

The Round Table by George Joyce III

A mystical era surrounded in mystery. The Dark Ages. A period where there is little to no documentation of what happened. Therefore, it was dubbed the name Dark Ages due to the shadow fog that surrounds this period. I'm sure you have all heard of the tale of King Arthur. One of the more popular tales from the Dark Ages. A tale of a fair king who lifted a sword and created the round table; whilst being accompanied by his companion Merlin. However, this is a different story. One of corruption and greed.

As King Arthur finally got his knights of the round table chosen and situated, it became apparent that it was not going to last long. The knights were greedy. Having come from nothing to being at a position of high power was too much for them. All the knights but one of the knights, Gawain, Geraint, Percival, Bors, Lamorak, Kay, and Gareth, plotted to overthrow King Arthur, along with King Arthur's son Mordred. Lancelot stood by Arthur.

However, the effort was not unified. All of the plotters all squabble over who would take control. Bors, the youngest of them, suggested the idea of all of them being with equal power. But for that, the others cut him down right then and there. "Too young." They all muttered. As they all went back to squabbling. Now there are seven plotters.

War broke out between Kay and Geraint. They were the first to prepare personal armies in secret. And as skepticism grew against their comrades, they launched a war on each other. This war was waged for 5 days and 6 nights. One of the first instances of constant fights with no end. The army men fatigued, the leaders growing impatient, and the rumors of the other five amassing armies of their own all three of these variables lead to both Kay and Geraint growing impatient. Kay, being slightly more eager, called his army back and started walking forward. Geraint followed. Kay called for a duel to settle the matter. Geraint agreed and lunged his longsword towards Kay. Kay blocked, kicked Geraint's knee, and grabbed his sword. As Kay approached Geraint without restraint, he bashed Geraint's primary hand with the pommel of his longsword and threw Geraint's sword to the floor. As Kay prepared to strike, Geraint struck him with a dagger in the side of his abdomen. Kay fell to the floor. However, his longsword was sent speeding down, and hit Geraint on the head. They both lie on the floor, Kay bleeding out in pain and Geraint unconscious never to wake again. And so remained five plotters.

The next was waged in four ways. Gawain, Percival, Lamorak, and Gareth, having all been paranoid after the fall of Kay and Geraint, all began to march on Camelot. The goal, not to capture, but to see who will live to capture. As the war waged for 13 days and 13 nights, there was no sign of give. However, the four, being much more patient than the other two, were in it for the long game. They believed they could capture Arthur and Merlin to get Merlin to use her magic to make them live forever. So, time was not a necessity to them. However, their armies dwindled, and reinforcements slowed and diminished to zero. As the last soldier was left standing, Gawain, out of annoyance, struck him down by a blow to the head. Then all four marched for the center. However, there was no thought of pleasantries. They marched with their weapons drawn. They started an all-out rumble. Slash. Percival fell at the hand of Lamorak. Squish. Lamorak fell at the hand of Gareth. Now two remained: Gawain and Gareth. Having

always been drawn together, there was a last attempt to negotiate. Gareth proposed a 50-50 power spread. This displeased Gawain. And his greed took over once again. With no chance to react, Gawain struck down Gareth; and left him to die on the battlefield surrounded by his fallen men and comrades.

And thus, two plotters remain. Gawain went to meet with Mordred. But out of the same paranoia that led to the War of the Four Traitors, Mordred ordered his men to kill any of his fellow plotters on sight. So, once Gawain approached the encampment, he was shot with 20 arrows in the chest. He was at least given a knight's burial and a payment for the standing of his work was sent to his home village. One plotter remained.

Arthur, grieved with the news of his knights, entered a state of mourning. He would lie in his chambers for days on end. Until he was delivered news that was too unbearable. His son Mordred was spotted with an army south by 10 miles, marching toward Camelot. Filled with fear of the decision he knew he would have to make, King Arthur ordered the assembly of the Royal Knights and marched toward Mordred. As they approached, they met for a confrontation. Mordred demanded his father's crown and said there is no need for blood to be shed. But Arthur, believing that he was the only one who could bring another era of peace and order to Britain, denied. And so, they dueled. The Royal Knights were commanded to not charge unless Arthur should fall. As the duel went on, it was apparent that for it to end, one of them would have to slip up. And one did. Arthur in his older years wasn't as enduring as his son. So his son struck and threw him to the floor. Deaf from the emotions of the duel, he couldn't not hear the Royal army marching. And his army stayed; for they were ordered to not charge unless ordered.

So as Mordred prepared for the final blow on his father, he was struck by a knight in the Royal Army. Merlin arrived in time to order the army to fall back to where they were during the duel. And in her grief of seeing her best friend and his son set to bleed out, she cast a spell that was the only way to save them both from dying.