

Password Protected QnA's by Thomas Bell

Protected: November 2024 – Questions & Answers (Extended)



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

As suggested by the Greater Circle and voted on by the Greater/Lesser Circle tiers — it's the November Question & Answer session coming in at an even more whopping 2600+ words.

Half the seats are left empty, which includes a certain sombrero-wearing scarecrow on a certain sombrero-wearing rocking horse. The middle chairs are filled by Merlin, Arthur, Adrian, and Lorelei, who is looking a little wet considering she's seated in the shadow of the towering pillar of water that is Vivian.

Lorelei: **looking distinctly disgruntled, although not at the mari-morgan who's currently half-soaking her. For once, she's not wearing her gas mask but is instead staring coldly off-stage while muttering about 'thieves' under her breath**

Broderick: **offstage, coughs, sounding rather muffled as if he were wearing a thick mask**

Merlin: **teasingly** Went back to your original seating, did you, Adrian?

Adrian: **sloooowly slumping down on his chair on the other side of Arthur** That's the seating arrangement, I told you!

Arthur: Merlin, must you tease the poor boy immediately upon sharing the stage with him?

Merlin: I must. I might die of boredom if I did not. And then where would the world be, hmmm~?

Vivian: **the pillar of water shifts like a surging fountain** Who is the supposed mentor and who is the destined child in this affair, one wonders?

Arthur: **sitting onstage, smiling and unruffled, like an underpaid babysitter**

Adrian: **sneaking peeks at the king at his side again**

All right, first question of the session. To the underpaid babysitter of Camelot on stage...

Everyone: **blinks in confusion**

That is, to Arthur, the One and Future King... which person or reincarnation of the Round Table are you least looking forward to meeting again?

Arthur: **leans forward, briefly resting his folded hands against his forehead** Oh... what answer to that? I had so many enemies back then.

Merlin: Oh, tis an understatement, if ever I've heard one!

Arthur: **dryly** Aye, thank you, Merlin.

Lorelei: **even dryer, looking to the side and most certainly not at Arthur** Yes, I can only imagine the hypocrites and duplicitous fools that infected your royal court.

Adrian: **still slinking down in his seat**

Arthur: But you said someone who was explicitly a member of my Round Table, did you not? In that case... Mordred. The ambiguity of someone who is both loved and hated, trusted and betrayed, is far more painful than someone who was an enemy from the very beginning.

Lorelei: **now casting a sideways look at Arthur**

Adrian: **now looking away completely**

Merlin: **reaches over and soothingly ruffles the king's hair**

Arthur: Although I suppose if we met again, then perhaps I would finally learn the reason *why*. He would never say, back then, not until the very end.

Percy: **offstage** Sus.

And that leads us straight to a somewhat related question. Adrian... so, is it Mordred or is it Guinevere? Is Arthur your father, or is he your "daddy"?

Broderick: **offstage, still sounding muffled** HA!

Adrian: **freezes in the midst of nearly slumping his way out of his seat and onto the floor** WHAT?

Merlin: **bursts into a fit of cackling**

Arthur: **is now looking towards Adrian in consideration... and also burgeoning confusion**

Merlin: **leans over and starts whispering an explanation of twenty-first century slang to the fifth-century king**

Lorelei: **sighs** And here comes the inevitable soap opera.

Answer the question, Adrian. The audience really wants to know... they kept sending it in for months at a time!

Adrian: **looking like he now greatly regrets the return to his previous seating arrangement**

Arthur: **is very much looking at Adrian now after Merlin's explanation of the meaning behind the question**

Adrian...

Merlin: Yes, do go on, Adrian.

Cassandra: **offstage** Indeed. **scratching sounds are heard**

Adrian: **through gritted teeth** I. Choose. Guinevere.

Merlin: You choose Guinevere to do *what*? Alas, my dear boy, I fear Arthur is not inclined to save you this time.

Arthur:

Adrian: I worded my answer as clearly as the question was asked!

Arthur: **leaning forward, muscles coiled like a panther about to pounce** Adrian, about a certain oubliette in your mind...?

Adrian: **calling over his shoulder towards the still-gushing fountain of water** Vivian, drown me. **Right now.**

Vivian: **sounds of gurgling water begins to grow thunderous** Ah... if you *insist*, if that is your *wish*...

Gwen: **flustering offstage** This is still part of the show, right? I mean, she's not really—?!

Merlin: Let it be known that request is non-canon. No going after him in the true world, Vivian, unless he repeats such flabbergastery out there.

Vivian, no. No murders, self-inflicted or otherwise, on the public stage. Instead, answer this question — Vivian, what exactly did Merlin do in his “pursuit of freedom” that led him to be imprisoned by you?

Lorelei: **sitting there, looking even more soaked than before after that last kerfuffle, eyes beginning to narrow into murderous slits as droplets slide down her face and pale golden hair**

Vivian: What did they do? Nothing. Tis what they could have done. A pattern that repeats unto infinity.

Theirs is a nature to set forth a plan that spans eons, multiple planes of existence, and reincarnations beyond counting, along with the rise and fall of many human empires and all their manipulations for the supposed *greater good*, all to grasp the fate of the world upon the apocalypse... and then cast it all aside in a fit of whimsy.

Oh, that pawn does not wish it and briefly outwitted me? Oh, that favored one who needs to die to save all the others desires to live instead? Oh, there's a tingle in my toe today? Then forget all of it! All the planning, all the plotting, thousands upon thousands of years, let us merrily go to our doom instead *tra la la la la~*

Everyone save Merlin begins clutching their ears as the fae's laughter spirals higher and higher. Several shrieks resound offstage amidst the sound of shattering glass. The platform grows slightly dimmer as a few stage lights burst in a flurry of sparks

Broderick: **offstage, still muffled** Holy shit!

Merlin: What can I say? Tis my nature.

Cassandra: : **offstage** Oh for the love of—

Percy: **offstage** Sus.

Vivian: We are well aware, Merlin! And the mortals are wont to declaim the fae as *capricious*!

Merlin: I prefer to say that I remain flexible, adaptive, and vivacious. All hail free w—

Vivian: **the fountain has become a thunderous waterfall that may or may not be trying to flood the stage**

Arthur: **simply sitting there with his hand over his face** Merlin, I beg thee, cease goading her.

Adrian: . . . I-I'm not even sure who I should be rooting for here in this case.

Interesting. And speaking of Merlin and Vivian, here's another question to them both and the High King of Camelot as well. To Merlin, Arthur, and Vivian... say I wanted to have an equivalent of a nuke; what reincarnation should I hope to be?

Merlin & Arthur: **chorusing as one** Galahad.

Vivian: Oh? Of those incarnations still potentially available, I would say tis Oriel the Red.

Merlin: Oh dear negligent gods in heaven, you watery tart, you say I must be sealed away for the sake of the world, and then you go and suggest something like that?!

Vivian: Do thine nonexistent ears need be cleansed, Merlin? I never said twas a *good* thing.

Lorelei: **side-eyeing the bickering pair** ...dare I ask? Who's Oriel?

Merlin: Ah, I see someone failed to read my very detailed, helpful, and extremely informative guide to Arthurian lore that I sent them upon their joining our crew, didn't they?

Lorelei: That thing is literally 366 pages printed! Of course, I didn't read it... that's enough for every single day in a leap year!

Adrian: **sunken so deep in his seat he's nearly on the floor** It really, really is.

Merlin: Yet I see you had time to check its exact length.

Lorelei: **simply **staring** at Merlin, hair plastered to her face, as Vivian's tinkling laughter resounds in the background**

Arthur: **reflexively reaching over to keep Adrian from falling entirely out of his seat to that one's growing horror, embarrassment, and a host of other unmentionable emotions**

Oriel was a chieftain amidst the Saxon invasions who inherited the title of High King of Germania upon Aminaduc's death. Assuredly the most dangerous of the red knights that plagued us, a long-term threat of highest priority, and an ever-present burr within our shoe as he lived, but was he truly this 'nuke' that you so fear?

Percy: **offstage** Sus.

Merlin: **smugly** Yes, we did thwart that one quite handily back then, didn't we? Little remains now of his true potential.

Arthur: **simply turns in his seat to regard his Court Mage in quiet consideration as Adrian slides back onto his seat in the background**

All right then. Next question is for Lorelei.

Lorelei: **implacably wringing water out of her braid to the side** Say it. This is why you dragged me up here today, isn't it?

Adrian: . . . **currently caught between edging closer to Arthur or getting soaked by Lorelei and Vivian on his other side**

Right then. Lorelei, who do you think is the most trustworthy in the group?

Lorelei: **automatically replies without a single pause for thought** Me.

Merlin: **cackling to the side** Never heard of that oh-so-quaint modern saying, “Trust nobody, not even yourself?”

Lorelei: **continues implacably squeezing and saying** Still me.

Besides yourself. Someone else in the group.

Now that seemingly is a reason to pause for thought. Lorelei remains silent for several long moments until...

Lorelei: **beginning to sound unsure** some versions of MC?

Merlin: You sound very certain of yourself there.

Adrian: No, I can quite understand the sentiment! As long as they aren't uh... well...

Merlin: **mildly** Exorcisms can be such complicated things, hmm?

Lorelei: **is starting to look like she might regret her choice here**

Someone else besides Schrödinger's MC.

Lorelei: **looks at everyone on stage, then everyone back stage, and then helplessly into the audience, before repeating the cycle a few more times**

Merlin: **still chuckling beneath their breath** Oh, do go on. Such a hard choice, is it?

Lorelei: **huffs and finally gives up on looking for something she can't find*.*
. Arthur?

Merlin: **laughing** Arthur, you shameless lothario! Even the ones who hate knights and all chivalry are falling for you.

