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# Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

by  
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**Contemporary Drama Service**

PO Box 7710 • Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7710

## ***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

**MINSTREL, our storyteller**      **MERLIN, the magician**  
**SIR GAWAIN**      **LADY ELAINE, Sir Gawain's lady**  
**LADY LILLY, Elaine's friend**  
**WINNIE, the servant**      **LADY DIANA, of the court**  
**The GREEN KNIGHT**      **The HEADLESS GREEN KNIGHT**  
**SIR LANCELOT**      **SIR PENNROSE**  
**SIR BEAURIGUARD**      **OLD HAG**  
**MORGAN LA FAYE, Arthur's wicked half-sister**  
**KING ARTHUR, haggard king of the realm**  
**QUEEN GUINEVERE, his domineering wife**  
**GRENDDEL, Guinevere's domineering mother**  
**JESTER TOM, the court jokester**  
**PANSY, TULIP & VIOLET, daughters of Sir Bertilak**  
**SIR BERTILAK, ruler of the Forbidden Forest**

## ***THE SCENES***

**Scene One ...** Christmas Eve in the dining hall at Camelot  
**Scene Two .....** Near Christmas a year later in the  
Forbidden Forest

## ***PRODUCTION NOTES***

**Running Time:** 35-40 minutes

**Characters:** 11 female, 11 male

**Settings:** Scene One — A large table, Centerstage, covered with a cloth that goes to the floor in front. The Headless Green Knight hides under the table. Candlesticks, or other props that the director may deem suitable, can be placed on the table. Banners may hang from the rear wall or curtain.

Scene Two — Several cardboard pine trees with “snow” on the branches should be placed randomly around the stage. A small sign that reads “Forbidden Forest,” should be placed Down Center.

**Costumes:** The ladies should all wear long dresses, preferably in plain colors. Both Arthur and Guinevere should have capes and crowns. Grendel should have the same. The Old Hag should have a cape of black or another dismal color. Merlin can wear a bathrobe decorated with stars and moons. The knights should wear blue jeans and hooded sweatshirts. Tunics can be worn over this, belted at the waist. Various designs can decorate the tunics or they may be worn plain. The sweatshirt hoods can be worn on or off the head. Swords are optional. The Headless Green Knight and the Green Knight should be dressed the same: green tunics over their sweatshirts and blue jeans, with green hoods and possibly green capes. The Green Knight should have a green sword too. While he has his head, his face should be pale green. (Suggestion: green eye shadow works well in achieving this effect.) The minstrel character should dress in a fashion similar to that of the knights.

**Lighting:** Lights flash as indicated in the text.

SCENE 1

(The MINSTREL steps before the curtain, book in hand.)

MINSTREL: And now, fair knights and gentle ladies, a tale for you from the legends of Arthur, King of England, Ruler of Camelot, and Master of Excalibur! Forthwith you shall hear the story of Sir Gawain, a knight of the Round Table, and how he — (Looks up from reading) No! — Let me just begin my tale . . . (The curtain opens to reveal a table, covered with a cloth that extends to the floor in front. There are stools about it and, perhaps, candlesticks on top) . . . in the grand dining hall of Camelot. It was Christmas Eve, A.D. 865, and unlike the year before, it was a bitter, snowy Christmas Eve. (WINNIE enters from Right, bearing a tray of food.)

WINNIE: (Nonchalantly) Boy, oh boy, it's hot in this castle! If it gets any hotter they're gonna have to invent the fan!

MINSTREL: Ah, Winnie? It's cold outside. It's cold inside. It's A.D. 865 and you're freezing!

WINNIE: (Nonchalantly after slight pause) Boy, oh boy, it's cold in this castle! If it gets any colder they're gonna have to invent forced-air heating. (To MINSTREL) That better?

MINSTREL: Now shiver already and get back to work. The knights and their ladies will be here soon for the grand celebration!

WINNIE: (Disgustedly) You're telling me! Roast squab, boiled duck, smoked venison, barbequed moose, rack of caribou, sautéed rabbit backs — I wish somebody would start up a game preserve! They're eating us out of house and country!

