

TIME MACHINE 23

This book is a time machine. Travel back
1,500 years to find the real King Arthur.



**QUEST FOR
KING ARTHUR**

**This book is
your passport
into time.**



**Can you survive
Briatin during
the Dark Ages?
Turn the page to
find out.**

TIME MACHINE 23

**Quest for
King Arthur**

by Ruth Ashby

illustrated by Scott Caple



A Byron Preiss Book

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ATTENTION TIME TRAVELER!

This book is your time machine. Do not read it through from beginning to end. In a moment you will receive a mission, a special task that will take you to another time period. As you face the dangers of history, the Time Machine often will give you options of where to go or what to do.

This book also contains a Data Bank to tell you about the age you are going to visit. You can use this Data Bank to travel more safely through time. Or you can take your chances without reading it. It is up to you to decide.

In the back of this book is a Data File. It contains hints to help you if you are not sure what choice to make. The following symbol appears next to any choices for which there is a hint in the Data File.



To complete your mission as quickly as possible, you may wish to use the Data Bank and the Data File together.

There is one correct end to this Time Machine mission. You must reach it or risk being stranded in time!

THE FOUR RULES OF TIME TRAVEL

As you begin your mission, you must observe the following rules. Time Travelers who do not follow these rules risk being stranded in time.

1. You must not kill any person or animal.
2. You must not try to change history. Do not leave anything from the future in the past.
3. You must not take anybody when you jump in time. Avoid disappearing in a way that scares people or makes them suspicious.
4. You must follow instructions given to you by the Time Machine. You must choose from the options given to you by the Time Machine.

YOUR MISSION

King Arthur is probably the most famous king in the western world. Everyone knows the legend of Camelot—the story of the Knights of the Round Table and the king who established a reign of peace and prosperity in the British Isles.

But did King Arthur ever actually exist? For centuries people assumed that his story was invented by medieval writers to entertain the courts of Europe. But archeological evidence suggests that there was a real King Arthur, and that he lived during the most troubled times in Britain's history.

You must discover the truth behind the legend. To do so, you will brave the untold dangers of Britain during the chaotic and treacherous Dark Ages. It is up to you to find the man who finally brought peace to Britain. Was it the great King Arthur who stopped the swarm of invaders and brought an end to Britain's misery? You must determine once and for all if King Arthur was more than just a legend.



To activate the Time Machine, [click here](#).

**TIME TRAVEL
ACTIVATED.
Stand by for Equipment.**



[Click Here](#)

EQUIPMENT

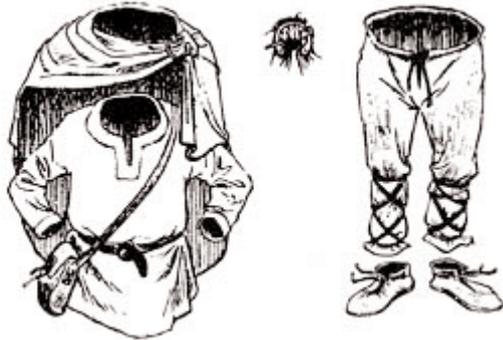
For your journey into the Dark Ages, you will dress in the clothing of the ordinary Briton: a loose shirt or tunic, a pair of breeches, leather shoes, and a warm woolen cloak. Your cloak will be fastened together with a round metal pin called a brooch. Over your shoulder you will carry a leather knapsack.

In addition, you can choose one of the following items to take with you:

matches



sugar cubes



To begin your mission now, [click here](#).



To learn more about the time to which you will be traveling, [click here](#).

DATA BANK

TIMELINE

2000-1600 B.C.:	Building of Stonehenge
55-56 B.C.:	Julius Caesar invades Britain
A.D. 43:	Romans conquer Britain
A.D. 59:	Revolt of Boudicea
A.D. 122:	Romans build Hadrian's Wall
A.D. 410:	Romans pull out of Britain
A.D. 428:	Vortigern hires Saxon mercenaries
A.D. 490:	Battle of Badon
A.D. 871-99:	King Alfred the Great
1066:	Norman Conquest
1468-70:	Sir Thomas Malory writes <i>Le Morte D'Arthur</i>

1) The people who inhabited Britain when the Romans arrived in 55 B.C. were known as the Celts. They were divided into tribes, each headed by a chieftain. Their priests, or Druids, were known for their wisdom and learning. But they also practiced human sacrifice as part of their religious rituals.

2) Julius Caesar invaded Britain twice, in 55 and 54 B.C. But the Romans didn't finally conquer Britain until A.D. 43.

3) The Romans brought civilization to Britain in the form of paved roads, canals, a system of coinage, and fortified walled towns. Like all the conquered tribes on the European mainland, Britons became imperial citizens.

4) In A.D. 59–60, Boudicea, queen of the Iceni tribe, led an unsuccessful revolt against the Romans.

5) In A.D. 122, the Roman emperor Hadrian set up a wall across northern Britain that stretched from sea to sea. Built to keep the barbaric northern tribes, especially the Picts, from attacking the

more civilized south, Hadrian's Wall was only partially successful.

6) After the sack of Rome by the Goths in A.D. 410, the Romans pulled out of Britain. The British were no longer protected against other invaders.

7) About A.D. 428, a British high king named Vortigern hired Saxon troops to help him repel Pictish and Irish invaders. The Saxons came from the coastlands of what is now Germany.

8) Before long, the Saxons in Britain were so numerous that they rebelled against the British. They were joined by other newcomers to the land, most notably the Angles, from what is now southern Denmark.

9) After a major victory over the invaders in about A.D. 490, the British held out against complete domination for the next fifty years. By the time the Saxons and Angles took over the country, they had abandoned their more barbaric customs and intermarried with some of the British. Many had adopted the Christian faith.

10) The Anglo-Saxons ruled most of Britain for the next 600 years. Their language, Old English, is the ancestor of modern English. Their land came to be called Angle-land, or England.

11) The last two major invasions of Britain occurred during the eighth and ninth centuries, when the Vikings attacked from Scandinavia, and in 1066, when William of Normandy sailed across the British Channel and conquered the English at the Battle of Hastings.

12) Medieval historians included Arthur in their list of British kings. Their histories which were generally inaccurate, told of a King Arthur who reigned from a castle called Camelot. Presumably he built a round table for his knights so that everyone seated around it would have equal rank.

13) In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries French authors wrote long fabulous tales, called romances, about the adventures of the Knights of the Round Table. In 1468–70, Sir Thomas Malory wrote *Le Morte d'Arthur*, "The Death of Arthur," the most famous English version of the legendary stories.