Arthur: **simply sighs** Merlin... you truly run wild without the duties of Camelot to hold you back, do you?

Lorelei: **slowly and ever-so-menacingly stands up, looking as if she's about to lunge for Merlin's throat**

Arthur: **warningly** Lorelei, for your own sake, I would not.

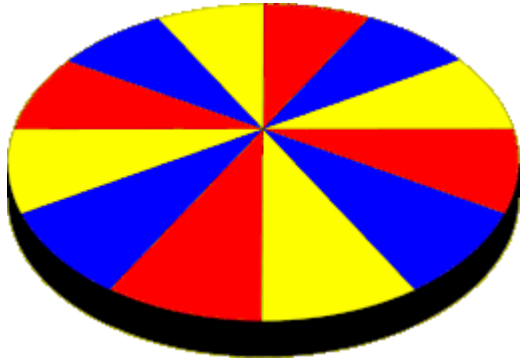
Merlin: Ah, I see someone needs to learn the same lesson as MC. You may punch me as you will, but in return I ask a favor.

Lorelei: **freezes, stares suspiciously at the mage sitting at center stage, and finally sits back down**

Merlin: Wise decision.

And next up we have our first tie between three questions at 11 votes each. Since we only have room for two more, we'll let the hands of fate decide!

Adrian: **resting head in hands, may or may not still be peeking between his fingers at Arthur** Oh, thank god, only two to go.



A roulette wheel suddenly appears on stage behind the line of occupied and empty seats, its face split into three different sections. Adrian looks worried, Lorelei seems suspicious, Arthur's face remains schooled into calm composure as Merlin cackles at his side. Meanwhile Vivian may or may not be trying to wash away the wheel in a surge of water.

Vivian: It burns and binds too tight, this contract.

Round and round it goes until the roulette finally stutters to a stop on Question 1

All right, the penultimate question goes to Merlin!

Most of the other people on stage are looking rather relieved at that

Merlin: Whoo, I won!

And the audience asks... Merlin, have you had kids? Exactly how many Camelot versions of "Maury" did you appear in?

Merlin: Oh pooh, I lost.

Arthur: I fear being somewhat lost here. What is '[Maury](#)'?

Lorelei: **scoffs** Something even worse than a soap opera.

Adrian: It's one of those talk shows. A trashy one from a decade ago where they dig up cheating couples and try and find out who's the real father of some random kid.

Broderick: **offstage, still sounding muffled** Definitely trash. That I've never watched at all. Ever.

Gwen: **offstage** It's not completely trash! I-I mean, not all the time! The renewal version is slightly better, at least?

Percy: **offstage** Baby mama.

Arthur: **looking more confused than informed at this point**

Merlin: **pats Arthur's hand** Never you mind, dear. And to that I say, of course not! What kind of monster do you take me for? I may've helped to raise a promised child or three or a dozen, but I never implanted a parasite within a mortal, neither fae nor human. There are far kinder and quicker ways to dispose of a person than that.

Adrian: that is... uh, a rather *dark* way to view pregnancies, Merlin.

Merlin: We speak not of normal impregnation here, Adrian, but a potential spawn of mine. That would be no true 'child', but a soul-sucking monster until it finally grew a conscience. If it ever does. Most incubi never do.

Adrian:uhh...

Most people on stage are now staring at Merlin. The only one who seems completely unsurprised is Arthur, although the expression on Vivian's translucent face is hard to see

Cassandra: **offstage, the scratch of pen on paper is heard** Intriguing.

Right. Time for our final question of the day!

**The wheel once more spins as several suspicious eyes remain watching it. Round and round it goes in a dizzying spin of color until it finally comes to stop on Question 3. Considering those on stage have no idea what questions go to which people, most simply look confused at the moment.*

*Lorelei reaches for the bow on her back, having given up on drying her hair. Adrian has plastered on a painfully polite smile on his face. Merlin sits with their folded fingers in front of their face in a rather [familiar pose](#)**

And the final question goes to Vivian. Better luck next time, Arthur!

Arthur: **faintly smiling, he gives a slight bow, expression too composed to tell if he's relieved or disappointed**

Adrian: **definitely looking relieved**

Lorelei: **still looking suspicious**

Merlin: **still doing the Gendo pose**

Vivian, what do you think of Lancelot? Would you be able to recognize him in a new form? Or his kin?

Vivian: Ah... *Lancelot*. One of the beloved pet projects of my predecessor that I inherited upon taking the role of Lady of the Lake. One that consumed an exorbitant amount of time and energy to guarantee its continued flourishing. So the minds of mortals unstable be.

But the necessities of bonds and old covenants calls to us all. The blood of the old children still sings in certain veins. His get is truly... *intriguing*.

Merlin: Vivian, *don't*. Or... do? Truly, even my clairvoyance cannot tell what is the best... Galahad's rise or Galahad's fall. Simply beware of what you meddle with, Vivian.

Vivian: You dare think I need your warnings, Merlin? Need I remind thee that the celestial heavens and the infernal plains must first pass through the Otherworld before they ever breathe the air of this mortal realm?

Adrian: **looks mildly alarmed**

Lorelei: **looks mildly confused**

Arthur: **looks like he's all too familiar with this sort of chicanery**

Vivian: Would I recognize that one and his kin in a new life....? **slowly her pellucid gaze passes over those assembled on stage, the smile that briefly flashes over her face has all the sharp angles of a shark**that depends on how well they *hide*.

Percy: **offstage** Sus.

Cassandra: **offstage, sighing and inaudibly muttering**

And that's the end of this month's Q & A session. Remember to send in your questions in the next Suggestions post if you belong to the Greater Circle! And that's the end of this month's Q & A session. Remember to send in your questions in the next Suggestions post if you belong to the Greater Circle!

Protected: December 2024 – Questions & Answers (Extended)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

As suggested by the Greater Circle and voted on by the Greater/Lesser Circle tiers, it's the December Question & Answer session coming in at 2506 words. Alas, since none of the "To everyone" questions won the vote, there will be no special guest stars this time.

Broderick: **offstage* Whoo!*

Cassandra: **muttering to herself offstage to the tune of the sound of a pen scratching paper**

Percy: Dirty water hotdogs.

Half the seats — and a certain sombrero-wearing rocking horse — are once more filled by a courteously smiling Arthur, a smugly smirking Merlin, a distinctly uncomfortable-looking Adrian, and the still rocking Percy in that order. Vivian looms in the background on a pillar of water.

Merlin: **chuckling rather smugly** This setup seems strangely familiar.

Adrian: **muttering about cursed 'favorites' as he slides down in his seat**

Well, speaking of 'favorites'...

Adrian: Oh God...

Arthur: **silently reaches over and rests a commiserating hand on Adrian**s shoulder***

Adrian: **repeating even more fervently* Oh God!*

Stop trying to hide underneath your chair, Adrian, and instead answer this question. A very popular one as it ended up with double to triple the votes of all others in this batch! Actually, this might be the most voted question in the history of the Q & A session...

Adrian: **slowly begins to turn his head back to Vivian**

No asking Vivian to kill you, either. We're saving the death battles for later.

Merlin: **chuckling with fingers laced in front of their face in a damnably fine impression of the [Gendo pose](#)**

Vivian: **water cascades even harder, sending a faint mist spreading through the stage area** The taboo against violence is renounced? So pronounced... then denounce it!

... no. No, renouncing taboos. Yet. And here is the question in question. Hey Adrian, MC or Arthur?

Gwen: **offstage** ¿Por qué no los dos?

Merlin: **cackles** Someone's feeling greedy, I see.

Adrian: **briefly looks askance at the hand on his shoulder** Uh...

Arthur: **removes hand and leans back in his chair, faintly chuckling** Oh, assuredly, do go on. Be my guest.

Percy: You're alone and you're scared, but the banquet's all prepared~

Arthur: **looking somewhat confused** Assuredly not so pressing as the miracles at our past banquets?

Merlin: Tis worse... tis Disney. Hopefully no one in the audience was recording!

Arthur: . . .

...yes, well, back to the question. What's your answer, Adrian?

Adrian: **muttering to himself** That's seriously what they're so hyped about...? **raises his voice** It's obviously MC, right? I mean, Arthur is more than capable of taking care of himself and... **pauses to stealthily squint over at Arthur's right side** I mean, at least he'd be way better off than MC charging to take on a two-story hellhound with nothing but their copy of Stephen King's *The Stand*!

Arthur: Indeed, I have bested such beasts before. With better weaponry, I assume, than what was mentioned and—

Merlin: **tsks and hands over said copy of The Stand to Arthur** That question was worded far too vaguely. The fae would end up walking all over you with *that* sort of phrasing!

Adrian: Shut up! Shut up! ShutupMerlinanddon'tgivethemideas!

Vivian: **cascades even higher, a faint bubbling giggle can be heard beneath the thunder of water**

Arthur: **flipping through The Stand** Tis a book? Of fine parchment, assuredly, but not even a grimoire?

Adrian: **somewhat fervently** MC needs me. Or at least someone who can tackle them out of the way at times.

Well, there you have it! Certainly some among the audience will be pleased. And some perhaps a little disappointed instead. This next question is directed towards both Percy and Merlin...

Percy: **rocks even harder on horse** Purple's for rue when mourning black isn't available.

Merlin: **Gendo poses even harder** Shhh... refrain from giving things away too soon, my lad!

Cassandra: **pen scratches even harder**

..... yes, well. To Percy and Merlin, what did the colors on the marbles mean or represent?

Merlin: Ah... but one has several choices there, don't they?

- A. The most common colors used for the tokens in that particular game.
- B. Favorite colors of those playing it.
- C. Manufactured 'gems' to appease whatever else might have been lurking in that warehouse.
- D. All of the above.

