

# Llama's Writing Patreon by Thomas Bell

## (01/February/2024 - 09/April/2025)

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### [Announcement](#)

[Feb 1, 2024](#)

Hi folks! I am back with hopeful news. My hands are feeling better, though some discomfort/pain still lingers; I am, however, well enough to slowly get back to writing.

So I let payments go through for February, since I'm planning to start work again.

I'm setting modest goals for myself this month. I want to make some progress on the game itself, however much that may be - I already wrote a small bit, the beginning of a conversation with Nimue I'm excited for - , and write the two short stories for the Knight and Champion Knight tier. The mini-game (featuring Elaine's POV during the sword-fight duel) will be postponed for now, since I don't want to push myself too much.

This is all for now! I'll get back to writing weekly updates to let you know how work is progressing, and how my hands are feeling.

### [February short story\\_poll](#)

[Feb 1, 2024](#)

Time to vote on the RO to be featured in the second short story of the month! Since Gawain won last time, he will be sitting out on this poll.

Galahad

47%

Elaine

18%

Sofie

4%

Nimue

2%

Isac

10%

Agravain

18%

Poll ended Feb 5, 2024 · 49 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Feb 4, 2024](#)

Hi folks!

I've almost finished the Knight Tier short story. It only needs editing now. I've made a little bit of progress on the demo as I mentioned before - the very beginning of a conversation with Nimue. There are also some changes I'm planning to make in chapter 3 and likely chapter 4 as well. I will be introducing Guinevere earlier. These edits/addition will take a while but I wanted to let you know because I am very excited about them.

[Short story second poll](#)

[Feb 5, 2024](#)

Galahad won! Time to vote on the Mordred to be featured in this month's second short story. Last time, the vote went to the sweet Mordred who wants to befriend Gally; this option will be sitting out on this poll.

Flirty, confident Mordred who loves teasing Galahad; very much aware of their own crush

35%

Defiant Mordred who loves to challenge Galahad, Mordred's oblivious of their own feelings

52%

Defiant Mordred who loves to challenge Galahad again but this one's aware of their crush and hate it

13%

Poll ended Feb 9, 2024 · 54 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Feb 12, 2024](#)

Hi folks! This past week I've focused my attention on the demo, and managed to finish the conversation between Mordred and Nimue, and moved onto a small interaction with a different character 🙄 These scenes are rather brief, but you'll soon have the chance to talk more with these characters.

The Knight tier short story is almost ready to be posted! I'll release it either later today or sometime tomorrow.

[Vella's journal](#)

[Feb 13, 2024](#)

**Llama's note:** Before I let you get on with reading the story, I wanted to make a couple observations. First off, this month I decided to go for a different format! The story is constructed as entries from the journal of Vella Meier, a sorcerer who played a crucial role in the creation of the dragon bloods, and who is also Isac's ancestor. Second off, you'll notice that the entries are written to be in "the third month of summer" – that's sort of a placeholder, because Vella would have obviously just used the name of the month. However, I'm still working on coming up with names for the months that would make sense within the world of Boc, so a placeholder it is for now.

On to the story!

## ***10th day of the third month of summer***

Today, we did it. I am beyond jubilant. I am overcome with feelings I cannot describe, for no words could make them justice. How could I possibly capture on page this intoxicating concoction of triumph, relief, joy and pride, when my being can hardly contain them as they electrify my every nerve, take up my every thought?

I did not think I would see the fulfillment of my dreams – I fancied myself an old woman, wrinkled and bent yet still diligently toiling away at my spells and wards and runes, when a resolution would finally be achieved. And in moments of deep sorrow, when progress stalled, I tortured myself with the possibility I'd never live to see it all come together – and in the darkest, cruelest crevices of my mind, dreaded neither would any of my descendants.

Yet it is done. We all went over the ritual, again and again, and we cannot see anything else to improve. We cannot see how it could fail. The wards are well constructed. Each step to be taken, each ingredient to be used – how the blood shall mix, how the magic shall be channeled and conducted – all is written down in a rigorous and plainly, clearly defined guideline. We have achieved what our great-grandparents started, and we kindle hope for the future.

I ramble. I ramble and I ramble but I can hardly restrain myself – truly, I can hardly write, for my hand can't keep up with the torrent of words I need lay down. Thoughts upon thoughts upon thoughts, like a rope looped once, twice, thrice, a thousand times!

This wonderful revelation of success came over us almost explosively. We'd all – or at least, those of us not needlessly fatalistic – started to expect we were approaching this most-anticipated summit, which for so long has appeared to us obfuscated by gloomy clouds. The mist was starting to lift, finally, though we barely allowed ourselves to hope, for we'd trodden this road before, seen this artifice before: we'd thought we'd clambered to the summit only to find ourselves sliding back down the mountain of progress. We'd underestimated just how close to the top we were this time.

The wards – they have been imagined and re-imagined, drawn and re-drawn, checked and re-checked, went through drastic and minute changes, all to be perfected into what they are now. We've meditated for hours on end, extending tendrils of our powers to explore, to comprehend, to tap into the very fabric of draconic magic. Human and dragon worked together to construct this ritual – this magic of such likes as never attempted before. All we've learned, all our work is now bound between leather covers, blue ink on paper depicting runes, describing rules.

I should be sleeping. It's late at night and Elke says I deserve a good night's rest, for tomorrow we set off to meet our allies and lay before them our discoveries. But how could I put head to pillow before yet putting pen to paper to consecrate, by my own hand, this wonderful revelation? Though intense excitement does lend itself to just as great an exhaustion, each and every of my nerves is still too electrified for sleep.

Aunt Mila warns against my rampant optimism – she says that it is way too early to get this celebratory, that this is only the beginning. I find her somber caution unwarranted, though I cannot help but agree, to

a certain degree, to the latter. We may have figured out the ritual – we may have our rules, our guidelines, our list of components and ingredients – but we have yet to gather our subjects, we have yet to put it all in practice and see our much desired results become more than fanciful expectations. Aunt Mila says much can go wrong in practice, but I believe we are due some confidence in our craft, and all that we poured into it.

Soon, the world will change – and we will have been the ones to make it happen.

For now, sleep.

### ***11th of the third month of summer***

Mother, Aunt Mila and I set off on our journey before the first rays of sun streaked the horizon. Our allies are the only ones knowledgeable about our departure, while the rest of the Academy remains none the wiser. It is no difficult feat – such is the vastness of our castle, and so great the ranks of students and teachers it hosts, that it is easy for friends to not stumble into each other for days. Who's to say we haven't passed through the great halls or aisles of the library? And even should our absence be noted, it shall appear unremarkable. Scholars are wont to locking themselves up into their studies – I, Mother and Mila especially. We can freely take the journey and rouse no suspicion.

Yet we still employ great caution in our venture. We exited through means of the secret passages that run all throughout and underneath the Academy, into a thicket where our horses awaited. We donned disguises: transfiguring our features, coloring our hair and eyes in new shades. We wear traveling clothes not of our own wardrobe. They're practical, comfortable and utterly unremarkable. We stay away from well-trodden roads and take on the wilderness of the woods. We have Elke, our trusted scout, flying high above us in the guise of a raven, scouring the surroundings.

We made camp at dusk. It's night now, and I'm writing this by the bonfire's light while my companions slumber. Elke has made a nest for themselves in the folds of my cloak, still in their avian disguise; tomorrow they'll be able to discard the black feathers for their green scales, once we are safely with our allies.

I stand as guard for our party, though the task is rendered rather obsolete by the alarms and protective wards we've cast about our camp. Still, I wanted a little while to myself. My body is tired and saddle-sore, yet my mind is far too animated for sleep.

Today has been long, made longer and duller by the excitement and anxiety that propels me forward and wears my nerves thin alike. By tomorrow afternoon, we will have reached our destination high up in the mountains. In an abode dug into the stone we shall meet our draconic allies and present our finished work. Together, we shall discuss the next course of action.

Our allies are all great in character – and some of them, in stature as well. But greatest of all I find the scope of our mission. It reminds me of being a little child, standing at the base of the grand hill which our Academy crowns – stately, imposing and splendid with its slender, sharp towers cleaving the sky. I

am reminded of feeling small and humble. But stronger yet is a different impression – of feeling awed – of feeling determined.

I am ready.

### ***12th of the third month of summer***

We arrived at our destination well into the afternoon, as we predicted. On arrival we were shown to your chambers and given time to eat, wash, and divest ourselves of both magical disguises and traveling clothes. There's is always a sense of relief upon finding again my own true reflection in the mirror; but more often than not it comes accompanied by an odd sensation of nakedness, of baring too much. As if all guard and mask have been stripped away to reveal my self in far too stark, too intimate clarity for any prying eyes that may look upon my face.

It passes by the time I don new clothes and comb my hair, which has once again been restored to its dark curls.

In truth, I'm writing this as I wait in my chamber to assuage my nerves. Any moment now I shall hear the echo of my summons, and I shall make my way deeper into the mountain, in the great cavern we converge. We each have our part to say, and I've thoroughly rehearsed my speech.

I hear the toll of the bell ringing off the walls. It's time.

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Oh, I'm overwhelmed – in the best of ways! I should say that words cannot describe how I feel, but there is a wealth of words I could list to do so, but I won't waste paper and ink flaunting my rich thesaurus.

But what's the cause of such intense emotions? Elke and I may or may not be the ones sent out to seek and gather our ritual's candidates. I say 'may not' though I am ready to plead our case most convincingly to all those who doubt our ability to undertake this task. Well, I suppose Elke has no need of it, since favor leans so heavily in their direction; I have yet to know the full extent of my support.

But I am now more than ever determined that it should be me sent out, especially should Elke go as well; we make a marvelous pair. It's a thought I'd previously mostly entertained as a fancy in between tracing meticulous runes and exhausting myself over extensive meditation. A little harmless jest between Elke and I, though I could tell it left a more serious impression on them than they showed, as it did on me.

Today, we presented our work. They listened patiently, attentively, and asked many questions at the end, seeking clarification, seeking to test possible weaknesses. We had answer for everything, and our allies were most delighted with the results. So we talked about our next move.

We shall gather our candidates. Fair and Wise Hieran reminded us of the list we'd all constructed with possible subjects for the ritual – well, a list my mother and her siblings worked on with our draconic

allies rather than me or my cousins. The list should now be poured over again, shortened, filtered, refined. But there is also the matter of who shall be sent out to find and assess these candidates, of who shall present the mission to them in hopes of their acceptance.

The draconic allies have their suggestions. Elke counts among them; I was filled with pride to hear my dearest friend's name put forward. Then they turned the question on us, to suggest one of our own. Aunt Mila earnestly presented a pool of worthy options: one of hers and mother's siblings, or perhaps even one of my older cousins. Mother smiled one of her arch smiles and said there are many capable in our family who could fill this important role. Perhaps one of our younger members, of a bright, eager, earnest character.

Then I was surprised to find the question turned on me. I pondered for a brief moment, then opened my mouth and proffered myself as candidate. The dragons nodded, considering it with a seriousness which yet surprised me – and pleased me greatly. Brave and Spirited Lisline turned to Elke and said: "Vella is a good friend of yours, isn't she? She's a studious and skilled sorcerer, we've been told." And Elke replied: "The best friend I could ask for! She has done so much for the cause, and still would do so much more." The dragons exchanged glances; I could perceive a sense of approval.

Mother jumped in to support me, while Aunt Mila remained reticent – neither arguing for or against me, simply conceding I did indeed play a crucial role in developing the ritual, and completing it.

The Honorable Hieran said the pair sent out should be one that could work well together; that understand each other, as well as the gravity of the task. There seemed to me a growing support for Elke. All the work they've done as scout, as spy, as diplomat between the humans and dragons was brought up and discussed with pleased and praising tones. I got, though more subtly, the impression that it'd be desired I join them. Nothing was said directly though – our allies entreated us to go back home and discuss the matter within the family. Afterwards, a decision shall be made.

Elke and I have already made our decision. It shall be us.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Feb 20, 2024](#)

I'm wrapping up work on the demo update - I've written all the content for this month and all that's left is going through it for editing. I've also done some other general edits, going back to earlier chapters to correct typos (and rephrase a couple sentences).

I've also started work on some bigger change I'm planning - and that is Guinevere's introduction, which is being moved to chapter 3. You won't see anything in the demo yet, because I want to have all her

new scenes in that chapter ready first, but I've begun writing some bits. I'm really excited about this change!

I'm also currently working on the Champion Knight tier short story.

## [Snow and mischief](#)

[Feb 27, 2024](#)

You stalk down the alley, swathed in shadow, step soft and silent on the freshly settled snow. Through the eye-slits of your mask you see your target: unsuspecting, turned back on you as he leans against the very same wall you skulk along. He nurses a goblet and watches the town square – awash with revelers, booths and garlands – standing just outside its golden, warm light, a lone observer.

You ready yourself – pulse quickening, muscles tensing – and spring forward, arms out to grip onto Galahad's shoulders.

He whirls around, spraying red, arms up in a defensive stance and face scrunched up in apprehension, instincts sharp as always. You drink in his expression – the widened violet eyes, the severe line of the mouth, the furrow in his brow – with a heady sense of triumph.

Galahad eases down as quickly as he tensed, casts a dimly irked look over your figure decked in bulky wool and a horned mask, then makes the sensible decision to move away.

That is, until he hears your chortle.

His gaze narrows on you, with a far more intimate sense of vexation this time. "Mordred. Of course."

"Oh, did I spook the golden knight?" You slip off your mask so he can not only hear, but see your taunting smirk too. "Almost soiled your pants?"

"No," he says tersely, "but you did make me spill my drink. "

You both glance down at the blood-like speckles in the snow; miraculously, the wine seems to have eluded his pretty brocade coat.

"It's not even that much. Now –" you snatch the goblet from him, metal warm with the phantom of his touch, and down it halfway before handing it back. The mulled wine heats you from within, sweet and tangy. "Now I owe you a new drink."



Galahad looks completely unimpressed. “Amusing.”

You make a mock bow and turn on your heels, having no intent on paying your debt. You feel lighter as you walk away, high on your victory – or perhaps the wine itself.

You’re just a couple strides away when a chill hits you squarely in the back of the neck. You reach your fingers into your cloak’s collar, coming away with a handful of snow.

“Spooked you?” Galahad calls out.

Oh, he’s not getting away with it.

You shake yourself off, plucking back your dignity, and set off back down your path, feinting disregard. No second snowy missile comes after you, but one will soon be on its way to Galahad.

You shoot an arm out as you spin round, guiding the snow with your motion, willing it to strike where your index points – straight in Galahad’s smiling face.

He ducks, abandons his goblet on a nearby stair, and squares his shoulders. The game is on.

What follows is a most vicious snowball fight. Neither of you need to waste time on bending down and scooping up snow to mold into chilly projectiles. Your duel is more akin a dance as you wave your hands, wiggle your fingers and step around each other, drawing on magic – your own blood’s for you, the Goddess’s for him – to throw slush at your foe’s face, to flank them with a barrage of flakes.

You might almost be having fun.

And, you realize as you take in Galahad’s ruddy cheeks and animated eyes, so might be he.

So enthralled you find yourself with this sudden revelation that you fail to notice the snowball headed your way. You make a desperate, flailing bid at ducking away, and it misses you, barely, swishing past your shoulder.

Your boot slips. One moment you’re looking at Galahad’s alarmed face, limned by the gilded lights of the fair, and the next you’re seeing stars, cold and glittering and too distant to be something to cling to.

Yet you do not fall. Wide, bright violet eyes fill your vision of the sky. Galahad’s breath blazes against your chilled cheek, your quick, sharp exhalations twining into wispy tendrils. One arm wrapped around your waist holds you uptight, flush against his chest. It rises and falls in concert, frenzied succession with yours.

Away from the dazzling lights, music and the crowd, you feel suspended out of time – there’s nothing but you and Galahad, the wild beating of your hearts as you stand frozen in a picture that...that you don’t even know how to frame, don’t even know how you feel about. Don’t know what to make of that look in his eyes.

All you know is that you have to get away.

With one flick of the wrist, you call down a small cascade of flakes. It powders your head and tangles in your lashes but it makes Galahad flinch, too, giving you the opportunity to break away and run – run until you're down the alley, round the corner, into another shadowy lane, back pressed against the wall. You listen, but there's no footfalls following in your wake – would you want there to be? – just your trembling breath filling the air.

You pull your mask over burning, heated cheeks and steal off into the night.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Feb 27, 2024](#)

The demo update is coming soon! I still have a little bit of editing and testing left to do, and then it's good to go.

I'm so excited, and I hope so are you!

[Demo update](#)

[Feb 28, 2024](#)

## **What's new?**

- More of chapter 5! (it's a big one)
- Catch up with Nimue
- Have a quick conversation with a certain character
- Some more edits: typos and errors and the likes, fixed

**Hope you enjoy the update!**

**Link:** <https://llamagirl.itch.io/the-bastard-of-camelot-beta>

## New Password: BocDemo53

If you find any bugs or typos, have any suggestions or simply wish to leave me feedback, here's a handy dandy Google form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc7F8P0TtGRrucAzhU9j57I29IELyFBdcU7TxxyxQ9HMFsKgg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc7F8P0TtGRrucAzhU9j57I29IELyFBdcU7TxxyxQ9HMFsKgg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

## [Bugs and fixes](#)

[Feb 29, 2024](#)

Alright, so some of you have reported not being able to continue past Mordred asking Nlmue how to go about catching up; I think I know what the issue may be.

That scene branches based on a variable from chapter 1, which has been there for a long while, so old saves shouldn't be an issue. However, if you've played this update using the quick-character creator, or from a save that used it, then that can be a problem as the variable was not set during the questionnaire. It's been added now, so it should be fine.

Let me know if the issue persists!

## [Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Mar 5, 2024](#)

I've been working on the demo, continuing with a small Galahad interaction (which is not finished yet, I got excited and skipped a bit forward but I'm returning to it now!) and onto the party properly starting. I've currently left off progress when the dancing begins, and Mordred gets to ask/be asked to dance (if they dance at all, that is).

I've also decided on the topic of this month's short story (we're taking another dive into Morgana's mind, I hope you'll enjoy it!) and I'll put up the poll for the second story today.

Concerning the Royal Sorcerer tier: I'm afraid I will be postponing the mini-game yet again. I don't feel confident I can - or really, should - push myself that much. My nerve issues aren't fully resolved yet. I

apologize, and I hope you understand; feel free to cancel or downgrade from the Royal Sorcerer tier for the time being, if you'd rather return when the mini-game is actually finished.

And since I've mentioned my nerves, I want to give a bit of an update on my health. I've finally managed to see a doctor, which confirmed what I suspected - compression of the ulnar nerve, in both arms, and perhaps some issue in the carpal tunnel too. I got prescribed supplements, I'll be doing some further testing, return to the doctor, and see what else he has to say. All in all, this is progress!

Once again, thank you all for the understanding, patience and support you've shown me. Hope you all have a great week!

[March short story poll](#)

[Mar 8, 2024](#)

This month we're choosing from friends/family/Lot, who can't claim the first and the only thing making him the second one is a piece of paper. Note: Arthur won previously so he's not going to be featured on this poll, but he will return for voting next time!

Gareth

31%

Morgana

22%

Accolon

19%

Lot (if you like pain)

28%

Poll ended Mar 11, 2024 · 64 votes total

[March short story second poll](#)

[Mar 12, 2024](#)

Gareth won! Time to vote on the type of Mordred to be featured. This month we're going to do things a little bit different, spice up the poll. I'll be including options for more distant/antagonistic relationships with Gareth. I'm curious what the results will look like! (Sweet Mordred with a close relationship with Gareth also won last time so it's off the poll this round)

Cheerful, playful Mordred (close relationship)

52%

Defiant Mordred who doesn't mince words (close relationship)

23%

They're distant but not antagonistic, Mordred trying to bridge the gap

12%

They're antagonistic towards each other, Mordred acts caustic/scathing

13%

Poll ended Mar 15, 2024 · 69 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Mar 12, 2024](#)

I've finished the Galahad scene I mentioned last week! So much...variety in his interaction, lol. From trying to make small talk to outright insulting him, if you're feeling particularly waspish.

I've also been working on the Knight tier short story, which is from Morgana's POV and mostly introspective. It's almost done, but of course I still have editing left to do.

That's all for now!

[Sneak peek](#)

[Mar 19, 2024](#)

You wait for him to elaborate, tracing circles on the slippery, smooth chiffon while you watch him, hoping your expression alone - open, hopeful, affable - might drag the words out his mouth. Galahad glances away, grabs for the goblet before him and brings it almost all the way to his lips before realizing it's empty, and that there are no pitchers or bottles to be found anywhere near yet. He refuses to put the cup down now, though, holding it up as if he meant to do this all along. In lieu of any liquid he gulps air, throat working heavily against whatever lump is lodged in there, blocking off all his words.

And seems to altogether swallow it - or at least, dislodge it enough for him to ask: "How have you been?" He speaks as if in a language not his own, one he's freshly started learning the basics and fears not accidentally insulting someone, unwittingly switching salutation for invective.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Mar 19, 2024](#)

I've been working on the demo - on some dancing scenes, to be more specific. Gawain's scene, with all its variations, is done and I'm currently on Elaine's. It's basically all drafted, just needs to be chiseled and coded.

The short story is also coming later this week!

[Morgana contemplates matters](#)

[Mar 20, 2024](#)

Morgana's hand moved across the page in bursts of rapid, decisive, aggressive motions. It paused, a contemplative lull; then it was back in motion, thumb making artful smudges, charcoal stick tracing sweeping, dramatic lines in a furious, droning scratch.

Her vision was slowly coming together, an image half-remembered, half-dreamed, rendered in shades of storm gray. Violent, hungry waves like the maw of a huge beast, clapping down viciously on a ship that once thought itself great and invincible, cresting the sea with impetuous confidence; now cut in two, spilling its innards to the depths, splintered, jagged boards and masts like impotent teeth, unable to bite

back the bigger creature that downed it, and faceless, helpless shapes. A flag, once proud, now bled of its red-and-gold, teared and tangled, the neck of its dragon-emblem wrung, broken.

A tableau of something that never came to pass, however hard Morgana had tried to bring it about in her bottomless anguish and anger. She felt an echo of those feelings now too – would always feel them, deep in her bones, twinned with her marrow – paired with the sour, terrible victory of dragging your foe down, and yourself along, bittersweet mutual destruction.

Morgana sighed, paused and looked up. The reality that met her was far more serene than her fancies. Balmy, clear-sky summer, the briny air humming with the ceaseless, tireless song of cicadas, every so often punctuated by the guffaw-call of seagulls. Boughs of ripe fruit, and shocks of blooming flowers bursting out of the green everywhere around her – and among it all Mordred, sitting by the rectangle pool of water in the inner yard, bent over a folk tales book with Nimue.

A serene scene, yet not entirely devoid of troubling elements; such one component being Nimue herself. Her presence was like a splinter – a tiny sliver of a splinter, so unobtrusive you barely felt it, didn't even know it was there in the beginning. A splinter superficially lodged into the skin, unobserved, a tiny prickle of pain easy to ignore; but one like that burrows itself deeper and deeper into the flesh till each light touch is pain. And then you can no longer ignore it, or bear it. It wasn't quite so deep yet – but it was something to keep an eye on, to prevent from wedging itself too firmly in place. It should be pushed out on its own soon enough. Once Morgana and Mordred would be off the island.

Despite the unfortunate comparison, Morgana didn't find the girl herself to be as unpleasant a thing as a splinter might be. Sharp as a shard, that she was, even so young; with an avid curiosity for the world around her, a silent observance in her keen gaze that reminded her of Merlin. Though Morgana couldn't tell what really went on behind those eyes, green like her mother's – like so much of her was, detail after detail mirroring the serene countenance of High Priest Niniane. She seemed as often in good spirits as she was in contemplative ones, drawn to some inner meditations. She could be so opaque, as misty as the horizon.

And so Morgana kept an eye on her. She was circumspect of the friendship that'd struck up between her and Mordred, though not sufficiently worried to intervene.

It seemed to have developed organically enough. Nimue was only three years older, someone who could be both a playmate and trusted to be somewhat responsible; her mother was a Priest and Morgana an adept, so it figured their children would run into each other. Besides, it had been Mordred themselves who had seemed so enthusiastic about the friendship – always the one approaching Nimue, bringing her books to read and swords to play and telling Morgana all they learned from her about weird creatures dwelling in the depths of the sea and how to pick up crabs without them pinching you. Mordred, befriending Nimue as if there wasn't a gaping maw yawning between their families, a chasm of frothing, furious, wild waves.

She'd rigorously instructed Mordred in the matter of keeping the secret of their blood, of their lineage, of their parentage, unless it was one of the few individuals already in the known, adults that they could

trust – she wondered how much Merlin had revealed to Nimue, how much of a conspirator his daughter was; it was a matter of when, and not if, Nimue would know it all, certainly. She'd allowed Mordred to then become a friend of her, but urged them to stir away from...potentially inflaming topics, such as Merlin and Igraine and all that transpired on the Continent. Urged them to behave like she was any other child on Avalon – who just happened to have a horrible monster of a father. Mordred and her were set to leave the island in a couple years, anyway, and it would be a long, long time till they'd be properly reunited with the Wyllt family, in Camelot. By then, Morgana would have thoroughly warned Mordred. By then, they'd know and understand so much more than they did now.

For now, they could just be a child. No worries of betrayal, no conspiring or spying or revenge.

As for Morgana herself, she found it hard to separate the daughter from her father. It wasn't so much that Merlin's reputation shadowed her; what Morgana wondered – dreaded – was how much of a *mirror* she was. How much parts her mother, how much parts her father, and what of the rest, that which blends to create something new, removed from both parents? She couldn't quite tell yet, looking at the girl. She was too much of a child for Morgana to come to any solid, final – sordid – conclusions, though she held no hope for the apple falling too far from the rotten tree.

Perhaps there could have been hope, but Morgana knew that she was bound for Camelot, for an apprenticeship under her father. The Royal Sorcerer had finally got himself the pupil he coveted – coveted so much so that he'd travel all the way to Avalon to offer her a new life, in exchange of the one he'd stolen. But she never would have been enough for him, even if she'd trampled her dignity and accepted. How could she be? He'd wanted – needed – blood of his blood, magic of his line, a descendant through and through. Someone to teach, to mold. Someone to trust, if Merlin was capable of that, and perhaps care about, if that too wasn't foreign an emotion to him. Things Morgana could have never been – she suspected she'd only ever been meant to be a foe, a threat, kept close in check. Nimue he could nurture, cultivate the way he wanted, to water, to prune, the way a gardener tends to a flower, from seed to blossom.

She didn't envy Nimue her place.

