horrified by the terrors that the Queen of Air and Darkness has unleashed, he fears he has condemned his soul for eternity. If the Heroes approach Nicolas, they will need to speak Latin or Gaulish as he only knows a few words in Brythonic. (As game master, it will be your task to ensure that if the players create their own characters, at least one among them has one of these languages on their character sheet). Nicolas will feel more comfortable if there are Christian priests or nuns present, regardless of their creed. Nicolas recalls vividly how the Green Man strode out of the forests during the feast of St John to lay down his challenge to the High King. Nicolas was one of several courtiers present, all of whom were sent away as soon as the challenge was made. The only one who stayed was the royal confessor, Brother Gildas. Nicolas doesn't know what became of Brother Gildas, but since he was an important figure in the city, it should be relatively easy for the Heroes to pick up the trail leading to the Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus

✱ **Aelfgifu Wulfstandottir:** A former warrior from an Anglo tribe allied with Cerdic. Aelfgifu fought for Mordred at Camlann and led the High King's elite guard for many years. However, she has recently been relegated to



Claudia the Numidian



Nicolas of Arelate

the position of guard at one of the fortress gates. Aelfgifu blames her demotion on Queen Nuala and Mordred and burns with hatred towards them. She will be especially cooperative if there are Angles among the Heroes, or if they appear willing to make trouble for the High King. Aelfgifu was on guard duty the night Bertilak (she remembers his name) arrived at the castle of Venta Belgarum. She recalls how it was impossible to stop him: 'Like trying to halt the flow of a stream or a summer breeze.' Bertilak demanded a meeting with the High King, and the guards were powerless to stop him. Mordred didn't seem afraid, however, and agreed to meet Bertilak alone in the throne room. Only the king's royal confessor, Brother Gildas, was allowed to stay with him. Aelfgifu never found out what happened, but she does know that Brother Gildas decided to leave the court shortly afterwards. She thinks he was tired of the king's tyranny and of his wicked mother. Last she heard, he had secluded himself in the Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus.

From all this, the Heroes can deduce that, unless they want to try to speak to Mordred himself, the only witness to what happened is an elderly monk at the Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus.



Aelfgifu Wulfstandottir







CANTO III

THE WORDS OF AN OLD BARD



Interestingly, although the Queen of Air and Darkness is an eminently pagan figure, King Mordred has favoured Christians since becoming High King. He seems to feel comfortable surrounded by men of faith, even keeping a confessor. Perhaps this is because he relishes seeing how holy men react to his depraved acts. It will be easy for the Heroes to uncover information about Gildas among the inhabitants of Venta; many remember him well, and all consider him to be a pious and saintly man, albeit with some curious ideas. Some recall his frequent clashes with the envoys of the Bishop of Londinium. (Gildas, along with the entire Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, is a Priscillianist Christian; if the Bishop of Londinium could, he would throw them all on a pyre. Fortunately for them – and for the Heroes – he cannot).

THE MONASTERY

The small Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus is primarily constructed of wood, with a modest stone church, stables, pens, and a simple residence for the monks. The entire compound is adorned with rough carvings and murals depicting scenes from the lives of the saints who give the monastery its name. These saints were two Roman soldiers who served under Emperor Maximian in Syria and refused to participate in the official rites of the Roman gods, for which they were condemned to death. Sergius was beheaded, while Bacchus was flogged to death. Within the monastery, there's an abundance of decorations in the form of severed heads, which may prompt an observant character to make a **Wisdom** roll with -1d to know that the cult of severed heads was characteristic of the Celtic peoples prior to Rome.

Although the monastery lacks guards, gaining entry is no simple task. The monks adhere strictly to Augustine's Rule, preferring minimal contact with the outside world as they dedicate themselves to prayer and study. They are not welcoming to visitors. The Heroes could force entry by knocking down the doors (extended **Strength** roll with 4 successes) or scaling the walls (extended **Dexterity** roll of 2 successes with assistance from the *Climbing* Speciality); but the former would turn all the monks, including Gildas, against them, while the latter would require stealth. Alter-

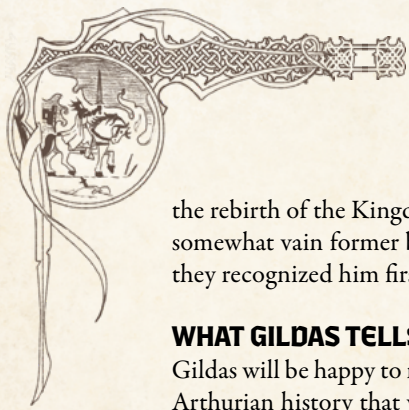
natively, a successful **Charisma** roll – adjusting the difficulty according to how receptive the monks are – could persuade the gatekeepers to grant the Heroes entry. As a last resort, the Heroes could pretend to be seeking asylum, something the Augustinian Brothers cannot refuse due to their charitable obligations (the Heroes could discern this with a successful **Wisdom** roll with -1d).

Once inside the monastery, assuming they have the goodwill of Augustinians, the Heroes will be invited to a meagre dinner (watered-down wine, hard bread, and a thin barley stew). One of the novices, or perhaps the prior himself, will tell them which of the brothers is Gildas. And although the monks live in seclusion, Brother Gildas has not taken a vow of silence.

However, as the Heroes will soon find out, the most dangerous aspect of the monastery is not the monks. When Gildas left Venta Belgarum, Morgawse suggested to her son that he kill the monk. Mordred refused, perhaps because he felt some attachment to the man he had known since childhood (we'll learn more about this later), or perhaps because of his belief that the dead do not suffer. So Morgawse sent her spirits of wind and shadow to keep an eye on the former confessor, suspecting that one day someone might come to him to ask what he remembers. These creatures will alert Morgawse to the Heroes presence at the monastery. Unless the Heroes use magic to reveal them, the spirits are undetectable.

BROTHER GILDAS

Gildas seems like any other monk. Dressed in a black habit, he is thin with a thick mane of silver-grey hair and piercing green eyes. As the Heroes are introduced to Gildas in the main hall, he will keep his gaze fixed on them. As soon as he is alone with them, the first thing he will do is identify them by their bloodlines: *'You have the eyes of Perceval', 'Only a Saxon of Aelle would walk like that', 'You have the bearing of the Orkney Clan. Do you take after treacherous Lot or brave Gawain?'* If the Heroes were expecting a helpless old man, they will be in for a surprise. Gildas is alert and sharp-witted. If any of the Heroes grew up during Camelot's final days, they will recognise Gildas as Aneirin, King Arthur's bard. Otherwise, Gildas will reveal his identity, believing that the presence of these descendants of Camelot heralds



the rebirth of the Kingdom of Summer. However, being the somewhat vain former bard he is, he would enjoy it more if they recognized him first.

WHAT GILDAS TELLS THEM

Gildas will be happy to recount any noteworthy events from Arthurian history that you consider worth sharing. He was there for many of them and heard first-hand accounts of those that occurred before he came to Camelot. In fact, he frequently alludes to his experiences. For instance, if there are members of the Lothian and Benoit clans among the Heroes, he will recall Gareth's tragic death during the rescue of Queen Guinevere, emphasizing Lancelot's anguish upon realising what had transpired. Additionally, Gildas will recount his own harrowing tale.

There is a historical figure named Aneirin. He was the poet who wrote *Y Gododdin*, which recounts the confrontation between the Celts of the kingdom of Gododdin and the Angles in the Battle of Catraeth. However, the historical Aneirin lived in a later period than the one in this story. Perhaps he was named in honour of our Aneirin, King Arthur's bard. There is also a historical Gildas, or Saint Gildas. He was a Welsh chronicler who wrote *On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain*. While he could potentially coincide with the timeframe of our characters, he is not the Gildas in our story.

Gildas only escaped Camlann with his life thanks to Morgan le Fay's intervention. Afterwards, he sought refuge in the lands of King Aglovan of Gwynedd where he hoped the faithful to Arthur would gather. When it became evident that this was not going to happen, he tried to find the gates to Avalon in the Summer Country. Unfortunately, his search was cut short when he was captured by Mordred's soldiers, who recognized him and took him to the High King. Just as Mordred was about to condemn Aneirin to a gruesome demise, the bard surrendered his soul to God, prompting Mordred to spare him, believing a life dedicated to the spirit would be a greater punishment for one as vain and foolish as the former bard of Arthur. Thus, Aneirin took the habit and became Gildas, while Mordred kept him by his side as his confessor.