Percy: I like the color red. Or do I?

Merlin: Well, white is safer for me than red as it is. Or black. I am such a pearl of wisdom, after all.

Adrian: **sighing as he rubs at his temples** Not even that goofy board game where someone was *definitely not cheating* would be simple, could it?

Merlin: **smugly** There's a trick to it.

Arthur: Aye, the trick is to discover how they do it and then confront them; otherwise, you shall never have a proper game of it. All this time and still you pull such shenanigans, Merlin?

Merlin: I assure you my methods of teaching are unparalleled!

Percy: Tricky. Gained two magic points.

And speaking of tricks, here's a question for the High King. Arthur, what are your thoughts & feelings on Lancelot?

Percy: Ouch. My duodenum.

Adrian: **splits his attention between side-eyeing Arthur & Percy**

Merlin: **chuckles** Ah... you humans love your soap opera dramas, don't you?

Lorelei: **offstage, muttering** This is ridiculous...

Arthur: **raises hand to head** Ah, Lancelot. Someone close and trusted enough to act as my companion in my rarer forays into the field during the latter part of my reign. One of my greatest knights at court... on the rare occasions he would show up. One of the greatest reasons that the Fellowship of the Round Table was sundered.

Merlin: He certainly lanced-a-lot. And by that, I mean he killed a lot of people at court and— **gets hit in the head with a crumpled-up ball of paper**

Cassandra: **offstage** That joke is terrible, and you should feel terrible, Merlin!

Arthur: **side-eyeing Merlin as well** He was brilliant and nearly unparalleled as a warrior, and alluring to both men and women, but... not the most stable in certain ways.

Vivian: Unstable, unsound, unbalanced! The many days of yore I spent back then, through the hills, through the dales, through the fens, simply to try and slap some sense back into him! **launches into a long, bubbling rant about babysitting mortals as water slowly begins to pool across the stage**

Arthur: **looks like he has a headache coming on** I still reel at the thought that he actually believed I would *burn her at the stake*. True, twas an Orkney plot, paid in blood of those innocent to it, but truly... *burn my wife at the stake for infidelity?!* I suppose this is what happens when I stray too far from court for a few days hunting.

Lorelei: **muttering offstage**

Cassandra: **furiously taking notes offstage**

Broderick: **may have already left the area**

Adrian: **starts reaching out to lay a hand on Arthur's shoulder, but after a long moment of hesitation, he decides against it**

Merlin: Keeping your words politic and discreet as ever, are you?

Arthur: Shush, Merlin.

Percy: Here, this is yours. **hands a picture over to Arthur**

The Picture:



Arthur: **sighs** Yes, one supposes this is a good representation of Camelot during its final days.

Well, since we've started this track, let's keep Camelot burning in a trash fire! And the next question to the High King is... Arthur, is Mordred your son?

Percy: [Maury Povich](#).

Arthur: I fear tis best for me to not know who or what that is?

Adrian: **just groaning**

Gwen: **offstage** Do go on!

Broderick: **offstage** Where did you get the tub of popcorn?!

Merlin: **eating from said tub of popcorn** Mayhaps we need to break out yon paternity tests?

Arthur: You bring forth all the old scandals and rumors from back in the day, do you? So many tongues wagging about what they knew not at the High Court.

We're not hearing a 'yes' or 'no' over there, Arthur.

Arthur: I shall say now what I always said back then. Whatever his true bloodline, Mordred was my heir. Indeed, one of those that I treated as a child of mine, lacking any trueborn progeny of my own.

Merlin: **chuckling while eating popcorn kernels** Arthur was his father figure at least. Because twas certainly not King Lot back then!

Arthur: That mayhaps be the true source of the rumors and the rancor that it brought, whoever it was that bedeviled Lot's mind with suspicions in the matter. And tis why when it came to Mordred...

Gwen: **offstage, popcorns so hard her head may explode**

Lorelei: **offstage, disapproving so hard that it's leaking on stage**

Arthur: no, never mind.

Hold that thought. The next question is for Adrian...

Adrian: **for once looking somewhat relieved** O-okay, well, at least that means we're done with Camelot, right?

Merlin: **still popcorning**

Well, speaking of 'favorites'... Adrian, what are your thoughts on Guinevere? You did 'pick' her, after all. In front of Arthur. (Brings back any past memories of yours?)

Adrian: **groaning** You've gotta be kidding me!

Percy: **rocking even harder on his horse** Let's not go to Camelot. Tis a silly place.

Arthur: **sitting there with a very practiced smile on his face**

Adrian, the studio audience (of Maury Povich) is waiting to hear your thoughts on Guinevere and why you picked her in front of her ex-husband.

Adrian: I just picked her because I didn't want to have anything to do with Mordred! What kind of choice was that?! **muttering to himself**

Arthur: **still elegantly smiling upon his seat as he side-eyes Adrian**

Merlin: I warned you that question was too vague. Too many holes to wriggle through.

Arthur: *Merlin.*

Merlin: Hmm...? **tosses silvered locks over their shoulder** I'm helping!

Adrian: **begins rushing to answer before any more detailed questions can come through** As to what I think of her, it would depend upon her particular representation in the story in question? Most popular modern characterizations are rather flattering, having her as a strong-willed warrior or political player caught in an unfortunate situation. There are some tales where she's more a weak sop or downright skanky, but uh... I like the more complimentary portrayals? And I don't think Arthur w-would mind people favoring Guinevere in some ways so as long as uh...

Arthur: Aye, I grew quite used to others declaring their love to my Queen. As long as such does not end in a kidnapping attempt, these comments can merely be deemed flattering.

Merlin: And then all the amusing times that it *did* end in a kidnapping attempt. Like that one time that Guingamor ‘kidnapped’ Guinevere and then ‘Gazosein’ rode off to her rescue but ended up kidnapping her instead until Gawain was ambushed by—

Gwen: **offstage** How romantic...

Lorelei: **offstage** What.

Arthur: **still smiling fixedly**

And on to the next question, this time directed to Merlin.

Merlin: **tosses hair** Naturally.

Adrian: **slinking further down in seat** I swear, if we’re still going on about Camelot...

Merlin, which kind of MC soul would you like to taste the most?

Adrian: **sits up in protest** Hey, that’s not any better!

Merlin: **chuckles** This question about my preference in souls seems rather popular to ask, doesn’t it? Are people perhaps planning to tailor their own tastes then... in more ways than one?

Vivian: Curiosity kills the cat and spoils the pot, does it not? Your heavens portend, beyond which one lurks the greatest of dead ends.

Percy: Sus.

Cassandra: **offstage** All considering, that’s a given, isn’t it?

Gwen: **offstage** Wait... what are they even talking about?

Adrian: **sighing and muttering and rubbing at his head** Red flags.

Gwen: **offstage, growing ever more excited** Where’s a red flag? Who? Let me at them! Is it Arthur?!

Arthur: **ever politely smiling**

Merlin: Ah, but what’s a proper romance without a bit of *danger*, yes? I’ve always enjoyed the subtle flavors of nuance and layers to peel back. Of a personality more complicated than not. And, of course, said soul should be powerful... the more the better, the greater the flavor.

Vivian: Yesss... a very spoiled pot.

Merlin: And also a purity, to strengthen said flavor. Since this is MC we speak of, something more noble and virtuous then. Yon standard ‘knight in shining armor’ that you modern lot like to call them. Because

most assuredly I recuse myself from dealing with someone purely evil while on this quest!

Arthur: Merlin, I fear to ask what you have been imbibing lately.

Percy: **casually removes his and his rocking horse's sombreros and puts a rainhat on both of them instead**

Merlin: I have cultivated nothing but the most exquisite of diets over the years. And then all of it was flushed away with nothing but an eon of fish.

Vivian: **stage begins to slowly flood** What do mine ears hear but someone has cultivated a death wish as well?

And on that note, here's the final question of the day! To Merlin and Vivian...who would win if you fought each other? A demonstration would be appreciated (kick their ass Vivian! Lets see if that robe is waterproof!)

Merlin: **glances down at their seeming trench coat** What robe?

Adrian: **hurriedly raising his feet away from the suddenly overflowing stage** That's the point you'd like to quibble over?!

Arthur: I beg thee, do not instigate them!

Vivian: As much as I fain to follow such a request... and claim the *reward* that doing so requires, a more powerful contract compels non-violence between us. On *the stage*, that is.

Merlin: Ah yes... *the contract*...

Vivian: **the expression on her watery face is hard to decipher, but she seems to be staring rather fixedly at the mage as an inch or two of water continues rising and spilling off the edges of the stage**

Merlin: **whistling innocently**

Arthur: **glances tactically around the stage before calling quietly off to the side** See the chairs gathered 'round the far exit? Move them out of the way, if you would.

Cassandra: **offstage** On it. Come on, Lore.

Lorelei: **offstage**

Broderick: **offstage** What the fuck are we doing now?

Gwen: **offstage** I can help— wah!

Percy: **plants a sign on the stage**

The Sign:



Vivian: And as loath as I am to admit, would be impossible for a normal fae to overpower *Merlin*; cursed be the one of that name. There was a reason that one needed to be sealed away by trickery all the same.

Merlin: **whistling even harder** Ah yes, certainly no mere mortal mage nor fae can match me in my normal form!

Vivian: **the tides begin to surge in ever-growing swells** I see. Just how far hast thou diminished in thy repeated escape attempts, fallen one?

Merlin: (☆○~○;)

Percy: **puts on a duck floatie** Sus.

And with one last thunderous upswell of water, the entire stage gets washed out, as the 'lucky' participants — some sighing, some further threatening, some rapidly paddling — go floating past and swirling out the far exit, which has just been cleared of chairs in the nick of time.