The
**BRITISH
ISLES**
at the time of
ARTHUR

LEGEND

- Major Roman Roads
- ▨ Area Occupied by Saxons
by A.D. 500



14) Interest in the Arthurian tales revived in the nineteenth century. In 1839, a British peer held a mock tournament, in which “knights” jostled and women dressed up as medieval ladies.

15) After John F. Kennedy’s assassination in 1963, many writers likened the years of his presidency to the idealistic days of Camelot. The Arthurian legend has persisted to this day.

DATA BANK COMPLETED.
CLICK HERE TO BEGIN
YOUR MISSION.



**Don’t forget, when you see this symbol,
you can click it to check the Data File for
a hint.**





T*rrrraa-da-da-da!* A trumpet blasts in your ear. Startled, you jump and bump into a bald-headed monk wearing a long brown robe.

“Eh, watch where you’re going, mate,” he says, looking annoyed.

“Sorry,” you mumble, as the monk strides off. Touchy fellow.

You look around. You’re in the middle of a large crowd of people, all of whom are dressed up. You see women wearing long velvet gowns and tall, pointed hats with veils that trail on the ground behind them. Men strut by, encased in armor and flashing long bright swords. There are jugglers juggling, tumblers tumbling, and vendors selling food from trays strapped around their necks.

On a hill high above the whole scene rises a castle, its pennants waving proudly in the breeze.

You must be back in the time of King Arthur and his knights!

“Excuse me,” you say to a jester wearing a red, yellow, and green cap with little bells jingling from each pointed end. “Is that King Arthur’s castle?”

The man looks startled for a moment. Then he breaks into a wide grin. “Well now, maybe it is, and maybe it isn’t, my young friend. Depending.”

“Depending?” you repeat, confused.

“Depending on who you ask, of course.” He puts a finger beside his nose, looks wisely at you and, turning a cartwheel, disappears into the crowd.

This jester is just speaking in double-talk, you realize. Someone else might give you a straight answer.

You are trying to decide whom to ask when *smack!* A flying object hits you in the side of your face.

“*Ouch!*” you cry out. Looking down, you pick up the orange lying at your feet.

“That’s mine, guv’nor,” says a boy in a short tunic and tights. He runs up and plucks the orange from your hand. “I’d let you keep it, but the tournament hasn’t even started yet and I’m running out of oranges. I can’t seem to get the knack of juggling four at once.”

“That must be quite a trick,” you say sympathetically. “What tournament is this, anyway?”

“The Eglinton Tournament, of course.” The boy gives you an odd look. “What are you doing here if you don’t know? My family heard about it as far away as Suffolk. There’s to be riding, and jousting, and a Queen of Beauty crowned, and a jolly lot of food and dancing. His lordship has opened his grounds to anybody who wants to come.”

The boy looks you up and down. “You’ve dressed up for it, anyway, even if your clothes are a bit rum. You’ll need that cloak if it starts raining.”

You look up at the sky and see masses of dark clouds gathering ominously over the castle.

“Does King Arthur live there?” you start to ask the juggler, but he is gone.

If King Arthur is here, he must be in the castle, you think to yourself. Trudging up the hill, you pass monks and pages and horses decked out in gaily colored ribbons. As you near the castle, you look down and see a wide, open area on the plain below you. It is surrounded by little striped tents and open grandstands filled with thousands of people. That must be where the tournament will take place.

By the time you finally reach the castle, you are a bit tired—but what a sight! A line of knights on horseback stretches around the castle. Carrying long lances that stick straight up into the sky, the knights are dressed in armor so shiny it looks brand-new. At the head of the line a beautiful woman is preparing to mount a white

horse—and beside her rides a man dressed in golden armor.

He must be King Arthur!

“Sire!” you cry out. You run up and kneel in front of King Arthur’s horse.

“What the deuce—” the king begins. But his words are interrupted by a loud clap of thunder. *Crack!* The skies open, and a torrential rain begins to fall.

Neiighh! The golden knight’s horse rears up, frightened by the thunder. Its hooves are above you and ready to pound down.

Jump out of its way to avoid being trampled.



Click here.



K*a-calank!* You watch as two knights gallop at each other from opposite ends of a field and violently collide. The Knight of the Red Plume, unseated by his opponent, bounces to the ground and lies still.

The man next to you exclaims, “Ah, see how the knight’s lady weeps for him!” You look at a woman who is gently dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief. She continues to cry as the Knight of the Red Plume is helped up and walks away.

“He doesn’t look hurt,” you say.

“But he has disgraced his lady,” the man explains. “Like Arthur’s Knights of the Round Table, knights here in France should do great deeds for their ladies—kill dragons and fight infidels and win tournaments.”

“Did Arthur’s knights really kill dragons?” you ask skeptically.

“Who knows?” the man replies. “In 1280, it’s hard to know what really happened back in Arthur’s time. It makes a good story, though.”

Obviously you won’t learn much about the *real* King Arthur here. Maybe Sir Thomas Malory will know more. You excuse yourself and leave.



Click here.



It is 1470. You are in a dark stone room, with one small, barred window. An older man sits snoring behind a table, a quill pen fallen from his hand.

As you tiptoe forward to see what he has been writing, your wet shoes make a squelchy sound. The man starts awake.

“Who the devil are you?” he asks, glaring.

“Sir Thomas Malory?” you inquire, hoping you’ve got the name right. “I want to ask you about King Arthur.”

“King Arthur? You mean someone outside the walls of this blasted prison has heard that I’m working on a book about King Arthur?” Malory shuffles some of the papers on his desk. “I just finished writing about the death of Arthur this afternoon,” he continues, holding a sheaf of paper aloft. “Let me read it to you—I receive few enough visitors.”

Malory clears his throat and begins to read. You sit on the rough cot in the corner and listen, mesmerized.

You hear about the fall of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. The knights came from far and wide to join the Round Table, which was formed to uphold truth and justice and defeat the enemies of Britain. According to Malory, the knights were once united under Arthur’s leadership, and peace reigned throughout the land. But jealousy and ambition brought dissension to Arthur’s court. His queen, Guinevere, and his best knight, Lancelot, betrayed him. Knight turned against knight, and Arthur’s table was destroyed.

At the final battle, Arthur and his arch-enemy Modred met and fatally wounded each other. Arthur was borne from the battlefield



and rowed across the lake to the isle of Glastonbury by three beautiful ladies.

Malory finishes reading his story:

“In many parts of Britain it is believed that King Arthur did not die and that he will return to us and win fresh glory . . . but for myself, I do not believe this, and would leave him buried peacefully in his tomb at Glastonbury . . . And inscribed on his tomb, men say, is this legend: *Here lies Arthur, the once and future king.*”

Malory puts his papers down and the two of you sit silently for a moment. “There,” says Malory brusquely. “You can tell the world outside Newgate that I have written a masterpiece. Now begone with you. I’m going to finish my nap.”