Throughout the years, Mordred tortured Gildas in diabolical ways, regaling him with accounts of his heinous deeds and atrocities committed or permitted, including the domination of Camelot by the undead of Rience, and the scourge of the Wild Hunt upon the roads of the Summer Country. Mordred took delight in tormenting Arthur's for-

mer bard with every artifice and evil he and his mother were plotting in their long, slow revenge against all that Arthur had stood for.

Mordred's orders for Gildas to witness his encounter with Bertilak served as another form of torture. Gildas had hoped that the Green Knight's challenge might lead to Mordred's downfall. Instead, it became one of the most painful experiences of his life. Bertilak, challenging Mordred on behalf of the kingdom, offered Mordred a chance to strike him, as he had once done with Gawain, in exchange for the promise of receiving a similar blow a year later. Mordred swiftly decapitated Bertilak, but unlike the previous encounter, Morgawse intervened, destroying Bertilak's body and imprisoning his head, preventing the manifestation of the god of the forests from returning to its origin.

Gildas knows that Mordred continues to use Bertilak's head to manipulate the weather and crops against his enemies. He's also aware of the head's oracle-like abilities, suspecting that it inadvertently informs Mordred of any conspiracies or movements against him. There are scribes who collect all Bertilak's words and send them to the High King. Once a season, Mordred himself visits the Green Knight's head in the shrine where Morgawse imprisoned it. In another act of cruelty towards the ancient god, Morgawse decided to lock Bertilak's head in a profaned sanctuary of Cernunnos. This means that the god himself and the aspect of the god manifested in Bertilak can feel each other but not become one, thus causing a wound that can never heal.

Gildas repeatedly sought Mordred's permission to leave Venta Belgarum, and after the incident with Bertilak, Mordred finally acquiesced, albeit ordering Gildas to be confined in the monastery near the city. Gildas suspects that Bertilak manipulated his prophecies to persuade the king not to kill Gildas and to help the monk get away from Mordred. His suspicions are correct: Bertilak needed Gildas away from Mordred and Morgawse; that is why he prophesied that if Gildas died, the High King would join him nine days later. This prophecy is what saved the monk and allowed the Heroes to find him.

And, of course, Gildas can provide the heroes with the location of Bertilak's head: the High Stone Circle on the Isle of Vectis.

Once Gildas has told his story, the Heroes can either rest in the monastery a little longer or leave immediately for Vectis in search of the head. If they ask Gildas to accompany them he will refuse, unless the game master decides otherwise, saying that he has no desire to leave the monastery. He is still terrified that Mordred or Morgawse will take reprisals on him. (**Deduction** to perceive his fear). Gildas will wish them luck on their quest and take his leave.



MORGAWSE'S ATTACK

Unless the Heroes detect Morgawse's spies before entering the monastery, their presence will seal the fate of the small congregation, leading Morgawse to launch an attack to eliminate the Heroes and capture Gildas. The assault will occur at midnight. If the Heroes have already departed, Morgawse will succeed in destroying the monastery and capturing Gildas through the paths of the Otherworld.

If the Heroes are still within the monastery as guests, the tolling bells will signal the attack, and Gildas will express panic, urging them to leave immediately. He'll guide them

to an old postern gate, leading through tunnels to an exit near a stream. A dozen undead warriors and eight spirits of darkness will assail the monastery. Confronting them would be suicide, so Gildas must convince the Heroes to flee. As they depart, they'll need to make a **Strength** roll, facing a penalty of -1d, to cross the courtyard without attracting the attention of 1d3 spirits of darkness.

Whether they take the road or flee through tunnels and caves, the Heroes will leave the Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus behind them, with Morgawse's malevolent forces in hot pursuit.







CANTO IV

AN ISLAND FORGOTTEN BY TIME

Regardless of how the characters escape the monastery, Morgawse will soon realise that her quarry has eluded her and dispatch half a dozen spirits of darkness to pursue them. If the Heroes use magic, particularly divination, they'll sense they're being followed, initiating a chase.

ESCAPE TO CLAUSENTUM

A successful **Wisdom** roll will reveal that reaching the Isle of Vectis is best accomplished by boarding at Clausentum, the primary port in southern Britannia. To reach Clausentum before Morgawse's spirits catch them, an extended **Strength** (*Endurance*) or **Dexterity** (*Riding*) roll with 8 successes will be required, representing the exhaustion of their horses, or their own fatigue if they lack mounts, assuming they haven't obscured their tracks.

The journey to Clausentum is an eight-hour walk or a four-hour horse ride from the monastery. If they arrive without encountering the spirits of darkness, the spirits will

vanish. However, Morgawse knows the Heroes' destination, and her spirits will reappear once the Heroes disembark on Vectis.

Entering Clausentum at night poses challenges. The high walls are difficult to scale. If the Heroes try to break down the gates they will need 15 successes in **Strength** and will have to fight at least twenty guards. If they attempt to sneak past the guards and climb over the wall, they will need 8 successes in **Dexterity** (*Climbing*) and run the risk of falling or being discovered. Their best bet is to convince the sleepy guards, unsettled by the Heroes' sudden arrival, to let them in. To do this, they will need a successful **Charisma** (*Persuasion*) roll or a generous bribe.

Once inside Clausentum, the Heroes will find safety. If they've sustained injuries, this is an opportunity to rest and recuperate before continuing. The city buzzes with activity even at night, with preparations underway before dawn around the port. With numerous inns and taverns available, finding a place to rest shouldn't be difficult before seeking passage to Vectis.

WHAT IF MY HEROES WANT TO EXPLORE CLAUSENTUM?

No additional information is provided about Clausentum (modern-day Southampton) in this adventure, as it's just a passing location. If your heroes express a desire to explore the city, it's important to remind them of the urgency of their mission. Any delay could give Morgawse the chance to relocate Bertilak's head or fortify the defences around it. Moreover, like Venta Belgarum, Clausentum is under Mordred's influence, and its hostile city guard may initiate a search for the Heroes shortly after their arrival. Lingering in Clausentum would thus be unwise. However, if they are determined to explore the city, keep in mind that Clausentum is a bustling port city frequented by ships from all over Europe. They'll encounter a diverse array of people, ranging from sophisticated Byzantine merchants to fierce Vandal mercenaries. The city boasts a sturdy fortress loyal to Mordred, as well as several churches adhering to the Nicene creed. Along the seafront, they may stumble upon the ruins of an ancient Mithraeum, offering a glimpse into the city's rich history. Countless warehouses line the docks, storing a myriad of products from distant lands.

THE CROSSING TO VECTIS

At this stage of their journey, the Heroes likely have enough challenges without you adding further complications. However, finding passage to Vectis from Clausentum proves tricky due to the limited availability of boats departing for the island. If the Heroes ask around the port, people will point them in the direction of Eadric the Saxon. Despite this label, Eadric is in fact a Jute, a distinction often overlooked. The Jutes have settled on Vectis in overwhelming numbers, provoking suspicion from Clausentum's residents, one reason why so few of them want to travel there. If there are any Saxons among the Heroes, they may discern Eadric's true ethnicity with little effort, which could significantly influence his willingness to assist them.

Eadric traverses between his village in the northwest of the island and Clausentum every three days, peddling salted fish from his modest boat. Unfortunately, his vessel lacks the capacity to accommodate horses. While he may not be a Saxon, Eadric possesses proficiency in both the Saxon and Brythonic languages, ensuring smooth communication with the Heroes. Upon request, he agrees to ferry them to his village. If the Heroes identify Eadric's Jutish heritage, he will offer to transport them to the northern coast of Vectis, near the mouth of the Medeana River. If they fail to discern his true origins but express a desire to head north, he will comply, nonetheless. Regardless of their destination, Eadric's demeanor will shift noticeably if they mention the High Stone Circle; he will spit and touch the pendant around his neck. A Saxon party member, or someone who achieves 2 successes on a **Wisdom** roll, will identify the pendant as an ivory amulet bearing a crude engraving symbolizing Rán, the Saxon sea goddess. Eadric's reaction makes it clear that he considers the place to be cursed. Regardless, Eadric will ask for a fair price for the trip to Vectis. As soon as he finishes his business in Clausentum, he will start his journey home, taking the Heroes with him.