And that's the end of this month's Q & A session. Remember to send in your questions in the next Suggestions post if you belong to the Greater Circle!

Protected: January 2025 – Questions & Answers (Extended)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

As suggested by the Greater Circle and voted on by the Greater/Lesser Circle tiers, it's the January Question & Answer session coming in at 3487 words. Another very Camelot-themed gathering... because Merlin refuses to leave the stage.

Merlin: **tosses a tendril of hair behind their shoulder* (🌟👁👁)* The star must never leave the stage, of course.

Adrian: I- I would like to leave the stage sometime too. I've literally been here since the very beginning!

Arthur: . . . **side-eyeing Adrian as he gives the young man a commiserating pat on the shoulder**

Adrian: **sinks down into his seat muttering about the past questions**

Cassandra: Intriguing. **furiously scribbling in her notes**

Sitting at the center of the stage is Merlin, flanked by Arthur & Adrian to the right and Cassandra & Broderick — who is currently trying to stealthily sneak off stage — to the right. The ever-present misty fountain known as Vivian lurks in the background as an empty rocking horse faintly swings to and fro to the side

This is probably the most Harbingers — and Harbinger-adjacent characters — that we've ever had on stage. Because Merlin refuses to leave. And no prematurely leaving the stage for the others either... did you hear that, Adrian and Broderick?

Broderick: Goddammit. **returns to his seat** I can't believe you invited the crazy water woman back after she literally flooded the whole... wait, can you flood the stage right now and shut this whole shitty production down?!

Vivian: **thundering of the fountain grows louder** Oh my, oh dear, is that a request that I hear?

Merlin: Once the Veil fully falls, this group is veritably doomed since they seem completely incapable of not shoving their feet into their mouths.

Cassandra: **laughs softly** I think we need to still work on that. Odd that some people haven't grown wary of their own words with *you* around.

Merlin: What do you mean, I am the very picture of*—*

Percy: **off-stage** *—*of a modern major general.

****Merlin:** —**of a modern major general... and also of responsibility and good will when it comes to my own deals!

All right then, responsibility, being willingly or unwillingly permanently stuck on the stage, and accidentally bargaining your soul away to a fae aside, it's time for the first question. To everyone, which Camelot "character" are you calling dibs on?

Arthur: **chuckles** A rather obvious choice for half the people currently on this stage, is it not?

Merlin: ...*or is it?*

Arthur: Hmm... yes, I suppose there are those out there who might wish to exchange their fate with another's. But I fain excuse myself... twould be rather cruel to inflict my fate on someone else in trade.

Adrian: **very much not staring**

Arthur: And those who would still choose it for the power it brings instead would best not have it.

Merlin: **smugly** And Merlin is the obvious best choice here anyway!

Cassandra: **delicately coughs and starts flipping through her notes** Yes, about that... I believe it was previously mentioned that the most powerful incarnation still potentially possible is Galahad? **tilts her head in thought** Although, certainly, there must be some lurking hidden drawback there. Still... let's say I'll go with that.

Vivian: I also "call dibs" on Galahad.

Adrian: What, really?!

Arthur: ...the wording.

Percy: **off-stage** Sus.

Vivian: Indeed. Yon announcer never gave further detail on what that "dibs" precisely meant.

Merlin: ʃ ɔ ɸ_ɸ \ ɔ

Cassandra: You truly need to teach the group better when it comes to dealing with the fae, Merlin!

Merlin: ʃ ɔ ɸ_ɸ \ ɔ

And for the two still remaining silent... no getting out of this question, Adrian and Broderick!

Broderick: Tch.

Adrian: Well, at least I get more options than Mordred and Guinevere this time! Taking the question in the spirit it was intended, I... I... hmm... I'd probably choose to be Bedivere's reincarnation.

Arthur: **straightens slightly within his seat in interest**

Cassandra: **furiously writing notes** Indeed? Intriguing.

Percy: **off-stage** Sus.

Adrian: **yelling over to the side of the stage** How is that "sus", Percy?!

Gwen: **giggles off-stage**

Merlin: Oh, do go on. Of all potential incarnations — of which I have been led to believe that you know of in some detail unlike many of the others here — why did you choose Bedivere?

Adrian: Uh... well, Bedivere is one of the more powerful and legendary people from Camelot, but unlike others like Gawain or Lancelot, he doesn't really have so much *drama* attached to him? He's like... a completely sensible choice? Also, he makes it to the end in many versions of the myths and—
muttering ...last person to see Arthur alive.

Arthur: He was, indeed, one of the few who remained loyal to the last.

And you, Broderick? No sneaking off stage while people's attentions are on one of your co-workers instead!

Broderick: **once more returns to his seat** God dammit.

Gwen: **giggles off-stage**

Broderick: I don't wanna be any of those whackadoodles!

Lorelei: **off stage** Of course not. Only sensible.

Broderick: And most of the few Camelot characters I even know are already on the stage! And unlike *some others here*, I've no intention of claiming dibs on *Guinevere*.

Adrian: Hey, it was her or Mordred!

The audience is still waiting, Broderick.

Broderick: Fine! I'll be... Sir... Bob, then.

Adrian: ...uh.

Merlin: **cackles**

Broderick: You heard what I said!

Cassandra: **flips through notes** Do we even *have* a “Sir Bob”?

Merlin: Hmm... well, there was that one “Robert” who was the squire of Gingalain the Fair Unknown.

Broderick: Yeah, sure, that dude.

Merlin: ...who is not found within my guide and thus, I must remind you, is not a potential Harbinger incarnation.

Broderick: Screw your guide and screw you too, Merlin, and your hourglass figure that doesn't quit!

Merlin: Wait until I'm a bit *hungrier*, dear.

Broderick: **begins sputtering like Vivian's fountain going out of control**

Gwen: 🙄

All right, that was certainly... illuminating. Like drawing out teeth. Moving on to the next question then... to Adrian.

Adrian: **sighs**

Adrian, what are your feelings & thoughts on Percy potentially being MC's soulmate when you're romancing MC?

Percy: **off-stage** Sus.

Adrian: Well, after having met Percy and seeing what type of MC is the sort who'd trigger that reaction, I can't say that I'm all that surprised. I mean, it's kinda obvious, right?

Broderick: A pair of cuckoos.

Adrian: And, anyway, soulmates don't have to be romantic, particularly because Percy doesn't seem inclined to go that way, and— what do you mean, “*romancing MC*”?! I'M NOT ROMANCING MC!

Percy: **off-stage** Very sus.

Cassandra: Intriguing. **scribbles furiously** How does that saying go? “Methinks the lady doth protest too much.”

Merlin: Ah... you're the “slow burn” type, are you?

Adrian: I'm not burning at all! I'm an ice cube. I'm the iceberg that sank the Titanic. I'm Broderick's chances of actually hooking up with Merlin!

Broderick: **jumps to his feet, looking like he's about to lunge across the stage at Adrian** WHO SAID I'M TRYING TO HOOK UP WITH MERLIN?!

Arthur: Easy there. There are enough enemies facing us down that we need not seek them amongst our allies as well. Sharp words seek only to deflect attention away from oneself, after all.

Merlin: Yes, this particular conglomeration of incarnations gets along *so well*.

Lorelei: **off-stage** Ridiculous.

Broderick: **grumbling to self**

Adrian: **has successfully deflected**

And the next question is for the High King.

Arthur: **slightly inclines head and motions for them to continue**

Adrian: **is suddenly looking very wary**

Merlin: **is still looking highly amused**

Cassandra: **is waiting with pen upheld**

Broderick: **is slowly shifting his chair towards the side of the stage**

Vivian: **may or may not be currently trying to stealthily flood the stage**

Gwen: **off-stage** Whoo!

Arthur, which person/reincarnation of the Round Table are you least looking forward to meeting again, and which are you most looking forward to?

Arthur: Who would I dearly wish to meet again? There are so many who passed before me... and of course, I never saw the survivors again either. Perhaps Ector or Kay? Morgause? Or.... **slants a sideways glance at Adrian** Bedivere would be good, considering my last words to him.

Adrian: **coughs discreetly**

Merlin: **cackles indiscreetly**

Arthur: Yet, one must keep in mind that none of those would be the same, and I must manage my expectations so. Perhaps someone still alive from that time, then? That would most likely be a fae then, which brings its own sorts of complications, or...

Merlin: Or me~!

Arthur: Aye, you would assuredly be high on my list if you weren't sitting right there, Merlin. As to who I least wish to see, again...

Arthur: . . .

Merlin: Ah.

Cassandra: **nonchalantly scribbling away** A bit obvious there, hmm?

Arthur: I suppose so. Twould be Mordred, of course. Who is also perhaps the one that I most direly need to see. Perhaps he would tell me *why* this time... well, if his potential reincarnation even remembers such things. I simply...

Merlin: **reaches out and lightly pats Arthur's arm**

Adrian: **looks like he wants to do the same from the other side, but also looks like he might asphyxiate and die instead**

Arthur: I need a bit more time to... process... I suppose one would say nowadays? To think upon the fate of Camelot and her people, before properly meeting him again.

Broderick: Wasn't that literally a millennium ago now? That's a whole lotta thinking!

Merlin: 1510 years. But who's counting?

Cassandra: **dryly** You are, obviously.

Vivian: Indeed. Nattering on for years upon end. *Oh, why is the seal not giving away? What is holding the Veil in place? Tis been 1490 years, and assuredly something has gone wrong!*

Merlin: Oh yes, assuredly something went wrong, indeed!

Arthur: **shakes his head in faint bemusement** Tis only been a sennight for me.

Merlin: **repeats ominously** Yes, something went wrong indeed.