You hesitate, and then ask one more question. “Did your story really happen?”

“Who knows?” Malory replies, shrugging his shoulders. “I got my tale from medieval French romances. The real Arthur may have lived in the fifth century—or not at all.”

He leans back in his chair and closes his eyes. You assume Malory is already asleep when you hear him say under his breath, “But if Arthur didn’t live, he should have.” A moment later he is snoring.

Malory said that the real Arthur *may* have lived in the fifth century. Maybe you should look for him there.



Jump back to the fifth century.

[Click here.](#)



You spring out of the way of the horse's hooves. The golden knight is clinging to its neck and trying to stay on.

You run up and grab onto the horse's bridle. Together you calm it down.

"Thank you," the golden knight says. A servant runs up to him with an umbrella.

The knight snaps the umbrella open. Hundreds of other umbrellas appear at the same time—and down the hill, they blossom like a garden of black mushrooms.

You've never heard of a knight with an umbrella. What's going on?

The golden knight hands you his umbrella. You hold it over his head as he dismounts and barks orders to his servants.

"Get the horses back into the stables!" he shouts, trying to be heard above the storm. "Escort the ladies into the Great Hall and give them something warm to drink!"

He pauses. Finally you have the chance to ask him, "Are you King Arthur?"

"You've been reading too many books," he says with a laugh. "There's no King Arthur in the nineteenth century. Nor in any other century, I'd wager."

"But who are you?"

"Lord Eglinton of Eglinton Castle, of course." With a wave of his hand he indicates the battlements behind him. "Like you, I have always been fascinated by stories about Arthur. When I was about



your age, I read French romances and stories by Sir Thomas Malory—tales of knights and derring-do, damsels in distress, jolly good stuff. And so I decided to hold a real tournament, with real knights wearing real armor. And I invited all of England—” The visor of his helmet falls over his face and the golden knight tugs at it. It will not budge.

You hear a muffled, “Blast this rain!” Lord Eglinton turns and walks, quite stiffly, back toward his castle.

One of the servants grabs the umbrella from your hand and runs after his master. You are left standing in the pouring rain.

You’re not going to meet King Arthur at this Victorian costume party. You think about what Lord Eglinton has said. Maybe you should ask Sir Thomas Malory about Arthur—he may know where you can look for him. Or you could go to France and ask about the Arthurian romances.



Go to France. [Click here.](#)



Find Sir Thomas Malory. [Click here.](#)



Halt! Who goes there?" A Roman sentry steps out of the shadows and blocks your way. It is 54 B.C., the year of Julius Caesar's second expedition to Britain. You're on a beach near an encampment.

"I'm looking—" you start to tell the guard.

"Spy!" he yells. "A spy in the clothes of a Briton!"

Another sentry runs up and grabs you roughly by the arm.

"Escort the spy to Caesar," orders the first Roman.

"But I only wanted—" you try to protest.

"Save it for Caesar," the second one says, hooking you firmly under an elbow and propelling you across the sand.

In the flickering firelight of the Roman camp, you see hundreds of boats and small ships rolled up on the beach. Vigilant legionaries stand guarding them, their spears thrust into the sand. They look as if they expect an attack any minute.

The guard leads you up to the biggest camp tent on the beach.

"Marcus Deuteronomus reporting to Caesar," he tells the soldier on duty. The soldier disappears inside the tent and comes out a moment later.

"Caesar will see you," he says.

Marcus shoves you inside. The tent is festooned with purple. Behind a table in the center a man in full battle armor sits writing by candlelight. He looks up when you enter.

"What have we here?" he asks.

Marcus gives Caesar a military salute. "I caught this British spy skulking around our encampment, sir," he answers. "I've brought

him in for questioning.”

Julius Caesar looks at you sharply. “So, what do you have to say for yourself, youngster?”

Finally someone will let you speak!

“Sir,” you say, “I am not a spy. I am looking for a man named Artorius. I was hoping that you—”

Crash! The night quiet is shattered by a sudden tumult. The guard outside the tent rushes inside. “The British forces are attacking from the hillside!”

Caesar gets up and starts to leave the tent. At the flap he says, half over his shoulder, “There is no Artorius here. Maybe you can find him in Rome when we send you back with the rest of the British captives.”

Oh no! You’re going to be taken as a prisoner! Marcus’ attention has been diverted by the commotion outside. You look around quickly. The moment Marcus’ back is turned, you run over to Caesar’s candle and blow it out. The tent is plunged into darkness!

“Hey!” yells Marcus, as you hear him tripping over something on the floor. “You won’t escape!”

Oh, yes you will!



Jump forward 100 years. [Click here.](#)



Jump forward 200 years. [Click here.](#)



Fire!” someone screams. You feel the warmth of flames licking at your feet and jump away from a smoke-filled doorway. From over the top of the door, a painted satyr, half-man, half-goat, grins down.

It is A.D. 446 and you are in the spacious stone courtyard of a villa somewhere in the British countryside—and the villa is burning down around you!

Frightened men and women run past, clutching household goods and dragging wailing children behind them. Dazed by the smoke and the confusion, you stand uncertainly for a moment and try to figure out what to do.

“The Saxon devils have arrived! Run for your life!” a voice shouts. Saxon devils? You turn and see a swarm of blond-haired giants pouring through the villa’s main entrance. They are brandishing axes and short, broad-swords—and one of the giants has just spotted you!

You remain still, frozen in fear. As you turn to run, you feel a hand grasp yours. A voice whispers, “Follow me.”

Her other hand gathering up her long white skirt, a young girl pulls you after her. The two of you flee across the courtyard and down a long corridor. You run along mosaic floors, past tall white columns and open doorways leading onto quiet courtyards.

Footsteps pound behind you. The girl pulls you with her into a small, dark anteroom. The two of you wait, panting, as the footsteps grow louder and then fade away.

“I’ve got an escape route,” she whispers. Now that you’ve



stopped running, you can see she's about your age, with long dark hair arranged in ringlets around her face. She tiptoes across the room and pulls aside a wall hanging. Beneath the hanging, there is a door in the wall. She wrenches it open, steps in, and disappears.

"Come on," you hear a voice echoing from within.

You step in. The door swings shut behind you, and you tumble down a short flight of stairs into total darkness.



[Click here.](#)



Moonlight glows softly through a grove of trees. You hear the soft rush of a nearby stream. It is 554 B.C., and you are somewhere in the wilds of prehistoric Britain.

You turn around slowly to get your bearings in the dark. A strange, misshapen face is leering at you in the moonlight!

Is it a spirit of the forest? A beast out on the prowl?