With a successful **Charisma** (*Persuasion or Deception*) roll, the Heroes coax Eadric into revealing more about his distrust towards the High Stone Circle. He will be reluctant at first, his nervousness causing him to spill some of his beer into the sea. However, he will eventually reveal that strange things occur at that place. The Jutes believe that Bretwalda (the Saxon term for High King) Mordred has imprisoned an ancient demon there and makes dark deals with it. The area is plagued by inexplicable phenomena – sudden storms and downpours, strange colours in the sky, and bloodcurdling howls and groans. Old Godric, the shaman of Eadric's village, has forbidden his followers from going near there, warning of Woden's wrath should they dare defy the prohibition. When pressed further, Eadric will simply shrug and say he has no intention of going anywhere near the stones. He will leave the Heroes far enough away from them to not



Eadric the Saxon

risk angering anyone. This will be the case even if they identify him as a Jute and he agrees to leave them at the mouth of the Medeana.

HEADING TO THE CIRCLE

If the Heroes disembark at Eadric's village, they will face a four-hour trek through rugged terrain to reach the circle. The spirits of darkness will harass the group throughout their journey. Morgawse's spirits will avoid attacking the Heroes directly; their goal is to weaken them as much as possible before they reach the circle, where Bertilak's guardian will deal with them. Describe the Heroes' arduous progress through the forests as they are ambushed and attacked by the spectres. Let the dice decide the cost of this journey. Each PC faces 4d of Damage and has two rolls to mitigate it. The first will be **Strength** (*Walking or Resistance*) to endure the intensity of the journey. The second is up to the game master but should contribute in some way to the group's progress. It could be **Deduction** (*Orientation*) to stay on course, **Charisma** (*Leadership*) to rally their companions, **Strength** (*Feats of Strength*) to clear obstacles, or **Wisdom** (*Nature*) to detect ambushes.

For each success obtained on these two rolls, the PC subtracts 1d from the Damage caused by the dark spectres' ambush.



On the other hand, if Eadric leaves the Heroes at the mouth of the Medeana, they will be less than an hour away from the High Stone Circle, situated on a hill on the eastern bank of the river. The spirits will have less time to harass the group, so the potential Damage they can cause is lower: only 2d. Similarly, the journey is much easier so the Heroes will not need to make a **Strength** roll to withstand it. Ask each PC to describe how they contribute to their progress and have them roll for the Attribute that best fits. As above, each success reduces Damage by 1d.





CANTO V

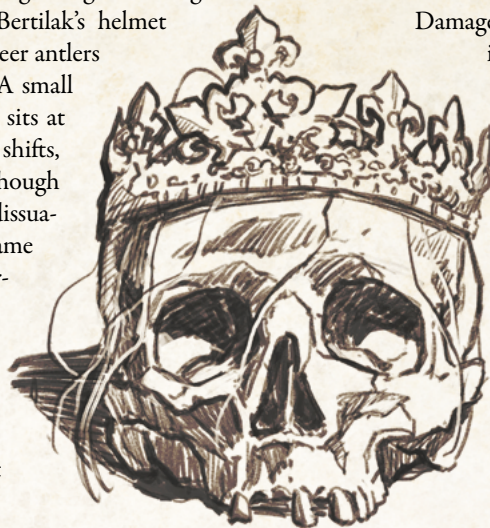
WHERE THE DEER SUFFER



The High Stone Circle, known as *Clanchan Ard* in Gaelic, once served as the sanctuary of Cernunnos on the Isle of Vectis, but was abandoned over four centuries ago. Vectis fell under Roman rule around 46 AD, when General Vespasian led his legions to Britannia. Some locals equated the worship of Cernunnos with that of Vertumnus, the Roman god of the forests, but over time the significance of the site faded into obscurity. When the Jutes claimed Vectis, they eyed the site with suspicion, and those suspicions were validated when Queen Morgawse imprisoned Bertilak's head within the sanctuary. Since then, eerie phenomena have plagued the area, turning it into a nexus where our world collides with the Otherworld, manifesting as strange lights, ominous sounds, and violent storms. As the Heroes approach, they see the sky above the High Stone Circle streaked with unnatural hues of green and purple, lightning crackling unpredictably, and flashes of witch's fire dancing over the stones and the Heroes' weapons, setting their nerves on edge.

THE SANCTUARY

The circle comprises six granite stones. Two have fallen and become overgrown with moss and vegetation, while another has split in two. At the circle's centre, a stream gushes forth from the earth, eventually feeding into the Meleana before reaching the sea. Queen Morgawse erected a small wooden shrine upon the rocks where the spring emerges, housing Bertilak's severed head. Nearby, Bertilak's helmet lies on the ground, adorned with deer antlers and weathered by rust and moss. A small shelter for Morgawse's two scribes sits at one side of the circle; they rotate shifts, recording Bertilak's utterances. Though not warriors, they may attempt to dissuade the Heroes with threats in the name of Queen Morgawse and King Mordred, but they possess no combat prowess and are easily felled by a single blow. Should any Hero venture into the circle, the scribes will pale and flee, aware that Morgawse left a guardian to protect



Bertilak, a fate they are keen to avoid. Before entering the circle, the Heroes may glimpse some deer emerging from the forest and looking uneasily towards the circle.

