

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight



The Knight's Code of Chivalry

“Chivalry” comes from the French term *cheval*, which means horse.

This term was used because the Norman Knights rode horses into battle.

The Knight's Code is a traditional code that is meant to influence the way a knight acted.



What did it mean?

Respect the king. Do nothing to bring him dishonor.

- Respect women. Do nothing to bring dishonor to any woman.
- Protect the poor and the weak.
- Honor God as a faithful Christian.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

This poem is an alliterative poem.

This means that the verse uses alliteration as the main structure to connect the lines together, instead of using rhyme or syllables.

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds found at the beginning of words.

Example:

*The mane of the marvelous horse was much the same,
Well crisped and combed and carefully pranked with knots.*

What kind of story is it?

Well by George, it is a Medieval Romance of course.

M.R.:

Idealized Character (Sir Gawain)

Hero motivated by adventurousness

Supernatural Elements

Hidden Identity

Damsel

A Quest

Whose in it?

King Arthur

(You do know who he is, right?!)

He is the guy that:

Pulled the Sword From the Stone

Is the Legendary King of Britain

Husband to Lady Guinevere

He is the Uncle of Sir Gawain

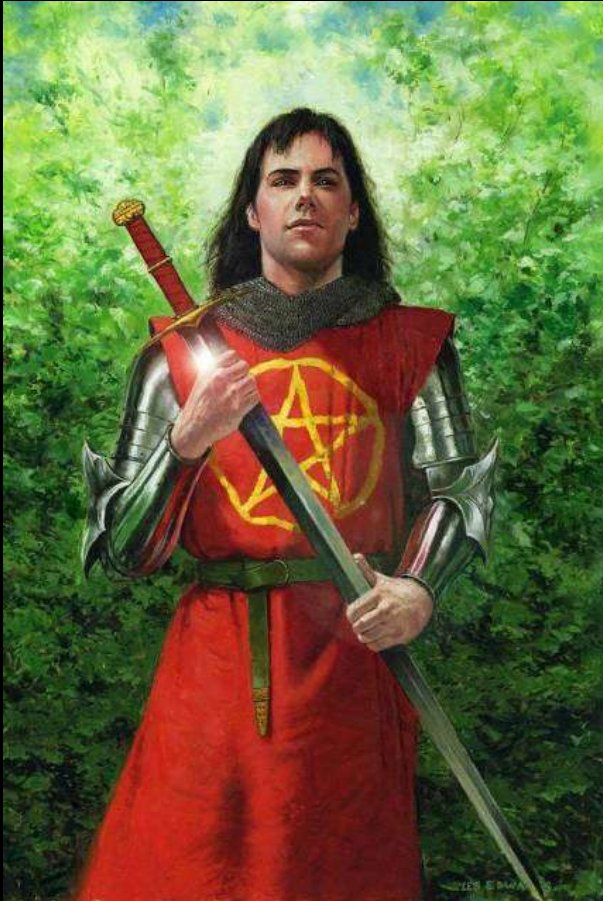
The creator of the Knights of the Round Table

King of Camelot

Wielder of Excalibur

Known for his Bravery, Courage, Kindness, and
chivalrousness

Main Characters



Sir Gawain

Arthur's nephew and one of the most loyal and brave of the knights.

Follows the Knight's Code (Humility, piety, integrity, loyalty, honesty)

Courtly Lover

He has but one flaw... HE LOVES HIS LIFE!

He will lie to protect his own life, thus he is breaking the Knight's Code.

Another Main Character



The Green Knight

He is GREEN ... Think Jolly Green Giant with an ax!

He is a huge man with giant muscles.

He carries an ax bigger than most of you.

Come to Camelot in peace and all he wants to do is play a game.

The BEHEADING GAME!

He wants the knights to step up and play.

Why a Green Knight?



During the Medieval period in England, the "Green Man" was a pagan representation of nature.

HE IS NOT EVIL!

The "Green Man" was not a Satanic symbol. He was a pre-Christian symbol for nature. The tribal pagans would worship him. He was thought to be able to make it rain and to provide lush meadows for cattle.

He was also known as "Green Jack, "Jack-in-the-Green" and "Green George."

Things to Know



In the poem, Gawain's Shield has a golden pentangle on a red field.

The reason for the pentangle is because of the five virtues that Gawain was said to possess. Each of the points on the pentangle was meant to represent one of those virtues.

Why the Red and Gold?

In the medieval age red was meant to symbolize humility and the blood of Christ.

Gold during this time period was thought to represent perfection.

Who else is in the poem?

The Lord and Lady of the Castle where Gawain stays during the Christmas holiday.

Lady Guinevere, King Arthur's wife/queen and Gawain's Aunt.



Themes

Chivalry:

The world of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is governed by well-defined codes of behavior. The code of chivalry, in particular, shapes the values and actions of Sir Gawain and other characters in the poem. The ideals of chivalry come from the Christian concept of morality.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vliaa_vmHF-A



Themes

Arthur is introduced to us as the “most courteous of all,” indicating that people are ranked in this court according to their mastery of a certain code of behavior and good manners.

When the Green Knight challenges the court, he mocks them for being so afraid of mere words, suggesting that words and appearances hold too much power over the company (pride).

The members of the court never reveal their true feelings, instead choosing to seem beautiful, courteous, and fair-spoken.

Message

Gawain's faults throughout this story teach him that though he may be the most chivalrous knight in the land, he is nevertheless human and capable of error.