Your heart thumping, you slowly back away from it. It doesn't even blink an eye. Then you notice other grotesque faces staring out of the darkness. The breeze blows, the leaves rustle—but everything else in the forest glade is quite still.

Whew. You must be the only living person here after all. Sure enough, when you look at the faces closely, you see they are crude wooden carvings of men and women. Maybe you're in a prehistoric art museum. Or this could be an outdoor temple of some sort.

Ooommm-hhuommm-omm.

You hear a low, droning sound in the distance. It grows louder; a group of people are chanting, and they're coming your way. You are curious to find out what's going on, but this place is creepy. You'd better remain invisible.

Hoping to conceal yourself under a bush, you run into the woods on one side of the glade. But the underbrush has been cleared away, and the glade is surrounded by a high mound of earth. There's no place to hide!

Lit by torches, a procession enters the clearing. At its head is a white-robed figure carrying a leafy branch in its hand.

Huummm-ooooom.

You crouch low in the underbrush. *Crack!* You've stepped on a branch, which breaks under your weight.

A woman darts out from the end of the procession, seizes you, and drags you into the line. You stumble into place next to a wretched-looking man dressed in rags.

You are in a double line of people moving slowly and heavily, as if drugged. They are guarded by men and women wearing crowns of oak leaves on their heads.

The chanting continues. The procession nears the end of the clearing, and in the flickering light of the torches you can see a stone altar and a great two-story straw figure behind it. It looks like a wicker bird-cage in the shape of a human being.

"What's going on?" you whisper to the man beside you.

He groans and looks at you with dull, glazed eyes. "We're prisoners of war—and our enemies have delivered us over to their Druids. Now we will be sacrificed to the eternal gods."

A white-robed man—who you decide must be the chief Druid—raises his leafy wand to the sky and begins to intone, "O Spirit of Nature, she who watches over us, accept our offering."

The other priests and priestesses chant in reply. The hymn continues, rising in volume, as the first of the prisoners is led up to the wicker shape. Some Druids begin to gather sticks and branches and place them under the wicker.

They are going to burn the prisoners alive!

The other captives seem resigned to their fates. But not you!

Surprise may be your best strategy. Bumping into the Druid priestess next to you, you knock the torch out of her hand. You dash past the startled woman and into the grove of trees.

You dive into the deepest shade you can find—and jump!



[Click here.](#)





Heave-*ho!* Heave-*ho!*” Straining with all your might, you haul on a gigantic wooden barge. Behind and in front of you, hundreds of other workers pull in the same monotonous rhythm. Inch by inch, the barge crawls forward over dry land.

“Heave-*ho!*” The voice of your gang leader rings out again. You give your rope another hard tug. You feel as if your back is about to crack in two.

Just when you are ready to give up on this time period altogether, the leader cries “Halt!”

You let the rope drop and rub your aching arms. Finally, you look up. The man next to you is stretching his muscles.

“I’m sure glad that’s over for the day,” you say experimentally. You wonder exactly what it is that’s over.

“I’m glad it’s over for the year,” the man says, laughing. “We’ve had a long trip. But it will be a good homecoming.”

He looks off into the distance, and you follow his gaze.

There, rising majestically out of the plain, are the hanging stones! The stones are arranged a bit differently than they were in Drusilla’s day. But they look just as grand.

You look back at the barge and see the large brownish-gray stone lying on top of it. You’ve jumped back to 1554 B.C., and you’ve helped tow the giant stones to Stonehenge!

Your companion gives you another, more searching look. “You haven’t been with us during the long months. I’ve gotten to know every man, woman, and child on this journey.”

“No, I haven’t,” you improvise. “I just joined the gang today. I

wanted to be able to tell my grandchildren I hauled the final stone.”

“Yes, our efforts will be long remembered,” the man agrees. “Someday my children’s children will tell the story of Wen, their grandfather, who helped haul the greatest of the sacred stones. And how he met with”—Wen bows in your direction and you tell him your name—“on the last day of the journey, and how they returned to the Sacred Circle, where there was much rejoicing.

“I haven’t seen my family for six long moons,” Wen continues. “Would you like to come with me?”

You nod, and the two of you set off across the Salisbury Plain to Stonehenge.

“How long has it taken to build the Sacred Circle?” you ask Wen, using the same name for Stonehenge that he used.

“Generations without end,” Wen replies. “My ancestors, and my ancestors’ ancestors, have grown up in the shadow of its splendor. But now we are making it more magnificent than ever. The stones that we have brought will show the sun where to rise and where to set. It will tell us the story of the moon, and predict the days when the earth will be covered with darkness.”

A calendar! So that’s what this cluster of huge stones was designed for. In your own time, Stonehenge is considered the greatest monument of prehistoric Britain. You realize now that it was built for very practical purposes.

The builders of Stonehenge have settled on the land for at least a mile around it. You pass crude sod and wood huts, gardens, and tilled fields.

Sharp odors greet your nostrils when you enter the encampment. Bent over steaming cauldrons, women stir mysterious stews with long wooden sticks. Naked children skip by, playing tag or catch with little round stones. Chickens and pigs scurry underfoot, and you almost trip on a mangy dog running back and forth between your legs.

One of the children running by bumps into Wen. She looks up and shouts, “Father!” Wen picks his daughter up in his arms, gives a wave in your direction, and sets off into the crowd.

Unnoticed, you enter the stone circle and gaze up, craning your neck. The largest stones look more than twenty feet high. And you know, from the many hundreds of people needed to tow just one stone, that each stone must weigh thirty or forty tons. No wonder thousands of people are at work at Stonehenge at once.

Some men dig holes into the ground with sharp bone tools that you recognize as antlers. Others pound away at the huge stones with stone hammers.

In the center of the circle, a horizontal stone is almost ready to be placed across two vertical ones. It has been lifted up to the correct height by means of a series of log steps. Teams of men seesaw the stone back and forth on the logs.

Rock . . . rock . . . rock. The huge horizontal stone slides off its log perch onto the summit of the two upright stones. The capping stone is in place.

A hush falls over the crowd, as all eyes turn toward the top of the new arch. "All honor to God!" a man sings out. He stretches his hands toward the capping stone as if to bless it.

You have witnessed the creation of one of the wonders of the world. But it is time to return to your mission. You have jumped much too far back in time to find Julius Caesar.

You get out of camp and try again.



Jump forward 1000 years. [Click here.](#)



Jump forward 1,500 years. [Click here.](#)





It is pitch-black. You reach out your hands and touch clammy walls to each side of you. You feel a moment of panic.

“Don’t be frightened,” the girl tries to reassure you. “My family had this tunnel dug just in case the Saxons ever raided our villa. It runs straight in one direction until it comes out above ground.”