MINSTREL: (To audience, as WINNIE works at the table) And so it was A.D. 865, where at Camelot the servants were preparing for the Christmas feast. It was but a short time before Arthur entered the dining hall, that Lady Elaine and Lady Lilly arrived for a secret meeting. (WINNIE watches carefully as ELAINE and LILLY enter from the Left.) I

1           said it was a secret meeting! Be gone, Winnie! (*WINNIE*  
2           *paces off Right.*)

3   **LILLY:** Oh, Elaine! I can't understand what is so important  
4           all of a sudden! I was just in the middle of having the  
5           dogs clean up the garbage in the hall.

6   **ELAINE:** Oh, Lilly . . . I've heard a terrible rumor! Gawain  
7           may be sent from the Round Table.

8   **LILLY:** Well, he is somewhat of a square.

9   **ELAINE:** Oh, Lilly . . . you know what I think of him!

10   **LILLY:** Honestly, Elaine. You go for the craziest creatures!  
11           First there was Marmaduke, the Astrologer.

12   **ELAINE:** It wasn't in the stars.

13   **LILLY:** Then, Sir Mark, the Sculptor.

14   **ELAINE:** He wasn't quite what he was cracked up to be.

15   **LILLY:** And now, Sir Gawain!

16   **ELAINE:** (*Dreamily*) He's fearless, brave, truthful, valiant . . .

17   **LILLY:** (*Casually*) Trustworthy, loyal, clean, thrifty, and he  
18           doesn't bark after ten at night.

19   **ELAINE:** I can't lose him! But I will if he is forced from Camelot.

20   **LILLY:** Now how do you know all this?

21   **ELAINE:** I heard Sir Pennrose talking with another knight . . .  
22           and he said that there was soon to be a meeting, and he  
23           thought it would be about Gawain's yearly evaluation.

24   **LILLY:** All the knights are evaluated yearly. What's awful  
25           about that?

26   **ELAINE:** They said Gawain hadn't done a brave deed this year.  
27           Isn't that silly?

28   **LILLY:** Oh? What has Gawain done?

29   **ELAINE:** Why, he . . . (*Thinking*) he . . .

30   **LILLY:** Yes?

31   **ELAINE:** There was the time he saved the royal duck from  
32           drowning in the royal bathtub.

33   **LILLY:** Wasn't that Gawain's brave deed from the year before?

34   **ELAINE:** Oh, what can we do?

35   **LILLY:** *We? We?*

1 **ELAINE:** Please, help me!

2 **LILLY:** I don't know how I get into these things!

3 **ELAINE:** Please!

4 **MINSTREL:** And so, Lilly called Merlin the Magician, who  
5 made his customary gaudy entrance. (*MERLIN enters from*  
6 *Right, waving his wand.*)

7 **MERLIN:** And what can I do for you two turnips? You want  
8 to see my strawberries? How about my cucumber? What  
9 is really exciting is watching my car rot!

10 **LILLY:** Cease, Merlin!

11 **MERLIN:** Cease? Cease? A hex on you!

12 **LILLY:** You threw your last good hex in A.D. 482 and you  
13 know it!

14 **MERLIN:** (*Shrugging*) All right, all right. Allakazam and what  
15 can I do for you?

16 **MINSTREL:** And so, the ladies explained to Merlin the  
17 problem and he agreed to help them. (*MERLIN angrily*  
18 *shakes his head to ELAINE and LILLY. Loudly*) I said he  
19 agreed to help them! (*MERLIN shrugs and nods. ELAINE*  
20 *and LILLY gratefully rush off Left.*) But suddenly, an  
21 unexpected guest arrived. (*MORGAN LA FAYE cackles*  
22 *from Upstage Right and appears slowly.*)

23 **MORGAN:** Ah, Merlin . . . fancy meeting you here.

24 **MERLIN:** Morgan! Morgan La Faye!

25 **MORGAN:** I'm glad to see you still remember me. You know?  
26 You always were my favorite magician.

27 **MERLIN:** Don't try to sweet talk me, Morgan. What brings  
28 your wicked carcass to Camelot?

29 **MORGAN:** I came to see my half-brother, Arthur. Is there  
30 any harm in that?

31 **MERLIN:** He'll not see you, you witch! Out with the truth!

32 **MORGAN:** (*Angrily*) You're being unpleasant, Merlin.

33 **MERLIN:** And why shouldn't I? I just spent two centuries as  
34 a wart hog because of your wicked spells. I've still got  
35 mud between my hooves!

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