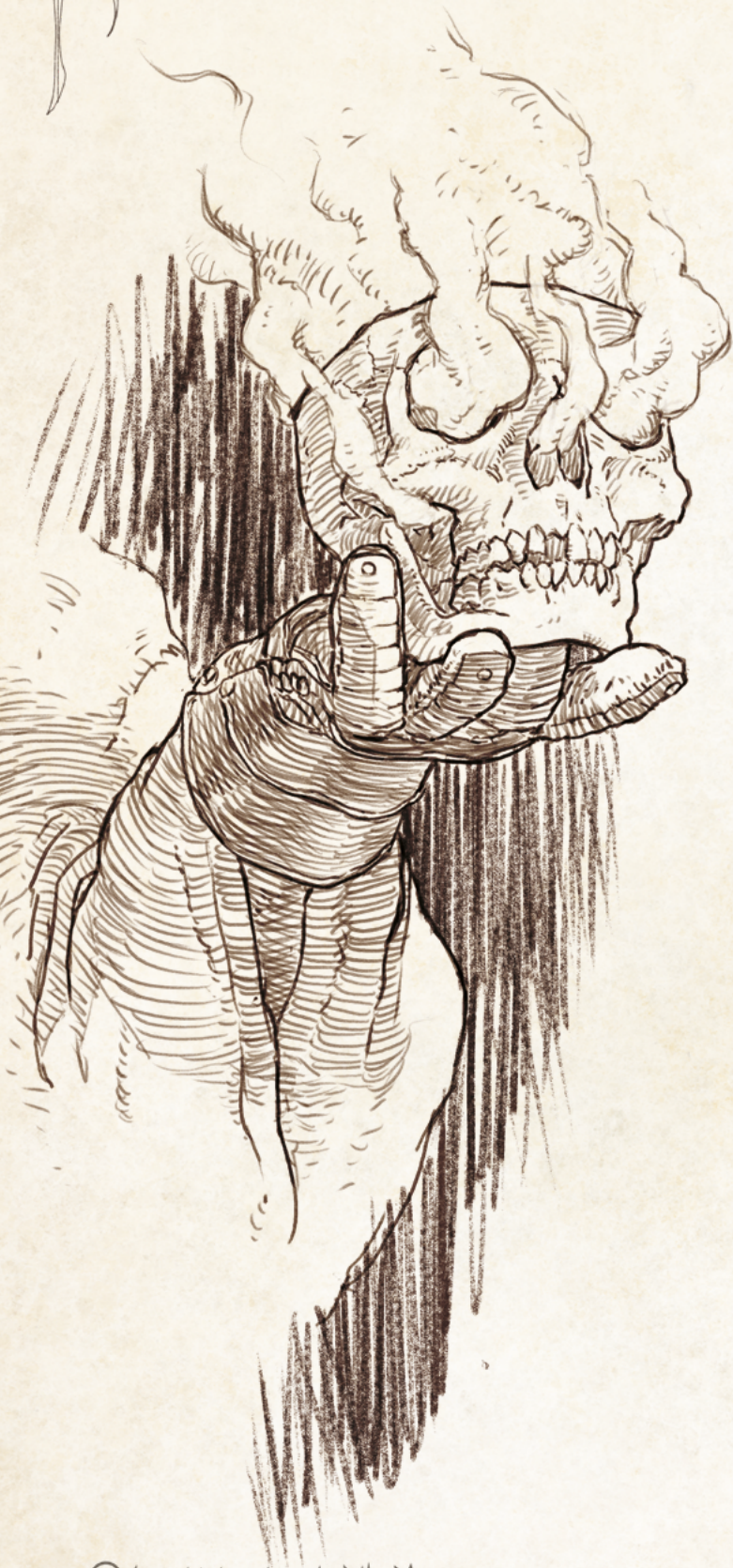
BERTILAK'S GUARDIAN

As soon as one of the Heroes sets foot inside the circle, the Guardian will awaken. When Morgawse left Bertilak's head on the Isle of Vectis, she harnessed a natural resource to guard it: fossils. The Isle of Wight is one of Britain's primary palaeontological sites; it even has its own species, like *Vectipelta Barretti*, a dinosaur with blade-like spikes for armour. Morgawse is not a palaeontologist, but she has melded the remains of several large and ferocious 'dragons' to form a formidable guardian, which will emerge out of the earth to try to thwart any attempts to rescue the head.

Bertilak's Guardian is made up of large bones fused together by Morgawse's magic. It is about twelve metres long, with a fin-shaped spine, a bony carapace protecting its hindquarters, and sharp crocodile-like jaws. Refer to the appendix of adversaries for a visual representation. The creature strikes twice per turn, with both its jaws and its tail posing lethal threats.

As the battle rages, the circle is gradually surrounded by a growing multitude of deer. By the fourth round of combat, the herd charges into the fray, targeting the Guardian in response to the Green Man's call. Their goal is to help the Heroes free their lord. While the deer are in the circle, the Guardian will not attack the Heroes and will receive 2d of Damage each turn (which will not be reduced by its Massive and Protection characteristics).

However, the Heroes will have to dodge the charging deer to avoid receiving 1d of accidental Damage from being gored, struck, or trampled by the herd. If the Heroes want to attack the Guardian while the deer are there, they will have to chain their rolls; for example, rolling a **Dexterity** (*Dodge*) test before rolling to attack. The deer will hold out for three turns before being overwhelmed by the Guardian. Once that happens, it will be up to the Heroes to finish the job.



USE THE ENVIRONMENT!

This will be a tough battle, especially if our Heroes just engage in straightforward attacks. It's a great opportunity to remind them that they can support each other by taking actions to distract the Guardian, leveraging the environment, and assisting their allies.

- ✦ **Strength** (*Climbing*) roll to scale one of the stones or a tree, thus gaining a vantage point, adding +2d to the use of ranged weapons.
- ✦ **Extended Strength** (*Feats of Strength*) roll to topple one of the stones onto the Guardian to cause Damage equal to the accumulated successes, with a minimum of four successes.
- ✦ **Dexterity** (*Stealth*) roll to hide in the thickets. Additional successes add to the next surprise attack.
- ✦ **Charisma** (*Deception*) roll to distract the Guardian. Additional successes subtract from the monster's next combat roll.

These are just some ideas; your gaming group can come up with their own ways to gain tactical advantages against a very dangerous opponent in direct combat.

CANTO VI

WHERE EVIL CANNOT REACH



nce the Guardian has been defeated, the Heroes will be able to open Bertilak's cage without any problems. It is locked, but a sword blow will suffice to break the lock and access the head. Bertilak, upon release, greets them with a laugh. He appears to be a man in his forties, with skin of a greenish hue, a beard of moss, and extraordinary eyes that blend the dark green of pine leaves, the silver of willow bark, and the red of holly. Bertilak, now free, may implore the Heroes to remove him from the circle, having been tainted by the magic of the Nameless Old Gods, served by the Queen of Air and Darkness. He may offer cryptic guidance or prophetic musings, steering the Heroes' path. For example, if after *The Lay of the Green Knight* you intend to play *The Book of Mordred*, Bertilak could advise the Heroes to seek refuge in Rheged, under the protection of the Lion Warrior, King Owain of Rheged, sworn enemy of Morgawse and Mordred. There, Bertilak could tell them, they will be summoned for the song that can end the darkness. The Green Knight can be as enigmatic or as clear as you desire, for though ensnared by the queen's magic, he remains an aspect of a god, and if he has been opaque and deceitful towards Mordred, it has been by his own volition.

The Heroes cannot afford to linger on Vectis. As soon as the Queen of Air and Darkness senses Bertilak's escape, she will set her hosts in pursuit, while Mordred marshals his armies. In fact, all their actions will have had consequences. If they happen to pass through the Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus again, they will find it destroyed and its inhabitants, including Gildas, crucified. To fully liberate Bertilak, the Heroes must incinerate his head; and they must do so quickly, because it is the head that allows Morgawse to track them. (Bertilak himself could explain this). The Heroes are now marked targets of Morgawse. Returning home could risk sparking conflict between the High King and the lords of southern Wales. Caer Gwent, too, may suffer a fate akin to the monastery.

The Heroes have dealt a significant blow to Mordred and his mother. Finding refuge in a place where darkness does not reign may now be a nearly impossible mission for them.







APPENDICES

CREATURES AND NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

BEAR

Dexterity 2
Fighting 2
Massive 1
Vitality x1,5

WEAPONS

Claws 3d

ROAD GUARDS

Dexterity 1
Fighting 1
Ranged Weapons 1
Vitality x0,5 ([1-2] [3-4] [5] [6], 2 INC boxes)

WEAPONS

Short sword (slash) 2d
Short bow (ranged), 20m, 2d Trauma 6

PROTECTION

Leather armour -1d Damage

CAPTAIN OF THE ROAD GUARDS

Dexterity 2
Fighting 2
Ranged Weapons 1
Vitality x1

WEAPONS

Short sword (slash) 2d
Short bow (ranged), 20m, 2d Trauma 6

PROTECTION

Leather armour -1d Damage

MONKS OF SAINTS SERGIUS AND BACCHUS

Dexterity 2
Fighting 1
Vitality x0,5 ([1-2] [3-4] [5] [6], 2 INC boxes)

WEAPONS

None 1d Non-lethal

UNDEAD WARRIORS

Dexterity 2
Fighting 2
Vitality x1

WEAPONS

Long sword (slash) 3d
Spear (throw) 3d, Trauma 6

PROTECTION

Breastplate (rigid) -1d Damage, Resistance 1, -1 DEX, -1 INI

Undead: Ignore effects of Trauma

SPIRITS OF DARKNESS

Dexterity 4
Fighting 2
Vitality Special. Immune to conventional Damage but dissipate if damaged by fire or cold iron weapons.

WEAPONS

Claws 2d

PROTECTION

Partially ethereal -1d Damage

MAGIC

Suffer magic fatigue on rolls of 6; Magic Fatigue boxes = 6

Instil fear Create + Sight 3d: Conjures a horrifying image to paralyze enemies. Inflicts penalty dice equal to the Magnitude of the roll. You can distribute them among multiple targets.

Move objects: Manipulate + Small objects 2d: Manipulates objects smaller than a fist without touching them. Can do so gently or at great speed. If used as an attack, roll Damage dice equal to the Magnitude obtained on the -1 roll.



FACE TO FACE WITH THE SPECTRES

This adventure is not designed for characters to engage in direct combat with the spirits of darkness. Instead, they serve as an obstacle during the assault on the Monastery of Saints Sergius and Bacchus and in the march across the island of Vectis. But if you do wish to involve the spirits in a direct confrontation, you should be aware that the PCs may have trouble damaging them, except for Lucius Agricola with his Halo of Fire spell. If you want to level the playing field, have Prince Corbin award one of the Heroes with a dagger of cold iron after the hunt.