“Thank you for rescuing me,” you say, as the two of you join hands and begin to feel your way along the tunnel. “I don’t know what I would have done back there.”

“Yes, you looked quite lost. Who are you? What were you doing in the Trebonius family villa?”

“I’m—I’m looking for someone,” you answer evasively. You tell her your name and ask for hers.

“Drusilla Trebonius,” she answers.

“How did you know the Saxons were coming?” you ask, changing the subject.

“Haven’t you heard about the Saxon mercenaries?” Drusilla asks in disbelief.

“I’ve heard rumors,” you answer cautiously. “I just arrived in this part of Britain. I don’t really know what’s going on.”

“Then I’ll begin at the beginning. After the sack of Rome more than thirty years ago, the Romans pulled out of Britain. They could no longer afford to keep troops here. So we Britons became the prey of barbarians from the west and the north.

“At last our High King, Vortigern, decided to hire Saxon mercenaries to help us get rid of the Picts and the Irish. But now the

Saxons have grown so numerous they've turned against *us*. They've been rampaging the countryside, burning, murdering, and pillaging."

"Aren't you Roman yourself?" you ask, thinking of Drusilla's Latin-sounding name.

"No, we're British, but all Britons became Roman citizens after the occupation," she answers. "Our towns and villas and roads are all Roman. The Romans brought civilization to our island—and now that civilization might be destroyed!"

The tunnel takes a sharp turn, and you almost bump into a wall. Up ahead, you see a dot of light.

"We must be almost near the end," Drusilla says. The two of you begin to run. The light grows brighter. At last you clamber out of the hole at the end, push past some gorse bushes that conceal the hole from above ground, and step out into the open air.

"We'll wait here until evening," Drusilla says. "We will rejoin my family by the hanging stones." Talking quietly, the two of you remain hidden under the bushes until dusk falls. Then you start walking toward the stones, while taking care to always stay in the shadows.

You walk many miles. Finally, in the distance, you see huge, dark forms silhouetted against the bright night sky. Mammoth and solemn, they look as if they have been set on earth by a giant's hand.

"The hanging stones," says Drusilla.

"Stonehenge," you murmur. "Who built them?"

"I don't know—they are ancient. They were here when the Romans first arrived on Britain's shores."

In the shadow of the gigantic stones, two people are waiting—Drusilla's mother and father. They greet Drusilla joyfully, yet you hear the hint of worry in their voices. Her brother has not yet arrived, and they don't know whether he escaped the swords of the Saxons.

Drusilla introduces you as a newcomer to the region. Despite their anxiety, her parents greet you kindly and ask how you came to be so far from home and family.



“I am seeking King Arthur,” you answer. “I have heard that he will drive the barbarians out of Britain.”

“I have never heard tell of this Arthur,” says Drusilla’s father, “though such a man is sorely needed in these troubled times. But Artorius is an ancient Roman name. It is even possible that an Artorius arrived on British soil with Julius Caesar.”

The family returns to their own troubles, and you realize it is time to get on with your mission. You can be of no help to them right now.

“Good-bye and thank you,” you tell Drusilla. “I hope we meet again in better circumstances.”

“May you succeed in your quest,” she answers. You leave the family still anxiously searching the darkness for their son.

Out of their sight, you sit down on a smooth horizontal stone and consider your options. From what Drusilla’s father has told you, it sounds as if you should jump back to the time of Julius Caesar to find Artorius. But how far back should you jump?



Jump back 500 years. [Click here.](#)



Jump back 1,000 years. [Click here.](#)



Jump back 2,000 years. [Click here.](#)



Long live Vortigern!”

“Long live Hengist!”

The rafters of the great wooden hall echo with the cheers of hundreds of men. Burly Saxons and smaller, darker Britons raise their goblets and drinking horns in a toast and pound on the long tables with their fists. If this is Vortigern’s conference, you’ve arrived in time to see peace declared.

“Don’t stand there idling,” scolds a small, fussy-looking man who notices you surveying the scene. “Take this chalice of mead and serve the warriors.” He thrusts a large silver goblet filled with brownish-red wine at you. Surprised, you take it. The man is so worried he obviously doesn’t realize he’s never seen you before. “And don’t spill any,” he adds.

Bent over by the weight of the chalice, you start to pour the mead at the end of one long table. British and Saxon warriors alternate down the rows of benches. You fill the curved ivory drinking horns and listen to the chatter.

“We’ll be friends forever, eh Eadfrith?” A Briton nudges his large blond companion and laughs. He takes another long swig of mead.

“Forever is a long time, Gwydion,” answers the Saxon seriously. “A very long time indeed.”

Gwydion roars with laughter, as if Eadfrith had just said something very funny.

You move up and down the aisles, skirting the central fires that send billows of smoke up through holes in the ceiling and stepping

over dogs waiting eagerly for a handout. You observe that the warriors are all unarmed. Even though most of them don't speak the same language, they are communicating with friendly gestures and lots of toasts.

But, oddly enough, you are filling far more British than Saxon drinking horns. The British must be drinking more than their guests.

"Fellow warriors!" A tall, gray-haired man at the head table stands up and looks over the crowd. He is wearing a simple gold crown and a long red cloak. This must be Vortigern, you realize. "Hear me speak!"

The hall quiets down. Vortigern continues.

"We have assembled here today to celebrate the end of war and the coming of peace in this land. As commander of Roman-British forces on this island, I hereby sign this treaty with Hengist, leader of the Saxons. Here's to good feeling between our peoples—may it outlast our generation and bring prosperity again to our land."

With both hands, Vortigern holds a large silver chalice aloft and brings it to his lips. He takes a long, measured drink and passes it to the heavysset man sitting on his right.

Vortigern sits down and then turns to whisper to the woman on the other side of him. Hengist, for you assume it is he, puts the chalice down and pushes it impatiently away. Then he rises.

"Saxons, draw your knives!"