But Merlin had gotten what he wanted – child, apprentice, legacy, whether pawn or accomplice –but what did Niniane get out of this? A child could have been answer sufficient. But so many details puzzled her. Niniane got herself a daughter, a daughter she wouldn't even get to raise much, beyond these first few years of her life, before she'd be whisked off to Camelot to become Merlin's full-time apprentice. Niniane had no intention of going away with her, that she'd made decisively clear. She was most content on Avalon, and with her role in the Temple, more content than she'd be on the Continent. She had nothing but her daughter to tie her to Camelot.

Morgana had never understood why Niniane had got herself involved with the Royal Sorcerer in the first place. She'd heard the story of their meeting in the woods – Niniane had never been shy about it, though she never revealed the entire details of that encounter, or their subsequent ones – and how they'd developed a sense of mutual curiosity, of mutual *respect*. How that had all led to Nimue, it seems, and an amiable split as they parted ways to each follow their own path.



She sounded so level-headed when she talked about it, with a sort of subdued, quiet fondness so unlike the heated, maddening passion Morgana expected necessary in order for one to overlook who Merlin was and what he'd done and not only bed him – an action which, were it strategical, she could begrudgingly understand at least – but apparently like him, too. Perhaps the restrained tenderness was the benefit of retrospective, of cooled sentiments.

Yet Morgana couldn't help but feel a strange sense of betrayal, even though she'd ever first met Niniane upon her return on the island with Mordred, merely days old, bundled in her arms, one of her few – and her most precious – possessions brought over from the Continent, even though she'd never grown particularly close to the woman since then. It was betrayal, treachery, *blasphemy* almost, that an adept, no less a Priest of Her Lady's Temple would consort with such a man, who had stained his hands with the blood of the Le Fays. The Le Fays, who have always been loyal and devout and gracious, who have built The Lady shrines, who sang her praise and prayer. The Le Fay – Igraine, the very woman Merlin helped ruin – spread her faith across the sea, built her Temples and sang her praise and prayer so far from home. So many people now had her name on their lips, so many held her close to their heart now. Morgana would rather not think of the role the Royal Sorcerer played in this, though. Her mother had been practical; she'd had no choice but to accept Merlin's aid. She'd rather not think, either, of his own vested interest in the Goddess, of his curious interest in the ways her magic worked – in the way magic itself worked. She'd already begrudgingly read his books on the subject, and just as begrudgingly acquiesced they were thought-provoking.

And so Morgana couldn't imagine someone so easily, so willingly associating themselves with *that man*. She was aware, especially after she'd arrived on the Continent, that there were people who coveted the position of Merlin Wyllt's spouse, the wealth and reputation and influence they imagined would come from being married to the Royal Sorcerer, the Royal Advisor himself. Perhaps some of them coveted the man himself, though the idea of it made her insides revolt. Niniane must have certainly fancied the man though, and never the position she might have secured at his side, given she has so far made no move to claim any benefit from having born his child, has made no – known – attempts of marrying him. No; she'd nonchalantly confessed she'd had no intention to wed him, or anyone for that matter. Perhaps she too had only wanted the legacy of a child, of a magical line.

There was so much Morgana didn't know, so much Morgana could only speculate about. She sighed, and went back to her sketch, hand moving with renewed fury.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Mar 26, 2024](#)

Gawain's and Elaine's dance scene are done; now I'm working on Galahad's and Nimue's, both of which are roughly drafted in my voice memos. It's going well; honestly, I've had some notes about Gally's dance scene for so long, I'm excited to finally get to these parts, and I hope you'll all enjoy them too!

Also, the second short story (for Champion Knight tier and above) is coming later this week!

### [Sitting by the apple tree with Gareth](#)

[Mar 27, 2024](#)

You like to think yourself as nimble as a squirrel. Though unlike the furry critters, who climb by dint of their claws, sharp and smart, you must make strategic use of branches and hollows. You know well by now how to do it, quickly and safely – the latter of which Morgana and Accolon put great emphasis on, though you don't entirely get their concern – know how to test the sturdiness of boughs, how to swing your weight around.

So when you see the apples, hanging red and ripe and higher than either yours or Gareth's arms can reach, you waste no time clambering up. You straddle a branch – strong and sturdy, a perfect perch – and pluck an apple, which yields at the gentlest of tugs. Then, firmly hooking the back of your knees round the bough, you let yourself drape over the edge like a cloth hung out to dry and gracefully hand the bounty over to your brother, who offers back a thankful, upside-down smile. This is the best way to go about it; last time you tried tossing the apple and it caught him squarely in the chest, leaving him wheezing for a good few moments. You let yourself hang there a bit longer, observing this topsy-turvy world, where the sky is green and grassy and the ground is dappled-white blue and ethereal. What else could be changed, could be turned on its head in this inverted world? And perhaps still wondering that as you swing back in place on your branch, you ask:

"Don't you want to join me up, Gareth?" You reach out for a second apple, just as easily surrendered, for yourself to hungrily sink your teeth into. "It's fun! I have an amazing view, too!" you add, talking round the crunchy, sweet bites. "I think this branch is sturdy enough for the both of us."

He doesn't look very confident at your *I think*, so you say: "Or there's this one next to me." You extend a hand to pat said bough as if it were a well-trained dog.

Still Gareth shakes his head. "No thanks. I'm fine."

"Are you sure?"

"Father says I shouldn't climb trees."

"Yeah, but Lot doesn't know what fun is," you say. You bet the Duke has *never* climbed a tree, unlike Accolon, who climbed almost all the trees around the castle ground and taught you how to do it, too.

Gareth smiles, a wry little smile. “No, he doesn’t. I know what fun is, but I also know myself, and my body and muscles and how utterly pathetic they are. So I don’t trust myself to try the same stunts you do. I rather prefer feeling the ground beneath my firmly planted soles than underneath my broken bones.”

You consider his words as you lean against the trunk. Gareth’s always so concerned over bruising skin, broken bones and bleeding wounds; as a squire, you’ve grown used to the possibility of it all. And even before that, back on Avalon, you’d gamely enact your various derring-dos – under Morgana’s watchful eye – with your peers. It’s not that Gareth doesn’t love games. He has plenty of them, the sort that come in wooden boxes, with painted boards and maps and little booklets, with carved pawns and detailed figurines, with all kinds of rules neatly written down to learn and abide to. He could spend an entire day playing those with you, and so could you, and so you have, on those lucky days when neither of you had any other duties.

Yet Gareth is so reluctant to indulge half of your own ideas of games!

“That’s alright,” you finally say, beaming down at him. “I can get you all the apples you want, anyway.”

You eat in silence and so eat quickly. Once done, you fling your apple core into the grass, stretch your back then slink down to a lower bough, closer to Gareth, who’s leant against the trunk. You lay face-down on the branch, cheek pillowed by the rough, scratchy bark, limbs sprawling loosely over the edge. You’re lounging like you’ve seen some dragons do – as big cats do in pictograms of places far away. Cats much bigger than those who roam the castle and city streets, bigger even than the largest dogs you’ve seen, who fend the sheep from wolves. Big cats with great jaws that could rip out your throat, with baleful claws that could eviscerate in one awful, brutal sweep. And yet you could almost forget it, seeing those sketches of them with their furry, sleepy faces scrunched up against the bark, with their perpetual feline smiles, their grand, round paws and tails draping lazily over the edge. You’d love to see those big cats – those predators, so dangerously adorable – in person, at least once.

You share your thoughts with Gareth, who’s still munching on his apple, and dangle your feet near his face so that he has to playfully swat them away. The thread of conversation easily unspools from there, widening to include other strange and fascinating creatures you’ve read only from books, to then move on to the places they inhabit, with climates and landscapes unlike anything you’ve seen yourself: the deserts of endless dunes, stretching as much as the eye can see, the jungles where leaves grow as big as you are, the barren, bleak, hoar-frost covered lands in the north. Gareth passionately talks of various stories he’s read from authors all over the world, describing their homelands in vivid, fond detail – and veers only a little bit into a tangent about translations and what is lost, what is gained, what is changed – and you listen intently, sprawled like a big cat, piping in with awed ‘oohs’ or comments of your own whenever it’s a story you’re familiar with.

“You like reading about adventures,” you remark, following a brief lull in the conversation.

“Among other things, yes.”

“But you’re always so reluctant about doing anything remotely similar yourself! You don’t want to go too deep in the forest, or climb trees, or go dragon-riding with me.”

Gareth tilts back his head to angle a wry smile up at you. “I did relent to the last one, didn’t I? Quite enough times, actually.”

“Yeah, but you never want to do any of the fun stuff, like loops, or flying upside down, or even going too speedy.”

He chuckles. “Well, I think it’s for the best – I would have most likely puked on both you and [dragon\_name], otherwise.”

You scrunch up your nose. Gareth goes on, more contemplatively now: “I like reading about those kind of stories sometimes especially because I’ll never be like those protagonists. It’s fun on page, you know? Well, you’ll probably argue otherwise.” At your vehement nodding, he laughs. “But for me, it is more fun on page. I have to make my way on an entirely different battlefield than you, Mordred.”

Your brow furrows. Your brother has never had to pick up an actual sword, or run laps around the grounds (that’s why he gets so short-breathed after a couple flights of stairs). “And what’s that?”

Paper-dry, he says: “Court politics.”

Court politics. It’s something Morgana talks about, too, though she does so in varying different ways and tones. She raises the topic when she speaks of the retribution your family deserves, when she curses Merlin’s machinations that led to your ruin; she also decries them when it comes to long hours spent in council rooms discussing policies and administrative issues which sound, to you, frankly *boring*.

Mind made up, you swing off your branch down onto the grass. “Enough sitting around! Let’s go play something fun.” You give Gareth a grin. “You don’t want real adventures, but what about some pretend action?”

Gareth dusts himself off and matches your expression. “Let’s.”

[Demo update](#)

[Mar 28, 2024](#)

## What's new?

-More of chapter 5! (it's a big one)

-Make small talk with Galahad, insult him (before the food has even arrived!) or simply ignore him

-Get on the dancefloor!\*

**\*note:** unfortunately, i haven't managed to finish all of Galahad's dance options (half of them are finished and included in this update though, two very fine choices of "i bet you can't even dance" or a friendly invitation) and Nimue's isn't at all in the demo yet. I will be uploading them as they're done however (with no password change, of course, so that even if you unsubscribe during April you'll get access to the scenes since they were supposed to be included in this update).

**Hope you enjoy the update!**

**Link:** <https://lamagirl.itch.io/the-bastard-of-camelot-beta>

**New Password: DemoBoc16**

If you find any bugs or typos, have any suggestions or simply wish to leave me feedback, here's a handy dandy Google form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc7F8P0TtGRrucAzhU9j57I29IELyFBdcU7TxxyxQ9HMFsKgg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc7F8P0TtGRrucAzhU9j57I29IELyFBdcU7TxxyxQ9HMFsKgg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

[Quick Announcement](#)

[Mar 30, 2024](#)

Hi folks! I will be postponing the mini-game for another month since I don't want to push myself too much yet (due to the hand injury) and I'd rather put my energy towards the demo itself. I'm sorry that the mini-game has been pushed back so long. I will be adding a note to the Royal Sorcerer tier description to make it clear the perk is currently on hold, but keeping it available for anyone who wants to access the mini-game backlog.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Apr 3, 2024](#)

Alright, Galahad's all dancing variations are now done, overall - I still need to go over them for bugs and typos, will make a post when the demo is updated. In any case, I can move onto Nimue's scene next!

I think I've also made up my mind about this month's short story (Knight tier and above); thinking we could take a trip back into Lot's mind...and see some more of him and his complicated friendship with Uther.

[April short story poll](#)

[Apr 3, 2024](#)

Time to vote on the RO to be featured in the second short story of the month! Since Galahad won last time, he will be sitting out on this poll.

Nimue

17%

Gawain

28%

Elaine

21%

Isac

14%

Sofie

3%

Agravain

17%

Poll ended Apr 6, 2024 · 58 votes total

[Small demo update](#)

[Apr 7, 2024](#)

The demo was updated with Galahad's remaining choices and Nimue's dance scene. Same password. Enjoy!

[Second short story poll](#)

[Apr 8, 2024](#)

Gawain won! Time to vote on the type of Mordred to be featured.

Spunky, mischievous Mordred

14%

Flirty, confident, smooth Mordred

14%

Sweet, shy Mordred

42%

Intimidating Mordred who melts around Gawain

30%

Poll ended Apr 11, 2024 · 66 votes total

[Lot and Uther talk over drinks](#)

[Apr 12, 2024](#)

Uther downed his glass, slammed it down on the table and smacked his lips delightedly. "Ah, that's the good stuff. Camelotian cherry brandy, the best that you'll ever find. Better even than your Lothian plum brandy, my friend, you have to admit." A brassy guffaw exploded from him, with no intention to soften the insult.

*Funny that*, Lot thought, funny that everything on the Continent was Camelotian, except when it wasn't – when the meaning was restricted to only that region at the heart of the Continent, which had opened its jaws and consumed all surrounding it. A kingdom Uther had always called the greatest, even before it went and did good on that promise of vastness. A kingdom that will always be the best there is; those it subsumed into itself can only hope to reflect a sliver of its brilliance.

The cherry brandy was excellent, though.

It also worked wonders to sanitize Lot's wounds, to strip – at least in part – the resentment off his heart like rust off metal. The world was fuzzier, shinier, the disappointing, ugly shapes of reality blurred, more reminiscent of a past where Lot still called himself King and his friend was not a thief.

He reached for the decanter to pour himself another round. Uther himself was much like the booze he brought – potent, too much for the senses, yet so compelling, pulling you all the way to the bottom of the glass. And like the booze, he too proved to provide a nasty headache down the line.

Uther leaned back in the armchair and curled his finger, beckoning the flames in the hearth to rise higher. The fire spit and hissed. "So," he said, "heard you want to get hitched. Found the girl yet?"

Lot slowly swilled the brandy round his mouth and the question round his mind. He'd made his intentions no secret, and had started considering candidates from his Duchy and beyond. At two and thirty years, it was high time that he found a wife and secured an heir.

Uther himself seemed to lack both at the moment, a fact that intrigued, befuddled and concerned the whole of the Kingdom. He hadn't remarried since Igraine died, which did not come as a surprise – Uther's bed had as much traffic as a city's main street – but the striking absence of any offspring raised many questions, with hardly any answers given.

"Are you never considering marriage again, Uther?"

He grimaced as if he'd tasted cheap, foul brandy. Though even that he'd been willing to swallow, provided it burned hard enough to scrub away the sober senses that may protest to a second round. "Never again."

Lot swirled the colorless liquid round the tumbler, watched the tiny eddy form within. "Well, no fault in that I suppose. You've never lacked for company, either way." Uther laughed knowingly, heartily, and Lot went on, "though I do believe people are worried about one thing in particular."

Uther grinned, a dangerous flash of teeth. "What thing?"

He knew, but wanted Lot to come out and say it. "The heir."

Uther snorted as if he'd just said something funny, shook his head, drank. "Trust me, it's all handled, nothing to worry about." He winked. "I'm your king, aren't I? Don't I always think of it all?"



Perhaps it was the absolute confidence in his smirk, or the alcohol blazing through Lot's veins, but he felt inclined to completely believe Uther on it. All's handled and settled and the kingdom has nothing to worry about. He's done everything he's set his mind to, hasn't he? Always came through, all the way to the top.

"But it's your future heir we should be talking about, and who you want to pop it out for you. Have you thought of anyone?"

"Not anyone in particular, no."

He'd sifted through his options, choosing the noblewomen that may be interested in an offer; selected them based on title, wealth, influence and what else they might bring to the table, but these weren't the only criteria that preoccupied him. He'd tried to avoid the families that had been the most dissatisfied about his reigning decisions, and who had been vocal about it too. He wanted someone pleasant and endearing, some sweet, delightful thing to brighten these gloomy chambers, to soothe the nights he questioned and regretted his choices. He'd prefer it if she were young, too, younger than his weary years. The older he grew, the more fonder he became of those doe-eyed girls, who have yet to see so much of the world, grew fonder of their elastic, pert youth. And the less of the war they'd seen themselves, the less they remembered, the better.

"Forget about them all," Uther waved one big hand through the air, sweeping out of the way all other candidates, "I've got the girl for you. She's pretty. She's young. She can be a bit of a handful, I've heard, has a bit of a temper, but nothing you couldn't handle, eh? She's royal blood too, and would have been crowned queen and sat her ass on a throne if it weren't for me. And she's a sorcerer to boot."

Lot's drunken mind riffled and winnowed through the royalty he knew, after all there were many asses from under which Uther had snatched a throne, including his own. He couldn't possibly mean –

"It's Igraine's daughter," Uther cut the tension. "Morgana."

"Wasn't she sent to Avalon, to be a priest?"

"Oh well, whatever." Uther shrugged. "That's beneath her, isn't it? Beneath someone who is my own ward. Sending her there was Igraine's wish, and I couldn't be bothered to argue. Do you think Morgana really wants to be a priest when she was born a princess? We're doing her a favor, friend."

"How old is she, anyway?"

"Sixteen, fifteen, something like that. Looks just like her mother. She's noble," Uther went on, "but she did grow up among that bunch of Avalonians." He spat the word as if it were an insult. "They live like lord-less peasants, those ones. You'll likely have to educate her on how to be a Duchess and all that, but there's time for everything. But think, Lot – " he reached over the low table between them to grip his arm with bruising enthusiasm "–you'd get some magic in your bloodline. That alone should make you say yes."

That was indeed worthy of consideration. The Solomons, the most influential sorcerers in Lothia, had stirred clear of marriage and offspring with monarchy, even when entanglements did happen.

"So?"

"Isn't she...upset, though?" Lot carefully asked. "About the war, the siege, all that happened to her family?"

"Ah," a wide grin, all teeth, split Uther's face, "I reckon she's upset with *me*, but what's she got to do with you?"

Lot shrugged. The world was warm and hazy around him.

He'd be doing Morgana a favor, he'd be landing a helping hand. He'd be honoring Igraine herself. Morgana must be wishing to return to court, have some honor, dignity and nobility restored upon her, which Uther had stripped her of. The king of Camelot had taken something from them both.

"Besides, she may be no blood of mine, but ink-on-paper she's still my daughter. So," Uther wiggled his bushy eyebrows, "I'd happily welcome you into the royal family, Lot. You could even start calling me father."

Lot promptly, tersely said, "No."

The other man threw back his head and laughed. "What an unruly son I have."

"Fuck off, Uther." Yet the corners of his mouth tugged up. It did sound like a good match, a good deal.

"What say you, friend?" Uther filled both their tumblers and raised his up, the flames in the hearth glinting off the glass, brandy rendered liquid fire. "Give the word, and I'll fetch her right away."

Lot clinked his glass to Uther's and smiled. "Perhaps I should start wedding planning then," he said jokingly – only half jokingly. The idea had taken roots and bloomed past the drunken haze and past the morning headache.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Apr 12, 2024](#)

So sorry for coming in late with the weekly blog! Almost every time I update the demo I forget about them.

So, yes, Galahad's and Nimue's complete dance scenes have been added, and I've continued working on the next bits of the demo. We get brief appearances from Sirs Percival and Bronwyn.

Also, been thinking about future plot points of book 1, fleshing out some arcs and events. There's a very important change I've decided to make which I don't think I've talked about before, though it's been on my mind for a while now. (Or perhaps I did mention it and I completely forgot.) But I've decided to introduce Agravain earlier in book 1! (also where you'll be able to lock into their romance, as you would with the other ROs) Instead of meeting Agravain, who was then a squire at a tournament in the last stretch of book 1, Mordred meets them when they arrive in Camelot to try out for the Round Table.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Apr 17, 2024](#)

Hi folks! So, I haven't had a lot of time to work on the demo (was on the road, then letting my hands recover from that) but I did plan out the Gawain short story (Champion Knight tier and above) and will get to writing it as soon as I can!

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Apr 23, 2024](#)

Hi folks! I've still mostly rested my hands in the last week, but I've also finally managed to get some work done! The Champion Knight tier short story is finished and will be published sometime tomorrow.

To be honest, I won't be making a demo update this end of the month. It's not officially one of the perks, but it is a personal ambition of mine - and it's not that there isn't any new content, it's just that I don't think it's enough yet to warrant posting (just some gossiping going on, lol). But we did have an update at the beginning of the month, so it balances out, I'd say.

[Serenading Gawain](#)

[Apr 25, 2024](#)

You've been working on this song for weeks. You need it to be perfect – or at the very least, not make you look like an utter fool.

You've written songs before, composed tunes you'd hum with confidence and made up lyrics you'd repeat with pride (there are those that you can extend less grace to, though, but that's not a very helpful thought right now). Few of those songs felt as urgent or portentous as this current one – many were created only for yourself to listen to, poured bits of yourself too intimate, as one might into a journal they keep under lock and key – but *this*, this one song has a lot riding up on it.

How to tell Gawain you like him? That you wish you were more than friends? The answer seems to lie within the question – you could simply say the words, and yet you felt you needed to do more. Put it all into song.

You've been exchanging musical scores and lyrics – some half-finished, unpolished – seeking the other's honest opinion. You've gushed over each other's work and lent help where inspiration faltered. It feels only natural to want to share these feelings through song, too.

And so you've done it. You wrote the song, scratched it all, wrote it again, rinse and repeat.

You're left with what you thought were the best bits, a paper folded neatly in a pocket within your vest, kept against your too-quick beating heart. You've got your lute in your case, waiting to be taken out and plucked, and you have Gawain before you, smiling and excited to hear the new song you said you have for him.

"You've been all hush-hush about it," he says, placing an index against his lips and wiggling on the spot. "Now I'm really curious."

You give a weak chuckle, one hand unwittingly raising to brush against the vest – to the bit of your heart that seeped out, ink blotches on paper in the shape of words and notes. "Oh, it's just this little thing...it's rather silly, actually."

"Don't say that! Well, unless it's meant to be silly. Like those jesters' songs. Oh, I heard this one—"

You gladly allow him to get swept up in the tangent. Your fingers are so clammy, you can hardly imagine strumming the lute's chords.

"Anyway," he sheepishly sidles back up to the initial subject, "you were about to sing your new song. I won't interrupt again, promise. Let's hear it!"

"No, no," you stall. "Talk some more if you want."

"Nooo, come on, let me hear it, let me hear it, let me—"

You stop his eager chanting, putting up your palms in surrender. Your own mind's chorus, far more anxious – *You never should have said anything, Oh Goddess* – is harder to shush. "Alright, alright."

When you first set your mind to it, you loved the idea. Thought how much he'd enjoy it, how romantic it would be. How you'd lay your heart bare and swoop him off his feet like those serenading heroes, all at the same time.

You're not those serenading heroes, though. Your fingers quiver as you take your lute out of its casing and tune it. Each discordant note makes you inwardly wince. Meanwhile, Gawain makes himself comfortable atop your bed, expectant.

You stand before him, instrument in hands, heart ready to burst out through your chest, through the paper in your vest, and take a deep breath, in and out – a waft of his sweet perfume fills your lungs – and start strumming.

Your melody begins slow and mellow. Your fingers know it well; you could play it in your sleep by now. Gawain listens, swaying to the rhythm, his full and intent attention focused on you, gaze traveling from the hand round the lute's neck to your face.

You open your mouth, but only a groan comes out. "I don't think I can do this."

"Imagine I'm not here," Gawain says. "Turn around!"

You face the other way and begin anew. You open your mouth –

And catch Gawain's reflection in the mirror. "This isn't working," you helplessly say.

Gawain looks about your chamber, scouring for a solution, lips thoughtfully puckered. "Aha! I know." He skitters across your four-poster bed, drawing the velvet curtains all about himself.

"Alright, I'm no longer here!" His gleeful, disembodied voice calls out. "Now sing your heart out."

"Just...please don't peek until I'm done."

"Promise."

You brush the tips of your fingers against your wildly-beating heart, feeling for the edges of the paper, pluck up your courage and try again.

This time you, you don't stop. You strum on, singing gently the lyrics that expose you, so thoroughly, so vulnerably, pretending there's only you and the lute and the music to stand witness to this confession.

Once done, you remain frozen, waiting. Barely hearing anything over the rush of blood in your ears, a frantic tune so unlike the tender melody you sang, humming doom.

Maybe he hates it. Maybe he's gathering the words right now to gently let you down, maybe he won't ever talk to you again. Oh, what if he felt the same but the song was so horrible it convinced him he doesn't anymore?

Fearfully, you approach the bed. Your progress is arrested by something hurling towards you – not a jeering pillow, as you dreaded, but Gawain himself, cheeks flushed, eyes bright.

He throws his arms around you. When you fail to reciprocate the hug, stunted beyond reaction, he pulls back, a tad concerned. "Did I come out too quickly?"

"No. No. I just, I didn't expect..." You swallow, finding yourself less eloquent in speech than song, "Does this mean then that you do feel the same?"

Gawain nods, looking even more radiant than the summer sunshine that falls across his smiling face. He twines his fingers with yours, bringing up your hand to kiss the back of it.

"I too," he says, "am most ardently in love with you."

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

I've been working on the demo - specifically, on a conversation taking place at the table, concerning knighthood. Planting the seeds of some ideas that'll be explored later 🙄 I do have a rough draft of it, that I'm currently working off. I say the scene is shaping up nicely!

[Quick notice](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

Just a reminder that the Royal Sorcerer minigame is still postponed.

[Sneak peek](#)

[Apr 30, 2024](#)

"Ah!" Percival perks up like a hound - an old, wobbly-footed, drunk hound - catching whiff of prey. "Look at them coming along now! Done smashing faces?"

[Short story poll](#)

[May 2, 2024](#)

This month we're choosing from friends/family/Lot, who can't claim the first and the only thing making him the second one is a piece of paper. Note: Gareth won previously so he's not going to be featured on this poll, but he will return for voting next time!

Morgana

12%

Accolon

26%

Arthur

47%

Lot (if you like pain)

15%

Poll ended May 6, 2024 · 73 votes total

[Second short story poll](#)

[May 10, 2024](#)

Arthur won! Time to vote on the Mordred to be featured in this month's second short story.

The sweet, gentle, patient type will be sitting out on this poll since they won last time Arthur was chosen.

A charming, smooth, confident Mordred

19%

A defiant, spunky Mordred who doesn't mince words

34%

A playful, cheerful, high-energy Mordred

47%

Poll ended May 14, 2024 · 58 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[May 10, 2024](#)

Hi folks! I haven't made much progress with the demo since the last devlog I posted due to reoccurring issues with my hands. I'm currently seeking further medical help to get to the bottom of it, and I may even have to take next month off. But for May I will complete the two short stories and update the demo with what I manage to write.

On that note, I am almost done with the Knight tier short story which features Merlin's POV. Looking forward to sharing it with you!