And speaking of Mordred, here's another question for the whole lot of you. How do you folks think you might feel in the very unlikely and very hypothetical situation of if MC

turned out to be Mordred and not just called dibs?

Arthur: . . . that might be somewhat... awkward... shall we say.

Merlin: **chuckling** By the negligent gods, what have *you* been doing in people's dreams this entire while, Arthur?

Arthur: **perfectly practiced smile** Perhaps the question to ask is what MC has been doing instead.

Adrian: **groans** Why does the Audience have Mordred on the brain so much?

Arthur: **rubs at his temples** Aye, one wonders indeed.

Merlin: One word. Drama.

You have no idea how truly much they have Mordred on the brain.

Cassandra: I wouldn't be all that surprised if MC, or another of us, is actually Mordred's reincarnation. That one hasn't shown up in any of the previous Circles, did he? At least so far as we know. **once more flips through notes and side-eyes Merlin**

Merlin: **chuckles** Well, that one certainly was not part of the failed Second Lesser Circle.

Cassandra: So it seems inevitable that he'll appear either in our Circle or in the one that opposes us.

Merlin: *Que sera, sera.*

Broderick: Of course we'd have a crazy backstabber in the group. Isn't that the guy who's stuck in the innermost circle of hell? Bashing around like a fruitloop in a gold mask and stabbing people by running himself and everyone else through with a cursed lance? And then he changes into a girl if you remove the mask?

Adrian: . . .uh.

Cassandra: **just staring at Broderick with pen poised**

Merlin: Methinks you conflate several different versions of Mordred there, dear child.

Arthur: The modern age certainly has... intriguing... stories.

Broderick: **grumbles** Whatever. Toss them off the RV! Wait, no, keep them on the RV and toss me off instead!

Vivian: Mordred? Delicious.

Adrian: I don't think I even wanna know. But I don't believe that MC is Mordred. End stop. That's my reaction to this question.

The next question is aimed at the Lady of the Lake and current Lady of the soggy stage.

Cassandra: **looking distastefully at the puddles spreading across the floor** You certainly need a better setup than this. Especially when [REDACTED] can formally join us.

An unholy screech rises from backstage intermingled with a few more human shrieks. Arthur tenses, looking as if he's about to run off stage before silence settles in once more.

Merlin: For the love of the old gods, don't invoke that name yet!

Ahem. Moving on now. Vivian, if Changeling MC wanted to join you instead of Merlin, perhaps as an apprentice, would you accept?

Merlin: I shan't advise that. First of all, we are in the midst of an apocalypse here, and MC has no proper time to go frolicking off to Vivian's lake for an extended period of teaching like that. And even when events have settled down, they would be far better off seeking tutelage from a fellow elf like—

Vivian: Hist. Bite thy nonexistent tongue before someone tears it out, demon fornicator.

Merlin: **smugly** Now if tis nonexistent, then how were you planning to—**the sounds of a thundering waterfall drown out the mage's words**

Vivian: **bright eyes gleaming from beneath the crystalline waters** Why, of course, my services can be bought. Cajoled. Bartered. Plead. And if one should seek my side in order to learn my ways...

This scenario includes a meticulously negotiated contract with all fae loopholes covered. No screwing over MC here, except for the consensual fun kind of screwing, obviously.

Vivian: **huffily** Why would I agree to such a contract as that? The blood oaths with Camelot were necessary to fend off the creeping end of the worlds, both Mortal Planes and Otherworld. Tis bad enough to so constrained without seeking out another binding.

Bubbling water once more starts spreading across the stage as several others carefully begin raising their feet away from the floor.

Merlin: Oh, now she's sulking.

Arthur: Alas, from all I have seen and experienced, full-blooded fae have thralls, not willing apprentices as us humans do. As Merlin suggested, MC might best seek out the aid of one of the halfling elves instead. They should be returning to the mortal planes as the Veil falls as well.

Cassandra: **dryly chuckling as she continues to write** Yes, go with an elf, indeed.

Time for the next question, this one is aimed at our native grouch in residence...

Broderick: **grumbles and slouches in seat**

Merlin: **brightly** Oh boy, here we go!

Broderick: **grumbles even louder**

Broderick, how would you describe each individual of the Circle?

Broderick: **sits up in his seat and squints suspiciously at the people who currently share the stage with him**

Broderick: (=_ =) . . .

Merlin: We await with bated breath, Broderick!

Broderick: **points at Merlin** Harlot.

Merlin: You certainly have a one-track mind, dear child.

Broderick: **clarifies** Sketchy Harlot.

Broderick: **looks over at Cassandra scribbling furiously next to him** Sherlock. And Robin. **points over at Adrian**

Adrian: **looking puzzled**. . . the bird?

Broderick: From Batman! You're the sidekick. Maybe Jimmy Olsen suits you better? And that's some dude in a King Arthur Halloween costume.

Arthur: **merely chuckles**

Merlin: I assure you, dear child, that he is the "real deal" as you modern lot are wont to say. The true Once and Future King.

Broderick: **repeating with more emphasis** Some. Dude. In. A. Halloween. King. Arthur. Costume. Along with Kool-Aid Man's ex-wife in the background.

Merlin: Oh, you are simply lucky she shan't understand that reference, my boy.

Broderick: And then backstage is Grumpy, Dopey, Giselle from Enchanted, and a fucking Ringwraith.

Gwen: **off-stage** Dibs on Giselle!

Percy: **off-stage** Sus.

Adrian: You read— no, watched— Lord of the Rings?

Broderick: After one of you fuckers had a three-day marathon where that was the only thing playing on the TV, yes!

Cassandra: **playfully smiling** Hmm... but it seems to me that Grumpy is onstage with the rest of us, isn't he?

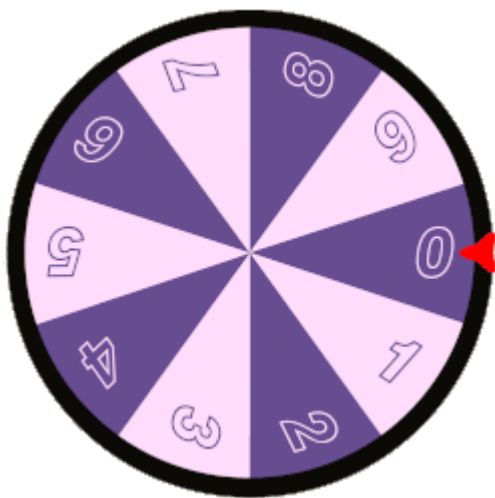
Merlin: Lorelei and he can fight to the death over the title. Feel free to cease those death glares any day now, my girl.

Lorelei: **death glare intensifies**

Broderick: **GRUMBLING EVEN HARDER**

All right, and here is the final question of the day... which is a tie. So you know what that means!

Merlin: Ah. Since, by technicality, I lacked an invitation to the stage, it appears no opportunity exists for me to lose this time!



And the winner for the last question is... Again I must ask, for those who remember, what is your craziest Dagonet story?

Broderick: Who the flying fuck is Dagonet?

Vivian: **sounds of water bubbling rises** Ah... that one. If only he stepped just a single pace closer to the edge of the lake... but he was always far more cunning than he pretended to be. A fake destined to always flee.

Adrian: The court jester, right?

Cassandra: **flipping through notes** So it would appear. The one who used to roll across the ground to muss up his armor and shield to make it look as if he'd been in battle, isn't it?

Adrian: Yeah, I think stuff like that is what he's best known for now.

Broderick: Oh great, another cuckoo.

Merlin: Oh, he used to do that *all the time*! Right in front of people's noses. After a laugh, more oft than not, rather than trying to fool anyone about his supposed prowess.

Arthur: Aye, that would be part of his act. Hmm... the "craziest" tale of his is perchance his most legendary feat.

Merlin: Ah. *That* one.

Arthur: Indeed. That little trick with Mordred's armor.

Adrian: **perks up ever so slightly** That really happened?

Arthur: I know little of what you might have heard of it today, but Mordred was the mind behind the ploy that Dagonet carried out. He put on that one's black burnished armor and had the entire coterie of knights and squires who accompanied him begin to scream that "Lancelot has gone mad and runs amok in his bloodlust!" and sent an entire *werod* of Saxons fleeing before him.

Lorelei: **doesn't sound exactly unapproving** Completely ridiculous.

Arthur: There were many who laid claim to the epithet of "Black Knight", but Lancelot and Mordred were by far the two most famous who wore that color. Yet if the Saxons realized twas a wounded Mordred before them, my heir and the Crown Prince...

Cassandra: A far darker tale there.

Adrian: Well, uh... actually...

Percy: **off-stage** Sus.

Merlin: Or brighter, depending upon one's perspective! Distant or close or in-between, as it might be. Apparently Lancelot was already building quite the reputation for pulling such stunts even back then. Although the details of the tale failed to survive fully intact. Nowadays they say twas King Mark that fled before Dagonet's mummery.

Arthur: ...King Mark? Who is that?

Merlin: Ah la la la... Isolde the Fair... la la la Tristan... oh look, is that Cerniw?

Arthur: *Cador*? Why would Dagonet be chasing my own brother away of all things?

Merlin: Yes, well, stories oft become a bit warped given time. But by my own reckoning, Dagonet's maddest adventure would be that amusing little sortie where he and Dinadan became embroiled in a

contest of who could rescue the High Queen first.

Arthur: She was merely a-maying in the nearby glens at the time and in need of no such rescue!

Gwen: **off-stage giggling**

Lorelei: **off-stage and definitely sounding disapproving this time** Ridiculous!

Merlin: Yes, well, details, details. So off goes Dagonet into the nearby forest, and he somehow ended up falling straight through into the Otherworld instead...