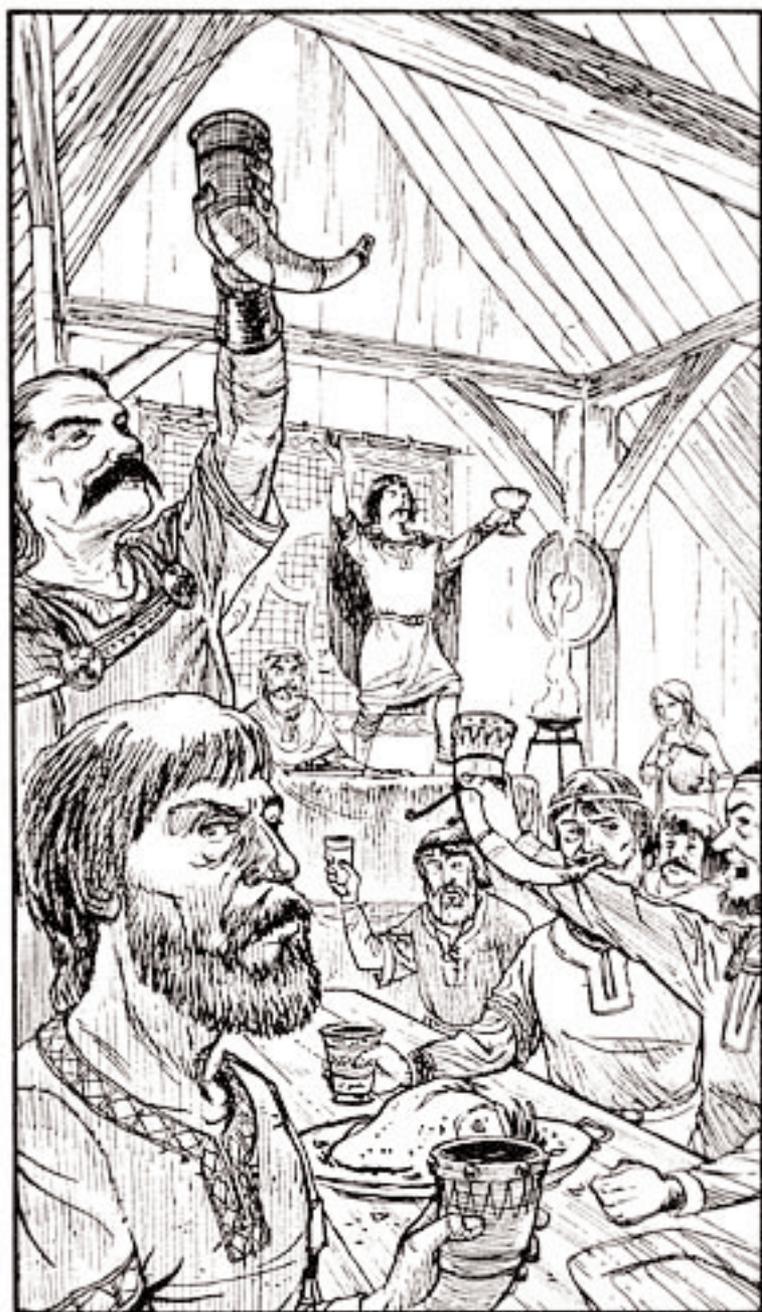
The Saxon seated in front of you reaches down into his boot and draws out a wicked-looking dagger. He plunges it into the back of the Briton beside him.

"Death to the British swine!"

The hall erupts in violence. Up and down the tables, the Saxons turn upon the unarmed and unsuspecting Britons.

This is a massacre!

Stunned, you let the chalice drop out of your hands. You stagger backward as a wounded Briton falls off his bench and onto your feet. Vortigern, still standing behind the high table, looks paralyzed with horror. Not one hand has been lifted against him.



But within minutes, it seems, every other British warrior or elder in the hall is dead or dying.

Through treachery and guile, the Saxons have killed the best men in Britain.

You've been too horrified by the scene before you to think about your own predicament. But from his vantage point at the high table, Hengist spots you. "Don't let the young one get away!" he shouts, pointing in your direction.

An obedient Saxon, his dagger dripping red, starts toward you.

Oh no! You can't escape from the hall—the Saxons have you surrounded.

You have only one option. Desperate, you dive under the nearest table.

Then you jump—anywhere!



Click here.



It is A.D. 254. You are in a gently rolling, lightly wooded, countryside. There is no one—and nothing—in sight.

Looking for signs of life, you decide to climb one of the trees. Who knows what may lie over the next hill?

As you swing yourself up on a branch, you hear a rumbling sound in the distance. You peer through the leaves. There's a horse galloping your way, with someone clinging to its neck. It's a run-away!

Scraping your stomach along the rough bark, you edge out on the lowest branch. The horse is still coming. Then you realize that if the horse doesn't change direction, it will pass directly under your branch!

"Watch out!" you yell. But the rider can't hear you. You have an idea. To make yourself as secure as possible, you hook your foot under the forked branch you are lying on. You're going to try to catch the rider as he passes beneath you.

"Grab hold!" you shout again. The speeding rider looks up, sees your hands, and reaches out to clutch them. The horse gallops out from under him. For an instant, he hangs there, suspended in mid-air. Then his weight makes you lose your balance. You start to slide off the branch, lose your foothold—and the two of you collapse in a confused heap on the ground.

Luckily the rider doesn't have far to fall, and you land on top of him.

Momentarily stunned, you roll off and lie on the hard ground.



“Are you all right?” the boy asks, getting up and dusting himself off. You see he is about your age, with a pleasant face framed by short dark curls. He is wearing a Roman-style toga.

“Sure. Just let me catch my breath.” You inhale deeply a few times and poke your arms and legs to make sure no bones are broken. Then you get up.

“Some horse you’ve got,” you say. “Does he pull this sort of trick often?”

“Oh, Janus is a clever one.” The boy chuckles. “He’s two-faced, like the Roman god he’s named after. One minute he’s meek as a lamb, the next terrible as a lion. But I made a bet with my father that I’d break him in.”

“If he doesn’t break you first!”

“Oh, soon I’ll be as sly as he is.” The boy laughs. “Thanks for rescuing me, anyhow. My name is Lucius Trebonius.”

Trebonius? You wonder if this boy could be a distant ancestor of Drusilla’s.

“I’m sure my father would like to thank you in person for your help this afternoon,” Lucius continues. “Do you live nearby?”

“No, I’m just passing through,” you reply.

“Then why don’t you come back with me to my family’s villa?”

You accept Lucius’ offer, and the two of you set off to find Janus. He’s innocently munching on an apple in a nearby field.

Lucius leads the horse home by his bridle. After Janus has been dropped off at the stables, you enter the courtyard of Lucius’ villa. There, painted over the entranceway, is the same grinning satyr you saw peering through the fire the day of the Saxon raid. You feel much more welcome on this visit.

“We’ll have supper in an hour,” Lucius tells you. “You can meet my father then. Perhaps, after your journey, you would like to refresh yourself in the bathhouse. We’ve just built it.” He leads you out a back entrance into a tiled-roofed building that adjoins the main one. “This is our new bathhouse,” Lucius says proudly as he hands you a towel. “You’ll be summoned when it’s time for supper,” he says, and leaves.

You slip your travel-stained clothes off and slide into the steaming water. You were more bruised by your fall than you realized. Soothed by the lapping water, you let your mind drift.

Much too soon, a servant comes to notify you that supper will soon be served. You put on the clean white toga that Lucius has lent you while your own clothes are being cleaned, then you follow the servant to the dining room.