ROYAL GUARD (ELITE), MORDRED'S WARRIORS

Dexterity 2
Fighting 2
Ranged Weapons 2
Vitality x1

WEAPONS

Long sword (slash) 3d

PROTECTION

Breastplate (rigid) -1d Damage, Resistance 1, -1 DEX, -1 INI

CAPTAIN OF THE ROYAL GUARD (ELITE)

Dexterity 3
Fighting 3
Ranged Weapons 1
Vitality x1

WEAPONS

Long sword (slash) 3d

PROTECTION

Breastplate (rigid) -1d Damage, Resistance 1, -1 DEX, -1 INI

GUARDIAN OF THE CIRCLE

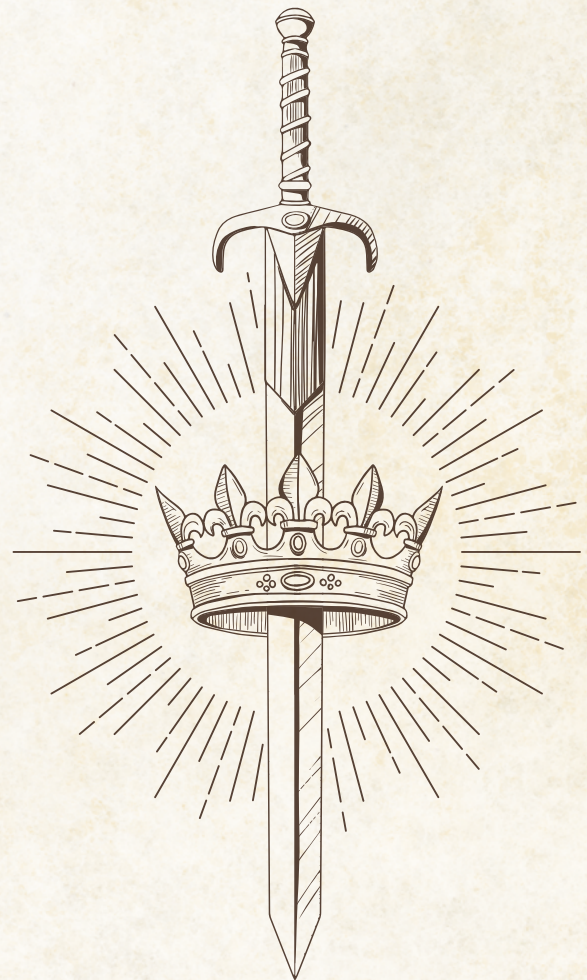
Dexterity 1
Fighting 3
Massive 2
Vitality x2

ATTACKS (can use both each turn)

Bite (slash) 3d
Tail (blunt) 2d Trauma 6

PROTECTION

Bones (rigid) -2d Damage, Resistance 2
Skeleton -2d Damage against fire and poison





APPENDIX 2

PREGENERATED CHARACTERS

GWENDOLEN UI GALVYN

CONCEPT: Noble

BLOODLINE: Lothian Clan

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Gwendolen possesses the fiery red hair and green eyes characteristic of the Lothian Clan, inherited from her great-grandmother, the fearsome Queen Morgawse. Quick to anger yet also quick to burst into laughter, she shares these personality traits with her most illustrious ancestor, the Knight Gawain.

ABILITIES

Strength: 3 (March)

Dexterity: 2 (Flexible, Horse riding)

Wisdom: 1

Charisma: 3 (Leadership)

Deduction: 2

Fighting: 1

Ranged Weapons: 3

Protection: Shield, mitigates 1d of damage when used

Languages: Briton, latin

Belongings: Horse, noble clothing, shield, arrows

Weapons: Short Sword (blade, 1 hand, 2d damage), Bow (ranged, 2 hands, 3d damage and Trauma 6, 20 metres)

BACKGROUND: Gwendolen is a descendant of Gaheris, the third son of King Lot and Queen Morgawse. After the Battle of Camlann, her father Galvyn, along with his wife and children, fled Lothian to the south to escape the influence of the Queen of Air and Darkness. Seeking refuge in Dyfed, south of Wales, Galvyn established control over certain lands and fortresses.

In Dyfed, Galvyn gained dominion over several territories, continuing the legacy of the Lothian clan in South Wales. As his second daughter, Gwendolen may be called upon to mend, through marriage, a longstanding rift between the Welsh and Lothian clans. Perhaps she holds the key to ending the animosity sparked by the deaths of King Lot and Lamorak... but only time will tell.

SELWYN OF CAER GWENT

CONCEPT: Warrior

BLOODLINE: Wales Clan

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Selwyn is a warrior in the service of the lord of Caer Gwent, Corbin ap Teudrig. She is a broad-shouldered woman with tanned skin, who often fiddles with a dagger in her hands, and who observes everything almost without blinking. On her face and wrists she has the tribal tattoos of the Ordovician tribe.

ABILITIES

Strength: 3 (Climb, Brute force)

Dexterity: 3 (Reflexes)

Wisdom: 1

Charisma: 2 (Intimidate)

Deduction: 2

Fighting: 4

Ranged Weapons: 0

Protection: Plate Armour (rigid) -2d damage, Resistance 4, Shield (-1d damage)

Languages: Briton, Welsh

Belongings: Horse, plate armour, Morrigan's amulet

Weapons: Sword (blade, 1 hand, 3d damage)

BACKGROUND: Selwyn descends from the ancient and enigmatic Ordovician tribe, who once inhabited the central regions of what is now Wales and frequently clashed with Roman invaders over the centuries. For decades, Selwyn's family has resided in Caer Gwent, faithfully serving Lord Corbin ap Teudrig. Under his rule, Selwyn has recently been tasked with the protection of Lady Gwendolen ui Galvin...



LUCIUS AGRICOLA

CONCEPT: Pelagian Priest (Christian heretic)

BLOODLINE: Benoic Clan

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Lucius, of Armorican origin, is a priest who tends to a small abbey dedicated to St. Martial in Caer Gwent. He is a tall, slender man, typically garbed in simple grey or brown attire, with a humble appearance notable for his deliberate speech and the wooden cross adorning his neck.

ABILITIES

Strength: 2 (Never tired)

Dexterity: 1 (Reflexes)

Wisdom: 4 (Well-read)

Charisma: 1 (Perceptive)

Deduction: 3 (Texts, Observation)

Fighting: 1

Ranged weapons: 1

Languages: Armorican, Briton, Latin, Welsh

Belongings: Donkey, wooden cross, blessed water, Pelagian texts

Weapons: Mace (blunt, 1 hand, 3d damage, Trauma 6)

MAGIA: Christian

Usual spells:

Heal/Harm

Roll: 4d (Manipulate + Wounds)

Effect: Heal cures X Vitality Track boxes, X being the number of successes in the Magic roll (an Incapacitation Track box is also healed when the healed Vitality box is an even number). Harm causes Damage equals to the number of successes in the magic roll, but you need the target to be already wounded.

Revitalizing Meal

Roll: 3d (Manipulate + Food)

Effect: Eating magical enhanced food cures X Vitality Track boxes, X being the number of successes in the Magic roll (an Incapacitation Track box is also healed when the healed Vitality box is an even number). This food retains its supernatural capacities till next sunrise.

Detect Spirits

Roll: 5d (Read + Fire)

Effect: This spell detects supernatural presences from the Otherworld depending on the Magnitude achieved. 1 = physical contact. 2 = 10-metres radius. 3 = 50-metres radius.

Diagnose

Roll: 5d (Read + Wounds)

Effect: Enables understanding of the damage nature, providing the healing recipe for a swift recovery of the wounded. Each point of Magnitude grants an extra die that can be added on the next first aid or non-magical healing attempt.

Fire halo

Roll: 4d (Manipulate + Fire)

Effect: Using an already existing fire, you can extend a flaming halo towards your enemies, depending on the Magnitude achieved. 1 = physical contact. 2 = 10-metres radius. 3 = 50-metres radius. Fire causes Xd of damage, X being the spell Magnitude.