[Uther's legacy](#)

[May 13, 2024](#)

Lord Merlin gathered his papers, smoothed down his coat, and headed for the king's quarters. He paused before the door, ears peaked for any sound from within.

One never knew what they'd find in Uther's chambers in the morning: empty bottles and drunken revelers strewn across the floor – a battlefield where the foe was sobriety – or disheveled young women



slipping out the door. The king took pride in such displays; it left Merlin unimpressed. So he was grateful to find Uther alone having a late breakfast.

“Merlin, you little demon, I hope you didn’t bring me any work this early in the morning!”

*Early morning* was relative – the king looked freshly out of bed whereas Merlin had been awake for hours now, sifting through paperwork, checking on his experiments, and putting together the leather binder he brought now.

“I bring you the latest report on Arthur, Your Highness.”

Uther grinned. “That so? How’s my legacy doing?”

Merlin opened the binder to a letter written in small, neat calligraphy. “I have a letter from Sir Ector. He says that Arthur’s a healthy boy, afflicted only by the usual seasonal ailments children his age are wont to catch.”

“He better be healthy, he comes from sturdy stock!”

Merlin calmly went on. “He is of a generally jovial disposition and considered courteous and pleasant by those who meet him, if a tad timid.” The “tad” was an understatement here. “Sir Ector has also attached a training report from Arthur’s knight mentor.”

At this Uther perked up.

“The report,” Merlin said, “calls him an adequate squire.”

Uther snorted. “Adequate?” He spat the word as if it were an insult. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“It means,” Merlin went on reading, “he is not a standout among his peers, but neither is he found lacking or slacking. A similar description has been made of his dragon partner. They are, however, noted to excel at speed flight.”

Uther gave a loud, thoughtful, not entirely satisfied “Hmph”.

“When I was his age,” he said, spearing a sausage with his fork, “my mentor called me a fierce fighter.”

The King may not have had a squire’s full education, but he had been given extensive fighting training at the request of his parents. His performance reports put in as fierce fighting what eye witnesses recalled as Uther bashing in a kid’s face with a shield.

“Indeed—” Merlin glanced up at him “— you have always been a force to be reckoned with. And it has served you well in the wars. But surely, since we’ve entered a time of peace, there’s no need to put such an emphasis on this kind of training.”

“Pff! There’s always going to be fighting, Merlin. There’s always going to be a reason to fight at some point.” There was a dangerous gleam in his eyes – a warning, a threat, a *promise*.

Reasons could always be found or made up but while ambition had once motivated Uther, all that remained was boredom and bloodlust.

“Come on now,” Uther pressed him on, “what about the boy’s draconic powers?”

Merlin flipped back to Ector’s report. “Arthur and his dragon partner Elewen have a bond that continues to grow stronger.”

Uther didn’t wait for him to go on. “Any sign of his dragon scales yet?”

It was a question he’d been persistently asking for almost a year now, and the answer would be no different now.

“Not yet.”

Uther looked affronted. “Not yet? By his age I already had my scales.”

Merlin smiled placatingly. “There’s nothing unusual about this, your highness. They can appear anywhere between ten and fourteen, in some cases even later.”

“Later?” Uther contemplated the idea and decided to utterly ignore it. “I’m sure he will get his armor soon.”

The King considered late bloomers weak links in the otherwise strong Pendragon chain of legacy. He failed to understand that, although rare, there was nothing strange or dysfunctional about it. But then again many of the intricacies of magic were lost on him.

“A likely possibility,” Merlin conceded.

“Is there anything else interesting in there?” Uther gestured vaguely towards the leather binder.

This time, Merlin didn’t consult any of the papers. “I think I mentioned it before, sir, but Arthur seems to be cultivating a close friendship with Lancelot du Lac.”

Uther grinned, a white, sharp flash of teeth. “Now that’s one great knight in the making! Saw him fight. I’d call that boy ferocious, except he’s as stony faced as one of those enchanted training dummies – you know, relentless yet mindless.”

“An apt description,” Merlin brightly said. “Young du Lac is one to keep your eye on, surely. Now, if I may go on reading the reports from Arthur’s tutors and we can conclude for today.”

He went on reading accounts of Arthur’s teachers, all describing him as an overall diligent, dutiful and differential student, if a bit insecure in his answers and knowledge. He could tell, however, that the

King's attention was turning away. Years prior, before the Kingdom became what it was now, you'd seldom find that look, so pensive – melancholy almost – on his face. Back then, there had always been a fire simmering behind the quiet, ready to scorch away any hurdles in his path, whether within or without. Now there was only a cold, dark hearth.

Merlin closed the binder and waited. Uther, eyes still staring off into the distance, fixed on inner, somber visions, said "So that's what my legacy's shaping up to be? Not quite what I expected. The boy sounds kinda mushy." He grimaced around the word. "Are you sure Ector was a good choice?"

"Yes, Your Highness. I think so, for reasons I've explained many times before –" the King huffed, but Merlin went on "– and I do believe Arthur will be good for the future of Camelot. As I said, Your Highness, we're well into a time of peace."

"Yeah, yeah, the bloodshed is over. I've got nothing to wet my blade on."

A smirk tugged at Merlin's lips. "Your Highness, you should be *enjoying* you achievements, you should be basking in glory."

The chair screeched on the flagstone. Uther walked over to the window looking out towards the sun-drenched city. "Basking, yes. It feels like that's all I'm doing nowadays. Repeating the same old war stories. I'm a living legend," he said, neither entirely pleased or displeased.

"And you should be proud of that," Merlin said. There was only silence from the King. He let it stretch on for a little, then said "Your Highness, there would also be some administrative business to–"

Uther waved a hand impatiently. "You deal with that."

Merlin slipped out of the chamber with a small smile on his lips, ready to take on the rest of the day on his own, to keep the great cogs of the Kingdom running.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[May 20, 2024](#)

There's not much to report: I finished and posted the Knight tier short story and I'm currently working on the second story of the month featuring Arthur.

[Demo update](#)

[May 29, 2024](#)

## What's new?

- More of chapter 5! (it's a big one)
- Listen to gossip
- Elaine expresses her opinions regarding knighthood

It's not that big of an update. definitely doesn't contain all that I wished it did, but I hope you enjoy it nonetheless!

**Link:** <https://lamagirl.itch.io/the-bastard-of-camelot-beta>

## New Password: BoC27

If you find any bugs or typos, have any suggestions or simply wish to leave me feedback, here's a handy dandy Google form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc7F8P0TtGRrucAzhU9j57I29IELyFBdcU7TxxyxQ9HMFsKgg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc7F8P0TtGRrucAzhU9j57I29IELyFBdcU7TxxyxQ9HMFsKgg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[May 29, 2024](#)

Hi folks! So. This month has had its ups and downs. I haven't been able to write much; but I've also seen a different neurologist and this time left far more satisfied, with new tests to undergo but also new treatments.

I'll be taking the next month off Patreon, and stop payment, just so I don't have to worry about deadlines while I still recover and take things easy. My hope, however, is that I'll be able to write though June. Get some more content done for the demo.

I've posted the demo update. It's small, but it's something :) I'll also soon be posting the second short story.

Have a nice week, everyone!

## [Doing acrobatics](#)

[May 30, 2024](#)

"Look, look! I can do a handstand! With one hand!"

Arthur's smile comes into view upside-down. "Very impressive," he says.

"Can you do it?" you ask, idly shifting your weight to your other hand.

"Oh, I haven't tried since I was your age. I think I would only make a fool of myself," he admits with a sheepish chuckle.

You ease yourself down on the grass and shrug. "It's never too late to try again."

The way his face scrunches up, you doubt he shares your optimism. "I... A king needs his bones intact, preferably."

"Come on, try it!"

Arthur steels himself and tries to do a handstand, or at least that's what you think he's doing; it's sort of hard to tell with all the flailing going on. He finally tumbles down unto the grass, admitting defeat. You unsuccessfully stifle a laugh.

With as much dignity as he can muster, he says: "I think I'll leave the acrobatics to you."

You don't argue with that, but you do get down to the task with enthusiasm, proceeding to do a couple more cartwheels and roundoffs, showing off your skill, before settling down on the grass opposite Arthur.

"I asked Accolon if I could use these moves in my swordfighting, but he said you only see that in theater plays."

"Oh, I know the sort. Our parents used to take Kay and I to see them. We'd often bring Lance along with us. When we got back home, Kay would try to recreate the stunts: the cartwheels, the rolls, sweeping someone's legs with a sword while doing a handstand. With a practice wooden sword", he hastily adds. "He wasn't that reckless even as a child", he chuckles. "He mostly didn't fumble the moves, and it looked fun, but I don't think it would have been any effective in an actual fight."

You consider his words, the nod. "It does sound fun", you say not really caring about practicality or efficacy. "Maybe I should try it too."

"Carefully," Arthur adds on.

You simply nod, placating, then ask: "Do you go anymore? To those shows."

"No, we don't go these days. They come to the castle. Theater troupes clamor to give the royal family a spectacle."

"Must be nice", you say, pulling at a handful of grass. "They don't clamor to *our* castle."

Arthur gives you a sympathetic smile. "Well, why don't *we* go to them, then?"

You perk up. "When? When?"

Arthur chuckles. "Well, whenever they're playing, obviously."

"We must go and find out right now!"

You don't wait for an answer before springing to your feet and sprinting up towards the castle, Arthur in tow, laughing, half-bemused, half-delighted.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Jul 6, 2024](#)

Hi folks! This past month I've been able to do some work on the demo, which I'm very excited to share with you! Though not just yet. I've still got some bits left to write. I'll post a couple teasers in anticipation of an update. All I'm saying for now...the upcoming scenes comprise of a bit of tarot reading 🧿 An likely so will the Knight tier short story.

That's all for now. Have a great weekend!

[Sneak peek](#)

[Jul 9, 2024](#)

Nimue produces a purple package from the folds of her black dress and carefully starts sliding out its contents. A pack of cards - tarot cards, you realize upon catching glimpses of familiar imagery.

She might as well have taken out a slice of meat among cats; they all circle her, curious, though none is as excited as Gawain.

"Who are you going to give a reading?" he asks.

"I was thinking the betrothed couple might want a card reading? Find out how your marriage will bode?"

Elaine shakes her head, mouth screwed up as if Nimue's offered her something sour to taste, while Gareth articulates his refusal more graciously, speaking of "Wishing to keep some surprise and anticipation to the union."

Nimue doesn't insist. Instead, she turns to you. "Perhaps Mordred would like to have their fortune read then?"

[Short story poll](#)

[Jul 9, 2024](#)

Time to vote on the RO to be featured in the second short story of the month! This time, I decided to make things a bit different: not only have I removed Gawain, who won last time, but Galahad as well, since he's also had quite a few wins so far, and I wanted to give the chance to another RO, shake things up.

Nimue

27%

Elaine

13%

Agravain

38%

Sofie

2%

Isac

19%

Poll ended Jul 12, 2024 · 52 votes total

## [Weekly developer's blog](#)

### [Jul 13, 2024](#)

I've been working on the demo, on the variations of the tarot reading scene I've teased before 🙄 And I've been taking notes on the scene that follows, a possible conversation with Nimue, catching up some more!

I have also drafted this month's Knight tier short story: it features Morgana having tea with Merlin, during her stay in Camelot after Arthur's coronation.

## [Second short story](#)

### [Jul 14, 2024](#)

Agravain won, let's gooo! Time to vote on the Mordred to be featured in this month's second short story. I thought I'd introduce some new variations this time, see how the poll goes 🙄

Flirty, confident Mordred, Mordred's POV

4%

Sweet, shy Mordred, Mordred's POV

6%

Friendly, cheerful Mordred, Mordred's POV

2%

Flirty, confident Mordred, Agravain's POV

32%

Sweet, shy Mordred, Agravain's POV

51%



Friendly, cheerful Mordred, Agravain's POV

6%

Poll ended Jul 17, 2024 · 53 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Jul 20, 2024](#)

I've finished the Knight tier short story! It still needs some editing though, but I'll be posting it soon. I've also drafted the second story, featuring Agravain and Mordred, this time from the former's POV.

Once I'm done with the stories, I'll get started on editing the demo in preparation for an update!

[Morgana has tea with Merlin](#)

[Jul 26, 2024](#)

The invitation came along with her breakfast. It was written in a neat, elegant hand, politely and succinctly inviting her to have tea with Lord Merlin at four sharp. Morgana stared at it for a long time before she crumpled it in her fist. When she opened her hand, there were only ashes smearing her palm.

It had been a couple months since the coronation, since she asked to be hosted in Camelot on account of getting to know the half-brother she never knew she had. Her wish was granted, and she would be welcome for as long as she wanted – and it would be a long time indeed, now that she knew that the plan she seeded had taken roots.

Morgana reached beneath her dressing gown, laid a gentle hand on her stomach. There was no tell-tale swelling and there wouldn't be for weeks to come, but her ceasing menses had been her first sign of hope. The trial she'd taken next confirmed her suspicion, cinching her plan.

And while seeing Merlin would never be a pleasure, not unless it was to drag him to either his jail or his grave, Morgana found herself in a bright enough disposition to weather his presence. Better not give him the satisfaction of calling her ill-mannered for turning down such a genial invitation.

Ten minutes to four, Morgana set out towards the Sorcerer's Tower. Her gown of brocade and silk – dyed Tintalian blue, the mildest defiance she could indulge in – rustled as she climbed up the spiraling stone stairs. She'd had new dresses tailored in the Camelotian fashion of starched bodices, laced cuffs and hoop-skirts. They were most unlike her Avalonian clothes, those light and airy tunics that let her easily and freely roam about the thistle-faced cliffs, along the sandy beaches, down hot cobblestone streets. With her heart feeling as light and easy as her dress on those sun-drenched days when the hollow in her chest didn't seem so horribly deep.

But these Camelotian gowns were heavy and layered and more ornate than a cake, their glamorous, intricate appeal hard to deny; she donned them as a costume to aid her play her role, donned them as an armor that protected her from the callous world.

She was received by Lord Merlin, a mild smile on his lips. Oh, how she wanted to claw it off.

"Lady Morgana." He sounded pleased to see her. "Just on time. I've put the water to boil. Please, come in."

The table had already been set too. Twin porcelain cups with matching saucers stood on opposite sides of the table, atop a doily of pristine white. Upon a closer look she saw the lace had been worked into a repeating pattern of eyes; it was subtle but once remarked, it couldn't be unnoticed. Dozens of staring eyes, fixing her unblinking.

Merlin sat down across from her and made small talk, silly pleasantries that felt more like a game, like a play, two performers acting out their well-rehearsed lines. He inquired after her beloathed husband, who'd recently gone back to Lothia to attend to his Ducal duties; she asked after his daughter, Nimue, who was presently back in Avalon with her mother. The mention of the island made her chest twinge, that hollow yawning open, threatening to gnaw at her from the inside.

He repaid the question in kind, wishing to know how Gareth enjoyed Court. He liked it well enough. His toddler desires were neither vast nor complicated: with his favorite toys brought along and his mother at his side, we was more than content, Camelotian Court or not.

When the pot started hissing over the fire, Merlin went to tend to it.

Morgana wondered how much longer till she started bubbling and boiling and spilling over herself. Had he really asked her here just to make inane talk? This was a kind of torture all on its own – forcing her to sit, mild and polite, knowing that there was nothing she could do that would actually change anything, no way she could truly lash out beside using her sharp tongue lest she wished to rot in a prison somewhere or see the executioner's block. She mused to herself, half entertaining the idea and half knowing it was ridiculous, nothing more than a fantasy to nurse at night, of what would happen were she to lay her hands on Merlin and crumple him to dust as she had with his invitation. Would Arthur take pity on her – on the sister he never knew, this girl which shared his eyes, their mother's eyes – and exile her to Avalon? She'd be doing the King a favor, cutting down the bridle, severing the leash; but the poor, foolish, infuriating thing had let himself gladly collared, desperate for direction.

No, she reined herself in as Merlin brought over the steaming teapot, elegant porcelainware which formed a set with the cups. She needed to be patient, needed only to humour the sorcerer for the time being. She had a solution, a safety net, a chip to bargain with now. Her time will come. She pushed back the urge to touch her belly. *Both their* time will come.

Merlin went on speaking to her as if they were old friends, telling her of how he'd collected the leaves from his own private garden and dried them off the very beams of his chamber. It was a mixture of chamomile and lavender. An excellent blend, soothing and harmless, if it truly contained only that which he claimed it did. She didn't necessarily fear being poisoned. Why would he go to the trouble of it when she was already collared and tied, caged behind golden bars. Though part of her wondered if the Royal Sorcerer would be able to get away with her murder, if only he put his mind to it. He could claim she'd threatened the King, put the Crown at risk, and he'd only done what his duty dictated.

Had it been Morgana serving him tea, she would have at least sneaked in something to upset his stomach.

She ran her index along the lip of the cup in a familiar motion, cooling down the liquid enough to drink. When she did, she discovered in the lingering, sweet and tangy aftertaste an ingredient he failed to mention.

"You failed to mention the gryphon's claw."

He seemed pleased but not surprised. "Indeed."

She took another careful sip, swilled the tea thoughtfully around her mouth. It aided one in clearing their mind, as one might wish to do before meditating. Especially helpful, an insidious thought coiled itself around her mind, for practicing divination.

With any other sorcerer, in any other circumstance, Morgana would simply remark on the fact to herself, chalk it up to preference, and raise no further suspicions; it would be foolish to do the same with Merlin, to discount the tinniest details as merely innocuous.

Perhaps he infused all his blends with the herb, or anything with a similar effect. Or this was simply the best, or only, brew he had at hand right now. Maybe he thought he might manage to lull Morgana in a false sense of security, have her slip up and say too much. Calming tea or not, she'd keep her wits about herself, sharp and ready like the tucked claws of a cat.

He brought a plate of cookies, too, which he said were fresh from the royal kitchen. Morgana nibbled on them but could discern no other unexpected ingredient, just butter and sugar and the lingering taste of bile his presence summoned.

Then he produced a package from his pocket and carefully slid the cards out. Tarot cards, vividly illustrated.

Ah, so this was the game he wished to play with her.

Morgana had never understood why people wanted to be saddled by predictions, let them dictate their life, instead of taking the reins and carving their own way. They're eager to let Merlin put blinders on them so that the only road they follow is the one he laid out for them. Scarfing down any scrap of information he gave up. It'd be pitiful, were it not so infuriating.

He placed the tarot deck in the middle of the table. It stood there like an invitation, like a challenge – almost like a threat. Merlin's mild smile was still fastened on his lips, placid black eyes watching her expectantly. Yet Morgana would always recognize his intent, keen gaze for what it is; a sharpened dagger, no matter how ornamental the hilt, will still cut you.

"You wish to read my future?" she calmly asked, betraying no emotion beyond polite interest.

She'd be better off saying no. It wasn't that she dreaded what his foresight might reveal to him were she to agree – he could try to peek into her future far more easily on his own, without any need of this spectacle, and she'd be none the wiser. There was little she could do against it.

So the intense, knee-jerk urge to say no was more a show of defiance than any real precaution taken. She wanted to refuse, wanted to take the pot of scalding tea and toss it in his face, push away his cards and pretty porcelain and demand the reparations she was owed. Her blood sang, fire-hot, and her palms itched with the hungry flames that begged to be released, to consume the flesh, melt that smile right off his face. Perhaps the calming plant had been added for his benefit, after all.

There was much she wished she could do – and that she'd be right to do, too – but none of her desires were practical. So instead she nodded. "Let's see what the cards have to say."

Merlin shuffled the cards with practiced hands while she nursed her cup of tea, the brew working to soothe her temper, if only slightly. Then he spread the deck out in a crescent of deep purple, dozens of painted golden eyes staring up at her, unblinking. There were hundreds of them affixed upon her, if you counted the pale ones wrought onto the doily.

For the next step, he asked to take her hand. "It's to establish a connection, to—"

"I know," Morgana smoothly cut him off. She may have not been fond of divination, but she'd acquainted herself well enough with the subject. After all, it was Merlin's weapon of choice.

She placed her hand in his open palm, and his other came to rest over hers, trapping it. No matter how soft his hands, how light the grip, they'd forever be stained with the blood he spilled, never to be washed away, and she could not shake off the image of a beast's mouth clamping down on her arm, ready to tear at the flesh at the first wrong move. The years at Lot's side had taught her how to swallow down that squirming, writhing mess of fury, fear and disgust, and she kept her face blank.

She missed Junia's careful, gentle fingers combing through her hair, missed the soft kisses Marcellus planted on her forehead, missed the bear hugs Gaius would pull her into, sweeping her off the ground.

He closed his eyes, and silence settled uneasily between them. His steady, deep breathing was the loudest sound in the room. Time moved as sluggishly as every rise and fall of his chest, the whole world around her revolving honey-dripping slow while her own heart took off at canter. She wondered if Merlin felt the heat of her palm, the wrathful magic simmering beneath. How it longed to leap out and meet him, to wrap itself around his skin in a fiery, smothering embrace, to grow and grow and grow till it cradled the how castle in its arms.

Then, eyes fluttering open, he slipped his hands from hers and turned onto the cards. His fingers hovered over the spread-out deck like those of an organ player, trying to settle on a searching for the right keys. When he finally reached out, he moved slowly yet deliberately. Morgana kept her gaze fastened on his face.

Had she been one of the poor fools that sought out his predictions, taken in by the spectacle, eyes riveted on the deft fingers and laid-out cards that'd spell their fate, she might have missed the moment his expression changed.

Though change is a generous word for the tiny motion that disturbed Merlin's serenely blank face. As his hand moved to pick out a third card, it stilled suddenly, and he blinked, slowly. The faintest sign that something had taken him aback.

He placed the three drawn cards in a row between them. "Past, present, future," he said, briefly resting an index on each, from left to right.

"I'm sure you're more than well acquainted with my past and present." Given he had a hand in shaping them.

"Ah, but they help in understanding the future, give us a perspective from which to view it."

She wanted to roll her eyes but nodded instead. "Very well."

"Let's start then with that which has passed."

He turned over the first card, revealing a picture of crumbling stone, white-foam mad waters and striking lightning.

Morgana bit back a mirthless laugh. There had been quite a few events in her past for which *The Tower* could apply, many of them a result of the Royal Sorcerer's wretched, cruel meddling.

Merlin brushed the tips of his finger down the card, the gesture almost loving. "There's been many a great changes in your life," he went on to state the obvious. She felt as if he was mocking her.

"Changes, and tribulations as well."

"That we both knew well." Her voice was calm and her lips frozen in a smile, but her fingers were wound up too tight round her cup.

Merlin said nothing, merely moved on to the next card.

“Ah, the moon.” He tapped the frowning face of the celestial body. “A card of mystery and illusions, of vulnerability and irrationality. You’ve not only shed your old garbs when you arrived to Lot, but your temperament too, at least as shallow appearances go.”

She did what she needed to survive.

Smiling mask still on, she said, “It’s what all Courtiers do, isn’t it?”

Merlin acknowledged her words with a small incline of his head and the sketch of a smile. “Too much of it, though, and it can easily become deception.”

*You’d know about that, wouldn’t you?*

Beneath the table, she dug her nails into her palm.

“And finally,” he said, fingers inching closer to the last down-turned card, “we come upon your future.”

Morgana raised her chin ever so slightly, ready to face whatever Lord Merlin was willing to throw her way. She was confronted with an equally undaunted painted face. The proud rider of the chariot held a lance in one hand and the reins of her steeds in the other, golden locks spilling free over glinting armor. There was a fire in her eyes that was familiar to Morgana.

“The Chariot,” Merlin said, his voice taking on a grave edge. “A card that indicates great determination. Your fire drives you onward, Lady Morgana. You persevere, and rush forward. Careful, however. Go too fast, too careless...”

“And I might destroy everything in my path?” she glibly supplied.

“And you might find yourself thrown off.”

“Is that all?” If he intended it to be a threat, it struck awfully weak, as mild as it was vague.

“Is it not enough?” Merlin returned, unfazed. “A word of advice to consider as you... pursue your life at Court.”

“Such cryptic word of advice. Are you being obscure on purpose, Lord Merlin?” A cloyingly sweet smile curled her lips as a delicious possibility crept on her. “Is your vision failing you?”

Were she to prod and poke enough, would the Royal Sorcerer try to dig deeper into her future right here, right now, prove to her there were no secrets she could harbor?

Instead, he chuckled good-naturedly. “I won’t deny it. Certain days are cloudy, others misty – but fear not, Lady Morgana, my sight will clear.”

A dizzying surge of satisfaction shot through her veins. Despite the latter warning, despite his confident talk, he'd admitted to a dead angle. How long that might last remained to be seen.

The cards laid out between them and their half-drunk tea cups, telling nothing she hadn't already known herself. Merlin folded his hands atop the table with an air of finality, watching her expectantly.

She stared back. If he expected her to feel either threatened or impressed, he'd be sorely disappointed.

"So this is all?" Morgana dryly demanded. "Is this what everyone clamors at your door for?"

Not all his readings were tarot based, Morgana knew; the cards were there for spectacle, and not everyone demanded one. *She* hadn't asked for one and still he dragged her all the way up to his tower just to flash his pretty pictures in her face, spin a web of warnings so thin and feeble as to be easily swept away. All this artificial politesse to remind her who was truly in charge at Court.

"Did you use to do this for Uther too? Showed him your pretty pictures and told him a little bedtime story of his future blood-stained glory?"

"If he asked of me, yes."

"All you do, cards or not, is tell a story, build a narrative." Her voice was calm, but the accusation was plain in her tone.

"Well, yes. I must be a story-teller; I must take all the sights, sounds, and smells that creep into my mind, as if there were memories, take all the emotions and knowledge that comes unbidden, and put it in a way that anyone can understand. Put in the way people want it presented to them. Surely you understand, that's especially the case for those without magic."

"But that's what you want, isn't it, Lord Merlin? You wish to craft the narratives that suit you most. And you are far from an objective narrator."

Merlin smiled. It didn't reach his eyes. "Neither can you call yourself objective, Lady Morgana."

"I may not be," she said, thrusting her chin forward. It was hard to claim objectivity when she'd lost and suffered so much. "But your voice is louder than mine, is it not? Not all narrators are created equal."

Merlin observed her for a while, head slightly tilted to the side as if the new perspective might afford a revelation, might display a weakness she hadn't know to cover. She met his gaze headlong, held it unfaltering.

He finally asked, "Why have you decided to remain at Court?"

Morgana emulated his friendly cadence, "To get to know the brother I never knew I had. Thanks in part to you," she added, without reproach.

"It was for the best."

“For whom?”

“For the boy.”