Lucius introduces you to his parents. “Our heartfelt thanks for saving our son today,” says Lucius’ father, Marcus Trebonius. “He’s a good rider, but sometimes we fear for him.”

“I’m glad I came along when I did,” you reply.

Everyone reclines in Roman fashion on couches surrounding the dining table. The table is heaped high with food—meat, fish, and fruit.

“Have some mineral water. We transport it every week from Aqua Sulis,” says Marcus Trebonius. “Rome herself cannot boast such natural springs and hot baths.”

“Thanks,” you say, sipping at the cool, bubbling water. You take a portion of goat cheese and some venison as well. You sure are hungry!

“Why are you traveling through the country by yourself?” Marcella Trebonius asks.

“I’m—I’m looking for a kinsman,” you improvise. “His name is Artorius. Have you heard of him?”

“There’s no one by that name in this part of the land,” answers Marcus Trebonius. “You might get some word of him in Londinium, though. We are taking our twice-yearly trip there next week. If you care to accept our hospitality until then, you can travel with us.”

Londinium—that must be present-day London!

“I’d love to go with you,” you answer gratefully.

During the following week, Lucius instructs you on the subject of horses. You learn to ride them Roman style, with a leather saddle but no stirrups. He teaches you how to calm a startled horse, how to groom, and how to clean out a stable.

Lucius even offers to let you ride Janus. “No thanks,” you say. “I want to make sure I get to Londinium in one piece!”



Click here.





You've jumped to Roman Britain in the year A.D. 59. You are in the middle of a warlike crowd. Men and women, wearing leather armor and carrying swords, axes, and even pitchforks, sprawl in ragged lines across a field. Even children are armed with swords and slingshots.

A chariot rushes by, sending up little clouds of dust. At the reins is a tall, imperious-looking woman with a mane of bright red hair.

"Queen Boudicea!" the crowd chants. "Down with tyranny!"

The woman pulls the horses to a stop in front of the crowd. Grasping a spear, she addresses the multitude in front of her.

"Fellow Britons! We of the Iceni tribe have often had women lead us into battle. But today I am not fighting as Queen Boudicea for my kingdom or my wealth. Like you, I am fighting for my lost freedom. I am fighting for the freedom the Romans have taken away from me!"

"Kill the Romans!" her listeners cry. "Death to the invaders!"

Queen Boudicea pauses, then defiantly holds her spear high in the air. "The gods will grant us the vengeance we deserve! Remember why we are fighting today—then you will win this battle, or die. That is what I, a woman, will do—let men live in slavery, if they will!"

The people roar their approval. Then you hear a different kind of sound—the thunder of distant hooves.

The Romans are attacking!

Across the plain comes a line of Roman cavalry. Even at this distance you can see their bright armor shining in the sun.

You fear the disorganized British tribes-people will be no match for the well-drilled imperial troops.

“Britons, to war!” cries Boudicea.

Zing! A well-aimed Roman arrow hits the old man next to you. He topples over with a groan. A volley of arrows, like a swarm of poisonous bees, fills the sky. There’s no way the Britons can triumph over such an attack.

If you don’t want to become a human pincushion, you’d better leave now.

You fight your way out of the frenzied mob and jump to a time when the Roman peace was better established in Britain.



Jump ahead 200 years. [Click here.](#)



Identical white tombstones extend in every direction. They seem to go on endlessly. You must be in a national cemetery of some sort.

A short distance away, you see a crowd of people standing on a long line. Curious to find out what they'd want to see in a graveyard, you decide to bring up the rear.

The two women ahead of you are talking.

"President Kennedy's assassination is one of the greatest tragedies this country has ever known, Gladys," a woman with a beehive hairdo is saying.

"I'm not arguing with you about that, Peg," replies Gladys. "I'm just saying that this *Life* magazine article is exaggerating when it compares JFK's White House years to King Arthur's Camelot. Kennedy was a good president, but he was only flesh and blood, after all. We shouldn't idealize him."

"We should judge men not just for what they are, but for what they strive for," asserts Peg. "I bet even King Arthur wasn't perfect."

"Silly, there never really *was* a King Arthur."

"We don't know that," Peg replies stubbornly.

You glance at the date on the *Life* magazine sticking out of Gladys's shoulder bag. It says December 6, 1963. The legend of King Arthur has been alive for a long time.

The line moves until you find yourself standing before the eternal flame that is burning at President Kennedy's grave. You think about what you have just heard. More than a thousand years after his death, Arthur still stands for the pursuit of good in a sadly

imperfect world. People still need a symbol to remind them of what might be.

You get away from the crowd and find a quiet spot. You are more eager than ever to find the real person behind the legend—if there is a real person!



Jump back to Roman Britain. [Click here.](#)



Winding ribbonlike over the hills and valleys, a great stone wall stretches as far as the eye can see. You must have found Hadrian's Wall.

The countryside around you is peaceful. The hills are covered with little purple flowers, and you hear the buzzing of bees and the occasional far-off caw of a bird.

You're still sopping wet from your dunk in the Roman bath. Maybe you'd better dry off before you go any farther.

You spread your woolen cloak out on the warm grass and open your knapsack. Good, the contents are still dry. Then you lie down in the sun, yourself.

"Had a hard day, eh youngster?" A voice comes to you out of the fog and you lazily open your eyes.

A Roman soldier stands over you, his armor glinting in the sunlight. Startled, you sit up.

"Take it easy," the soldier says. He spreads his cloak and sits down beside you. "If I weren't on duty, I'd be sleeping in the heather too. The sun always makes me lazy."

He pops the plug from his leather canteen and offers you a drink.

"Have you had much trouble with barbarians lately?" you ask after you've taken a sip of water.

"Haven't heard a peep from them in a long time. The wall has helped us contain the Picts ever since Hadrian had it built, over two hundred years ago."

"How long is it?" you ask.

"Eighty Roman miles long—it stretches from the Germanic Sea

to the Irish Sea. And it's ten feet wide besides. The Picts will never get through again."

He stands up and readjusts his cloak. "I've got to get back to my post. You can go back to sleep now. Catch a few winks for me." He grins and raises his hand in a good-bye salute.

You wave back. When the soldier is gone, you consider where to go next. You'd better look for Artorius in a time when you *know* there were barbarian raids.



Jump forward to the fifth century.

[Click here.](#)



You set off for Londinium the following week. Lucius and his father are bringing sheep, cows, and horses to market. Your troop makes lots of noise as it travels along the countryside!

The road to Londinium is wide and paved, a superb example of Roman engineering. Every few miles there is a rest house where you can stop and refresh yourselves. You pass great stone bridges and arched aqueducts spanning rivers.