***Surplus Magnitude:** In all spells, if the magician intended to achieve a specific Magnitude before the roll and obtains more successes than necessary, he may choose to increase the effective Magnitude or forego the extra successes to avoid the fatigue they cause.

Magic Fatigue (5, 6): O, O, O, O, O, O

BACKGROUND: Lucius Agricola arrived in Britannia from Armorica in the years following the defeat of Camlann. His family had fled, fearing a potential attack by the Frank. Lucius is distantly related to the Armorican royal family through his mother, who is connected to the wives of King Ban and King Bors. Raised in the devout Pelagian faith, Lucius continues to propagate their beliefs discreetly as a priest of St. Martial.

DEOCHAN REDTOOTH

CONCEPT: Hunter

BLOODLINE: Aelle Clan

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Deochan is a wild and rough-looking man with straw-blond hair, light eyes and a flat nose, who proudly wears the marks and scars of his life. He treasures his bronze bracelets, which depict a wolf hunting the sun and a wolf hunting the moon. The wolf is the totemic animal of Deochan.

ABILITIES

Strength: 3 (Forest survival)

Dexterity: 2 (Stealthy)

Wisdom: 2 (Merchant)

Charisma: 1 (Build rapport)

Deduction: 1

Fighting: 2

Ranged weapons: 2

Protection: Leather armour, -1d Damage

Languages: Saxon, briton

Belongings: Fur clothes, woodman's axe, 3 throwing spear

Weapons: Spear (spear, 1 or 2 hands, 2d damage and Trauma 6, 10 metres if throwing) Deochan's Spear Mastery enables him to deduct 1 point from an enemy's Massive Value (More on this in the complete rule-set for *The Winter King*).

MAGIC: Saxon (wolf totem)

Usual spells:

Follow/Erase Track

Roll: 3d (Read/Destroy + Movement)

Effect: The *Follow* spell allows to identify who and when have left a track, depending on the Magnitude achieved. 1 = one objective. 2 = 3 objectives. 3 = 5 objectives. When *erasing a track*, the spell's Magnitude equals the number of die that must be subtracted from whomever try to follow you.

Convince for the common good

Roll: 4d (Manipulate + Pack)

Effect: The Magnitude achieved represents the number of steps by which the audience is moved towards what you want to tell them or invite them to do... The scale is opposite-reticent-neutral-favourable-convinced. The game director must determine the initial state of the audience before the roll is made. He does not need to reveal this initial state to the magician.

Calm the prey

Roll: 5d (Destroy + Fear)

Effect: The chosen prey calms down before you, making it easier to deliver the coup de grace. The Magnitude represents the number of steps by which you move the prey towards tranquillity on the alarmed-frightened-neutral-confident-friendly scale. Magnitude also indicates the number of targets (as in *Follow Track*).

***Surplus Magnitude:** In all spells, if the magician intended to achieve a specific Magnitude before the roll and obtains more successes than necessary, he may choose to increase the effective Magnitude or forego the extra successes to avoid the fatigue they cause.

Magic Fatigue (5, 6): O, O, O, O, O, O

BACKGROUND: Not many Saxons can claim, like Deochan, that their family is descended from Aelle himself. During the Summer Kingdom, Deochan's family lived in southern Britannia, in the lands surrounding Venta Belgarum and Clausentum. Deochan's father, along with his older brother and some of his uncles and aunts, died at Camlann fighting alongside Arthur. After Mordred occupied Venta Belgarum, Aelle's Clan family sought refuge across the Severn River in Caer Gwent. There, Deochan has served as a hunter for the lords of the city and their guests.

NAME

GWENDOLEN UI GALVYN

CONCEPT

NOBLE

BLOODLINE

LOTHIAN CLAN

MILESTONE

□□□ **1d** □□□ **2d** □□□ **3d** □□□ **4d** □□□ **5d**

Physical Description

Gwendolen possesses the fiery red hair and green eyes characteristic of the Lothian Clan, inherited from her great-grandmother, the fearsome Queen Morgawse. Quick to anger yet also quick to burst into laughter, she shares these personality traits with her most illustrious ancestor, the Knight Gawain.

Background

Gwendolen is a descendant of Gaheris, the third son of King Lot and Queen Morgawse. After the Battle of Camlann, her father Galvyn, along with his wife and children, fled Lothian to the south to escape the influence of the Queen of Air and Darkness. Seeking refuge in Dyfed, south of Wales, Galvyn established control over certain lands and fortresses.

In Dyfed, Galvyn gained dominion over several territories, continuing the legacy of the Lothian clan in South Wales. As his second daughter, Gwendolen may be called upon to mend, through marriage, a longstanding rift between the Welsh and Lothian clans. Perhaps she holds the key to ending the animosity sparked by the deaths of King Lot and Lamorak... but only time will tell.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH

3

Spec. March

Spec.

Spec.

DEXTERITY

2

Spec. Flexible

Spec. Horse Riding

Spec.

WISDOM

1

Spec.

Spec.

Spec.

CHARISMA

3

Spec. Leadership

Spec.

Spec.

FIGHTING

1

Masteries

BLADE

BLUNT

POLEARM

SPEAR

SHIELD

COMPLETE ARMOUR

RANGED WEAPONS

3

Masteries

RANGED

THROWABLE

VITALITY

1 2 2 3 3 4 5 6

INCAPACITATION

□ □ □ □ □ □

Weapon	Category	Hands	Base Damage	Reach	Notes
Short Sword	Blade	1 hand	2d damage		
Bow	Ranged	2 hands	3d damage	20 metres	Trauma 6. Only applies on hits up to 20 metres.

PROTECTION

Armour

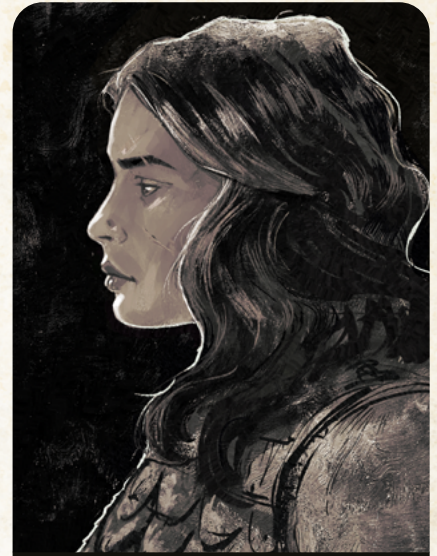
Required Strength

Damage Die

Shield

-1d damage

□ □ □ □ □ □



EVOLUTION POINTS

○

INITIATIVE

○

DEDUCTION

2

Spec.

Spec.

Spec.

LANGUAGES

Briton

Latin

BELONGINGS

Horse

Noble clothing

Shield

Arrows





MAGIC (Choose one Magic Tradition)

OTHERWORLD

CHRISTIAN

SAHON

MITRAS AND ISIS

MAGIC MASTERY

PRACTICIONER

(3 Objectives / Fatigue every 5 or 6 / Max. magnitude 3)

SCHOLAR

(5 Objectives / Fatigue every 6 / Max. magnitude unlimited)

MAGIC ACTIONS

READ

MANIPULATE

CREATE

DESTROY

TARGETS

FATIGUE

MAGIC MAGNITUDES

	DISTANCE AND VISIBILITY	TARGET PREDISPOSITION	SIZE / NUMBER OF TARGETS	TIME
1	PHYSICAL CONTACT / SELF	CHANGE ONE NOTCH	INDIVIDUAL / 1 OBJECTIVE	< 2 MINUTES
2	VISIBLE AND / OR <10 METERS	CHANGE TWO NOTCHES	HORSE / 3 OBJECTIVES	< 1 HOUR
3	VISIBLE AND / OR <50 METERS	CHANGE THREE NOTCHES	CART / 5 OBJECTIVES	< 1 DAY
4	VISIBLE AND / OR <100 METERS	CHANGE FOUR NOTCHES	SHACK / 10 OBJECTIVES	< 1 WEEK
5	VISIBLE AND / OR <150 METERS	CHANGE FOUR NOTCHES AND THE CHANGE IS PERMANENT	COTTAGE / 30 OBJECTIVES	< 1 MONTH

PERSONAL GRIMOIRE

(Write your spell formulas in the grimoire)

NAME: _____ **ROLL**

ACTION: _____ TARGET: _____

EFFECT: _____

NAME: _____ **ROLL**

ACTION: _____ TARGET: _____

EFFECT: _____

NAME: _____ **ROLL**

ACTION: _____ TARGET: _____

EFFECT: _____

NAME: _____ **ROLL**

ACTION: _____ TARGET: _____

EFFECT: _____

NAME

SELWYN OF CAER GWENT

CONCEPT

WARRIOR

BLOODLINE

WALES CLAN

MILESTONE

□□□ **1d** □□□ **2d** □□□ **3d** □□□ **4d** □□□ **5d**

Physical Description

Selwyn is a warrior in the service of the lord of Caer Gwent, Corbin ap Teudrig. She is a broad-shouldered woman with tanned skin, who often fiddles with a dagger in her hands, and who observes everything almost without blinking. On her face and wrists she has the tribal tattoos of the Ordovician tribe.