Morgana wanted to scoff, but said nothing. How easily he could pretend to be so thoughtful, so magnanimous, so caring, deflecting the calculated, selfish truth. Even at a distance, even with his busy hands kept far from Arthur, he'd managed to mold the boy into what he wanted, what he needed: someone completely unprepared to fill the crown forced upon them, a puppet asking to be strung up and ordered by the oh so kind puppeteer who already knows all the motions of this royal theater.

Hands still folded atop the table, Merlin shifted, leaning closer. “I’ve heard you’ve achieved making yourself greatly lovable to Duke Lot,” he said, and her skin crawled. “But if you wish to ingratiate yourself to the King – to the Court – he’s not the only one who’s graces you must enter.”

Morgana smiled wide even as little tremors of anger racked her muscles, made her skin itch. “I’ve accepted your invitation, haven’t I? And I’ve indulged your little card game.” She stood up smoothly, inclined her head. “Thank you for the tea, Lord Merlin.”

*One day*, Morgana vowed to herself as she made her way down the stairs. One day, it’ll be her at the top of the tower, looking down upon Merlin with that artificial, mocking sweet smile, heel of her shoe raised to stomp him back into his place.

### [Agravain receives a commission](#)

[Jul 29, 2024](#)

When Mordred commissioned Agravain for a garment, they leapt at the opportunity. They’d never received a commission before. They’d sewn clothes for their friends and family, and lent their help to the Court tailors back at home, but never before had someone offered to pay them not only to sew them a piece, but design it as well.

They’d tried to argue that there was no need for coins, that they’d be willing to do it freely for a friend, and accept only the supplied materials. The sentiment behind the argument was halfhearted, though. Agravain needed – wanted – the money, half to send back home, half to put aside for themselves. Besides, there was a new sort of gratification to enjoy here, of having one’s work valued in more than kind words with a heavy bag of clinking, glimmering coins. When Mordred shook their head and smiled, saying they wanted to be their first proper commission, Agravain protested no more.



The textiles arrived packaged neatly with satin bows. They took their time taking them out, handling them with a care reserved for porcelain. They ran their fingers over the patterned silk velvet till their pads tingled and all sensations had been rubbed off, then pressed it against their cheek just to relish in its softness. They stared enchanted at the intricate needlework of the lace, tracing with their eyes the shapes of flying birds and unfurling vines till they grew dizzy. The materials rustled, a sweet murmur to echo Agravain's whispered marveling.

They'd never worked with such material themselves to the extent and freedom they'd been offered now – but in their mind's eye, they'd cut and sewn it, again and again, into all those designs, mere fantasies in ink, that took up page after page of their notebooks.

Envy not so much crept as swept over Agravain, and they let it carry them in its murky waters for a bit, miserably indulging their worst instincts for a mere miserable moments before shame put a dam on them.

They held up the silk-velvet again, with its vivid, pretty pattern. So luxuriously made, they could hardly call it exorbitantly priced, given all the craft and effort that had gone into it. Yet they knew very well that it was coin they'd never had and might never come to have, as neither would those whose careful fingers rendered real this cloth. Such velveteen decadence both fascinated and sickened them, made them want to pack it back up with the gentlest of touch, made them want to cocoon themselves in its tender embrace, made them want to snatch the scissors and destroy it. But that would be a terrible waste.

There was double the material that Agravain had roughly deemed necessary, and they couldn't decide if that had only been Mordred overcompensating, or if they had in mind a vision of obscene opulence they failed to mention.

Or, a third option unspooled from that hungry, covetous part of them, perhaps they'd meant for Agravain to keep the rest. There would be enough for another piece. They'd immediately shamed themselves for such a far-fetched, selfish conjecture.

Once they started taking the measurements, Agravain soon became overly aware of their close proximity. Their fingers brushed over Mordred's waist as they looped the tape around it, skimmed over the exposed skin as they measured the length of their arm. Mordred's breath blew warm on their cheek, sending shivers down their spine.

They did a quick job out of it, relieved when they could finally step back and bury their head in their notebook.

And now, a few weeks later and with the garment well under way, Mordred was back to try their commission on. Once again they had to step in close, close enough to smell the faint scent of soap on Mordred's skin.

It wasn't only the proximity itself that sent Agravain's heartbeat off at a canter. It was the honing in on Mordred, on the shape of them and the way the garb fell across their frame. It was the quiet that swept over the room, a silence in which every breath they took, every rustle of fabric, every brush of skin was

tenfold amplified. It was the knowledge that just as Agravain studied them closely, so could Mordred do in kind.

Not that they seemed to do it. Their gaze never lingered too long on Agravain, flicking between their own reflection or the floor, the walls, any random spot away from them. Agravain, for their part, had a garment to inspect, and adjustments to make.

Their heart beat so quick it threatened to unbalance them, to jostle their hands and slip the pins through skin instead of cloth. Prickling themselves might at least jolt some sense back into them, pin back together their slowly unraveling self.

They managed to finish with no injury, and looked around Mordred in the mirror to assess their work. Their eyes met in the reflection; they'd both looked away so quickly Agravain couldn't tell who'd been the first to do so. They swallowed thickly, and hated how loud it sounded in the deafening quiet.

"Let me..." They trailed off, shuffling before Mordred, avoiding their eye as they went about further adjusting the garment.

Their hair was long enough to tie in the back, but the shorter strands in the front kept slipping from behind their ears and as they tilted their head to examine some stitching, a black curl fell across their eyes. They blew at it, sharp and impatient, but the stubborn hair only fluttered back in place. Before they could shake their head in another impatient attempt, Mordred's hand reached out and gently brushed back the curl. Their fingers grazed against the shell of Agravain's ear, their fingertips warm.

Agravain didn't look up. They stood stock-still, a deer in the woods who heard the crunch of twigs too close, too loud, hands clutching the piece of garment they were examining. The scrap of skin Mordred touched still tingled and Agravain's stomach, which had emptied as if they'd taken off into the skies, still struggled to remember they were firmly planted on the ground.

"Thanks." Their voice came out too hoarsely. They wanted to swallow it back, bite down that clumsy tongue.

They fussed a bit longer over the fit of the piece – staring aimlessly at first, mind still fogged by the rush of heat to the head – then sharply stepped back, out of view of the mirror (out of view of Mordred) arms crossed and hands tucked to keep from picking at the nails.

"How does it feel?" they asked. "What do you think?"

Mordred turned this way and that, timidly studying their own reflection. Agravain saw the vision clearly, already so well reflected: the piece befit Mordred just as much as Mordred befit it, an image of elegant glamour. A surge of pride – and something else, all heated blood and tingling skin – overcame them, chased soon after by slithering, creeping doubt.

What if Mordred utterly, completely hated it? As the moments stretched on, so did the list of imperfections that Agravain could count; they sprung out of nowhere, just to spite them.

The self-inspection done, they turned to Agravain with a bright smile. “It feels good. Well fitted now.”

Agravain considered their expression and weighed their words, lest there was a sign this was all a polite lie and first chance Mordred got, they’d toss the garb at the back of a wardrobe to be eternally forgotten.

When nothing in their kind face seemed to betray that, their shoulders relaxed. “We’re done for now then.” They made to move past Mordred to the opposite corner of their little chamber, to stand with eyes to the wall like a shamed child – thinking of all those little imperfections, real or imagined – while they changed. Mordred reached out to stop them, their fingers feather-light on Agravain’s arm.

“Thank you.” Simple, heartfelt and utterly honest.

For a couple moments, they simply basked in the brilliance of Mordred’s smile. Then Agravain briskly nodded and cracked a smile. “Just giving you your money’s worth.”

They went off into their corner to offer Mordred privacy, smile still affixed to their lips, growing only wider as the words rang – again and again and always just as sweet – in their head. A beacon to keep the circling, preying doubt at bay.

“Have you thought of what you’ll do with the extra material?” Mordred asked once they’d changed.

Agravain’s brows shot up. They’d yet to bring themselves to ask about the excess of fabric, secretly hoping Mordred would forget about it and they’d get to keep it. They’d even sketched a couple designs, but didn’t allow themselves to become much too eager.

Had Mordred planned this all along, then? The overestimating they assumed being, in fact, thoughtful calculation.

“I may have some ideas,” they said.

Mordred smiled. “Can’t wait to see them.” They walked towards the door, dithered. “Perhaps...you could tell me all about them over a drink?” Their expression was half grimace half smile, as if bracing for a refusal.

It seems Agravain wasn’t the only one.

Their reply was playful. “Perhaps I could.” When Mordred perked up, they added: “I’d like that.”

For a moment they simply stood, dumbly smiling at each other.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Jul 29, 2024](#)

So sorry for coming in a bit late with the weekly blog, I was caught up with finishing the short stories and editing the demo. As of now, both stories have been posted.

Right now, I'm focusing on getting the update ready. Very excited to share it with you!

[Demo update](#)

[Jul 31, 2024](#)

### **What's new?**

- More of chapter 5! (it's a big one)
- Elaine continues to express her opinions on knighthood
- Gawain reveals his surprise plan for the night
- Nimue offers Mordred a tarot reading

**Link:** <https://llamagirl.itch.io/the-bastard-of-camelot-beta>

### **New Password: Tboc900**

If you find any bugs or typos, have any suggestions or simply wish to leave me feedback, here's a handy dandy Google form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS\\_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf_link)

[August short story\\_poll](#)

[Aug 5, 2024](#)

This month we're choosing from friends/family/Lot, who can't claim the first and the only thing making him the second one is a piece of paper. Note: Arthur won previously so he's not going to be featured on this poll, but he will return for voting next time!

**Also:** to shake things up this time, instead of fluff we'll go for angst!

Gareth

20%

Morgana

22%

Accolon

44%

Lot

13%

Poll ended Aug 8, 2024 · 54 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Aug 6, 2024](#)

Since updating the demo, I've been going through the feedback received, fixing errors and making little edits. I haven't managed to work through it all yet though, since I've been on the road (and had some misadventures with cancelled trains). I was happy to see people on discord discussing the tarot cards they got 🙄 Hope you all enjoyed the update!

Also I can tell you what this month's short story will be: a glimpse at Elena and Lancelot, back when they were two teens crushing on each other.

[Second short story poll](#)

[Aug 8, 2024](#)

Accolon won! Time to vote on the type of Mordred to be featured! Since I'll be going for angst rather than fluff this time around, the poll will look a bit different too 🙄 It'll be modeled after the more

tense/distant relationship options that crop up in light of the chapter 4 revelations.

Distant/cold relationship; Mordred is hurt, angry, and doesn't mince words

18%

Distant/cold relationship; Mordred is hurt, quiet, prone to tears

10%

Tense/conflicted relationship; Mordred is still angry, doesn't mince words

14%

Tense/conflicted relationship; Mordred is still hurt, quiet, prone to tears

57%

Poll ended Aug 11, 2024 · 49 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Aug 19, 2024](#)

I've been fixing typos and bugs, not just from the recent update, but from the earlier chapters too. Besides that, I haven't gotten much writing done on the demo. I've started to work on a major change I am planning, which is to move away from the one personality trait selection for Mordred's dragon to an archetype-based system. There will be four archetypes to choose from:

- The friendly, playful one. They're eager to make friends, and try to keep their good cheer and optimism in every situation. However, their carefree attitude can veer into carelessness and impulsivity.
- The confident, decisive one. Well-spoken and charming, this dragon is not afraid to take charge. They claim all the risks they take are calculated, but their determination can turn to stubbornness.
- The shy, sweet one. Kind and thoughtful, they make for a steadfast friend once you get to know them, but they are too timid to make the first move. If someone stepped on their tail, they'd be the one apologizing.
- The fierce, bold one. Not afraid to stand up for what they care about, this dragon is outspoken and fiery, prone to snapping and stepping on tails.

I've decided to make this change because I found the existing one-trait system to be one-note and restricting. The archetypes will allow me to better flesh out the character of the dragon companion, and scenes that felt unique to each of them.

## [Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Aug 28, 2024](#)

Hi folks! I'm still working on the short stories to get them done as soon as I can! This month has been a bit hectic - I've been on the road, I've been on vacation, I've had to rest my hands, but at least I can say I've had some bursts of inspiration. It's regarding stuff later down in the series - regarding dragon bloods and decisions Mordred gets to make - and especially a scene I would like to set in a cave 🐉 It was a detail I already planned on, but revisiting Postojna Cave solidified it for me.

Unfortunately we won't have any demo updates this month. Come September, I'd like to focus on the dragon archetype change however.

## [Lady Elena pays Sir Lancelot a visit](#)

[Aug 29, 2024](#)

Elena came down to Sir Lancelot's chamber first thing in the morning. She stood before the door, flexing her fingers, eager to knock yet reluctant to disturb. She might have dithered there until she had no choice but to leave for the tournament had the door not opened then.

Healer Adrienne stepped out, looking tired. When she glanced up at Elena, she didn't look the least surprised. "My lady. Good morning."

Elena rushed through a polite response before jumping to the burning question she came to ask: "How's Sir Lancelot faring?"

Healer Adrienne opened her mouth to reply, then thought better of it. The corner of her lips twitched up. "Why don't you ask him yourself, my lady?"

Before Elena could protest, she was being ushered inside and the door closed shut behind her. She froze, fists bunched up in her skirts, heart drumming against her ribcage as if wanting to burst out, far

away from this awkward position she was forced in. Her gaze went to the bed, a stammered excuse bubbling on her tongue, but was relieved to find Sir Lancelot seemingly asleep, none the wiser to her unbecoming entrance. Her relief was soon stamped out by anxiousness.

He lay on his back, long golden hair fanned across his pillow and fallen across his brow. His head was turned away from her but she could see the profile of his beautiful, sharp features. His sun-kissed complexion was worryingly bloodless and waxy and, just below his left eye, a bruise bloomed sickly purple. Aside from that, Elena could only spot small bandages wrapped around his knuckles and a bigger one, peeking from beneath his loose chemise.

Her stomach knotted painfully.

Despite it all, his face looked peaceful, serene - she'd hated to see his face contorted by pain the day before, mouth open in a silent cry.

His chest rose and fell slowly and steadily. He must have been sleeping, she realized, and her rudely intruding. She should have left, should have slipped out of the room as if she'd never been there; yet she was rooted in place, wondering how she should make her presence known, whether to knock belatedly or clear her throat or softly call out and instead doing none of that.

Then his head lolled to the side and his eyes fluttered open, their sights set squarely on her. Elena almost fled, a startled bird. If she were quick and lucky enough, he'd think he was only dreaming.

"Lady Elena."

It was too late to flee. The arrow had been knocked and loosened and she was riveted; she had been since the first time he laid his eyes on her.

His voice was thick with sleep and surprise – and, unless she imagined it, a note of curiosity.

"Sir Lancelot." She hated the way her voice sounded, too small, too quiet. "I came to see how you're feeling." She hastily added, "The healer let me in. But I can leave if I'm bothering you – "

"No," he said quickly, and cleared his throat. "You can stay. I'm feeling much better. I'm mostly numb from all the medicine."

"Then," Elena said, dragging out the words with some difficulty, "would you like some company?"

Lancelot nodded, so she looked for a chair. She was growing overly conscious of all the space she took up with her tall frame and gangly limbs and wanted to fold in on herself, shoulders struggling to stand straight. There was only one chair, and she dragged it across the room with a screech of wood on wood towards the foot of the bed. She tried to calculate the proper distance, and reckoned this was a bit too far, too cold, so she pushed the chair forward, but overestimated and came all the way up to where he rested against the pillows. It was an overly-familiar closeness, one that assumed too much. But drawing



back the chair now would seem awkward and impolite so she steeled herself and gingerly sat down. At least this way she wouldn't have to worry about her quiet voice not being heard.

"I'm glad you're feeling better."

A small hum of acknowledgement, then silence. It rang in her ears. She stared down at her folded hands, searching desperately for something to say. She was not at a loss of words, just a loss of articulate tongue.

"We're all very concerned for you." That was true, but she was mostly speaking for herself. "What Sir Walden did was plain unfair and cruel." He'd pummeled into Lancelot with intent to not only win, but to make it hurt too. Lancelot was left bruised and bloodied while all he got was a warning and a slap on the wrist. "He should have been thrown out of the competition."

Lancelot slowly shook his head. "No, Sir Walden was overzealous, but I cannot begrudge him the fact. If I cannot hold my own in a tournament, then how will I do so on the battlefield, how will I protect the King?" He spoke with a conviction that took her aback.

This is what had drawn her eye to him: the confident way in which he carried himself, silent yet dignified.

She smiled shyly. "Your loyalty is commendable. But still it's a pity you were left wounded and unable to further compete."

Lancelot snorted and agreed. "That is a pity."

"A pity as well," Elena continued, as the drone of conversation and patter of footfalls grew louder beyond the chamber, "that you'll be missing out on all the excitement of the trials and fair."

"I'm sure that Kay and Arthur will regale me with the goings-on."

Elena didn't dare look up as she asked, "Would you like a third recounting of events?"

One panicked heartbeat later, Lancelot said "Yes, I think I'd like that." His gaze was turned too, staring at the wall behind her.

She stood up, feeling as if she were floating, as if she could fly all the way down to the tournament. "Then I'll come back."

And she did. She returned at evening, and the next morning, until the festivities drew to an end, bringing chocolates and caramels for them to share, cards and checkers for them to play.

Finally, just before farewell, it was Lancelot who plucked up his courage first, to ask for her correspondence.

## Training session with Accolon

Aug 30, 2024

It's the first sunny day in weeks, both outside and in your heart. Its frenzied beating has slowed down, and you find calm in more than fleeting moments. As you head down the hill, you dread your training less.

You wonder how long it'll last.

In the weeks following your twelfth birthday you could barely be roused from bed, let alone wield a sword. And the ones you'd have comfort you were the ones who hurt you.

This time, when you see Accolon waiting for you on the training grounds, you don't feel like turning around and running. Instead you take a steadying breath and hasten your step.

"Good morning," Accolon greets with a radiant smile. "Ready? Today I thought you'd spar with me instead of a dummy, if that's alright?"

"Yes," you say, surprising both. "I'll spar with you."

It seems now easier to not let your thoughts wander, to focus on your stance, your strikes, your parries. Lately, you've been sloppy, mind too fogged, throat too chocked; the dummy would get in hit after hit, and you'd get bruise over bruise. Accolon, however, didn't reproach you for your performance. He's offered words of comfort and talked things out with you. At first you'd scurry off, but more and more you'd stay and listen, desperate to get to how things were before, but not seeing a clear path back to it.

There is a soothing familiarity to sparring with Accolon; you've done it for as long as you can remember, first playing, then training. You fall into a rhythm you know, the world reduced to this moment, to the dance of your feet, to the swing of your swords. By the time you're done, as he pats your shoulder and congratulates you, you're actually smiling.

You collapse on the bench tired, while Accolon produces a paper bag from his satchel: caramels, your favorites. It used to be a welcome surprise – except for lately when you couldn't force them past the lump in your throat. Now you eagerly reach for the sweets. A sense of normalcy starts weaving around you, slow and delicate, framing a familiar image: the two of you, carefree and content, eating and chatting. As if nothing ever happened.

As if your life hasn't been a lie.

The caramels come back up your throat, bitter with bile. You put down a half-eaten piece and say, "I'm not hungry anymore."

Accolon shoots you a concerned look but you glance away, fumbling with a buckle.

"Mordred..."

"I just want things to be normal," you say – *plead*. Your world has been thrown off its axis and you've been left careening. You need someone to put it right, but you fear that won't be you, not when your own body doesn't feel right, heart beating too fast, skin fitting too tight. Can't he do it for you? He's offered you so many gentle smiles and understanding words, yet nothing seems to work for long. You keep circling back to that night.

"I just want to feel *normal* –" your voice breaks – "I want –" and dissolves into tears.

You want to feel safe in the knowledge that he loves you the way you thought he did. You want to open your heart to him like before. You want to be rid of this sense of betrayal.

Accolon tentatively reaches out for you. When you don't shrink back, he pulls you into a hug. You cling to him like a little child and cry till your tears dry up.

"It will be. Things will get better."

You don't argue; you want to believe it.

[Quick poll](#)

[Sep 2, 2024](#)

A quick poll to ask for your opinion, since I'm kinda at an impasse. Last time we did a short story poll for a RO, I excluded Gawain and Galahad to allow other characters to shine. (And Agravain won, a very pleasant surprise!)

So! Should I keep Gawain and Galahad off the polls for yet another month before bringing them back? Or should I just add them now? I'm fine with both, just want to know what the majority wants! (Also, since Agravain won last time, they'll be taken off the poll for this month.)

Exclude Gawain and Galahad this month again

87%

Include Gawain and Galahad this month

13%

Poll ended Sep 4, 2024 · 38 votes total

[Short story\\_poll](#)

[Sep 5, 2024](#)

Time to vote on the RO to be featured in the second short story of the month! As per the vote, Gawain and Galahad were excluded, and Agravain was also taken off since they won last time.

Nimue

28%

Elaine

25%

Sofie

8%

Isac

40%

Poll ended Sep 8, 2024 · 40 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Sep 11, 2024](#)

I've been working on the demo, more specifically rewriting the scene where Mordred first meets their dragon friend. I'm extending the scene to better show off the dragon's different personalities and the beginning of their friendship. A third customization option will be added for the dragon: horns (or lack thereof).

I've also started on a rough draft of the Knight Tier short story. This month we'll be getting Accolon's POV.

### [Second short story poll](#)

[Sep 11, 2024](#)

Isac won! Time to vote on the Mordred to be featured in this month's second short story.

Easily flustered, sweet Mordred, Mordred POV

5%

Flirty, bold Mordred, Mordred POV

13%

Easily flustered, sweet Mordred, Isac POV

53%

Firty, bold Mordred, Isac POV

30%

Poll ended Sep 15, 2024 · 40 votes total

### [Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Sep 23, 2024](#)

This has been a hectic week for me, I had to deal with some bureaucratic bullshit while updating my id, and hopping from one doctor's appointment to another. I got officially diagnosed with OCD, after so many years!

This month's update is going to be a short one, but fun. Hopefully the wholesomeness makes up for its length.

[Sep 29, 2024](#)

As lady Morgana's guard, Accolon was among the first to find out that she'd fled into the night. He had been none the wiser of her decision to leave, which saddened him, though he reckoned it was for the best.

The thought that she couldn't trust him to help her, to keep her secret, panged him a bit, though it was perfectly understandable and he wouldn't fault her for it. How could she know for sure that he'd put her over his knightly duties? But he'd do it for her, over and over again.

Perhaps it had been mere pragmatism: the less people know, the smaller chance to be caught. It was also a kindness on her part, for not knowing meant fewer troubles for him. When they came to question him he needn't feign innocence and he was let off with only a stern reprimand.

He wasn't told – none were – the reason of her abrupt nighttime departure, so rumors spread like wildfire. Gossip had it that she ran away with a bastard child; that she'd fought with the King and brought insult to him in his own castle. Accolon didn't know what had caused Morgana to flee, only that she looked shaken and enraged as she went to her chamber that evening, and refused to speak to anyone.

Weeks later, word came that she'd settled in Avalon, at her old family home, and Accolon knew he had to follow. It didn't take much to persuade Duke Lot to let him go after her, under the guise of coaxing her back. The Duke stared as if through him, and gave his approval.

Accolon had no hope of bringing her back willingly and no intention to force her. He only wanted to check on her, see how she fared, and if she needed a friend. Sera stayed behind to attend to their knightly duties in Lothia, so Accolon set out on his own, on a long and arduous carriage journey. Finally, he came to Azur, Tintal's capital.

He'd visited before, as a young squire accompanying his knight mentor at a tournament. At the time, he was not yet aware of the terrible things the new Duke had done to get his title, and Morgana was still living in Avalon with people who actually cared about her.

Accolon had declined to spend the night at the castle, saying he didn't wish to impose on the Duke and his family. In truth, he didn't want to play gracious guest with the person who had a hand in ruining the Le Fay and bringing Morgana such pain. So he spent the night at an inn and boarded a ship to Avalon the next morning.

Accolon stood at the prow as the ship speared through the ring of fog, and was awed by what he saw. The island was beautiful – like Morgana had so fondly described it, and so vividly painted it – golden beaches and green hills, terracotta roofs and pillared buildings. He wondered if Morgana would be willing to show him around – she once said she would, if they ever visited together. It was a nice thought to hold on to.

He set off into the bustling port and was promptly hailed by an unfamiliar voice.

“Sir Accolon!”

Waving at him was a young woman with a head of ginger curls, and a face full of freckles. He’d seen her before in Morgana’s sketchbook.

He bowed his head at her. “Miss Junia.”

She fiddled with the twine cord that cinched her long yellow tunic. “Junia suffices.”

“Then you may call me just Accolon as well.”

She briskly nodded and folded her hands behind her back, to keep from fussing. “Is that all your luggage?” He’d brought only a satchel and a trunk. “Morgana’s house is up on the hill, so if you’re tired we can arrange for a horse or a mule.”

“I’m fine walking if there’s no trouble. I’d like to stretch my legs after the journey.”

She gave a quick awkward smile and led the way. They passed a clowder of cats scarfing down the bucketful of fish a sailor tossed them, and roaming seagulls, eyes always sharp for their next meal. They skirted by a marketplace, the briny air laden with the scent of seafood and spices.

They made small-talk: she asked about his journey, he inquired after her well-being , her fathers’ and Morgana’s.

“How is she faring?”

“As best as anyone with a newborn can be.” She smiled gently. “At least this time she has my fathers and me at her side.”

It hurt Accolon to think of Morgana back in Lothia, pressured to be pregnant and surrounded only by strangers.

The conversation lulled as the road got steeper and the houses grew farther apart. Junia kept fidgeting with her hair, winding and unwinding a ringlet around her finger, lip bitten in thought. Finally, she halted and he stopped too, waiting patiently for her to speak.

“Why did you come, Accolon?” Her tone was neither accusatory, nor demanding, but deeply concerned. “If you came to force her back -”

He shook his head. "Never. I came to check on her as a friend. She left so suddenly and I - " he caught himself before his voice broke "- was worried for her."

Junia studied his face as she let the words sink in. She must have judged him to be earnest for she smiled. "Good. I hope you keep to your word. She considers you a friend too, you know?"

It was not long before they arrived. Wailing cleaved the air, growing louder as they walked to the garden and into a house unlike anything Accolon had seen on the Continent. It was high-pitched and incessant, the crying of a little babe. Junia led him to a mosaic-tiled bedchamber and there was Morgana humming and rocking a cradle. He couldn't help but beam at the sight of her.

When she noticed them, she got up and approached. "Accolon." The corner of her mouth tugged up. "It's been a while."

*Too long*, he thought.

Her eyes were bloodshot and her shoulders slightly slumped with fatigue but her gaze was as keen as ever.

"Are you well?" Accolon asked. "How is Mordred?"