Cassandra: **puts down her pen and merely starts sighing**

Merlin: ...and somehow personally insulted Glorianna, Queen of the Summer Court, while in there. Oh, he was lucky that King-consort Oberon intervened on his behalf. He always did the jester sort.

Vivian: And he yet lived? Forgiven? The Queen grows too complacent.

Arthur: **also sighing** Aye, Puck was Oberon's esquire of the body for good reason.

Merlin: Thus, Dagonet was able to safely leave the Otherworld alive and unskinned with the Wild Hunt itself baying at his heels. And luckier still for the former, the High King was in residence at Camelot at the time and made haste into the wilderness...

Adrian: . . .wut.

Arthur: **rubbing at his temples**

Merlin: I believe that was the first time you had to deal with the Wild Hunt, yes? You even led them on their next outing at the following full moon...

Arthur: Aye, that was part of the bargain we struck so that they would quit their hunt of Dagonet.

Merlin: —while he was blubbering and clinging to your leg. But such experience is good for you, particularly with what yet draws near. Yet alas, I fear Saint George was never the same after that...

Broderick: I swear to God, if one of you fuckasses ends up being Dagonet...

Arthur: **sighing even harder**

And that's the end of this month's Q & A session. Remember to send in your questions in the next Suggestions post if you belong to the Greater Circle!

Protected: February 2025 – Questions & Answers (Extended)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

As suggested by the Greater Circle and voted on by the Greater/Lesser Circle tiers, it's the February Question & Answer session coming in at 2579 words. Starring the ever-present Adrian (who's not allowed to leave the stage) and Merlin (who refuses to do so).

Merlin : **sitting smugly at the center of the stage as always**

Adrian: **sighing rather dolorously in his seat to the left side of Merlin**

It seems that there's been some adjustment to the seating order this time, at least.

Adrian: That's because Gwen beat me to my normal chair. And God forbid that anyone try and take the center seat away from Merlin, I think they arrive here several hours in advance or something... **trails off muttering**

Gwen: **giggling triumphantly in her seat next to Arthur**

Arthur: **looks faintly amused... and as composed as ever**

Meanwhile, Broderick is trying to set the stage aflame with his gaze alone on the far left side while Vivian tries to flood the stage with her ever-lurking fountain in the back. Percy's empty rocking horse is currently wearing a giant heart on its head instead of its normal sombrero.

And let's get this show on the road... and start off with the Audience's favorite vict—
ahem, MC's favorite person in the world. To Adrian...

Adrian: **groans**

Merlin: **the 'comforting' smile they turn to Adrian is perhaps a shade too predatory to be truly reassuring** Alas, the trials and tribulations of being the 'favorite'. I would suggest you do something demeaning or perhaps endangering to try and thwart their partiality, but that might just encourage them even further. MC does have some *interesting* predilections...

Vivian: **sounds of gushing water rises** I have some *suggestions...* for a price.

Adrian:this seating order sucks.

Broderick: **scooting even further to the side of the stage**

All right, putting aside MC's certain kinks, here's the first question. Adrian, who did you think was MC's reincarnation was when you sought them out?

Adrian: Huh, that's a whole pile of assumptions there. First off, why do you even think that I was looking for MC in the first place? Our apartments just ended up being sorta close, so we just ran into each other one day.

Percy: **off-stage** Stalker.

Gwen: **perks up** Wait... who's a stalker where?

Arthur: Ah, I see... even outside of Camelot, they still do this til this very day?

Merlin: They say a bird never truly changes its feathers, my dear boy. Not even reincarnation could truly divest the cuckoos from Camelot nor the stalkers from—

Adrian: I AM NOT A STALKER.

Gwen: Adrian's a stalker? That's so... **goes sparkly-eyed while Arthur looks faintly disturbed at her side****passionate!** **sighs** How romantic...

Cassandra: **off-stage pen scratching sounds can be heard** Indeed, intriguing.

Lorelei: **off-stage muttering** I can't believe how ridiculous...

Broderick: **slooowly sliding even further to the side**

Adrian: Gwen, I have no words. I just hope you stick with your Harlequin Romances there and aren't chasing after every guy who has a restraining order placed on him. Anyway, who says I even know who MC's previous incarnation was, anyway?

Percy: **off-stage** Interlude.

Adrian: SHUT UP, PERCY!

And moving on to the next question... which is still addressed to our resident stalker.

Adrian: **simply groans while someone cackles in the background. someone who might possibly be Vivian or Merlin**

Arthur: Chin up, lad. The sooner they expel this from their curiosities, the higher chance they shall move on to someone else... at least briefly.

Gwen: **goes even more sparkly-eyed at Arthur being supportive... or perhaps is still excited by all the 'stalker' talk**

Broderick: **still scooting away from Adrian** Oh no, feel free to keep all the attention on you instead!

Adrian: **simply groans even louder**

And the next question is... Exactly how much do you remember about your reincarnation? Tell. Us. Who. You. Really. Are.

Merlin: Oh yes, do go on, Adrian. **sits there, turned towards Adrian, with their chin propped on their hand**

Arthur: **side-eyeing Adrian from the other side of the stage**

Cassandra: **furious writing sounds off-stage**

Adrian: What's with all these assumptions that I know about people's past incarnations? First MC, now me? How am I supposed to know? I'm sitting here not even sure that Merlin is actually *Merlin* at this point!

Merlin: **chuckling somewhat ominously**

Arthur: I can assure you of that one little thing, at the very least, and... **turns to his left as the mage's laughter grows ever more foreboding** Merlin, stop messing with the poor child's head.

Merlin: Take all my joy from me, will you, Arthur?

Gwen: Who's a male stalker from Arthurian lore... **mutters under her breath** Oh, I got it! Melwas, right?!

Adrian: I'M NOT A STALKER.

Percy: **off-stage** Sus.

All right, moving on from the stalker accusations for the moment. Broderick, come back, no, you're not allowed to sneak your way off the stage.

Broderick: Godfuckingdammit! **kicks the legs of his folding chair as he drags it back from the shadow of the stage wing**

Vivian: Perhaps if thou possessed a spell of invisibility, then thy attempts would not be so condemned to failure. Such things can be had for a price.

Arthur: **begins reaching for a certain knife sheath at his side while Adrian pauses in the midst of slumping down in his seat**

Broderick: No thanks! I'll stick to good ol' human ingenuity that would be slightly less likely to get my face eaten.

Vivian: Only slightly.

| Moving on now. This is the first combo question to both Merlin and Vivian...

Merlin: **perks up in interest**

Adrian: **simply looks relieved that they've finally moved on from him**

Vivian: Speak thy question and pay the price for thine answer.

| To Vivian & Merlin... do you know what kind of fae MC is? If you do, tell us what kind.

Vivian: One has... suspicions. But one also has allegiances to higher authorities than this. Would you miss the ignorance that is bliss?

Merlin: **elegantly shrugs** That would depend much upon the MC in question, no? Although I have already gone on record as saying that since MC has been wandering the mortal world for many years now and hasn't been consigned to a mental ward, then they must be some form of elf or other.

Cassandra: **off-stage ever more frantic writing can be heard**

Vivian: One can perhaps narrow the heritage further than that... if one wishes to exceed the protection given by this stage. And so, if the audience wishes such a contract...?

Percy: **off-stage** Sus.

Merlin: Oh, pay her no mind. Sealed away at the edge of the Veil, she knows naught more for certain than me. A bargain with a fae can oft go awry; never mind the daftness of striking one for a mere *guess*.

Vivian: **hisses like boiling water**

| All right then, moving on once more...

Arthur: A fine idea, before tempers flare even more.

| ...to another question for Vivian and Merlin again!

Arthur & Adrian: **sighs in perfect synchronicity**

Broderick: **darkly laughs** Nice try.

Gwen: **giggles** They get paired up so much it makes one *wonder*...?

Broderick: Nope. Don't wanna know how you chucklefucks are even doing that.

Vivian: **ignoring the squabbling children on stage** Oh? Thy pettiness demands that thou hold the child in arrears for what their progenitor did?

Merlin: Do you wish to be caught in close quarters with a spawn of Mab for an extended period of time, Vivian? Because once the Veil comes down, I can assure you there shall be more than enough room for you to join this field trip of ours...!

Vivian: . . . point duly noted. Then let us hope *that one* is not the get of the Winter Court then.

Broderick: **grumbles** That means that MC is totally one of those sow-things, doesn't it?

Cassandra: **sighing off-stage**

Merlin: Sluagh not sow, dear child. There are no pigs here. Not unless one of them turns you into one for *that* particular insult.

All right, as (un)enlightening as that might've been, it's time for the next question. This one is directed towards the High King. Arthur, did you love Guinevere?

Gwen: **her attention has been had!**

Adrian: **surreptitiously side-eyeing Arthur from across the stage**

Broderick: **is boredly scanning the area looking for any stray piglets**

Merlin: **cough** Timelines... **cough**

Arthur: Tis that not one of the plots that MC seeks to untangle back in Camelot? The truth of what lay between me and Guinevere... as well as certain *others* there. But I digress...

Gwen: Oh, do go on! 🙄

Arthur: Aye, well then... **side-eyeing that emoji** And so I will merely say that our relationship was good enough that she remained my Queen for fifty years even despite all the gossip of her infidelity and the claims of her unsuitability for the station due to her supposed barrenness.

Merlin: **indulgently chuckles** As diplomatic as ever, Arthur.

Gwen: So... does that make you a grieving widower now or are you officially back on the market?

Arthur: ...on the market?

Merlin: **chuckles more wryly** Well, he is on the list of the ROs. **clarifies** Romance options. Everyone wants to know if the High King is available to bed and wed again, Arthur!