Background

Selwyn descends from the ancient and enigmatic Ordovician tribe, who once inhabited the central regions of what is now Wales and frequently clashed with Roman invaders over the centuries. For decades, Selwyn's family has resided in Caer Gwent, faithfully serving Lord Corbin ap Teudrig. Under his rule, Selwyn has recently been tasked with the protection of Lady Gwendolen ui Galvin...

ABILITIES

STRENGTH

3

Spec. Climb

Spec. Brute force

Spec.

DEXTERITY

3

Spec. Reflexes

Spec.

Spec.

WISDOM

1

Spec.

Spec.

Spec.

CHARISMA

2

Spec. Intimidate

Spec.

Spec.

FIGHTING

4

Masteries

BLADE

BLUNT

POLEARM

SPEAR

SHIELD

COMPLETE ARMOUR

RANGED WEAPONS

0

Masteries

RANGED

THROWABLE

VITALITY

1 2 2 3 3 4 5 6

INCAPACITATION

□ □ □ □ □ □

Weapon	Category	Hands	Base Damage	Reach	Notes
Short Sword	Blade	1 hand	3d damage		

PROTECTION

Armour	Required Strength	Damage Die
Plate armour		-2d damage
Shield		-1d damage



EVOLUTION POINTS

INITIATIVE

DEDUCTION

2

Spec.

Spec.

Spec.

LANGUAGES

Briton

Welsh

BELONGINGS

Horse

Plate Armour

Morrigan's amulet





MAGIC (Choose one Magic Tradition)

OTHERWORLD

CHRISTIAN

SAHON

MITRAS AND ISIS

MAGIC MASTERY

PRACTICIONER

(3 Objectives / Fatigue every 5 or 6 / Max. magnitude 3)

SCHOLAR

(5 Objectives / Fatigue every 6 / Max. magnitude unlimited)

MAGIC ACTIONS

READ

MANIPULATE

CREATE

DESTROY

TARGETS

FATIGUE

MAGIC MAGNITUDES

	DISTANCE AND VISIBILITY	TARGET PREDISPOSITION	SIZE / NUMBER OF TARGETS	TIME
1	PHYSICAL CONTACT / SELF	CHANGE ONE NOTCH	INDIVIDUAL / 1 OBJECTIVE	< 2 MINUTES
2	VISIBLE AND / OR <10 METERS	CHANGE TWO NOTCHES	HORSE / 3 OBJECTIVES	< 1 HOUR
3	VISIBLE AND / OR <50 METERS	CHANGE THREE NOTCHES	CART / 5 OBJECTIVES	< 1 DAY
4	VISIBLE AND / OR <100 METERS	CHANGE FOUR NOTCHES	SHACK / 10 OBJECTIVES	< 1 WEEK
5	VISIBLE AND / OR <150 METERS	CHANGE FOUR NOTCHES AND THE CHANGE IS PERMANENT	COTTAGE / 30 OBJECTIVES	< 1 MONTH

PERSONAL GRIMOIRE

(Write your spell formulas in the grimoire)

NAME: _____ **ROLL**

ACTION: _____ TARGET: _____

EFFECT: _____

NAME: _____ **ROLL**

ACTION: _____ TARGET: _____

EFFECT: _____

NAME: _____ **ROLL**

ACTION: _____ TARGET: _____

EFFECT: _____

NAME: _____ **ROLL**

ACTION: _____ TARGET: _____

EFFECT: _____

THE WINTER KING

NAME

LUCIUS AGRICOLA

CONCEPT

PELAGIAN PRIEST (CHRISTIAN HERETIC)

BLOODLINE

BENOIC CLAN

MILESTONE

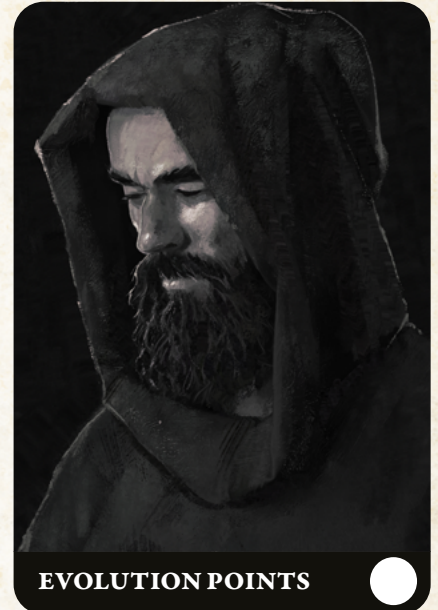
□□□ 1d □□□ 2d □□□ 3d □□□ 4d □□□ 5d

Physical Description

Lucius, of Armorican origin, is a priest who tends to a small abbey dedicated to St. Martial in Caer Gwent. He is a tall, slender man, typically garbed in simple grey or brown attire, with a humble appearance notable for his deliberate speech and the wooden cross adorning his neck.

Background

Lucius Agricola arrived in Britannia from Armorica in the years following the defeat of Camlann. His family had fled, fearing a potential attack by the Frank. Lucius is distantly related to the Armorican royal family through his mother, who is connected to the wives of King Ban and King Bors. Raised in the devout Pelagian faith, Lucius continues to propagate their beliefs discreetly as a priest of St. Martial.



EVOLUTION POINTS

ABILITIES

STRENGTH

2

Spec. Never tired

Spec.

Spec.

DEXTERITY

1

Spec. Reflexes

Spec.

Spec.

WISDOM

4

Spec. Well-read

Spec.

Spec.

CHARISMA

1

Spec. Perceptive

Spec.

Spec.

FIGHTING

1

Masteries

BLADE

BLUNT

POLEARM

SPEAR

SHIELD

COMPLETE ARMOUR

RANGED WEAPONS

1

Masteries

RANGED

THROWABLE

VITALITY

1 2 2 3 3 4 5 6

INCAPACITATION

□ □ □ □ □ □

INITIATIVE

DEDUCTION

2

Spec. Texts

Spec. Observation

Spec.

