

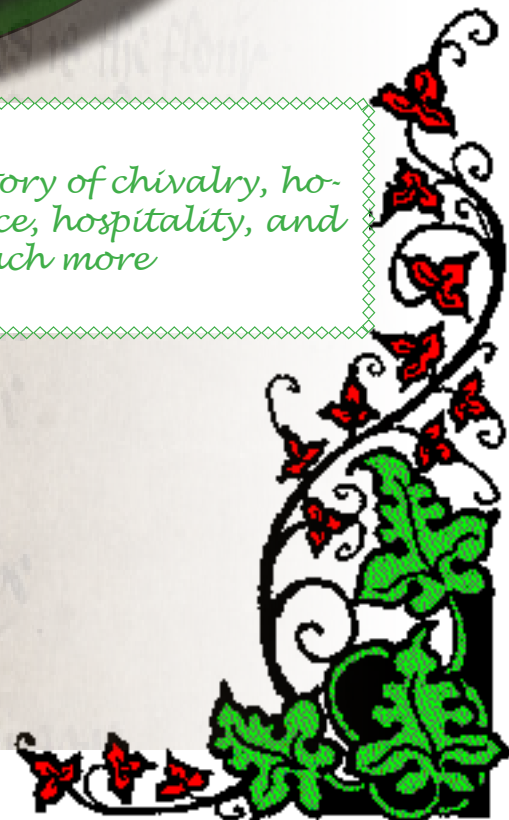


## LATEST NEWS FROM CAMELOT



*A medieval story of chivalry, honour, romance, hospitality, and much more*

**The story of Sir Gawain and The Green Knight  
retold by Elisa María López Cabrera**





*Long time ago.....when the war and siege of Troy had already finished and the man who had betrayed the city was brought to trial, guilty of terrible crimes. . . . When the noble Aeneas and his royal line swept across Europe and lived as the rulers of every country in the western world. . . . When powerful Romulus had already founded the city of Rome. And when over the Channel, illustrious Brutus had colonized Britain and its rolling mountains. . . .And once Britain was founded by this powerful leader, brave people were born there; many chose to do battle in turbulent times.*

*Of all the kings of the Britons, Arthur was the noblest. So my purpose is now to describe an adventure that took place at Christmas.*



Learning Integrated Project  
Fantastic Worlds and Living Places  
2008/09  
IES PEDRO JIMÉNEZ MONTOYA

**I**t was Christmas at Camelot and the King and his lords and all the best soldiers, the famous company of the Round Table were celebrating a great feast.

Guinevere, the queen, was sat in the middle, elegantly dressed, on her rich throne, too beautiful to describe her grey eyes. Sir Gawain was sat next to her. But Arthur, who was so young, impulsive and boyish at that time, would never sit and eat before someone told him a new story of some great adventure or until someone asked for a knight to fight against.

Suddenly a strange noise came and a monstrous apparition strode in the door, one of the tallest creatures in the whole earth appeared. I think he was the hugest man in the world. However, people were shocked by his colour- he was green from head to toe. This man and his clothes were all coloured green. Moreover, his horse was also a green horse and he carried a great, green axe. Who presides over this feast? He asked

King Arthur stood and declared, "I do! And who are you? "I am the Green Knight, and I come to offer you a challenge," the stranger said.

"I offer you the chance to swing this axe and take my head. However, in one year's time you must bow your head to me and let me behead you."

He said, "Who takes my offer?" "I will swing the axe!" King Arthur declared but then Sir Gawain stood and said: "Your Highness, please allow me the honor. Your life is too precious to give to this knight."

The young knight rose to his feet

and turned to the giant stranger. Sir Gawain easily cut his head. But surprisingly the head spoke, "Meet me in a year's time at the Green Chapel."

The Green Knight swung to his horse - head and all, and rode from the feasting hall; leaving Sir Gawain holding the emerald battle axe.



**W**inter swiftly turned to Spring, and Spring with the same speed became Summer, and with equal swiftness Summer turned to Fall. And Sir Gawain knew that now he needed to find the Green Chapel.