Morgana scoffed. "Far better than at court with those wretched traitors. As you can hear, Mordred is getting in their daily dose of screaming." She cast a fond glance over her shoulder at them. "I gave them a soothing potion, they should calm down soon."

Accolon approached the cradle and peered down at the wailing bundle inside. "Can I?" he asked Morgana. When she nodded, he gently picked them up and held them close to his chest. Their crying stopped for one confused moment before resuming again. He swayed from side to side, marveling at how small and cute they were. *It's alright little one, you're safe and well, and you've got so many people looking after you. I'm here too, if your mother will have me.*

When they were finally asleep, he placed them back into their cradle and turned to Morgana. Junia had slipped out some time ago, and the two of them were alone now. Morgana beckoned, and they stepped into the hall, gently shutting the door behind them.

She took his hand in both of hers and smiled. "Thank you." She tilted her head and scoured his face. "Now, are you here to drag me back?" Her tone was flippant, but there was a tightness to the curve of her lips.

"Of course not," he said, "I came here as your friend, not a knight. I came for your and Mordred's sake, to check on you."

"Well you checked on us." she said teasingly. "You're free to leave now."



"If that's what you desire, I will leave. But if not, I'll stay by your side for as long as you need me. As long as you want me."

Morgana's smile softened, her thumb stroking the back of his palm. "Come," she gently said, "let me show you to your room."

Days turned into weeks, lingering touches into caresses, longing gazes into kisses. Accolon would have stayed by Morgana's side for as long as she wanted him there, forsake his knightly duties and remain forevermore in Avalon. He had no interest to keep serving a man like Duke Lot. But Morgana needed him in Lothia. After all, Mordred would need a mentor when they became a squire.

So they parted ways with difficulty and his promise of a hasty return.

### [Rendezvous in the woods](#)

[Sep 29, 2024](#)

Isac lounged on a branch, lying in wait. He'd looked forward to this day, marked it down on his calendar, pestered his cousins about the upcoming appointment with his spy-in-arms, Mordred.

He pulled his dagger from its sheath and flipped it between his fingers, watching the way it glinted where it caught the light. It was not all business though, and he was eager to get his job done quick and proper before moving on to the even more fun part: getting to hang out with a friend.

There was movement down below and he knew the footsteps right away – soft and measured, searching for him. With a grin, and mindful not to snag his clothes, Isac eased himself off the tree, right into Mordred's path.

He bowed with a flourish, and said: "A good day to you, lone traveler!"

Mordred smiled. "Have you been waiting long?"

"Not at all; besides it's a pleasant day for waiting. For walking too, if you will." He gestured down the forest path and they set off at a leisureed step.

"You're all decked out today," Mordred remarked, studying him out of the corner of their eye. He donned a black silk shirt, cuffs and collar trimmed with lace, leather breeches and silver rings on almost all his fingers. All very deliberate choices.

"All decked out to meet a friend," he returned and Mordred hummed an uncertain "Aha," staring at the trees ahead.

"Let's get down to business," they said.

They exchanged any useful information they'd managed to accrue since the last meeting, keeping each other updated on goings-on and when all was said and done they moved on to more personal matters.

"How's life in the Round Table going?"

"Stressful," Mordred sighed. "There have been some conflicts we got tasked to settle..."

"You had a good time when we kidnapped you," Isac said, smirking. "Would you like us to do that again? Could give you a break."

Mordred chuckled. "Don't tempt me." They seemed to seriously consider the prospect for a bit, then shook their head. "I wouldn't want to worry people." Mordred sighed again, this time less weary and more longingly. "I love our walks in the woods, but I wish we could go into the city too. We could watch a play, visit the market, dance at a tavern ..." Mordred trailed off, dreamy gaze trained somewhere ahead, imagining this lovely possibility. When they noticed Isac looking and smiling, they snapped their head away. "What? Do you think it is ridiculous?"

"Not at all," he smoothly replied, "I'd love that as well." He looked around, cogs turning in his head. "We may not have plays in the woods – though you are always welcome to show off your fire storytelling – but we have a marketplace of our own. Of sorts. Here."

He looped his arm around Mordred's and tugged them along. "Let me show you our range of choices." He'd spotted a raspberry bush not far off, and presented it to Mordred with a dramatic sweep of his hand. "The Wild Raspberry. Would you care to try?"

Mordred laughed while he plucked berries into their waiting hand. He led them where he knew there was a shrub of blackberries, which they picked as well. When they ate their fill, Isac said "As for dancing, well, we may not have a band of musicians, but we do have the melody of birds."

Mordred tilted their head and they both listened out for the peaceful trills and chirps. "Doesn't sound very dance appropriate," they said.

"It's a slow dance," he replied without skipping a beat. "It's a brand new style, very revolutionary." He held out his hand to Mordred. "Shall we?"

Their skin was hot against his. He placed his other hand on their side, and they spun around between the trees, ruled by no rhythm, just pure fun. Mordred was smiling widely now, and so was he, two fools twirling around the forest to no music.

Then Mordred tripped, eyes wide in shock as they tottered dangerously. Isac acted immediately – wrapping his arm around their waist, and pulling them close to him, to safety from the treacherous ground. Mordred stood motionless, flush against his chest. He felt the frantic beating of their heart against his ribcage, their quickened breath against his cheek.

Slowly, they raised their head and met Isac's eyes. The shock was gone from their face, all that remained was a wondering softness. They seemed too entranced to pull away. Isac dipped his head closer, but didn't bridge the distance. He wanted nothing more than this, but he waited to see if Mordred would draw away, and put this all behind them.

Mordred didn't pull away, instead they tilted their head and parted their lips, eyes fluttering close. This time, Isac closed the distance. Their mouth was soft, and they tasted sweet, of berries. The kiss was short, yet tender, a gentle pressing of lips that had him smiling as Mordred pulled back.

"Oh," Mordred took another step back, letting Isac's hand slide off them. They seemed surprised at themselves, and flustered beyond words. "I – I think we should resume our walk."

Isac fell obligingly into step with them. They'd have to talk about it eventually, but he decided to wait until Mordred seemed capable of stringing a sentence together.

[Demo Update](#)

[Sep 29, 2024](#)

## **What's new?**

- The introduction of Mordred's dragon friend, re-written and extended
- The dragon archetype choice implemented, mostly reflected in said introduction. The other dragon scenes aren't broken, but they haven't been updated yet.
- An adjustment made to the dragon lore, dragons can communicate between each other with telepathy, but they need permission to enter each other's minds. In contrast, dragonbloods can go in without permission. This is mentioned in Chapter 1, when meeting Scaly.
- General typos fixed.

**Link:** <https://llamagirl.itch.io/the-bastard-of-camelot-beta>

**New Password: BetaBoc368**

If you find any bugs or typos, have any suggestions or simply wish to leave me feedback, here's a handy dandy Google form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS\\_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf_link)

## [Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Sep 30, 2024](#)

Hello folks! I want to start by saying that this month has been sort of rough on me mentally. OCD was doing a number on me, but now I'm finally medicated and doing much better. Before I was constantly anxious, but now I'm calmer and my mind is much clearer and I can actually think about what I want to write and get excited over it.

That said, I feel bad that the stories were posted right at the end of the month, and I'm sorry for that.

I hope you all enjoyed the update, even though it was short, I had fun writing it and I look forward to the future updated scenes of the dragon companion.

Here's to a more productive October!

## [October short story poll](#)

[Oct 5, 2024](#)

This month we're choosing from friends/family/Lot, who can't claim the first and the only thing making him the second one is a piece of paper. Note: Accolon won previously so he's not going to be featured on this poll, but he will return for voting next time!

**Also:** to shake things up this time, instead of fluff we'll go for angst!

Gareth

30%

Morgana

22%

Arthur

32%

Lot

16%

Poll ended Oct 8, 2024 · 37 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Oct 15, 2024](#)

Hi folks! First off I want to apologize for taking so long to post the weekly blog. I got caught up with some things irl, and I've been on the road, returning home after visiting family. I have, however, managed to work on the demo - on some more dragon friend new content, this time in chapter 3 - as well as plan out this month's Knight tier short story. For the first time in a while, we're getting Arthur's POV again!

Now I'm settled back and writing! I did have one weird happenstance with the Twine editor just today, though. The story file just fucking disappeared while I was working on it. Luckily I got to copy paste the text I wrote, and I'm also in the habit of constantly backing up the demo so nothing got lost, but still. It was strange and I need to look into it, and take extra measures to make sure I don't lose anything.

[Short story second poll](#)

[Oct 15, 2024](#)

Arthur won! Time to vote on the Mordred to be featured in this month's second short story.

The playful, cheerful, high-energy type will be sitting out on this poll since they won last time Arthur was chosen.

A charming, smooth, confident Mordred

28%

A defiant, spunky Mordred who doesn't mince words

32%

A sweet, gentle, patient Mordred

40%

Poll ended Oct 19, 2024 · 47 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Oct 23, 2024](#)

Hi folks! I finished the Chapter 3 scene re-write that I mentioned last week featuring Mordred's dragon friend, and now I'm turning my attention to the short stories. The first one featuring Arthur's POV when meeting Guinevere is drafted and I'm very excited about it. The second story is also an Arthur one, so lots of him this month.

[Sneak peek](#)

[Oct 23, 2024](#)

\$dragon\_name grins. "That's what I wagered too. Alright, everyone! Let's roll the second die."

Their long, pink tongue flicks out to gather up the die before they proceed to shake their head as if trying to ward off an annoyingly adamant fly. The wooden cube clatters against their fangs, an increasingly frenzied crescendo. You try to smile and mentally cheer them on. You wished to send only that, yet so much spills through: the muddy, dark currents of your turmoil, sweeping over your friend in a flood of emotions not their own.

\$dragon\_name chokes. They cough, sputter and retch, back arching as they struggle with the die stuck in their throat. You move forward at the same time that the red-and-orange dragon does; while you're pleading with them to open their jaws so you can get your hand inside, the other dragon is urging them to get on their side, wild eyes already searching for the soft spot on their belly to press. Before heeding any of the advice, with a final, wretched wet gag, \$dragon\_name expels the treacherous die. It skips and rolls to a halt in the grass, slick with saliva.

## [Arthur meets Guinevere](#)

[Oct 29, 2024](#)

It would be the first time Arthur met Guinevere properly. They'd seen each other before, always in formal, stuffy settings: at tournaments and parties, when he was still a carefree squire, then at his ascension to the throne, when Ducal families were paraded before him, a dizzying blur of names and faces. He'd barely taken notice of her – or anyone else – back then, crumbling under the weight of his crown, smothered by his tight, high collar.

Now, everything was different. They were no longer simply peers, fellow noble offspring; neither was this just a meeting between king and royal subject, but the beginning of their official courtship.

The betrothal was all but cinched at this point, and this was mere formality. Merlin had already spoken with the parents and Lady Guinevere herself, before Arthur could even pen, under the kind guidance of the Royal Sorcerer, his official proposal of the union to the family. To seal the deal once and for all, they'd agreed that the betrothed would have to first meet in person. This was ideal, Merlin had told him. Such political marriages have, and still sometimes were easily conducted with the grooms only ever meeting on the day of the wedding.

Arthur wished he could say it took some of the pressure off his shoulders to not be rushed straight to the altar, no formal introductions, but yet it only worked to add more of a burden on him. Now his anxious mind was preoccupied with all the ways in which he could mess this meeting up.

He talked to his friends and family asking how to go about courtship; yet what he needed was not only a guide on romantic pursuit, but simple conversation too.

While all gave useful advice, it was Lance who had spent the most time with Guinevere, when his knightly duties saw him housed at her parents' castle for a few good months.

The man considered the question silently for a while, thoughtful face tilted to the side. Lancelot, who was so quick and precise with his sword, could be so reserved and meager with his words, choosing them as if they might cut – himself or those he spoke to, Arthur wasn't sure.

"She's good-humored, with a kind smile," he finally said, gaze returning to Arthur. "She loves to talk, and loves to laugh. Very fond of rabbits, too." He paused. "I think you'll like her."

Arthur made up his mind then. He'd bring Guinevere a carved token of a bunny. The cutting and hewing gave his fidgeting hands a purpose and precious moments of clarity of mind.

The night before they arrived to her castle, he tossed and turned in his inn bed, tormented by visions of failure. His vivid, wicked imagination conjured up all the gaffes that he could make: step on her dress and tear it up, fail to understand a joke she made, or say something so unbelievable silly that she won't only question his merits as a potential spouse, but as a ruler as well.

By morning he'd slept so uneasily, he could add another fear to his endless list: bringing insult to Guinevere through his relentless tired yawning.

At breakfast Merlin brewed him a soothing tea, not too potent as to dull his already drowsy senses, but enough to pacify his nerves, at least somewhat.

The carriage rolled towards the castle, which loomed tall and sprawling at the end of the alder lined road, all jutting spires, towers, chimneys and cupolas as if it housed an entire city on its roof. His heart did not quite gallop but went on at a canter, fingers industriously fussing with the lacy cuffs of his doublet. The ruff was too tight around his throat, and he fought the urge to tug at it. It didn't help his nerves that he was riding in a carriage, but the flight with Elewen would have messed up his appearance, Merlin said. His fear of looking disheveled was enough to make him acquiesce to the jittery ride inside the pokey cabin, its frills and trims only working to make it more smothering.

As they got closer, he could make out the silhouettes gathered to welcome them, four of them, all patiently waiting. He stared at the bunny carving in his hands until it was time to climb down.

Meeting Guinevere was worse than Arthur had anticipated. Lance's modest description had not prepared him well: Guinevere's smile was not only kind, but lit up her entire face. It crinkled the corners of her eyes, rounded out her, sweet, rosy-powdered cheeks. She smiled with teeth – some of which were adorably crooked – the kind of smile that makes your own lip twitch upward unwittingly.

It disarmed him completely. He carried himself through the introduction and pleasantries with as much grace as he could muster. It wasn't as hard as it had been in the beginning, but he couldn't rid himself of that nervous itching beneath his skin, even though he knew to hide it now. Guinevere received the bunny with delight, and cradled it as if it were flesh and bone and fur, delicately running her fingers over the white-painted wood.

His party was given time to rest and freshen up before being summoned to tea and lunch, where Arthur ate more out of politeness than anything else, munching slowly on small bird bites.

Then Guinevere and he were ushered outside into the garden, to have a walk and conversation away from prying eyes and ears. He gave Kay and Lance one last pleading, anxious look before the doors closed on them.

He cast his gaze around the courtyard – over swirls of tulips so vividly hued they made him dizzy, and neat rows of blossoming fruit trees – searching for something to say.

He went for the remark closest at hand – and safest, if dull. "It's a beautiful garden."



"It is, isn't it? I take any opportunity to get out when the weather is fair, than be cooped up inside. You could spend all day just walking through the grounds, to be honest." She chuckled. "I used to play hide and seek with my sibling and cousins – we still do, actually, when we're bored. It's quite a challenge. But most of the days I simply knit or read for hours on end." She pointed to a wicker chair shaded by an alcove of climbing roses.

"Oh," Arthur was happy to hear there were common threads he could grasp onto. "I love being outside, too. Especially with Elewen." Though since becoming ascending the throne, he hadn't been able to go out and about in nature as much he used to, as much as he wished to. "I could read for hours on end, too. What do you prefer?"

"Poetry. Though I do not limit myself to it. Yourself?"

"I read all sorts of stuff. And too many official documents I wish I didn't have to read," he jested, then quickly regretted it. How was he coming off, a King who spoke so flippantly of his duties?

But Guinevere only laughed. "Oh, I imagine there's not much excitement or lyricism to be found there." She played with her jeweled girdle belt, meeting his eye with an ease Arthur could not reciprocate. His gaze snapped to the grassy ground, and remained pinned there. At the corner of his vision swayed her ample, silk satin gown of bright yellow, printed with a lovely pattern of daisies.

"Thank you again for the bunny," she said. "It's quite adorable. I heard you often carve."

"I do." He added after a beat: "My father taught me."

She gently coaxed him to talk about it, listening with interest and patience as he chose his words. Arthur spoke little, and mostly when prompted, it wasn't that he was at a loss for words, just a lack of courage to say them.

Arthur was relieved, and intimidated anew. Relieved, for Guinevere was an easygoing companion who could make up for his own conversational skills. Intimidated, for he wasn't sure he could match up with her demeanor. He feared that one misspoken word or pause too long would disappoint her. Convince her that beneath his kingly regalia and Pendragon blood, he was not that impressive a man. He didn't buckle under the weight of his crown as much as he did when he was younger, but he was overly conscious of its pressure on his forehead, and all that it meant.

After a while the conversation fell into a lull, which Guinevere seemed utterly unbothered by, basking in the silence as one does in the sun, while Arthur simmered under the pressure of what to speak of next. His chemise was slick with sweat beneath his doublet. Did she expect him to talk first, and what if he chose to say something stupid – oh, had he already said something silly? He can't afford to do it again –

"Would you like to see the bunnies?" Guinevere asked.

Arthur blinked. "Yes," he said, sounding more relieved than warranted, as if he'd been thrown a lifeline.

She led him to a spacious pen. Even from a distance he could see four hopping balls of fluff, leaping over each other like acrobats, shooting in and out of tunnels. They flocked around Guinevere, continuing to jump as if they were weightless, dandelions in the wind. Their long ears twitched as Arthur approached and he stilled, as wary as them.

"They're nervous around strangers," Guinevere explained.

"It's alright," Arthur said, "I'll just sit here." he lowered himself onto the grass in his corner of the pen, while she sat down among the bunnies.

One of them, all snow white fur, pushed their head against Guinevere, demanding to be pet. "This is Cauliflower," she said, obliging their request. "And this -" she used her other hand to scratch a brown and white mottled rabbit "- is Licorice." In lieu of free hands, she tilted her head towards the other two.

"The straw-colored one is Strawberry, and the one bothering Strawberry is Mint."

The aforementioned Mint, with fur of a deep grayish blue, was nibbling on their bunny peer's ear.

"They're shy creatures, you know. Anxious, sharp ears, quick on their feet, ready to leap off at any moment. Their life in the wilderness shaped them to be like this," she explained as she did her best to split her attention five-ways. "You have to be patient and careful and gentle with them. And once you earn their trust and affection – well, it's very well worth it."

Arthur smiled, he couldn't help it, not when she spoke with such warm fondness.

Guinevere beckoned to him. "Come slowly."

Arthur hesitated, then did as told. The allure of fuzzy fur and twitching noses too strong to ignore. He inched closer on his knees, and reached out a hand, waiting for the bunnies to bridge the distance. The creatures stared as if his arm may turn out to be a snake, ready to snatch them up. He'd almost lost hope and was preparing to shuffle back into his lonely corner of the pen when one brave bunny stepped forward – Cauliflower. They took small hops towards him and sniffed his fingers, determining if they were right enough to touch their fur, a thorough inspection that Arthur passed. He stroked the bunny slowly, until they had their fill and hopped back to Guinevere, nuzzling her said as if to say *Look! I was brave and went to him.*

"They're so fluffy," Arthur said, which must have sounded like an inane thing to say to Guinevere, whose hands were more than full of rabbits.

But Guinevere only smiled, that wide, teeth-flashing, eye-crinkling infectious smile of hers.

He smiled back.

## [Encounter in the gardens](#)

[Oct 30, 2024](#)

You have to get away from the feast before you unravel. You're barely holding yourself together, the snagged threads of your composure slipping through your fingers. You find the balcony doors open and you flee through them, down the marble steps, away from the dizzying brightness into the shadow-shrouded gardens. You dash down gravel paths of neatly trimmed hedges and blooming roses bushes tall enough to swallow you up, with nothing but the full moon to guide you. The music and voices fade out and you start feeling like yourself again; no longer overwhelmed with that itching restlessness, that need to retreat to the nearest crevice that'll fit you, a burrowing animal taking refuge from the mean, sharp teeth of a predator. You need a respite, need space. You've done all that was expected of you tonight: you talked and smiled and danced, all while nursing your wounded heart.

Tonight, for the first time in well over a year, you were in the same room as Arthur. The father – so many years absent – that you love so much, that you had no choice but to excise out of your life yourself – slowly, painfully, bloodily – so that once again he is nothing more than a shadow looming over you.

You point your steps towards the silvery sound of flowing water, and come upon a fountain, topped by an over-sized marble goose with its wings open as if about to attack, spurting out water from its beak. You sit down on the edge of the basin, pull your legs to your chest and dip your fingers in the cool, bracing water. Your thoughts will hardly be marshaled into anything resembling order, but you try your best to focus on familiar words, calling out to a familiar presence, one you've reached out towards since your childhood. You easily pick up on the Goddess's magic, a current pulling at you even through the still water – you only need surrender yourself to it.

Slowly, you regain a modicum of composure – it's almost all dissolved by the rustling that comes next. You flinch and almost flee away, a spooked bird, before you realize how silly you're acting and settle back down, then almost flee a second time.

Approaching the fountain – with the sad, apologetic smile of the tenderhearted farmer coming to fetch the lamb for slaughter – is Arthur. His voice is quiet as he points towards the fountain and asks, "Can I?" as if afraid to scare you away.

You should be scared away – you spell nothing but trouble for him. But something in his eyes makes you stay.

Your voice is no louder when you respond. "Yes."

He sits on the edge opposite you so that the falling water separates you, not so much obscuring but blurring his face, turning it into a melancholy smear.

If only matters were different, if only it could all go back to how it were before you knew the truth. You wish to tell him to go, remind him that you won't allow yourself to cause him any more hurt that you already had, all these years, without your intent, without your knowledge. Yet you couldn't stand that wounded expression on him, can't stand to turn him away when you can see in your father's face how, whenever he goes, he leaves another piece of his pockmarked heart behind.

It's Arthur who breaks the silence. "How have you been? I mean, what with what happened then, but also – in general. How have you been?" Each word is clumsily strung together.

"I've been fine," you reply, giving the saddest, most pitiful *fine* possible.

"I'm sorry."

"What for? It's not your fault," you gently say, "You needn't trouble yourself with me."

Arthur lets out incredulous, brittle laugh. "Don't say that, Mordred." He pauses. Beyond the sheet of water, his face is thoughtful and distorted. "I wish I knew the right thing to say to you. I wish there was something I could do to take this pain away from you, but I can hardly take it off myself at times. But it will get better."

How can it get better? Every passing year brings you closer to your doomed destiny, to becoming the weapon of destruction you were born to be – that you fear – meant to ruin the father you love.

"No matter how much time passes," Arthur says, "whether we write or speak or not, if you need me, you can always reach out to me."

Your throat tightens. You couldn't talk even if you knew what to say. You know what you *want* to say – reach out to him right now, bridge the gap you dug yourself, bury your face into his shoulder and cry. Instead you run.

No footsteps come behind you.

[Demo update](#)

[Oct 31, 2024](#)

## What's new?

-This month's update is a short one: another of the dragon friend scenes rewritten, this time in chapter 3, specifically after Mordred meets Arthur; the scene where you go find your draconic companion has

now been changed and expanded a bit, to better showcase their personality and also their relationship to Mordred.

-Also if you replay chapter 3, do stop to re-read the bit where Mordred pays the blacksmith pavilion a visit. There's some extra lines added, which I think you might find interesting.

Since the update is a short one, I decided I won't change the password this time.

**Link:** <https://llamagirl.itch.io/the-bastard-of-camelot-beta>

**Password:** BetaBoc368

If you find any bugs or typos, have any suggestions or simply wish to leave me feedback, here's a handy dandy Google form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS\\_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf_link)

[Quick poll](#)

[Nov 1, 2024](#)

Yet again doing a quick poll to ask for your opinion on the matter of the short story poll of this month - which will feature the ROs. Last two times Gawain and Galahad were excluded to allow other characters to shine. (And Agravain and Isac both got wins since then!)

So! Should I keep Gawain and Galahad off the polls for yet another month or bringing them back now? I think it's best to let the majority decide. (Also, since Isac won last time, he'll be taken off the poll for this month.)

Include Gawain and Galahad this month

28%

Exclude Gawain and Galahad this month

72%

Poll ended Nov 3, 2024 · 39 votes total

[November short story poll](#)

[Nov 4, 2024](#)

Time to vote on the RO to be featured in the second short story of the month! As per the vote, Gawain and Galahad were excluded, and Isac was also taken off since they won last time.

Nimue

24%

Elaine

32%

Sofie

8%

Agravain

35%

Poll ended Nov 8, 2024 · 37 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Nov 6, 2024](#)

I've been working on the demo, on rewriting the next chapter 3 scene featuring the dragon friend, which sees Mordred telling them about their encounter with Arthur.

Also, while I haven't properly started writing it, I have decided on the Knight tier short story for this month and plotted it out/roughly drafted it. It'll be told from Igraine's POV 🗨️

[Second short story poll](#)

[Nov 12, 2024](#)

Agravain won, let's gooo! Time to vote on the Mordred to be featured in this month's second short story.

Flirty, confident Mordred, Mordred's POV

12%

Friendly, cheerful Mordred, Mordred's POV

7%

Flirty, confident Mordred, Agravain's POV

49%

Friendly, cheerful Mordred, Agravain's POV

32%

Poll ended Nov 16, 2024 · 41 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Nov 18, 2024](#)

I've continued work on the demo, still on the same dragon friend scene mentioned last time; I've also started properly writing the Knight tier short story, which I'm very excited about. Since it shows us a look into Igraine's mind, and a look at her family, I thought I'd offer you some Le Fay lore here too, for everyone to read.

Besides Igraine and Gorlois - with the latter very briefly mentioned by Morgana - I haven't really talked about the rest of the Le Fay, either in the game proper or outside of it. To be honest, there are some elements I was still fleshing out, but now I wanted to share some little facts.

Igraine had a younger brother, Elie. He was a sorcerer and very academically inclined, preferring to be up in his study, experimenting with magic, than playing prince. Igraine and Gorlois wished to have a second child after Morgana, but then - well, the war and Uther happened.

Many of the Le Fay died during the siege of Tintal, or during subsequent battles; Elie himself died trying to kill Uther. Those that survived fled the continent, putting as much distance between them and Camelot as possible.

These tidbits will be sprinkled throughout the game as well.

[Sneak peek](#)

[Nov 21, 2024](#)

"It's a thoughtful gift, isn't it?" you say. Something tender - hope - seeps into your voice. "I think it means he cares. That he'll finally try to be here for me." The corner of your mouth twitches, unsure whether to bloom into a full smile yet.

\$dragon\_name says nothing, merely puts the figurine down and gives a short, little rumbling hum. You can tell something doesn't sit right with them, by the apprehensive way they eye the little wooden dragon, as if it might spring to life any moment and bite you.

Your smile falters. "You don't trust Arthur, do you?"

"Do *you* trust Arthur? The carving is pretty, but is it enough? He's been absent your whole life. Is he willing to do more for you, make up for so much?"