LANGUAGES

Armorican

Briton

Latin

Welsh

BELONGINGS

Donkey

Wooden Cross

Blessed Water

Pelagian Texts

Weapon	Category	Hands	Base Damage	Reach	Notes
Mace	Blunt	1 hand	3d damage		Trauma 6

Armour	Required Strength	Damage Die
		□ □ □ □ □ □

PROTECTION





MAGIC (Choose one Magic Tradition)

OTHERWORLD

CHRISTIAN

SAHON

MITRAS AND ISIS

MAGIC MASTERY

PRACTICIONER

(3 Objectives / Fatigue every 5 or 6 / Max. magnitude 3)

SCHOLAR

(5 Objectives / Fatigue every 6 / Max. magnitude unlimited)

MAGIC ACTIONS

READ 3

MANIPULATE 2

CREATE ○

DESTROY ○

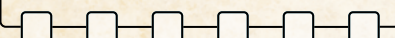
TARGETS

Wounds 2

Food 1

Fire 2

FATIGUE



MAGIC MAGNITUDES

	DISTANCE AND VISIBILITY	TARGET PREDISPOSITION	SIZE / NUMBER OF TARGETS	TIME
1	PHYSICAL CONTACT / SELF	CHANGE ONE NOTCH	INDIVIDUAL / 1 OBJECTIVE	< 2 MINUTES
2	VISIBLE AND/ OR <10 METERS	CHANGE TWO NOTCHES	HORSE / 3 OBJECTIVES	< 1 HOUR
3	VISIBLE AND/ OR <50 METERS	CHANGE THREE NOTCHES	CART / 5 OBJECTIVES	< 1 DAY
4	VISIBLE AND/ OR <100 METERS	CHANGE FOUR NOTCHES	SHACK / 10 OBJECTIVES	< 1 WEEK
5	VISIBLE AND/ OR <150 METERS	CHANGE FOUR NOTCHES AND THE CHANGE IS PERMANENT	COTTAGE / 30 OBJECTIVES	< 1 MONTH

PERSONAL GRIMOIRE

(Write your spell formulas in the grimoire)

NAME: Heal/Harm ROLL 4

ACTION: Manipulate TARGET: Wounds

EFFECT: Heal cures X Vitality Track boxes, X being the number of successes in the Magic roll (an Incapacitation Track box is also healed when the healed Vitality box is an even number). Harm causes Damage equals to the number of successes in the magic roll, but you need the target to be already wounded.

NAME: Revitalizing Meal ROLL 3

ACTION: Manipulate TARGET: Food

EFFECT: Eating magical enhanced food cures X Vitality Track boxes, X being the number of successes in the Magic roll (an Incapacitation Track box is also healed when the healed Vitality box is an even number). This food retains its supernatural capacities till next sunrise.

NAME: Detect Spirits ROLL 5

ACTION: Read TARGET: Fire

EFFECT: This spell detects supernatural presences from the Otherworld depending on the Magnitude achieved. 1 = physical contact. 2= 10-metres radius. 3 = 50-metres radius.

NAME: Diagnose ROLL 5

ACTION: Read TARGET: Wounds

EFFECT: Enables understanding of the damage nature, providing the healing recipe for a swift recovery of the wounded. Each point of Magnitude grants an extra die that can be added on the next first aid or non-magical healing attempt.

NAME: Fire Halo ROLL 4

ACTION: Manipulate TARGET: Fire

EFFECT: Using an already existing fire, you can extend a flaming halo towards your enemies, depending on the Magnitude achieved. 1 = physical contact. 2= 10-metres radius. 3 = 50-metres radius. Fire causes Xd of damage, X being the spell Magnitude.

*Surplus Magnitude: In all spells, if the magician intended to achieve a specific Magnitude before the roll and obtains more successes than necessary, he may choose to increase the effective Magnitude or forego the extra successes to avoid the fatigue they cause.

THE WINTER KING

NAME

DEOCHAN REDTOOTH

CONCEPT

HUNTER

BLOODLINE

AELLE CLAN

MILESTONE

□□□ **1d** □□□ **2d** □□□ **3d** □□□ **4d** □□□ **5d**

Physical Description

Deochan is a wild and rough-looking man with straw-blond hair, light eyes and a flat nose, who proudly wears the marks and scars of his life. He treasures his bronze bracelets, which depict a wolf hunting the sun and a wolf hunting the moon. The wolf is the totemic animal of Deochan.

Background

Not many Saxons can claim, like Deochan, that their family is descended from Aelle himself. During the Summer Kingdom, Deochan's family lived in southern Britannia, in the lands surrounding Venta Belgarum and Clausentum. Deochan's father, along with his older brother and some of his uncles and aunts, died at Camlann fighting alongside Arthur. After Mordred occupied Venta Belgarum, Aelle's Clan family sought refuge across the Severn River in Caer Gwent. There, Deochan has served as a hunter for the lords of the city and their guests.

ABILITIES

STRENGTH

3

Spec. Forest Survival

Spec.

Spec.

DEXTERITY

2

Spec. Stealthy

Spec.

Spec.

WISDOM

2

Spec. Merchant

Spec.

Spec.

CHARISMA

1

Spec. Build Rapport

Spec.

Spec.

FIGHTING

2

Masteries

BLADE

BLUNT

POLEARM

SPEAR

SHIELD

COMPLETE ARMOUR

RANGED WEAPONS

2

Masteries

RANGED

THROWABLE

VITALITY

1 2 2 3 3 4 5 6

INCAPACITATION

□ □ □ □ □ □

Weapon	Category	Hands	Base Damage	Reach	Notes
Spear	Spear	1 or 2 hands	2d damage		Trauma 6
Throwing Spear	Throwable	1 hand	2d damage	10 metres	Trauma 6

**Deochan's Spear Mastery enables him to deduct 1 point from an enemy's Massive Value (More on this in the complete rule-set for The Winter King).*

PROTECTION

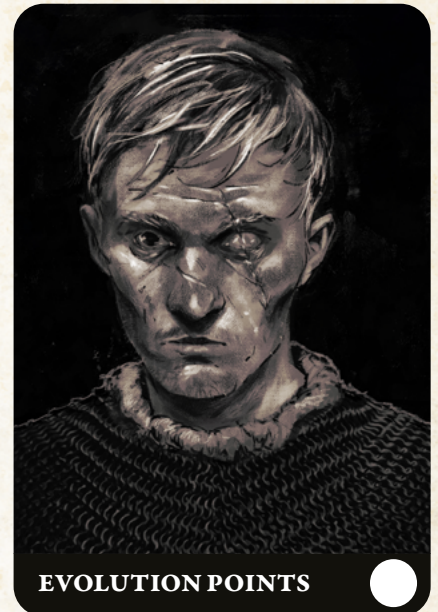
Armour
Leather
armour

Required Strength

Damage Die

-1d damage

□ □ □ □ □ □



EVOLUTION POINTS

○

INITIATIVE

○

DEDUCTION

1

Spec.

Spec.

Spec.

LANGUAGES

Saxon

Briton

BELONGINGS

Fur clothes

Woodman's axe

3 Throwing Spears





MAGIC (Choose one Magic Tradition)

OTHERWORLD

CHRISTIAN

SAHON

Totemic Animal: Wolf

MITRAS AND ISIS

MAGIC MASTERY

PRACTITIONER

(3 Objectives / Fatigue every 5 or 6 / Max. magnitude 3)

SCHOLAR

(5 Objectives / Fatigue every 6 / Max. magnitude unlimited)

MAGIC ACTIONS

READ 2

MANIPULATE 1

CREATE 0

DESTROY 2

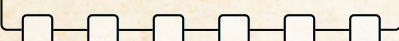
TARGETS

Movement 1 _____

Pack 1 _____

Fear 3 _____

FATIGUE



MAGIC MAGNITUDES

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PERSONAL GRIMOIRE

(Write your spell formulas in the grimoire)

NAME: Follow/Erase **ROLL** 3

ACTION: Read/Destroy **TARGET:** Movement

EFFECT: The Follow spell allows to identify who and when have left a track, depending on the Magnitude achieved. 1 = one objective. 2 = 3 objectives. 3 = 5 objectives. When erasing a track, the spell's Magnitude equals the number of die that must be subtracted from whomever try to follow you.

NAME: Convince for the common good **ROLL** 4

ACTION: Manipulate **TARGET:** Pack

EFFECT: The Magnitude achieved represents the number of steps by which the audience is moved towards what you want to tell them or invite them to do... The scale is opposite-reticent-neutral-favourable-convincd. The game director must determine the initial state of the audience before the roll is made. He does not need to reveal this initial state to the magician.

NAME: Calm the prey **ROLL** 5

ACTION: Destroy **TARGET:** Fear

EFFECT: The chosen prey calms down before you, making it easier to deliver the coup de grace. The Magnitude represents the number of steps by which you move the prey towards tranquillity on the alarmed-frightened-neutral-confident-friendly scale. Magnitude also indicates the number of targets (as in Follow Track).

***Surplus Magnitude:** In all spells, if the magician intended to achieve a specific Magnitude before the roll and obtains more successes than necessary, he may choose to increase the effective Magnitude or forego the extra successes to avoid the fatigue they cause.