So, on All Souls Day he set off on his quest. The way was hard, and Gawain met with many adventures, but no one he met along the way could tell him where the Green Chapel lay. At last, with the snow piling high and his horse really tired, he saw the walls of the

castle. Sir Gawain dismounted and asked for hospitality. The porter opened the great gates and let the frozen young knight, and his horse, into the courtyard.

Lord Bertilak, the Lord of the castle, invited Sir Gawain to the feast. And once they had eaten well Lord Bertilak asked, "Why, my friend, do you ride so far into this forest? Few people travel this way, and even less in the winter."

"I am trying to find the Green Chapel by the New Year," Sir Gawain answered simply.

"Ah ha!" the Lord laughed, "That is easy enough!! That Chapel is not far from here."

"Can you tell me the way?" Asked Sir Gawain

"All in good time. It's still 4 days from the New Year. Rest here and regain your health." answered the Lord of the castle. "Now it's time for bed. Tomorrow I'll go hunting and I must get up before the sun rises."

"A hunt? May I join you?"

"No, no", said Lord Bertilak, "sleep in tomorrow and when you get up, my good Lady can entertain you- But I offer you a small contest". "Yes", the young knight answered.

"Whatever I catch, said the Lord, I will give to you, and whatever you gain tomorrow you can give to me"

"Agreed", he answered

The following day when Sir Gawain woke up, the lovely lady Bertilak came to stand by his bed. The Lady offered him many pleasures, but Sir Gawain, who was an honorable man, accepted just one kiss from her lips.

That night, Lord Bertilak and his men returned. "There is what I found today", pointing at the horses piled high with the meat of the hind.

And what of you? Only a kiss, my Lord, Sir Gawain said.

And where did you gain such a pleasant prize?

"That's not in our bargain" the young knight laughed.

"True", Bertilak said.

The next day passed much the same, except that Lord Bertilak brought home the head of a boar and Sir Gawain had 2 kisses to exchange.

With the coming of the third day, and the third hunt – the Lady gave him a green, silk sash. "This has magical properties that will protect you from harm"

"Thank you" he said and didn't protest too much when she claimed three kisses from him.

"Don't tell my husband of the sash" I shall not, Gawain promised.

When evening came and Lord Bertilak returned with a fox pelt, Sir Gawain offered the three kisses.



**O**n New Year's day. Sir Gawain was led to the Green Chapel by a servant. The servant begged the young knight to reconsider, telling him all the horrible stories about the Green Knight's cruelty. He even offered to lie and say that Sir Gawain had gone to the Chapel, so that the young man could flee unharmed, but the knight didn't agree. Instead, he angrily sent the man back down the trail and continued his way to the Chapel. As the knight entered the doorway, he heard the terrible, echoing sound of the grinding of an axe. Then he found the Green Knight:

Ah excellent, you've come! One blow is your only right- Sir Gawain growled, laying his head on the waiting block, but when the axe was brought down, the young man flinched.

What's this? said the Green Knight

"I will not move again"

The second blow stopped just short of his neck.

"A test", the Green Knight laughed, "to see if your heart was ready"

"Strike the blow!", Sir Gawain demanded.

So I shall, the Green Knight said. However, the axe only nicked young Gawain's neck and when he saw the trickle of blood he leapt to his feet.

"Now we are done!! You proved yourself a worthy knight."

"Who are you?" The young knight demanded.

"I am Lord Bertilak and with the help of my Lady wife we tested you. I stayed my hand on the first two blows because you refused the temptations that Lady Bertilak offered you. And gave you only a nick because you hid the sash from me. I can't blame you for wishing to save your own life. But the fact that you came here is what saved your life. A worthy man."

Sir Gawain's cheeks had grown red with shame and he tore the sash from about his waist. Throwing it to the ground.

"No, no" Lord Bertilak said. "Take it up and wear it to prove that you faced the green knight and lived. And that we parted friends."

"Friends . . . . But I will wear it to remind me not to be too proud." " I thank you" said Sir Gawain. "But now my quest is done and I must return to Camelot".

He returned and told King Arthur and the court of his guest and his trials. And while he wore the green sash to remember humility, the other knights wore green sashes to remember Sir Gawain's bravery.

*The End*





*A late-Medieval image of New Year's Gift Giving--the January page of the Très Riches Heures du Duc du Berry,*