\$dragon\_name's right; he has been absent your whole life. You don't know Arthur - he's all cautionary tales Morgana told you, rumors and gossip from Court. He's bits and pieces, a patchwork of contradicting opinions, and the peek you got at him would be too brief to make a rash judgement - and yet, what you saw is so much more than you expected.

[The tournament](#)

[Nov 27, 2024](#)

It would be the last tournament that Tintal hosted before the Continent descended into chaos. What Igraine now saw as bad augurs, were then mere grievances. But warnings became threats. Dark clouds on the horizon turning to thunderstorm. A gash on the hand that you thought would pass, left to fester to an infection that required amputation.



But Igraine did not know that at the time. And so life went on, bustling and busy and exciting as the Court prepared for the festivities. The brunt of decision-making fell on Igraine and her Aunt Julia. Her mother had long relinquished her role as Queen, as far as responsibilities were concerned – soon she would give up the title too, and bestow it on Igraine. No one wished to test the Queen's frail heart more than it had already been tested, with the passing of her spouse. She spent most of her days out in the garden, reading and staring out at the sea as she drank her medicinal tea.

People came from every corner of the Continent. Royal carriages rolled up the winding hill path to the Castle, striving to rival each other in splendor and foppery alike. People spilled into the streets, dragons blotted the sky. The air thrummed with excitement and anticipation. It echoed in Igraine's ribcage, matching the wild rhythm of her heart.

The first day of festivities was spend receiving the guests, a blur of familiar faces, both welcome and not so much; Igraine passed the start of the feast roaming about the hall, playing host and mingling with the other royals. She was content to play the role – it was her duty as Princess. And though custom dictated that her brother should assist her, she shouldered all the work to allow Elie respite from the crowds she knew he so despised. He was far more suited to the quiet corners of the library, to his study up in the tower where he only had his tomes of magic for company.

Talking at length with the Tanwen twins of Cornwallis – the Golden Dragonbloods, called so after their brilliant yellow scales. Alyden ascended to the throne, not two years ago; Adelissa, who had donned armor and brandished her sword since childhood, was named General after she'd wreaked havoc on the dragon hunters, far north in the harsh, cold islands of perpetual winter. From the Twins she hopped to the Queen Eloise of Astolat, laughing at her anecdotes. Igraine drifted from guest to guest – from monarch to duke to lords and ladies and knights – without feeling much tired. There were those in whose company she could linger all night long; and those she dreaded to approach, yet had to approach all the same.

King Uther of Camelot and King Lot of Lothia belonged to the latter. She took her time making her way to them, carefully constructing a polite smile on her face.

Uther was loud and brash – his inflated ego needed the room. His voice was brash and loud, demanding your attention whether you wanted to give it or not. And then there was Lot, who followed him around like a puppy – she could just imagine him, slobbering in his footsteps waiting for a thrown bone, playing along with his games, picking up his worst habits, barking when he did.

She could not call the conversation in any way pleasant, but past the usual pleasantries, it only got worse. He tried to goad her away from the hall, onto the balcony, into the gardens, and she had to skillfully evade all his – frankly insulting – invitations with a tight, polite smile.

Uther did not relent easily; he insisted with the same impertinent confidence with which he ate into her personal space. With every step forward, she took another back, holding her head high, eyes on him, treating the man as she would a wild, dangerous animal. When her patience ran out, she decided to down the beast in one fell swoop.

"If you wish to stroll through the gardens, I'm sure Lord Lot would be more than happy to accompany you." Igraine did not wait for a response. She spun on her heels and took off, searching for the one whose presence she actually desired.

She found Gorlois easily enough. He was in need of rescue from an awfully dull conversation on the subject of horse-breeding and the merits of pedigree.

He twined his fingers with hers and whispered, "Thank you," once they were out of earshot.

She squeezed his hand and smiled wryly. "You can repay me by not leaving my side tonight."

"I wasn't intending on leaving," he readily said.

"Good, since King Uther seems in need of reminding that I am betrothed."

Gorlois flung his gaze around the room, horrified, looking for the offender. "Did he say anything? Did he do something?"

"Nothing more than being a pain in the neck and an offense to good sense." Gorlois' concerned expression did not abate so she patted the back of his hand and glibly added, "Let's not waste a moment's thought more on that man. It's what he wants, and does not deserve it."

They spent the rest of the night together, dancing, drinking and seeking out far more agreeable company.

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The tournament started in earnest the next morning. The clang of armor and clash of swords rang across the arena, only rivaled by the roaring of the crowd.

As knights stepped out into the ring, proud and mighty and determined, Igraine thought back on what her aunt had told her, one late afternoon after hours of planning. Julia had leaned back in her high-backed chair, goblet in hand, gaze scouring over the map of the arena and fair as the calculating gaze of a general weighing the chances of her success. *You know tournaments are more than just entertainment, Igraine*, she'd said. *We must not appear weak, lest our neighbors get the wrong idea.*

She saw the wisdom in her words, and kept them close to mind as the trials unfurled. At her side, Gorlois didn't seem particularly keen on the spectacle. She spared him from his boredom by making jokes and remarks every now and then, to draw a smile or a chuckle out of him. When languor touched her too, they'd put their head close together and talk in hushed voices, discussing matters they both found more engaging than the entertainment at hand.

On Igraine's other side, her mother reclined in her queenly seat as placidly as she did in her wicker chair overlooking the sea, nursing a goblet in her hand – not filled with wine but her medicinal tea, which she sipped on slowly, neither perturbed nor particularly roused by the violence playing underneath them. On

her left side, Elie had his long, dagged sleeves pulled over his hands to conceal the puzzle box he was fidgeting with; he looked up every now and then with idle interest, and grimaced at the crowd's hooting and whooping. By far the most excited seemed to be Minerva, not even ten summers old, who sat on the edge of her seat as her mother – Aunt Julia – and grandfather talked to her about weaponry and fighting technique.

It was halfway through the tournament that Uther decided to perform his greatest offense to Igraine yet.

The King had chosen to participate in the one-on-one duels, to showcase his might and valor – and, in Igraine's opinion, to satisfy his thirst for violence, with no complicated political consequences attached.

Uther strode onto the arena with the confidence of one who has decided he'd already won the contest. He wore little armor – made of steel, that was. He had his scarlet-dyed cuirass, embossed with the golden Pendragon symbol, and shimmering ripples of red scales taking up the expanse of his arms, his neck, his face, and wore a grin as sharp as that of a dragon.

Igraine shifted her attention to the other side of the arena. Sir Agathe stepped into the ring with a brisk, unwavering step, stopping only when she was before the royal booth, where she dropped to one knee, head bowed. Her tightly coiled hair was cropped short, leaving the nape of her neck bared, showing off the serpent inked in azure blue there.

Agathe was a promising young knight; not a year ago she was a squire, kneeling before Igraine's mother to receive her title, as shiny new as her polished armor. She'd spoken her oath with earnest, solemn confidence, and she beamed a brilliant smile as she rose, holding her sword.

"My Queen," Agathe called out, gaze still pinned reverently to the ground, "may I ask for your favour to wear in battle?"

Mother smiled warmly. "You may." She made to gesture at Igraine, but she was already on her feet, knowing exactly what to do.

With the blue ribbon tied securely to her arm, Sir Agathe strode off to face her opponent.

As soon as the signal was given, Uther pounced on her like a hungry wolf. Her blade met his with a terrific screech, and so the fight commenced, vicious and relentless.

Igraine watched it unfold with all-consuming focus. Even Gorlois seemed to have honed in back to the moment, from whatever daydream his mind wander off to.

Later that night, Igraine would have to console an apologetic Sir Agathe. *You fought well*, she'd say. *You fought honorably, you're not the one who brought me offense.*

But for now, all Igraine could do was watch helplessly as Agathe fell to her knees, the ribbon limp on the ground, a cut down snake.

King Uther sheathed his sword, took off his helmet and snatched up the ribbon. He approached the royal booth, fist raised and clutching the stolen favour.

"Your Highness," he said/boomed, "Queen Matilda, I may not have carried your favor in this battle, but I would still like to dedicate this win to you."

Mother merely inclined her head, a gracious allowance. Igraine wanted to take the ribbon and choke him out with it. It would have stopped him from uttering the next offense.

"Your Highness," he went on, "I believe I have shown myself to be a valiant warrior, a worthy man not just by dint of my status and blood. I would like to ask for your daughter's hand in marriage."

The stands exploded with voices. Igraine picked up an undercurrent of hoots and cheers, but it was swiftly swallowed up by the overwhelming exclamations of shock and confusion.

Igraine did not like the way her mother's chest fell and rose, as if every breath was laborious, neither the way her knuckles stretched taut as she clutched the armrests of her seat. Beyond her, Elie had gone still, fingers frozen on his puzzle box, gaze flickering between his sister and the impertinent king.

She slid her hand over her mother's, gave a reassuring squeeze, and got up to face Uther herself.

The crowd quietened down as she approached the rail with a placating hand raised high. Once there was silence, she placed her hands on the banister, wide apart, and tilted back her chin ever so slightly, looking down at the King.

"Your Highness," she said, both voice and expression carefully blank. "If you wish to ask for my hand in marriage I would appreciate it if you addressed your question directly to me."

Uther grin, flashing white teeth. "Your hand in marriage, Princess?"

"I'm sure your offer is flattering, Lord Uther, if only it were addressed to the right woman. As you remember, I am already engaged. You are acquainted to Sir Gorlois, are you not? Unless all the bashing has affected your memory, in which case I highly advise you seek out the help of our brilliant healers."

Laughter cleaved through the silence. Loudest to her was Elie's amused snort he failed to hide.

There was movement behind her, and Igraine did not need to turn to know it was Gorlois coming to join her side.

But Uther was not cowed. "Ah, Lord Gorlois." As his attention shifted to him, his smirk only grew wider. Sharper. "How could I forget? It is as you say, Princess Igraine, but I would like to challenge your betrothed to a duel for your hand."

Gorlois had never picked up the sword for he had no interest in it, and it was common knowledge. Skill or not, Igraine knew he'd never agree to this. So his answer was not surprising, yet it still filled her with a vicious sense of affection.

"Princess Igraine is not a prize at the fair for us to squabble over like children."

"Ah, but is it not the greatest compliment to be considered a great prize?"

"I wouldn't know," Igraine said, "a prize neither thinks nor feels."

Laughter rippled through the stands once again, but Uther would not let himself laughed out of the arena so easily.

He drummed his fingers against the hilt of his sword. "Perhaps you are not confident in your skills, Lord Gorlois."

"You may think of me however you wish," Gorlois replied, "but I will not agree to a duel."

Igraine decided it was time to end this charade. "Neither do I wish to see the two of you fight, but I'm sure we're all anticipating your next duel with your scheduled opponent." She looked to the side and called out, "May they step into the arena!"

Igraine felt vindicated as she watched Adelissa Tanwen sprawl Uther on the ground.

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At the feast that night, Igraine and Gorlois sneaked out not long after it began. They took to the gardens, wandering about 'till they came upon a stone bench sheltered by rose bushes.

They were in no haste to return, but their goblets were running dry.

"I'll go refill them," Gorlois said, and kissed her forehead before he left.

When she heard rustling soon after, she expected to find Gorlois rushing back to ask if she wanted something sweet as well, but instead she found a less welcome sight.

"Are you lost, Lord Merlin?"

"Good evening, Lady Igraine. Excuse me for the intrusion, I was merely out for a breath of fresh air." He gestured to the stone bench across from her. "May I?"

Igraine nodded, and the sorcerer smiled. People had talked of Lord Merlin and his rapid rise to power; the King liked to keep him close and the court clamored to him, wishing to have their fortune told. They say he was a mere merchant's son blessed with magic to carve a higher purpose for himself. What they fail to mention is that, even before his birth, the family dressed as lavishly as the nobles they garbed.

Merlin made pleasant remarks about the starry sky and the roses, but Igraine could not shake off the annoyance that prickled at the back of her neck.

Tone light, she said “If you’re here to petition me on behalf of Uther, do not waste your breath. My answer hasn’t changed, and it won’t change no matter what.”

He inclined his head obligingly. “I understand, my lady. Though my King’s heart is broken -”

“I highly doubt it. I do believe I saw him take refuge in the company of more willing ladies.”

The corner of his mouth twitched. “Ah, but it is merely a balm for his broken heart.”

“You understand that I refused not only because I am betrothed. My heart belongs to Gorlois, but also to my country, to my people. I will soon step up as Queen, and it is a duty I gladly embrace, but one I cannot perform if I am bound to another kingdom.”

“How admirable.”

She suspected that veneer of politeness only concealed his ridicule. Before her patience could run out, Gorlois was back with the cups of wine. He startled when he saw the uninvited visitor.

Merlin got up and gingerly smoothed his clothes. “Once again, pardon me the intrusion. Have a good night, Lady Igraine, Lord Gorlois.”

Once he was away, Gorlois asked, “Was he rude to you?”

“Not overtly,” Igraine said, taking a long sip of her wine. “But I do not want to hear anything about Merlin, or Uther, or the other Camelotians tonight.”

Gorlois smiled. “How about some gossip then?”

[Outing with Mordred](#)

[Nov 29, 2024](#)

They had arranged to meet one hour before the play started. It was Mordred who had suggested that, which relieved Agravain of having to ask themselves and face possible rejection.

They’d dressed up for the occasion – put on their best black shirt and leather jerkin, slipped on the silver ring inlaid with amethyst they’d found in a street gutter years ago. They traced kohl under their eyes and

painted their lips the same dark color, then stared at themselves in the mirror 'till the swell of satisfaction frayed away to doubt. There were loose threads in the seams of their breeches, and their boots which they'd polished revealed their overuse and old age in every crease. They turned away from the mirror before it was too much.

Mordred was already there when Agravain came out of the boarding house. They looked as radiant as ever, even more so when they offered them that easygoing smile of theirs.

"Been waiting long?"

"Not at all. You look great by the way. You have an air of menacing mystery about yourself."

The way Agravain's heart stuttered seemed like a menace only to themselves. At least their voice was steady. "Thanks." They paused, agonizing over whether to pay the compliment back, and how.

"Likewise." Their eyes scoured frantically over Mordred's sleekly tailored clothes, their charming smile.

"Without the air of menacing mystery."

Mordred's smile only widened. "Come on, do you have any idea of where you want to go?"

"I don't know. *You* suggested we meet early."

Not that Agravain minded. Meeting early meant more time with Mordred, more time to talk, to get to know each other, to see that smile turned their way. It also meant the possibility of awkward quiet, and saying the wrong thing.

"We can just wander around the town, maybe we'll find something interesting," Mordred said.

Agravain cast their gaze around for that something interesting. They found it quickly, and pointed out the stall to Mordred. "What's that?"

Mordred's eyes lit up.

The dragon behind the stall beckoned them forward with the tip of their tail, calling out in a sing-song grave voice. "Come on, come on! Take a look at my wares! We have ancient bugs in amber and the petrified remains of long-dead beasts."

Agravain picked up one of the amber gemstones to inspect.

"That is a truly ancient one from before human- and dragonkind."

Agravain narrowed their eyes. "That looks like an ordinary mosquito to me."

Mordred leaned in to take a look as well, their face close to Agravain's. They wondered if Mordred could feel the sudden wave of heat radiating off their cheek.

"Similar, yes," they said, "or it could be one of its ancestors from long before human- and dragonkind."

Agravain dropped their voice. "So are they swindling us or not?"

Mordred chuckled, their breath hot on Agravain's cheek. "I don't know, I'm not an expert on mosquitoes. Those, however," their gaze slid further down the stall, "seem veritable."

Agravain followed their line of sight to a row of stone slabs, each embossed with creatures they'd never seen before. They all had a similar shape, a body reminiscent of a ribcage, it's head vaguely bug-like. They had a spiky air about themselves, all jutting and sharp; at the same time it put Agravain in mind of an insect many-legged, scurrying and crawling. They weren't sure whether they liked that or not.

"Very... interesting," Agravain wearily remarked. "How do you know about them?"

"Nimue told me."

Of course. For a split, agonizing, shameful moment, Agravain wondered why Mordred was out here with them and not Nimue. She was clever and funny, and clearly knew more about these strange creatures of bygone eras.

As they moved away from the stall empty-handed – even though Mordred assured them the stone slabs were genuine – their companion said:

"You know, if you'd like to learn more, I could burrow some books from Nimue and we could go through them together. The cold season's approaching, might as well find something to do inside by the fire."

Agravain could just picture it, the two of them huddled on a plush carpet before the hearth, heads bent close together over the open book. Shoulder touching, fingers brushing against each other as they both reached to flip the page...

Agravain crossed their arms and smiled. "I'd like that."

"Then consider it arranged."

They walked aimlessly 'till they arrived to a square where lute music thrummed through the air. Mordred beckoned them to approach the bard, and waited for their song to finish before asking, "How much for a request?"

The bard lazily plucked at the strings. "Depends on how generous you are."

Mordred dropped a gold coin in their case, then gestured to Agravain. "You choose the song."

Their mind was wiped clean, whatever tune they'd ever heard or hummed quieted, forgotten. "Nothing comes to mind."

"No? You said you had that song we danced to at the tavern stuck in your head."



"Oh, right." They'd had it stuck in their head for a week now, playing again and again along with the memory of their dance. "It's *Ale for all ailments*."

The bard smiled. "A great choice."

The song started, cheerful and upbeat, and Agravain tapped their foot in rhythm with it. Mordred had other plans instead. They proffered their hand and Agravain stared at it pointedly.

"Really? Here? There's people."

"There were people at the tavern too."

"Yeah, but it was a *tavern*. And I had a pint of ale."

It's not that Agravain didn't want to take their hand and spin as carefree as they did a week ago, they just didn't want to take on the weight of all these curious gazes too.

"You don't have to if you don't want to," Mordred said, hand still outstretched. "But if you're nervous, keep your eyes on me."

Agravain bit the inside of their cheek and, with a moment's hesitation, took their hand. They weren't sure that focusing solely on Mordred would be conducive to not stepping on their toes, but they would try. Their dance companion moved with a confidence that made up for Agravain's wavering one. They willed themselves to focus on the music, the warmth of Mordred's fingers, the radiance of their smile. When the song was done, Agravain took off towards a side alley, short of breath, Mordred hot on their heels laughing. Agravain pushed the hair out of their face; the strands fell right back into place.

"People were staring."

"Doesn't mean they were judging. Perhaps they were simply admiring what a skilled dancing pair we make."

Agravain huffed, but they were smiling. "Come on, I think we'd better head to the theater."

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Nov 30, 2024](#)

First off, I want to start by addressing the update. It was supposed to be posted now, but I'm dealing with an annoying, baffling bug I haven't figured out yet. I won't be changing the demo password this time, so even those who are no longer subscribed during December will be able to access the added scenes.

**Password reminder:** BetaBoc368

Second off, I've switched from working in the twine editor to VS Code and TweeGo since it has syntax highlighting and spellchecking, yet I still haven't figured out that pesky bug mentioned above.

This update features another re-written scene with your dragon companion, this time when Mordred recounts them the first encounter with Arthur. There are a lot of bigger and smaller variations, and like with the other re-written scenes so far, I'm so much happier with what there is now, and I'm hoping you're enjoying them as well!

[Demo update](#)

[Dec 1, 2024](#)

## **What's new?**

-This month's update features another of the dragon friend scenes from chapter 3 rewritten, in which Mordred gets to tell their companion about their encounter with Arthur.

I've had a lot of fun with writing the different reactions of the dragon friend - they each have their opinion on Arthur, which may or may not coincide with Mordred's.

Since the update is a short one, I decided I won't change the password this time.

**Link:** <https://lamagirl.itch.io/the-bastard-of-camelot-beta>

**Password:** BetaBoc368

If you find any bugs or typos, have any suggestions or simply wish to leave me feedback, here's a handy dandy Google form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS\\_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf_link)

[December short story poll](#)

[Dec 5, 2024](#)

This month we're choosing from friends/family/Lot, who can't claim the first and the only thing making him the second one is a piece of paper.

But, to shake things up, I've decided to only include Morgana and Lot on this poll, since they've never won so far and the others have all won previously (more than once, even)

Curious to see how it goes!

Morgana

51%

Lot

49%

Poll ended Dec 9, 2024 · 35 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Dec 7, 2024](#)

Hi folks! I've been drafting the Knight Tier short story for this month. It features Arthur's POV and a small moment between him and Lancelot.

I've also continued working on the demo, finishing up the dragon scene from the last update.

I've also been playing around with the Google Docs speech-to-text tool to see if it can be of any help. I'm still figuring it out, but it seem promising. Hopefully, it will let me get more work done without putting as much strain on my hands.

[December short story poll](#)

[Dec 12, 2024](#)

We're gonna split this into two polls, first to decide the dynamic between Mordred and Morgana, then to choose Mordred's personality. The story will take place after chapter 4.

You're still close

10%

Your relationship is strained, but you still try to be close

48%

You've distanced yourself from her

43%

Poll ended Dec 15, 2024 · 40 votes total

[December short story poll #3](#)

[Dec 16, 2024](#)

For this month we have Morgana with a strained - but not cold -relationship. Time to decide on Mordred's personality!

A sweet, understanding Mordred who is saddened by the chapter 4 revelation

39%

A sweet, understanding Mordred who is mad at Morgana

20%

A Mordred who doesn't mince words who is saddened by the chapter 4 revelation

17%

A Mordred who doesn't mince words who is mad at Morgana

24%

Poll ended Dec 19, 2024 · 140 votes total

[Musings on kingship](#)

[Dec 17, 2024](#)

Arthur was not fit to be king.

It was a realization he kept coming back to. It had come to him in the dark, lonely hours of the night, tangled in his sweat-soaked bed sheets. It had come to him in a wave of nausea as he stood before the hungry eyes of the crowd. There were so many expectations, so many doubts. It had come to him as he paced around Merlin's study, when he sought both the man's reassurance that he would one day be the king he needed to be and his admission that putting Arthur on the throne was a mistake. That there was a need for someone else. Someone who wasn't him. And though there was someone, she had never been considered a choice. Not a serious one.

Arthur was no king, and he came again to this realization bent over his paperwork, fingers aching from gripping the pen, ink bleeding where the tip sank into the paper. The air could no longer fill his lungs or perhaps it was his lungs that could no longer fit the air. Arthur let the pen drop from his quivering hand and looked up. He hadn't really been writing for a while now, only staring down incomprehendingly. The words no longer took a shape that he could recognize. All sense was chased away, replaced by scurrying, wild thoughts - animals circling, looking for a way to escape, looking for a place to hide.

Across from him, before the hearth, Kay sat on the carpet, where he'd slipped off the armchair, book splayed open on the cushioned seat. Opposite him, Lance sat properly in his chair, reading his book with an earnest expression. He looked more the dutiful king than Arthur felt.

Officially, they were here as his guards. In truth they were here as his concerned friends who didn't want to leave him alone. He would have asked Merlin for help if he were here, but he was off to supervise the restoration of some important monument. He promised he'd be back in time for the meeting with the Merchants' Guild, promised he wouldn't let Arthur flounder on his own. Even with Merlin at his side, this kind of meeting terrified him. He didn't want to imagine what it would be like facing it alone.

Arthur's voice was brittle when he spoke. "I can't do this."

Kay made it halfway to the desk by the time Arthur unraveled into an incoherent mess.

He put his steadying hands on Arthur's shaking shoulders; his whole body was racked by sobs. Excuses and pleas gushed uncontrollably out of him like blood out of an open wound. "I'm not made for this. I'm not made to be king. I may have the blood, but I do not have what it takes to do this. They must have made a mistake. They have to find someone else. I can't do this. I'll ruin the kingdom. I already did."

He ruined it before they even put the crown on his head, he did on the day that he drew the sword from the stone, on that night when he met Morgana and did what they did. He knew that no matter what

everyone said he was not meant to be king. Morgana had seen that and had no qualms about making it clear to him.

He was no king. He knew not how to take a decision without Merlin's aid. He feared too much the consequences of making the wrong choice, it paralyzed him to the point where he could make none. At parties, nobles and courtiers approached him ceaselessly, all wishing to curry the King's favor. His voice was always too high pitched or too quiet, his smile too forced, body braced to flee. He trained with Merlin for hours on end to learn how to give a speech. He hated how his voice sounded in the empty, cavernous hall. He hated it even more when the chamber was filled with people, with more ears to bear witness to his inadequacy.

What praise he could glean never felt enough, could never surmount all the ways in which he was lacking. He could only console himself with the promise that he'd be better than Uther had been. Kinder.

But what kind king was he, sending away the child who had no fault for the way they made Arthur feel? Yet the way his stomach roiled at the thought of them could not be helped.

Lancelot hovered close to his chair. The concern on his face ran so deep, it was written in the creases of his brow, in the tight lines around his mouth. He'd been worrying for Arthur for so long, as had been everyone.

Kay was so patient, his touch on Arthur's shoulders, gentle and comforting. He was so patient and kind that it only made Arthur cry harder, reducing his ranting to incoherent, inarticulate gurgling and whimpering.

"I'm just a burden on everyone," Arthur sobbed.

Kay cupped his face and tilted his head so Arthur's eyes met his. "Never say that. You are not a burden, and I will repeat that to you as many times as it takes for you to understand, for you to remember it."

They all said that. Elewen, in particular, had to often reassure him of it, since it was them who not only saw the turmoil on his face, but felt it the way it felt in his own heart. Elewen reassured him that it was part of their bond to share not only in their joy but their pain as well, yet Arthur could not shake off the guilt of subjecting them to this. He tried to gate his mind as much as he could. It didn't always work. But now he needn't worry about it; Elewen was travelling across the continent, pursuing their scholarly passions.

A gentle pressure came down on Arthur's left shoulder. Even through the fabric of his tunic and his chemise, he could feel the warmth of Lancelot's palm - the touch anchored him so he would not drift away further.

When the tears dried and there was nothing left but a hollow in his chest and the salt on his cheeks and the pounding in his head, Kay pulled back and whispered "I'll bring you some tea and something to eat." Before Arthur could protest, Kay insisted. "I know you ate little. Please, you need to eat something, Arthur."

Then he was out to fetch the food and a pot of calming, soothing tea. Arthur guessed that when Merlin was back, a more potent concoction might be prepared for him.

The room was silent but for the gentle crackling of the fire and his sniffing, and in the quiet the absurdity of Arthur's ravings came into sharp, embarrassing focus. It was childish, ridiculous. Who else would be king but him? There was no escaping it and it was up to him whether he'd come down in the chronicles as a great and kind king - as he could only hope to be - or as an utter failure. Or perhaps he'd be a mere footnote, quickly skimmed over. But this last possibility he truly doubted, knowing Merlin's vision of doom. His only choice was to find a way to not give the historians a calamity to talk about for centuries to come.