Cassandra: **faintly muttering off-stage** Crass as ever.

Arthur: I will play it by ear. I know that much time has passed for all of you and that you should not be chained by your past incarnations. The same for any potential reincarnation of Guinevere.

All right, then, Gwen... since you seem overly excited to answer right now. Here's the next question for you... Who's your favorite Harbinger, and who's your least favorite?

Gwen: Hmm... hmm... hmm... I'm going to have to give the boring answer here and say that my favorite is MC. But it's MC, so that's expected, right? **giggles** Otherwise... **surreptitiously glances at the man at her side** Does Arthur count as a Harbinger?

Arthur: Even though we never properly met, my lady?

Gwen: I mean, you're THE King Arthur, so...

Arthurian MC in Audience: Damn straight!

Gwen: See, even one of the MCs agrees!

Adrian: **squinting out into the shadowed audience looking for who said that**

Merlin: **eyes narrowed slightly as they regard the High King from his right side** Does Arthur count as a Harbinger? ... not... precisely.

Gwen: Oh, pooh. Well then... **for a moment she considers Merlin from the opposite side of Arthur**let's just stick with MC as my favorite Harbinger then!

Broderick: **bites back a snort of laughter**

Gwen: As to my least favorite Harbinger, that's just *mean*. After all, we're supposed to be grand companions on a journey to save the world and all that. Like bosom buddies and the power of friendship and everything! So why would you have a question that singles out Broderick like that?

Percy: **off-stage** Sus.

Merlin: **cackles at the center of the stage**

Adrian: **silently and very carefully pushes his glasses back up the bridge of his nose, what no, he's not smiling**

Arthur: So very close to being properly diplomatic, my lady.

Gwen: 🙄 Whoops.

Vivian: **waters faintly receding into the background** As if being singled out as either favored or disfavored is a thing worthy of envy. Woe betide the attention that such mention brings.

Broderick: Yeah, well, every single one of you chucklefucks is my least favorite, so there!

And now that you seem willing to speak a bit more, here's our last question for this particular session. To Broderick...

Adrian: **heaves a sigh of relief that this is the final question... and not directed to him**

Merlin: **still seated smugly at center stage**

Arthur: **still smiling composedly**

Gwen: **still edging her seat slightly closer to the king**

Vivian: **still may or may not be trying to surreptitiously flood the area**

Broderick: **grumbles even louder from the far left side of the stage**

Broderick, do you really enjoy being the “normal” one?

Broderick: No, no, I don't! I shouldn't be *the* normal one. We should *all* be normal here! Because that's what normal is supposed to be... it's the NORM. But, noooo, this group can't stop setting random things on fire, or crawling across the roof, or fucking around in my dreams, or doing I don't even want to know what to the water supply, and I swear if you come through the skylight one more time, Percy, that I'll pop you in the—

Percy: **off-stage** Sus.

Lorelei: **off-stage** Well, he does have a point.

Broderick: And you know it's bad when Ms. Let-Me-One-v-One-the-20,000lb-Demon thinks I have a point! But at least she's not trying to drown everyone every time she makes an appearance! And never mind everything always exploding around Cassandra...

Cassandra: **off-stage** There are very logical reasons behind that...

Broderick: And how the fuck does someone manage to get locked inside the bathroom when it only locks from the inside?! While continuously playing that fucking JimBob the Pigfarmer theme song that's stuck in my head now! Never mind chasing after every single werewolf, zombie, vampire, or murderer that looks their way if they aren't half ugly, which brings me to Merlin—

Merlin: Oh, do go on, my boy.

Arthur: Hmm... this distinctly reminds me of *someone*.

Broderick: —who might as well be wearing a 'Stranger Danger' sign around her neck with those bewitching lips, which I'm sure can suck a man dry of—

Adrian: Uh, Broderick... do you want to change seats with me so you can sit next to Merlin?

Merlin: I daresay, in actuality, you may truly be the most “normal” one here, Adrian, dear child.

Broderick: Oh boy, Mr. Stalker is the other normal one...!

Adrian: I AM NOT A—

And that’s the end of this month’s Q & A session. Remember to send in your questions in the next Suggestions post if you belong to the Greater Circle!

Protected: March 2025 – Questions & Answers (Extended)



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

As suggested by the Greater Circle and voted on by the Greater/Lesser Circle tiers, it’s the March Question & Answer session coming in at 2458 words. We have an extra special session coming to you today, starring Adrian, Audrey III, and the Magic 8-ball!

At the center of the otherwise empty stage sits a mortified Adrian whose face periodically shifts between red, purple, and blue flanked on either side by a 3-foot-tall Venus flytrap and a run-of-the-mill plain plastic Magic 8-Ball toy sitting on a booster seat. All other chairs remain unoccupied.

Adrian: Are you kidding me? The only ones who got any questions this month are me, Audrey III—

Percy: **off-stage** — the elected High Queen of Parsimonious Botanical Function —

Adrian: — and MC’s FREAKING MAGIC 8-BALL?!?

Broderick: **off-stage, laughing so hard that he’s choking**

Merlin: **traipses out to reclaim their seat at the center of the stage** See now? Isn’t it better to have others on stage too?

Adrian: **buries face in hands** Why am I still here?

Gwen comes bouncing out on stage to sit on the other side of Audrey III, followed shortly by a significantly less bouncy Cassandra, who takes the empty seat next to the Magic 8-ball instead. No one saw anything, but suddenly Percy appears on top of his assigned rocking horse. Both he and the horse are now wearing party hats.

Lorelei: **off-stage, voice sounding somewhat muffled** Unbelievable. They all went out there *willingly!*

Broderick: **off-stage** Are you laughing?

Lorelei: **off-stage, clearing throat** No idea what you're talking about.

Ahem. And let's start with a question directed to "everyone", now that "everyone" includes a few more people on stage. To everyone... MC has brought their whole wardrobe along on the RV. What would you like to try on?

Merlin: Try on mortal clothing? Perish the thought! However... **picks up the Magic 8-Ball that has begun to roll back and forth atop its baby booster seat** This says "**Birthday Suit**".

Broderick: **off-stage** The Magic 8-Ball is answering too?!

Merlin: The question was directed to "everyone", dear child.

Adrian: **responding fervently as if he was afraid the question might change to something more insidious before he gets his answer in** Hoodie.

Percy: Cat-eared Hoodie.

Adrian: No, just the normal gray or black one and— oh wait, you mean *you'd* wear the Cat-eared Hoodie.

Percy: Or Matrix-style Trench Coat. Or Yellow Tracksuit. Or Vampire Cape. And Audrey III says the Wildlife Biologist Uniform is eminently suitable for gardening.

Audrey III: **jitters excitedly in her seat as Gwen looks faintly alarmed at the plant's side**

Broderick: **off-stage** Why am I not surprised here?

Cassandra: **is quickly flipping through her notes while Gwen looks on in interest. considering that Gwen and Cassandra are currently sitting on opposite ends of the stage, that's a bust, alas** I'll go with the Single-breasted Suit.

Gwen: And... uh... I'll go with... oh, I'd just love to try out MC's entire wardrobe! They were so lucky they were able to bring all of that with them! But if I had to pick one outfit alone, I'll go with the Frilly Blouse & Long Skirt, please.

Percy: **silently raises a thumb in approval as his wooden horse may or may not be snorting in agreement**

All right, then, now that everyone's done plundering MC's closet, let's move on to the next question. To the Magic 8-ball...

Merlin & Broderick: **concerted cackling**

Cassandra: **scribbling in notebook** Interesting. It seems that Broderick might share certain similarities in humor with Merlin when he is, shall we say, out of the line of fire?

Lorelei: **sighing, off-stage** Ridiculous.

Ahem. As we were saying, to the Magic 8-Ball, can we really trust Adrian?

Audrey III: **waxy leaves rustle as red, spiky mouths gape wide in excitement**

Adrian: *Really?*

Merlin: Ah yes, finally, a truly respected opinion on the matter regarding Sir Stalk-a-lot...

Adrian: I AM NOT A STALKER.

Magic 8-Ball:



Percy: **rocking ever harder** Sus.

Cassandra: It seems that might still be up for debate, Adrian.

Gwen: **sighs** How romantic. But then, how can the rest of us ever hope to compare to *that* depth of love? I'm afraid that everyone else has no chance with MC at all!

Merlin: **chuckles** Considering how these votes keep going, you may be right there, my dear.

Adrian: **may or may not be busy reptile screeching at the moment**

All right, and now for a change of pace. Our next question goes to... Adrian!

Merlin: **still cackling**

Cassandra: **still scribbling**

Percy: **still rocking on horse**

Gwen: **still sighing over love**

Audrey III: **looking for newest victim**

Adrian: **may or may not still be reptile screeching, but is definitely groaning**

Try and contain your excitement, Adrian! To Adrian, if MC is a changeling, how do you feel about the promises/vows/swears you have made to MC thus far?

Adrian: **surreptitiously looking around** Uh, considering that the Veil is still up and magic and fae nature should still be suppressed, especially in the middle of human civilization, then if hypothetically MC was actually a fae in disguise, it should be fine? Past promises, that is. Until any potential otherworldly nature starts exerting itself, then you'd have to really start being careful what you say around them...

Cassandra: **scribbling furiously**

Merlin: You seem rather well-informed when it comes to the fae, don't you, Adrian? Hmm...?

Adrian: I've got eclectic interests that include paranormal stuff like cryptids and fairies and such, that's all!

Percy: Sus. Also, optimistic.

Cassandra: Indeed, quite optimistic.

Merlin: **chuckles indulgently** Well, we all need a few things to believe in, don't we?