Merlin assured him that he could rise up to become the king he desired to be. But three years had passed since he stepped on the throne and he felt far behind that ideal. He had his whole life ahead to shape himself to fit this mold, and yet he still felt like unyielding, misshapen clay in the clumsy hands of a child. And the Kingdom had no choice but to make do with him.

There was a rustle of clothing and then Lance was knelt on one knee before him. He took Arthur's hands in both of his - they were no longer shaking but still simmered with nervous fire just beneath the hot, feverish skin - and met his gaze.

"Arthur," Lance said, "three years ago, I swore an oath to you. To have you as my king. The one for which I whet my blade, for which I aim my strikes. To be by your side, for better or worse. In times of hardship, in times of ease. But I'm not only your loyal knight, but your friend as well. And as your friend, too, I have taken on these vows."

Lancelot, the friend who helped him in his squire training back when neither of them knew he was to be king. Who so patiently showed him through the fighting stances, who healed his scrapes with his magic, who played with him and smiled at him with an exuberance he showed very few people.

Lance rested his forehead against the back of Arthur's palm, against his knuckles. "I believe that you will make a great king. That you will make me proud to call myself your blade. I will always be here by your side to clear a path towards your bright future."

There was a weight to his words that did not crush Arthur but overwhelmed him all the same, and he was too tired to protest. Lance's breath was caressing his skin, sending a shudder through his frame. He tried to tell himself that it was a normal reaction to have. That it only tickled, like the brush of a piece of garb. But he knew he'd be lying to himself.

Lance looked up, and Arthur was afraid of what his friend would see in his face. So, without thinking, driven only by impulse, he flung his arms around his neck and buried his face in his shoulder.

One of Lancelot's arms wrapped around his back while the other hand came to rest on his nape, fingers tangling in his curls. Arthur shivered yet again. He did his best to bask in this feeling, to think only of his friend, of his warmth, of the heartbeat he felt against his own chest. To think without guilt of the hand on the back of his neck, so he may not have to avoid Elena in shame.

He buried his face deeper into his shoulder, breathing in his familiar, leathery scent, and melted into Lance's arms. Arthur wasn't sure how long they stayed like this. Time yawned and stretched, then snapped back into place when the door opened and Kay returned. Only then did he disentangle himself from Lancelot. He drank the soothing tea his brother brought and ate as much as he could stand.

Then he was whisked away from his study and back to his chamber where Kay uncovered an old game they always used to play - it smelled of mold and home. And for the rest of the evening, if only for a little bit, Arthur could entertain that he was no longer king, but just himself, having fun with his friends. Like they used to back when they were younger.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Dec 17, 2024](#)

Hi folks! The dragon scene mentioned last time is almost done, just needs some more polishing.

I've also completed and posted the Knight Tier short story.

Other than that I've been recording notes for the upcoming new dragon friend scenes. I've planned out in detail all the little mentions as well as the bigger additions that I will make to incorporate the dragons more into the story. For example Mordred will be meeting Ariawen and Callum earlier and the dragon friend will be a constant presence during the tournament, doing their squire duties alongside you.

The diction tools have proved helpful too.

This is all for this week!

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[Dec 28, 2024](#)

Happy holidays everyone! I'm currently working on the demo to wrap things up for this month's update, as well as writing the second short story featuring Morgana and Mordred.

[Mordred and Morgana go to the theatre](#)



[Dec 30, 2024](#)

Your thirteenth birthday came and went, marking a year since your life has been turned upside down. On the surface, nothing much changed; you had the same guests and none made any reference to the fateful event the year prior. Junia and her fathers visited, like they've always done, but no longer did Morgana and her talk and laugh into the night - you are the only reason they are ever in each other's company now.

Your mother still smiles at you with that same tenderness she's always bestowed upon you; yet there are times when looking at her soft, loving expression makes your heart ache.

You still have your squire training with Accolon, your magic lessons with Morgana; you take lunch and dinner in her chambers with both of them, chatting about your days while feigning that you don't see the dark clouds that always hang on the horizon, threatening to rush in at any moment. There are times you can keep them at bay, times when you don't even notice them.

And then come the days when they swoop upon you with a vengeance. There's been many such a day before and after your thirteenth birthday.

Nothing changed, yet everything's different.

Perhaps your parties have never been as grand as Gareth's; you've never had as many guests as him, but neither have you had to suffer sycophants. You've always been surrounded by people you love, and the days up to your birthday have always been spent in a buzz of excited anticipation. This year, however, it's all been shrouded in a film of melancholy that clings over everything like grime that you can't scrub away.

And so, after a few too many silent days, Morgana has decided to do something. She organized an outing, one mild afternoon day at the end of summer. She booked tickets for one of your favorite plays - written and performed by dragons, in their own language, a play you've read and seen enough time to have learned by heart. She also arranges for you to go out in advance, to walk around town and see what catches your fancy. It's the way she always used to cheer you up, when life in Lothia got too tiring. But now it's her who put this weight on your shoulders in the first place. It's a fact you try not to think about as you dress up nicely for the theatre and go out to meet your mother.

You set out together on foot, trailed after by Sera as your guard. They've promised to keep at a distance, to let you have this afternoon with Morgana; they know too the cause of your sadness, and hope just as much as your mother that it'll be alleviated.

"Where would you like to go first, dear?" your mother asks as you walk down the cobblestone path, the castle growing smaller behind you. "The bakery, or perhaps the bookshop?"

The bookshop is first on your way, so that's where you head. It's the same cozy little shop you've been going to since you first found it years ago, tucked on a side alley. The owner has a tomcat that likes to snooze on top of piles of books and empty shelf spots, and who yowls at you till you pet or pick them up. Sometimes, your mother is convinced you only go there for the cat; though she's never made any complaints, especially not when he curls up on her lap while you browse the tightly crammed cases.

There's no one but you when you arrive, and the owner welcomes you both with a cup of steaming tea. Their father was Tintalian, and they're among some of the few people to receive you with warmth.

You browse through the shelves, talking in hushed voices. The rustle of pages and the smell of paper comfort you. In this tiny corner, cut off from the world, it's easy to forget yourself, and soon enough it feels just like old times.

"Look here -" your mother holds up a brown leather-bound book "- it sounds like something you might enjoy."

You take it and thumb through it - it's a collection of folk tales gathered from all over The Continent - and it does sound like something you'd enjoy. What looks like a familiar title flashes before your eyes, and you quickly flip back to it. *The Serpent in the Flowers* is the tale of how your ancestor met the fae with whom they'd come to have the first child of Le Fay magical blood; it's a story that's been told time and time again, but this particular rendition is your mother's favorite. She used to read it to you at bedtime, to lull you to sleep; it'd soothe you on nights when thunder cracked above the island and the waves crashed against the cliffs; it'd calm you down when you rode along in your carriage through the Lothian countryside, returning late at night from a noble's party. Back then, being at your mother's side meant only safety, security and comfort. Back then, there was no space for doubt in your heart, that you could ever do anything that'd make her love you less. That'd make you think she never loved you as much as she claimed she did. A time when there was no room between you, carved out by everything she hid from you.

When you look up, you catch the flash of concern that passes her face before she can dress it up. "What do you think?" she asks.

The words bubbling on the tip of your tongue taste bitter, so you swallow them and smile instead. You hate to see her upset as much as she hates to see you that way. "I think it'll take it."

Next up, you stop by the bakery to order some of your favorite treats, then amble about the streets, taking the opportunity to recount the play's story to your mother. She needs the explanation, given that she won't be able to understand more than a few words the actors speak in the draconic language.

"We could have gone to a different play," you say. "One you might understand as well."

"Why," your mother smoothly replies, breaking off a piece of pastry to pop in her mouth. "I've heard you talk so often of this tale, I think I might just know it by heart too now. Besides, the dragon language, while completely arcane to me, is quite melodic."

“Uh-huh,” you hum, “I thought you once said it sounds strident and harsh, like incoherent hissing and growling that twists your tongue into a knot.”

“Only because that’s what it sounds like coming off my lips.”

At the theatre, Morgana got you front row seats. You arrive early, as the crowd is still gathering, and try to pick familiar faces among the audience. Once the show starts, it’s easy to let yourself be carried away into the story you know so well by now. There’s the comfort of the familiar, and the excitement of a new performance, the actors breathing life anew in the characters. Even your mother seems utterly engrossed halfway through, though you doubt she can make out much of what is being told. The tricks of shadow and light the dragons employ to enhance the staging keeps her preoccupied enough.

It’s in those quiet moments where the light dims and the dialogue lulls that the sadness creeps back up on you - it’s always there, at the back of your head, ready to leap.

And leap it does, as you’re streaming out of the theatre with the crowd, surrounded by its merry chatter, walking under a bleeding sunset sky. How many evenings have you spent like this at your mother’s side, step light and mind replaying all the moments of the play that stuck with you? But now it’s not the show that stays on your mind - not their lines that loop in your thoughts, relentless and incessant.

There’s a tightness in your chest, but you try to breathe past it, keep the smile on your face.

“It was a beautiful performance,” Morgana says.

“Did you understand anything?”

“Barely, but it seemed quite intense.”

You get the sense she waits for you to say more, but all you can summon is the energy for a small smile.

You’re out of the bustling town streets by the time your mother breaks the silence. “I hope you enjoyed today.”

You wanted to give a full-chested, genuine yes. You had bursts of joyful laughter; you had moments of tranquility. You enjoyed this afternoon out with your mother as you did so many before, and yet you cannot shake off the melancholy that’s dogged you all summer - no, all year.

And it’s all her fault, and yet it’s still her you run off to for comfort.

You could have simply smiled and said yes, like you’ve done times before to avoid concerning her, or evade another argument that just leaves you tired and has no victor. You could have hummed and gotten away with a mere quick worried glance from her, but instead you halted in the middle of the cobblestone road and said: “I’m not fine.”

Morgana stops and turns to you, hand already on your shoulder, gentle. "Is it from the sweets-"

"No," you say, the answer you're sure she expected.

Her face twists in pain. "Darling..."

"I want to be fine, I want everything to be fine, to be like it used to, but I can't." Words gush out uncontrolled now. You stumble over them, the tightness in your chest so taut now you can barely draw in air. "I want to trust you, but there's so much you kept from me, and I don't know if there's anything left you haven't said, or if in the future you'll ever again keep me in the dark, and I-"

Both her hands are on your shoulders, then on your cheeks, cupping your face, thumb caressing your skin, wiping away - wiping away a stray tear, you realize with a start.

"Mordred-"

Before she can say anything, you're bleeding out words again. "And I know you've suffered a lot, and I love you so much, but I'm scared that I can't be what you expect of me - that I don't want to be that, and I don't want to disappoint you but I simply *can't*." Your voice breaks on the last word, splintered by a sob.

Your mother wraps her arms around you, presses you to your chest as if afraid that any looser a hold will have her forever lose you.

"Mordred," she whispers into your hair, lips moving fast, "I love you, I love you more than anything, and you could never disappoint me. "

"But-"

"You are so much more to be than one desperate decision I made years ago. A decision I made out of survival. You are *my child*, and nothing will ever change that. Do you understand?"

You understand. And as you cling to your mother on the empty road, soothed by her tight hold on you and by the constant stream of mellow reassurances muttered into your hair, you want to believe it, too.

Nothing changed, yet everything's different.

[Demo update](#)

[Dec 31, 2024](#)

## What's new?

- The update finishes the re-written dragon friend scene that was added at the beginning of the month.
- There's also a couple dragon lore-related changes to the first night's feast scene.
- I've also begun editing the tournament scenes. Now we see Mordred and their dragon friend working together on getting their knights ready for the trials. I've only gotten as far as the very beginning of the first day, before Gawain calls out to Mordred.

Since the update is a short one, I decided I won't change the password this time.

**Link:** <https://llamagirl.itch.io/the-bastard-of-camelot-beta>

**Password: BetaBoc368**

If you find any bugs or typos, have any suggestions or simply wish to leave me feedback, here's a handy dandy Google form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS\\_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf_link)

[Quick poll](#)

[January 7](#)



Yet again doing a quick poll to ask for your opinion on the matter of the short story poll of this month - which will feature the ROs. Last **three** times Gawain and Galahad were excluded to allow other characters to shine.

So! Should I keep Gawain and Galahad off the polls for yet another month or bring them back now? I think it's best to let the majority decide. (Also, since Agravain won last time, they'll be taken off the poll for this month.)

include

51%

EXCLUDE

49%

Poll ended Jan 9, 2025 · 43 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)



[January 9](#)

I've finished re-writing the scenes during the first day of the tournament when you can go talk to Gawain and co. or stay by your dragon friend's side (in which case you might still get some new company).

I've also decided on this month's Knight Tier short story, which will feature Nimue's POV.

I haven't mentioned this in the demo update post, because I wanted to let people discover it on their own, but the dragon friend is now romanceable. It's a choice I've been considering for a while, especially as I was fleshing out their character for the re-writes, and seeing other people actually interested in it convinced me to go ahead with it. It's a dynamic I look forward to exploring, especially given their mental bond; I'm also just excited about writing a romance involving a dragon.

Speaking of dragons, on our way home from visiting family we stopped by in Budapest and saw this funky guy:



It's a Mesopotamian snake hybrid.

We also stopped by a cat cafe and saw these cuties:



That's all for now, have a lovely weekend!

[Second short story poll](#)

[January 12](#)

Time to vote on the RO to be featured in the second short story of the month! The vote was close, but Gawain and Galahad are back on the poll now! Agravain will be sitting this round out however, since they won last time.

Galahad



27%

Elaine

5%

Gawain

5%

Nimue

13%

Sofie

2%

Isac

7%

The Dragon Friend™

40%

Poll ended Jan 15, 2025 · 55 votes total

[Second short story poll - Dragon Edition™](#)

[January 17](#)

The Dragon Friend™, who has been newly announced as a RO, has won this month's short story poll!  
Time to vote on their archetype!

Friendly, Playful

32%

Fierce, Abrasive

46%

Bold, Confident

17%

Shy, Sweet

5%

Poll ended Jan 20, 2025 · 41 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[January 19](#)

I've continued work on the demo, and for a change, the scene I've been rewriting is not one that features the dragon friend (though they are mentioned). It's the part where Mordred and Arthur have a secret meeting on the second night of the tournament.

I've also been working on the Knight tier short story - I'm really excited about this one, being the first from Nimue's POV. The story itself manages to have, in my opinion, both a weirdly wholesome/cozy and slightly ominous vibe to it, lol.

Also, speaking of the short stories, the Dragon Friend <sup>™</sup> has won the poll for the Champion Knight tier one, and I'm eager to write their romantic short story debut!

[Nimue and Merlin go out on an adventure](#)

[January 21](#)

It was a perfect day to go traipsing in the woods so, with her mind and pack alike made up, Nimue went to convince her father of the same. She showed up to his tower study, where he was already nose deep in his weighty tomes of magic, and laid out her arguments with patient confidence. Firstly, she pointed out the mild spring weather. Secondly, she reminded him of the importance of hands-on practice, of picking up plants not only from the neatly organized, well-cared private garden he kept on the castle grounds, but from the wild too; after all, he himself had extolled the virtue of first-hand experience. Thirdly, and lastly, she remarked that it had been too long since they'd done any considerable walking –

and no, the distance from his study to his garden, no matter how steep at times, did not make for enough exercise.

When she was done, her father cracked a small smile. "Well-argued."

It didn't take much more convincing than that. Half an hour later, they were out of the castle's shadow and into the balmy morning air. They walked past the lavish, manicured royal gardens, into the grassy fields that rolled on until they were swallowed by the woods.

The wildflowers that have sprung up all around swayed gently as the hem of her skirt brushed past them, and swathed them in their sweet, heady fragrance. Nimue picked her way carefully, mindful of the bees that buzzed industriously all around, flitting from flower to flower, tiny, twiggy legs laden with pollen.

"The bees are hard at work," she remarked, watching one of the little laborers zoom close by her side.

"Fascinating beings, aren't they?" father said, which he'd know she'd agree with, so she said nothing, merely listened. "Diligently going about their work, without complain, each knowing their role, not needing to be taught, their duties an instinct, like the spells charmed into a training dummy, that breathe that simulacra of life into their limbs. All workers and fighters alike, ready to lay down their lives for the protection of the hive, and its ruler. How any well-run kingdom should be."

Nimue looked up from the bumblebee she was observing, with its fluffy, chunky striped body, all pollen-powdered. "But bees have no choice about it; did you not call it their instinct?"

"Do humans have any choice?"

Her father smiled. It was not the kind, patient smile he turned on Arthur or leveled at some desperate noble from across a card-strewn table, as he prepared to tell them what they needed to hear. No, it was a sharp, almost cruel twist of the mouth, the kind of expression he put on for those that needed a reminder of their place. But its keen point was not aimed at Nimue – it had never been; instead it was an invitation, to take the blade and wield it herself.

The corner of her mouth twitched and she made a little thoughtful hum.

A crackle snagged her attention away. Close by, emerging from beneath the shade of a lonely tree, jutting too far out of the forest's line to have any company, was a crow, sheened black wings slick in the sunlight. More perched on the branches above.

"Here they are," her father brightly intoned, "I think they've been waiting for you."

Nimue carefully approached. She couldn't help it, the way her wry smile dug into her cheek as she watched the little critters – cocking their heads to turn those beady, curious eyes on her, hopping on their tiny legs, getting closer but never too much. She slipped her hand through the slit in her skirt, into the pocket tied around over her stays and produced a fistful of walnuts. She split it between her and her

father then, moving still honey-dripping slow, she knelt and placed the offering on the ground and backed away.

The crow that had first made itself known hopped closer, head tilting this and that way as it studied the offerings before, diving beak first and fast, it grabbed one of the nuts and scampered away, making that hoarse-throat, cackle-like noise.

Nimue knew it was merely that human urge within her – so infinitely creative, yet so immensely deceitful – to ascribe more meaning than warranted. She indulged herself and fancied that the bird's crowing was joyful thanks; or perhaps smug laughter as it took off with what it mistook for bounty, oh so conveniently dropped by Nimue.

"You'll have become friends in no time," her father remarked.

There, touching his features, was an expression that while not entirely foreign to his face, neither was it all that common – wistfulness. Her father was not a man who dwindled on the past more than was necessary – there was the present to seize, the future to unveil. And the way the expression sat on his face now was different than how it did when others were around; less dramatic in that compelling way that a poet translates their sadness to the page but rawer, like an old wound.

It was him who first ever facilitated this budding friendship, when he noticed her fascinated, unflinching attention turned on the crows. *Awfully clever creatures*, he'd said. *I'd made friends with some myself.*

He used to do the same when he was her age, forging friendships with the crows and ravens in his family's garden by bringing them regular tasty offerings. In return, they gave gifts of their own; little trinkets, more often than not spirited away from his own house, sometimes of worth, sometimes not, but always well-received by him. The birds would not flee when he approached – they'd even come to perch on his proffered arm, and let him stroke their sleek feathers, when they so fancied.

The trinkets were now in a chest in the attic of his parents' old mansion, along with all his childhood toys. Time moved on, and as her father left the coop to nest in the heart of the Court; the crows were exchanged for courtiers and the trinkets for far more valuable favors.

They didn't loiter much; this was merely a respite, the trip only now about to begin in earnest. They left the crows to their feast and headed off, letting the woods swallow them up.

There was no one else in sight, but the forest was far from desolate. It teemed with life all around them, even more than the court itself – little mice and blackbirds scurrying through the underbrush, cuckoos and ravens weighing down the branches above.

They were still walking when it happened. Reality split and doubled; superimposed over the current moment was the memory of something that was yet to come. For a couple heartbeats, the latter came into sharp focus, blurring the former. She was walking down the same path, but this time her footsteps were her only company; the woods had shrunk down around her and her body felt both familiar and new.

She blinked, and the world snapped back into place, her ambling stride never broken.

They diverged from the man-made path in search of anything of potion-making and ritual interest: mushrooms and lichen growing in the damp shades of trees, leaves to cut off, flowers and fruit to pick. They made their way, hands gloved in leather and blades at the ready, wicker baskets slowly filling up. They'd talk at times – her father querying her on a plant's properties and uses, and she'd answer with ease, and patch up her lack of knowledge with confidence. Other times they worked in silence, letting the sounds of nature wash over them.

By the time they stopped in a meadow and laid down their blanket on a patch free of wildflowers, the sun was already high in the sky. Nimue could not be persuaded to sit down more than it took eating and before long, she was toeing along the meadow's edge, studying the undergrowth for something to catch her eye.

"A-ha," she hummed victoriously, and slipped a leather glove over her fingers.

Soft footfalls came up behind her as she crouched and traced her hand along the leaf of the plant – which barely rose to her knee. "What have we got there?"

"Jagged blade," she promptly replied. The leaves were each split into five jagged, thin tongues, sharp enough to cut through skin and let slip in its boiling-painful poison.

"It's magical," Nimue went on. "Faintly so."

"Indeed," her father said.

She looked up, past the shock of jagged blade. The woods sprawled on and on, the crevices in the foliage showing only more of the same scenery, more trees and bush extending endlessly beneath a ceaseless sky. "If we went in deeper," she said, "we could find more magical plants, and more potent."

"We could," Merlin conceded, patiently, "but the sun is getting lower and we'd have a long way to return."

"We could camp out."

"We have no supplies."

Her tone, calm and steadfast, mirrored his. "You've taught me to always be resourceful. Be it at court, or in the middle of the woods."

At this, Merlin chuckled, and a small smile broke through her serious expression. "Yes, well, that is true. I'm sure we could easily arrange for you, Gawain and Galahad to have a couple nights camping out; after all, their fathers would be far more suited to give you a lesson in survival in the wild."

Here he was, demonstrating yet another skill he'd preached to her: the art of making up excuses.

Nimue knew she'd get nowhere, even if she tried to press the matter. Still, she could give it a little prod, just for fun. "Are you only saying no because you're afraid of getting lost, father? Mother told me about that time you met – how you would have wandered lost for hours, if it weren't for her."

"She said that, didn't she?"

"She said you dressed up far too excessively fancy for a woodsy expedition, too." She eyed his velvet cape and lacquered leather boots pointedly.

"No reason one can't chose an outfit that's both aesthetically-pleasing and *practical*, too," he said, putting emphasis on the word as if that alone might be enough to make the fact true. "You never know who you could meet."

"Like my mother?"

"Like your mother."

They were almost out of the woods when she heard the chirping. It came from close by, yet it wasn't until she combed through the bushes that she saw the source of it: a blackbird, she figured, and a very young one at that. Its brown plumage still retained the particular fluffiness of a fledgling, its proportions not quite balanced yet. It neither took flight or scurried off when Nimue reached out a hand, tentatively, squirming only as it lay in a pathetic little heap of ruffled feathers, chirps plaintive. She took a look at its body, prodding gingerly with her index. One of the wings hung limply, and a leg bent in the wrong direction underneath it.

"Poor thing," Merlin gently said, leaning down to look over her shoulder. "Broken wing, broken leg...it has no chance to survive. Sooner or later, once we leave, a hungry creature will find its way to it. Such is the way of nature." His voice was sympathetic, but it was empty commiseration, not an offer of aid.

"Unless we do something." She didn't wait for an answer as she reached for her water flask, wet her fingers and traced them carefully over the affected bits, murmuring a prayer under her breath, corralling her thoughts into order.

She whispered reassurances to the fledgling, even though she knew it was pure gibberish to it.

"Yes," her father said, tone more thoughtful now, as he watched her lay the bird down in the basket, atop a bed of herbs and flowers. "Sometimes, it is within our hands."

Nimue didn't glance up, her eyes still trained on the little, chirping bundle. It had been an easy choice this time.

As for the future, that was yet to come.

## [Second short story poll - Mordred Edition™](#)

### [January 22](#)

The fierce, abrasive dragon friend won. Time to vote on Mordred's personality.

A sweet, patient Mordred

59%

A playful, energetic Mordred

17%

A Mordred as fierce as the dragon friend

24%

Poll ended Jan 24, 2025 · 46 votes total

### [Weekly developer's blog](#)

### [January 27](#)

Hi folks! This last week, I've been working on the demo some more, focusing especially on editing what I've written for this upcoming update. I've also recorded some more drafts for upcoming scenes featuring the dragon friend.

I'm also in the process of writing the second short story - for Champion Knight tier and up - which features the Dragon Friend™, Fierce Edition®, and a sweet Mordred. It's set from the dragon friend's POV, since we really haven't seen their perspective yet, and I think it's quite lovely, if I can say so myself! I'm excited to share it with you when it's done.

### [The Summer Solstice with Mordred](#)

### [January 29](#)

The Lothian Court was celebrating the Summer Solstice the draconic way.

They'd taken off to the mountains - nestled at the very heart of the Duchy, within draconic territory - the dragons by wing and humans by carriage. They all congregated at the peak of the mountain; not the highest in the land, but by far one of the most spectacular, and most suited for celebrations, with its sprawling plateau and mellow rolling hills all around. They dotted the grassy expanse with lavish, green-dyed tents and rows upon rows of stalls, for food and entertainment.

Morgana, who had spearheaded the organization as she always did, had arranged for Mordred and \$dragon\_name to share one of those fancy, lavish tents. They were well-accustomed to sharing sleeping quarters; many times had Mordred slipped out of the castle to join \$dragon\_name in their own lodge chamber, where they fell asleep curled into one another, \$dragon\_name's tail draped over their abdomen, Mordred's head tucked beneath their chin. Last night was no different.

Well, it was a *little* different. Everything has been a little different lately.

They readied themselves for the day's festivities, side by side: \$dragon\_name helping Mordred decide between garments, Mordred painting the dragon's face in turn. They drew the sharp, metallic lines on their face - around the eyes, along the brows, down the snout - with a gentle hand. When they were done, Mordred put down the brush and stepped back, tilted their head as they studied \$dragon\_name. Then, with that sweet smile of theirs that never failed to brighten their day, they said: "You look amazing."

\$dragon\_name said nothing. They knew they should reply the way they usually would: give a cheeky grin and jokingly say, "You're just complimenting your own great paint work, aren't you?" to which Mordred would give that joyful little chuckle of theirs.

But this time, they were quiet. Thinking. They've been thinking a lot lately, about a certain thing in particular. Thinking as they laid curled together after training, thinking even more intensely as Mordred's steady breathing lulled them to sleep last night, as their gentle stirring woke them up in the morning, as Mordred stretched next to them like a cat, a small content smile on their face.

They'd been securing away the feelings they nurtured. \$dragon\_name couldn't tell exactly when they had appeared; sometimes it seemed like they had already been there. They didn't so much spring up as slowly blossomed, gradually unfolding, naturally growing, so easily that they hadn't even noticed it at first. It was both so new and familiar; an extension of the affection they already felt for Mordred. Not quite transformed, yet not quite the same either.

It was thrilling and comforting, and though they were reluctant to admit it, a bit terrifying too.

And so they hid it. They pushed it deeper every time it threatened to cross over the connection and reach Mordred, for the last thing \$dragon\_name wanted was to hurt Mordred. If their feelings were not reciprocated, they loathed to burden Mordred with the knowledge of them; if they were not



reciprocated...they'd be fine, in time, they'd heal but their friendship would still be there, because nothing could break it. But Mordred might feel bad; Mordred might hurt, or feel *them* hurt, and suffer all the more for it. \$dragon\_name couldn't bear that. The best way they knew of dealing with it - that helplessness, that hurt - was by turning it to anger, directed with a burning vengeance at the person who had inflicted the pain. And they'd only have themselves to blame.

But what if Mordred felt the same, was the question that had been circling them lately. The question was in hot pursuit of their peace of mind, snapping its vicious teeth at their feet, taunting them to just turn around and face it. They'd been running for far too long from the answer.

And \$dragon\_name was no coward.

And so, as Mordred turned towards the vanity to put the brush and the paints back in their case, \$dragon\_name slinked closer, and took a hammer to the dam they'd built inside their mind. It fissured, letting trickle through those well-guarded feelings - all the way to Mordred.

"You look pretty good yourself," \$dragon\_name said.

Mordred's face in the mirror was suddenly suffused with surprise. Slowly, they raised their head, and met their friend's gaze in the reflection. A smile curled their lips.

Before they could say anything, though, a tail-thump came outside their tent. "Are you ready, little ones?" Sera called out. "The opening ceremony is starting shortly."

This was the least exciting part of the day. Fortunately, it wasn't to last long. The Ducal family took their places atop the peak, surrounded by the dragons in the Council, and their families. Morgana gave the speech, as she and Cora decided early on in the preparations; Duke Lot stood stiffly next to her, face as sour as ever.

"*Look at him,*" \$dragon\_name said, projecting the image of him into Mordred's mind, from where they had a better vantage point. "*Doesn't look very festive, does he? I say someone should wrap a garland around him if he's so intent on standing like a pillar. At least it'd hide that sullen face of his.*"

Mordred's cheek twitched, and \$dragon\_name could tell they were biting it from within, to keep their smile at bay.

Once the ceremony was done, they were free to roam around and do whatever they wanted.

"We should make ourselves some flower crowns," Mordred said. "Get in the festive mood."

"Unlike Lot."

Mordred chuckled. "Unlike Lot. Come! I don't want to think of him any longer."

They gathered the needed materials and sat down on the grass, surrounded by others hard at work on their own crafts. Mordred's own fingers weaved the flowers with nimble ease, and they hummed under their breath as they did.

\$dragon\_name, on the other hand, was struggling with their own flower crown. They wished they could say it was a biological disadvantage - that dragons, unlike humans, were simply not made for this sort of craft, but there were many around them that rebuffed the claim, making nifty use of their claws and teeth and even tails. With each attempt, \$dragon\_name found themselves growing more irritated with their ineptitude and, eventually, called the job done not when it was truly completed, but when their patience ran out.

They lowered their head and pulled the crown over it.

The crown came undone in a rain of colorful petals.

Mordred watched with a sympathetic smile as \$dragon\_name gave a low growl at the limp flowers on the ground, as if that may muster them up in the correct shape, for fear of their anger.

"Here," Mordred said, scooting closer. "Have my flower crown. The colors go wonderfully with your scales." Their palms lingered on the sides of \$dragon\_name's face, sending a wave of thrills all the way to the top of their head, down to the tip of their tail.

It's because of those little shivers that \$dragon\_name realized only after a beat that that warm feeling, by now well at home in their chest, did not nest alone, this time.

By the time Mordred pulled back their hands, the feeling was gone.

"Do you want to check out the games?" they asked.

They strolled between the stalls and the spaces cleared out for all different kinds of games: throwing loops - or spewing fire, though only for the dragons - dice tossing, lifting weights, drinking contests, obstacle courses. They headed first for the latter, and as they readied themselves for the race ahead, \$dragon\_name met Mordred's eye and grinned.

"I won't go easy on you."

Mordred laughed, the sound bright and full. "I didn't expect you to." They nodded once. "Good luck."

\$dragon\_name snorted. "I don't need luck. But thanks."

And \$dragon\_name won, though Mordred smilingly suggested it was truly a tie, and it was only them stretching out their long dragon neck that made them a winner.

They spent the rest of the day flitting from game to game - laying out on the grass or perching on rocks when they got too tired, watching the crowds mill about. It was the longest day of the year, and yet it

seemed to pass too quickly.

As the sun sunk below the horizon, bonfires sprung up all around to stave off the darkness and the cold.

Once the last of the sun's light faded out, its warm colors bled out of the sky, and night sunk deeply all around, the Council of the Dragons stepped up and asked for the crowd's attention.

"It is time!" One of them called out, voice booming throughout the valley. "Extinguish the fires!"

Cheers rose from the people as, one by one, the bonfires were smothered out. As the lights went out, the sky lit up.

"Behold," continued the dragon councilor, reverent joy in every word, "behold the beauty of nature, the stars that guide us - the darkness that envelops us, that suspends us, that both conceals and reveals. Behold that which reigns above us, higher than any leader, than any elder, any monarch."

The sky was dotted with pinpricks of light, some glinting brighter than others; swathes of purple swirled around them, colors powdered the darkness.

Mordred huddled closer to \$dragon\_name and, eyes still locked on the sky, they bent their head to whisper in their ear: "Imagine flying all the way up there...exploring all that lies beyond our grasp."

Foolish, ambitious dragons have tried it before, and they all had gruesome meetings with the earth. Legends - children's tales - insist that a few of them, however, had managed, after all, to fall not out, but *into* the sky. That they reached those vast unknowns, that the stars you see are their glinting scales, suspended in the sprawling darkness of the universe. \$dragon\_name liked those stories. They liked to imagine the feeling of rushing air as they climbed higher and higher, till they broke that invisible ceiling of the planet - before it could break them - spilling out the other side into vast worlds, new and unexplored. Some tales made it out that those suspended, star-glimmering dragons were stranded, all alone, punished for their pertinence against nature; but \$dragon\_name knew they'd have Mordred but their side. Flying off into a new, thrilling adventure, doing what no one else had done before.

It was a lovely fancy to indulge.

This was their moment, \$dragon\_name decided. They had to take a leap of faith now, under the starry sky, when the world around them faded away and the Universe was the only thing engulfing them.

\$dragon\_name opened up their heart. No more half measures, no more shy little fissures. They cracked it in two and let pour out all its contents.

At their side, Mordred stilled. They could hear, in the silence, the sharp breath they drew in, could feel the exhale brush against their snout. For a terrible moment, \$dragon\_name expected that they'd turn away from them, that they'd seal up their heart and rebuke their feelings, force them back where they came from -

But then Mordred shifted. Not away, but into them. They slid their arms around \$dragon\_name's neck and rested their heated cheek against their scales. Then, slowly, they opened up their heart too.

And within, \$dragon\_name found their feelings mirrored. With a sigh, they melted into Mordred's arms.

[Demo update](#)

[January 31](#)

### What's new?

-The first day of the tournament, updated to include the dragons now - including the Dragon Friend™, working by Mordred's side. There's the possibility of meeting Callum early if you spend time with Gawain, and there's also some potential for conflict with your dragon friend if you chose not to approach the boy 🙄.

-The bit between Arthur asking to meet outside to talk in private, up to and including the actual meeting, have been re-worked a bit; there's a bit more description, a change of scenery, and a little choice added there. Overall edit to the prose too.

-There's some small changes in Morgana's POV, too, when confronting Arthur.

Since the update is a short one, I decided I won't change the password this time.

**Link:** <https://lamagirl.itch.io/the-bastard-of-camelot-beta>

**Password:** BetaBoc368

If you find any bugs or typos, have any suggestions or simply wish to leave me feedback, here's a handy dandy Google form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS\\_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRUqz3HZIYkYY-1e3tupPZ3X0Lu6ywgjuka8JQ3GIS_Od7Ng/viewform?usp=sf_link)

[Demo patch](#)

[February 2](#)

I've fixed the bugs people have reported through the forms, as well as added a quick character creation so you can jump straight into chapter 3!

So sorry for the inconvenience and hope you're enjoying the update!

[February short story poll](#)

[February 2](#)

This month we're choosing from friends/family/Lot, who can't claim the first and the only thing making him the second one is a piece of paper.

Since Morgana won last time, she'll be taken off the poll.

Lot

13%

Arthur

10%

Gareth

58%

Accolon

20%

Poll ended Feb 5, 2025 · 40 votes total

[February short story poll](#)

[February 7](#)

Gareth won! To shake things up this poll, I thought instead of defaulting to the close relationship, I'd let you choose the dynamic between him and Mordred!

The two of them are close

87%

The two of them are friendly but not close

8%

The two of them are distant but not hostile

0%

The two of them are mutually hostile

5%

Poll ended Feb 9, 2025 · 38 votes total

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[February 7](#)

Hi folks! So, I'm working on the next scenes to be added and edited featuring the Dragon Friend. This week, I've finished the part of chapter 3 in which Lancelot duels Accolon; not only is the Dragon Friend now present in the scene, but I've also added an extra reaction choice for Mordred.

Now I'm focused on writing the Knight tier short story, which will be from Galahad's POV, and set right after chapter 3, specifically on the route in which Mordred has been trying to befriend him (and gave him the little rock gift).

Hope you have a great weekend!

[Llama's devlog](#)

[February 8](#)

Hi folks! I decided to start making at least one monthly developer's blog for all followers, whether they are subscribed or not, to let people know what I'm planning for the month, and where the demo is in term of progress.

For the past few months, I've been focusing on adding content the existing chapters, taking a pause from continuing chapter 5. The major change done is that the one-personality-trait choice that defined Mordred's dragon friend has been turned into a system of four archetypes, which have allowed me to better flesh out the character.

I've been working on editing the existing scenes with them to reflect the changes, as well as extending those scenes, and adding altogether new content which I'm very happy about. They are also a romance option now!

I'm working my way through chapter 3 now; I've made changes up to the secret meeting between Mordred and Arthur, and the subsequent confrontation between him and Morgana, in her POV. The dragon friend related changes aren't the only ones I've made: I have also sprinkled in some more dragon lore, and the dragons themselves are overall more present. There's also just general portions where I've upgraded the prose, or even added new tidbits. And we now have a quick character creator to jump directly into chapter 3.

This is all added in the private beta of the demo, available to all tiers on Patreon.

As for the Patreon extra content I'm working on this month, we have:

-Knight tier: A short story from Galahad's perspective; set soon after chapter 3 on the route in which Mordred has been trying to befriend him. The young squire, now returned to Camelot, is grappling with his doubts and trying to squash them down.

-Champion Knight tier: This month, Patreons have voted for a short story featuring Mordred and Gareth! The polls that will define their relationship is still ongoing - there's about twenty hours left! - and soon after I'll be posting the poll to choose Mordred's personality.

That is all for now! ❤️

[Second short story poll](#)

[February 11](#)

Close Mordred and Gareth it is for this month! Time to vote on Mordred!

A sweet, patient Mordred

44%

A playful, energetic Mordred

33%

A fierce Mordred who doesn't mince words

23%

Poll ended Feb 14, 2025 · 48 votes total

[Galahad's reflections](#)

[February 12](#)

The little rock weighed little in the palm of his hand, but sat like a boulder on his mind.

He'd slipped it in his pocket when Mordred gave it to him and kept it there all day - dragging along the thoughts it stirred. Turned it between his fingers when Gawain was away, put it at the bottom of his trunk when he returned, hoping he'd forget about it. He could have tossed it away. Instead he carried it back to Camelot, placed it in the wooden box he kept the shells he didn't display on his shelves, buried the box at the back of his drawer.

Out of sight. Yet still on his mind, even almost one week since they returned.

He'd arranged to meet with Nimue, to go traipsing in the woods and practice their water magic by the nearby stream. She'd instructed him to wait for her in her father's study, all the way at the top of the Royal Sorcerer's tower.

The winding stairs both left him too much time to think and disappeared too quickly under his feet. Before he knew it, he stood before the imposing door, posed to knock - wanting to find Nimue on the other side, satchel strapped over her shoulder, yet wishing she were still in her chambers, only now slipping out of bed.

The door opened to reveal Merlin and his kind, warm smile. Guilt clawed at his chest.

"I assume you're looking for Nimue? She's not here yet, but I shall gladly keep you company. Would you like a cup of tea while you wait? It's just finished steeping."



Galahad nodded and smiled and politely went to take a seat at the table Merlin pointed him to; he nursed his steaming cup in silence, deliberating with himself - with the guilty side of him wanting nothing more but to gut himself open, let his faithless thoughts spill all out, and the shameful side of him wishing to bury the evidence of his disappointing faltering.

"How did you find the tournament?" Merlin asked. "I heard what happened to your father, and I am glad for his speedy recovery. Poison has always been a favorite of Lady Morgana's."

Galahad's fingers clenched then relaxed on the cup handle. "The tournament was an interesting experience," he carefully said. "Exciting." It had been. Watching the trials - especially at Gawain's and Aria's side, who whooped and gasped at every development and provided almost constant commentary - was fun. But he wasn't there simply for the entertainment value, so he hastily added, "And also instructional."

Merlin chuckled. "Indeed, a little lesson in what knights do to indulge themselves."

Galahad allowed himself a small smile.

"What did you think of Lothia?"

Forests as far as the eye could see, and rolling hills bordering the town. Galahad wished he and Callum had had time for more exploration. "It was lovely."

The man made a little hum of acknowledgement. "Very lovely indeed. Lord Lot has always been quite proud of it." There was a pause, a beat that went on for too long. "And you met Mordred."

This was the question he both had waited for and dreaded.

Galahad, in the process of bringing the cup to his lips, stopped. He pondered drinking, to buy himself time, to gather his thoughts, to make up his mind; he wanted to talk, but he wondered, if he were to begin, if he could pour out every last drop, even if it shamed him.

Mordred, with their relentless, infuriating friendliness and their penchant for giving river rocks as tokens of peace. Mordred, with the potential to destroy everything Galahad loved and stood for.

His father had called it his privilege and duty to know, so he may better be prepared, so he knew for what he whet his sword and mind alike; his burden to carry too, for the future could turn out truly disastrous, if he failed to meet it ready and unwavering.

And so how could he tell Merlin he had already faltered, so quick, so early?

Galahad put down his cup without drinking. His mouth felt dry. "Yes."

"What did you think of them?"

There he went - blade to the skin, let it all come out, blood and entrails. "They weren't just nice to me - which I already found suspicious, but they tried to befriend me, went out of their way in their attempts to do it. No doubt put up to it by Lady Morgana."

He had not, after all, let it all out. Doubt still festered inside, no matter how he had tried to convince himself with the last remark.

That bright, friendly smile that prevailed against Galahad's frown. That little rock, a snug fit for his palm, buried in the box, hidden in the drawer. Those simple words, *I want to be friends* that, no matter how much echoed again and again in his head, seemed to ring genuine. The dented armor and bloody face of Sir Accolon, Mordred's pained expression, Galahad's clenching entrails.

He wished he could wipe all those images away.

Merlin let out a wistful sigh - the sigh of a man far more accustomed to such cruelties of life, and immeasurably more at peace with them than Galahad.

"Yes, it could very well be Lady Morgana's doing - she is not above such tactics, and teaching her child to assume these artful ways of hers. Whether the child is fully aware of it yet or not."

It would be so much easier if Galahad could fully believe it to be an act of deceit. He did not say that to Lord Merlin, for if Mordred was truly playing just an act, he'd be the fool to fall for it, and then what hope would the sorcerer - the King - the whole of Camelot - have for the future?

"Who knows - if Mordred is happily playing along the act of deceit and charm as their mother did, or if they're truly ignorant for now, guided along by her to forge a friendship, for your favour could be useful to them in the future." Merlin smiled, the expression gentle. "It's entirely in your power to avoid that."

The insinuation of failure reached its claw straight into his chest. "That won't happen," he said. "I won't let Mordred take advantage of me."

Merlin smiled, the expression gentle. "Of course not. I have faith in you, Galahad."

The conversation was severed there - quick and clean - by the sudden opening of the door.

Nimue stood at the threshold, waiting. "Are you ready?"

\*\*\*

They'd spoken little as they set off together, and only stopped for Nimue to leave an offering of nuts for her corvid friends; now that they were away from the castle, into the arms of the woods, the girl sliced through the silence with an ease Galahad could not find within himself.

"I'd ask if you had a pleasant chat with my father, but you looked positively distressed."

"He asked me about Lothia."

“Oh? And was it so dreary as to warrant that expression?”

She had her flask of water unstopped, shaping the liquid into a sinuous column, playing with it as if it were a toy: swinging the water through the air like a whip, watching it ripple like a ribbon, wound and unwound again and again, before sending it rushing back into the flask and starting all over again. Her fingers moved with a familiar, almost distracted ease and nimbleness that Galahad both admired and envied.

“He wanted to know what I thought of Mordred.”

Her voice did not lose that easy, smooth intonation. “I see.” The two words were spoken lightly, too light for the subject matter Galahad was dragging along after him.

“You knew them when they were little. What were they like then?”

“You asked me this before. Many times, including right before you left for the tournament.”

His mouth pressed in a tight line. “Humour me.”

“What do you want to know, Galahad? If they showed any tell-tale signs of the prophecy? If they were evil all along, even as a babbling babe? They were a child like any other. They picked seashells and showed me pictures from their storybooks and wanted to hear all I know about sea critters.” The corner of her mouth twitched. “What, do you wonder if they used to build a castle out of their wooden blocks, called it Camelot and went about stomping on it with their wicked little feet?”

He frowned at Nimue. “This is serious.”

Her smile faded, but the glint in her eyes didn't. “It's quite tragic, isn't it?” Her tone suggested less sadness and more pensiveness; a voyeuristic sort of interest.

Galahad squared his shoulders. “But it cannot be helped.” He said it with all the conviction he could muster. *It's resolve, not defeat.*

Nimue snorted, and Galahad snapped his head in her direction, a question already forming on his lips. It got forgotten in a sharp exhale as the girl vanished from his side in a whirl of green linen skirts and posted herself before him. He stopped sharply, honed instincts alone keeping him from stumbling into her.

Nimue put her hands on his shoulders and squeezed them ever so slightly.

“Galahad, you think too much of the future. Mordred's not a villain, and you are not a hero. Yet.”

“What do you mean to say?”

*That you'll never be the hero Camelot needs you to become.*

"That you must stay in the present, too. Otherwise, you won't know what'll hit you."

A wise piece of advice that hit him squarely in the face. Effective immediately, dripping wet down his cheek, into the neck of his tunic.

She snickered as he dabbed at his face with his sleeves and fumbled for his own flask of water.

The fallen leaves rustled with a bone-dry crinkle as he firmly planted his feet on the ground and raised his arm.

Training - playing, lashing at each other with nails of water like clashing kittens - had begun in earnest.

There was no more space left for thinking at the moment.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[February 15](#)

Hi folks! Having finished the Knight Tier short story, I turned my attention back to the demo, currently working on the scene where Mordred tells The Dragon Friend™ about the prophecy.

Afterwards, I plan on adding a new POV from Galahad right after confronting Mordred right after Accolon and Lancelot's duel. This scene was actually the poll winner for a Royal Sorcerer Tier minigame, and the idea of adding his perspective to the main game has stuck with me since.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[February 23](#)

Hi folks! Unfortunately, the past week I haven't been able to work on the demo as much as I would have wanted, but I still managed to do some progress; scoliosis and my elbow have been giving me some trouble, and I took a bit of time to rest.

This coming week I'll be turning my attention to the Champion Knight tier story and finishing editing the demo for an update. To be able to finish all I'd like to for the demo, I may post the update at the beginning of March rather than the end of this month - but I won't be changing the password, so as long as you know it, you will be able to access the update.

Also regarding March, I've decided to take the month off and pause billing for its duration. I'll be visiting family and catching up on some doctor appointments, so I thought I might as well take a break. I still want to get some writing done though - in hopes of a longer update for April!

Hope you had a lovely weekend!

### [Patreon Announcement](#)

### [February 23](#)

I've decided to take the month of March off, so I'll be pausing billing for its duration. I'll be visiting family and catching up on some doctor appointments, so I thought I might as well take a break. I still want to get some writing done though - in hopes of a longer update for April!

### [Gareth plays with Mordred](#)

### [February 27](#)

Gareth had no idea what to expect of his little sibling, but mystery only made anticipation sweeter. He'd been waiting for years to meet this long-lost sibling of his, a facet of his life that seemed cut out of some more exciting story than his usual day-to-day life - though calling them lost was not quite accurate. Gareth knew exactly where Mordred was, tucked away to Avalon, along with the mother he longed to see again, after so many months apart.

And once she arrived with Mordred, there'd be no more of agonizing waits, soothed only by the constant stream of her letters. Before Gareth could read, they arrived committed to stones through magic, the way dragons preferred to send their letters; he liked this method greatly, for it allowed him to hear her soothing, mellow voice. Once he learned his letters, with an eagerness far stronger than any of his peers, he'd started receiving written notes too.

Mother wished for him and Mordred to get along, so Gareth was going to try his best; father wanted him nowhere near his sibling, but then father didn't want him seeing his mother either. Gareth tried not to listen too closely to what he had to say, lest it upset him.

Their first meeting came, and went by excellently. Mother was over the moon. Father, not so much. Gareth knew he'd attempted to keep Mordred away, but most of his plans failed. Soon after mother's

return to Lothia - this time, for good - she'd gotten rid of Gareth's old nanny. He barely felt her absence. She'd already been a fairly quiet woman, content to read or embroider while she left Gareth to his devices. In her place came a nanny who nodded deferently at mother and never spoke a word against her; she dutifully retreated when Morgana wanted to spend time with him and never went tattle-telling on father about it. She was a far better story-teller than his old nanny had ever been, too.

But ever since mother returned, he was spending less and less time with his nanny anyway, and more and more with her. With her, and Mordred as well. Despite all his father's complaints, they'd spent hours playing in the nursery, walking down the castle halls, lounging on the castle grounds. Mordred was content playing whatever Gareth wanted. They listened raptly to him ranting about all his different board games and all the stories he'd read; in turn, Gareth patiently walked Mordred through the rules of the games they played, and always let them choose their preferred figurines and toys first.

It was on a mild, sunny day that mother decided to take them beyond their well-trodden playing grounds, into the woods, all the way to the spot by the river where she took Mordred for their magic lessons. They only made it a couple steps onto the forest path before a castle guard turned them around.

Mother marched them all the way to father's chambers, where she let them wait in the hall while she *solved the matter*. Gareth put his ear to the door to listen in - Mordred did so too, tentatively - but they'd moved too far into the room; all he could make out was a constant angry susurrus pouring from his mother.

Once she was out, they resumed their outing into the woods.

Gareth had never ventured far into the forest himself, not without the company of a large crowd of courtiers. He'd only toed by the tree line, reading in the shade, playing with peers. It was always charming, traipsing through the woods, when hearing about it in stories. But he was less the plucky adventurer and more the apprehensive explorer; any little noise made him think of the clawed, fanged fiends that may pounce on him. He had no worries though with his mother at his side.

Mordred was well at ease in the woods, perhaps even more than at court.

They settled by the river, where mother got to drawing while Gareth surveyed the games he'd brought with him. He hesitated.

"Why don't we play something you used to play in Avalon?" he suggested.

Mordred scrunched up their face in thought and tilted their head, letting their gaze roam about. Finally, their eyes lit up as they looked at the flowing water.

"I used to pick rocks and shells on the beach. It's just rocks here though..."

Gareth had never been to Avalon, but he'd been to the beach a couple times, and had a little box of seashells sent over from the island by his mother, before she came back to Lothia for good.

"We can still try to see what he can find," Gareth said.

And so they got to work, with Gareth sitting on the dry bank and Mordred waddling in the shallows, bare feet and trousers rolled up. His sibling would use their magic to part the water, ever so slightly, so that Gareth could better reach for the pebbles. After a while, they sat back on the river side and studied their loot.

It was all different shades of gray pebbles, smoothed by the coursing water.

"It's not all that exciting," Mordred said, turning a little rock between their fingers. "But they're pretty, in their own way."

"Well, that only means we should do this again, when we finally go to the beach together."

Mordred nodded, smiling. "And go swimming and looking for fish. We might even find some crabs."

"Crabs, huh?" Sometime during their conversation, mother had put down her sketchbook and drawn close with a sweet smile on her face.

She sat down between them. "Just take care with the crabs - or they may pinch you!" And with that word of warning, she swooped down on Gareth with a tickling attack to his sides.

He went down in a fit of giggles, still squirming on the ground as she moved on to her second victim, Mordred's laughter joining his.

[Weekly developer's blog](#)

[5 days ago](#)

Hi folks, I'm back!

As you've probably noticed, I've decided to not update the demo at the beginning of March as I had initially intended - instead thinking best to wait till April, to gather more content. So expect to get an update later this month.

Now, to tell you about what I've been working on: after writing the new scene in which Mordred tells the Dragon Friend™ all about the prophecy, I moved on to working on a Galahad POV. I've also been working on changing certain bits of Morgana's POV in her study, following her conversation with Mordred, as well as rewriting the little outing with Gawain during the feast night, where he plays the lute for Mordred.

My plan right now is to finish all the edits and rewrites on chapter 3 and, instead of jumping directly into the chapter 4 changes, I'll return to chapter 5 (because, as much as I enjoy writing the Dragon Friend™ scenes, I'm also excited to revisit the party by the river in that chapter!)

Hope you have a great week!

[April short story\\_poll](#)

[3 days ago](#)

Time to vote on the RO to be featured in the second short story of the month!

Galahad

Nimue

Gawain

Elaine

Isac

Sofie

Agravain

The Dragon Friend

44 votes total · 7 hours left

[Sneak peek](#)

[19 hours ago](#)

\$dragon\_name stays stock-still as their mind buzzes - going at speeds no mechanical contraption could take before splintering off. It spins and spins, going through the horrible implications, the dread they stir, then settling into something you wouldn't call calm, or reassurance, but a crisis averted nonetheless.



*"So this is all Merlin's word, isn't it? Why should we trust the man? Your mother calls him a liar and a pretender; he clearly hates the both of you, so I don't see him above twisting and bending whatever he truly saw - whatever that may be, if he even saw anything - into a story that'll make you out to be a villain. How convenient for him."* The more they talk in your mind, the firmer their conviction grows, the clearer their mind becomes. "I don't trust this prophecy," they say outloud, to speak power into the words, let them fill the space between you, hang in the heavy air.