Gwen: Of course, love will find a way! Even if you accidentally barter away your soul in the bargain, that just means that your paramour really wanted it, right?

Adrian: . . .

Cassandra: . . .

Percy: . . .

Percy's Horse: . . .

Magic 8-Ball:



Merlin: When the time comes, let me deal with the fae, dear child.

Lorelei: **off-stage, huffing** As if that's much better!

Cassandra: **muttering while busily writing** This group is doomed.

All right, on to the next question, which is once more addressed to everyone!

Audrey III: **leaves jittering in further excitement**

Gwen: Is MC's plant really supposed to be like—?

What's everyone's favorite variant of MC? (cloudcuckoolander? mute? possessed? etc...)

Audrey III: **shakes even harder**

Percy: She likes the Gardener MC.

Gwen: I mean, that's sort of a given, right? Makes perfect sens—

Percy: Also the Serial Killer.

Everyone Else: . . .

Vivian: **crystalline laughter off-stage**

Adrian:okay, moving on from [Little Shop of Horrors](#) here. I like the Sensible MC who—

Broderick: **off-stage** Fuck, yes!

Adrian: Ahem, as I was saying, an MC who isn't trying to duke it out with a two-story hellhound with nothing but a dinky polo mallet. Or a blunted fencing sword. Or God forbid we're in the book club and—!

Merlin: **picks up the Magic 8-Ball** That charming toy of MC's says "**Very Doubtful**".

Percy: **still idly rocking** Not what the guides say about you.

Adrian: I've no idea what you're talking about and will pretend I never heard that.

Merlin: Meanwhile, I must admit to having a soft spot for a certain variation of Lust MC. Yes, that can be *very convenient* at times.

Adrian: **staaaring at Merlin**

Merlin: But anyone who says that their favorite is Possessed MC or the MC who runs around busting windows or hot-wiring the RV, feel free to leave the motorhome at once!

Percy: I play no favorites. All MCs are good. After a good exorcism, that is.

Gwen: I know, right?! It seems almost mean to have a favorite MC like that! A-although the MC that shares a love of romance novels with me is...

Adrian: Really, Percy? And what about that whole 'soulmate' achievement you have with a certain MC?

Percy: That's that and this is this.

Cassandra: **briefly flips through her notes** Yes, well, I suppose that just leaves me then. I like a clever MC with a bit of bravado to them. Some spice. Some backbone. Some cunning. Although that sort can be a pain too.

Gwen: The potential pain only makes it better!

Cassandra: Sure, darling, whatever you say.

Adrian: **muttering** Red flags. At least you didn't say your favorite was the Serial Killer too.

Cassandra: **merely smiles**

All right, and the next question is aimed right back at Adrian...

Adrian: **groans and slumps further in seat**

Merlin: **props their perfectly sculpted chin upon their just-as-graceful hands** Ah... the trials and tribulations of the Favorite.

Adrian: **grumbles harder**

Grumbling, and you even haven't heard the question yet, Adrian? And here it is! Adrian, are you romantically interested in Arthur?

Merlin: **begins cackling so hard that they nearly choke on the tub of popcorn that they suddenly pulled out of nowhere**

Adrian: **choking even without the help of any stray popcorn kernels** WHAT— W-WHY—WHERE IS THIS EVEN COMING FROM?!

Percy: Oubliette.

Adrian: That was not that— that!

Gwen: I mean, of course, he is? Who wouldn't be?

Adrian: Not helping, Gwen! And Merlin, where did you even get that popcorn?! You said you weren't bothering with human food during our trip!

Merlin: One needs to set the proper ambiance, dear child. Also, you're deflecting.

Percy: **whose rocking horse has been rocking its way closer to the tub of popcorn the whole time**
S'good though.

Audrey III: **jitters so excitedly that her pot nearly falls off the chair**

Merlin: Yes, yes... here you go. **tosses a few kernels over to the Venus flytrap's many gaping mouths**

Gwen: Uh... are you really supposed to be feeding it that sort of thing?

Cassandra: Not normally, no. But I wouldn't describe that one as 'normal'.

Adrian, no sneaking off the stage during all the chaos.

Percy: Busted.

Adrian: Dammit. **goes back to his seat**

Broderick: **off-stage** Yeah, that never works.

Adrian: Fine, fine. Okay, no, I'm not interested in King Arthur that way. I'm a fan — in an educational sort of way...

Merlin: Is that what they call it, nowadays?

Adrian: — *in a scholarly sort of way*. With a high level of respect. But I wouldn't want to— you know, *that* sort of relationship.

Arthur: **chuckling off-stage**

Adrian: **speech hastens ever faster with ever more mortification** Not that there's anything wrong with him! In that aspect! At all! Like Gwen said, who wouldn't be attracted to that sort of man? I mean, it would make way more sense for MC to pursue a relationship with Arthur then with me or *Merlin*—

Merlin: **still eating popcorn** Yes, tell it as it is, dear boy.

Arthur: **off-stage** Merlin...

Cassandra: **muttering and scribbling at the same time** Honestly, it seems Merlin needs to be tied to Arthur's apron strings...

Adrian: **babbling ever harder** I mean, just look at us. And then compare us to *him*. **pointing off-stage to where Arthur presumably is... somewhere** So, no, offense is applied in this rejection, I just... not worthy...!

Arthur: Tis fine, Adrian. I wager, I already possess more than my fair share of stalkers.

Adrian: I'M NOT A— That's just great, now you've convinced *King Arthur* that I'm a stalker!

Merlin: Indeed. You need to stop running away to be a proper stalker, Adrian.

Adrian: **grumbling even harder as he slouches down in his seat**

And finally, the question that has graced us with the presence of the elected High Queen of Parsimonious Botanical Function on stage! Audrey III, who do you like more, Adrian or MC?

Audrey III: **jitters so hard that her pot promptly falls to the side, where she fastens her many mouths onto the head and hair of Gwen**

Gwen: **flailing around wildly beneath all the waxy leaves and prickly mouths** WAUGH! WHY DOES THIS KEEP HAPPENING?!

Merlin: **hands propped beneath their chin once more, not helping** One wonders why of all seats, you chose *that one*, dear child?

Cassandra: **from across the stage, also not helping** Yes... I picked this chair for a reason. And the orbuculum says... **reaches for the nearby Magic 8-Ball** “**As certain as finding socks in the laundry.**”

Merlin: It seems someone's search query [crossed their wires](#).

Percy: **is helping... Audrey III** She says MC is her favorite. Unless MC forgets to feed her, then it's Adrian.

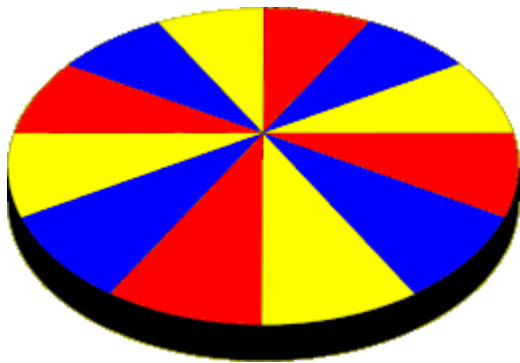
Adrian: **pulling the Venus flytrap off a frizzled-haired Gwen** No Audrey III, you'll get indigestion! You okay there, Gwen?

Audrey III: **sulking back on her seat where Adrian has placed her**

Gwen: *Just peachy*

Adrian: O-okay. If you say so.

Moving on to the final question of the day. Which is... a tie between three suggestions at thirteen votes a piece. Let's spin the randomizer and see who wins!



And the winner is the question to everyone! Tough break, Adrian. You could've initially been joined on stage by either Arthur or 404/Error/Not Found if the wheel of fortune had chosen differently.

Adrian: One of those options is significantly better than the other! Although maybe not with that last question you just directed to me?

Percy: Right. 404 hardly ever gets any questions then.

A growl resounds from stage left as the floor of the auditorium faintly shakes with a resounding deep crackling thunder.

Lorelei: **off-stage** Oh, for the love of....

Broderick: **off-stage** You fucking fuckers! Don't set it off again! Especially not while we're back here!

Vivian: **high-pitched laughter that may or may not've just shattered several glasses back stage**

Arthur: **off-stage** Ah... shall we subdue ██████ again? Lorelei to the left, and Broderick to the right while I...

Broderick: **off-stage grumbling** You just had to set it off!

And moving on now. The winning question to everyone is... Have you taken JimBob's Guide to Which Arthurian Character Are You? If so, what result did you get?

Adrian & Percy: I'm JimBob the Pigfarmer.

Percy: Jinx.

Gwen: R-really? You didn't up with Percival, Percy? I could've sworn that he was one of the options there.

Cassandra: **sounding puzzled** Who is JimBob the Pigfarmer?

Percy: **the rocking horse slows down to pointedly stare at Gwen and Cassandra** BobJim the Pigfarmer's cousin.

Cassandra: —that's not...!

Merlin: **elegantly flicks a silver lock behind their shoulder** I'm Merlin, of course.

Adrian: You cheated, didn't you?

Merlin: maybe.

Cassandra: **scribbling slows down** Why would you even have to cheat for—?

Percy: Audrey III is also Merlin.

Audrey III: **rattles leaves alluringly... or perhaps menacingly**

Merlin: **preens** Naturally. The best results to receive.

Gwen: Oh! I remember that cute little quiz. I was Guinevere! Tee hee hee...

Audrey III: **rattles even harder**

Gwen: 🙄 **slowly edges away**

Magic 8-Ball:

Merlin: **preens even harder** The very best result!

Cassandra: **presses down so hard on her pen that it snaps** I didn't take the test.

And that's the end of this month's Q & A session. Remember to send in your questions in the next Suggestions post if you belong to the Greater Circle!