You are amazed by what the Romans have created in Britain. You are even more impressed when you come to your first town—Calleva is a walled city, with a gigantic triumphal arch and a public forum.

It takes you a whole week to reach Londinium, but the trip is worth it. The city is magnificent, with a public forum, public baths, temples, and basilicas used as courts of law. It is an international city as well—down by the wharfs and in the marketplace you see tradespeople and sailors from every nation under the sun. You notice that though most people are dressed in Roman togas, many wear traditional British clothes, just like yours. Britain is not completely Romanized.

You help Lucius and his father pen the animals in the marketplace. A few servants stay to guard them.

You spend the night at the townhouse of Lucius' uncle, Silvius Trebonius. At dinner that night you ask him about Artorius.

"I know only one Artorius," Silvius Trebonius replies, in between mouthfuls of fragrant pheasant pie. "He spends most of his

time in the public baths. So he's your relative, eh?" Silvius gives you an odd look.

"I don't know yet," you answer hastily. You don't think that an Artorius who would fight barbarians would spend all his time bathing. This Artorius sounds either very lazy or fanatical about keeping clean!

The talk turns to the more general subject of national security.

"It's my contention," says Silvius Trebonius, "that Britain has the greatest natural defenses in Europe. Except in the north, she is completely surrounded by water. And the wall the Roman emperor Hadrian built should keep the northern tribes from bothering us for a few centuries at least!"

"Now you know the Picts still overrun Hadrian's Wall from time to time," objects Lucius' father. "And the Romans crossed the supposedly impassable sea easily enough. So might any other determined people."

"Not while we have the might of the imperial legions to defend us!" declares Silvius.

Unfortunately, that won't be forever, you think to yourself.

The next morning, Lucius and his father set off for the marketplace, and Silvius Trebonius shows you the way to the public baths. "You know where to find us if you need us," says Silvius, giving you a wink.

You ask a pudgy-faced guard where you can find Artorius. "Two halls down, third room on the left," he says, taking an apple out of his mouth.

You walk across the slippery tile floors and turn into the bath.

"I'm looking for Artorius," you say to a skinny boy dressed only in a loincloth.

"Do I hear someone using my name in vain?" a loud voice bellows. A fat man with a towel wrapped around his waist is sitting dangling his legs in the water by the edge of the pool. He motions you over to him.

"Yes, uh, I'm looking for Artorius," you say as you join him. "Are you the Artorius who is going to drive all the barbarians out of

Britain?”

“Am I what?” The fat man laughs lazily. “Gaius,” he calls to the skinny boy. “Did you hear that? This prying pipsqueak wants to know if I intend to drive the barbarians out of Britain.”

“The question is, where are you driving them to?” Gaius answers, sidling over.

“How about into the water?”

“No sooner said than done!” Gaius says. With both hands, he shoves you into the bathing pool!

Luckily the warm water isn't very deep. You figure that being underwater gives you the perfect chance to get away from these two clowns.

You hold your breath and swim to the other end of the pool. You ought to jump to a place where you *know* barbarians exist. Lucius' father told you that barbarian tribes still fight the Romans in the north. Do you want to go north now and check out Hadrian's Wall? Or do you want to jump back to the fifth century and find Drusilla after the Saxon raid?

Your lungs are about to burst. Decide quickly!



Go north now. [Click here.](#)



Go back to the fifth century. [Click here.](#)



You reach into your knapsack for the sugar cubes you brought along. You bet the horse has never had refined sugar before—you'll have no problem getting it to eat out of your hand.

You sprint into the field after the runaway horse. "Get back here!" Hilda cries. You ignore her.

Coming to a halt about ten feet from the horse, you hold the sugar out toward him. He whinnies nervously and dances to the side. An incredulous look on his face, Sigbert just watches you.

"Good horse," you coo, "good horse." Slowly you advance, your hand outstretched.

The horse seems to sniff the air.

Then he reaches out his long neck, and you feel his soft muzzle on your hand. As he eats, you grab hold of the bridle draped over his back.

"So we have a horse trainer among us!" Sigbert booms. He comes up and puts a huge hand on your shoulder. "You'd be wasted as a swineherd. I'll make you my new personal attendant. That way you can look after me and my horses."

Well, it beats sleeping with pigs.

The only problem is that Hilda seems to find more for you to do than Sigbert does. Still, you want to remain in this time period until you find out whether the Saxons know anything about Artorius.

Unfortunately, though he works you hard, Sigbert answers every question with a grunt. Finally, after you've been with him at least a week, he makes an announcement.

“Our most noble ring-giver, King Redwald, has died. Our people shall mourn his passing with song and with gifts. Prepare for a journey.”

“Was he the king of your Saxon tribe?” you ask.

“We are now Anglo-Saxon,” Sigbert corrects you. “Some of our people have intermarried with the Angles from the north. As a Briton, you should know the Anglo-Saxons together took over Angle-land more than two centuries ago.”

Now you know that Arthur—or Artorius—couldn’t keep the invaders out forever. You must be in the seventh century.

Early the next morning, you and the rest of the household set off toward the sea, where the burial is to be held. The horses are laden down with valuables, all for the dead king.

“Gifts for the giver of gifts,” says Sigbert solemnly. He is wearing his ceremonial helmet, surmounted by the figure of a crouching boar. On horseback, his huge figure really looks very impressive.

You walk alongside him carrying the gift you’ve been entrusted with—a small silver plate, decorated in intricate spiral shapes. You realize that despite their primitive villages, the Anglo-Saxons revere beautiful objects.

When you reach the burial site, you see that a large ship has been dragged out of the sea and up onto a hill overlooking a river. Now it is balanced on logs over a pit dug into the center of the hill.

“That ship is the burial chamber,” Sigbert explains. “We will place our gifts in it before the ship is lowered into the ground.”

“With the body?” you ask.

“The king’s body will be given a Christian burial, since he was recently baptized into the faith. But his queen wants the old pagan traditions to be upheld as well.”

Hundreds of the king’s retainers have gathered to make their last tribute. At the head of the procession rides the queen, followed by proud warriors in dress helmets and body corselets. Everyone brings some offering.

The crowd falls silent as the queen places the first gift in the ship. You hear the first twanging notes of a harp, and the melancholy song of a poet breaks the stillness:



*We sing of our pain, lament our king,
Most worthy of ring-givers, bravest among warriors,
Who was always to his people,
The kindest of men, and the most generous.*

“Do the poets sing songs about all the great men?” you whisper to Sigbert when the song is done.

“Worthy deeds are remembered for generations. It is the poets who keep the memory alive.”

“Do they remember a man named Artorius?” you finally have the chance to ask.

Sigbert frowns in effort. “Once I heard the name Artorius in song—but he was a Briton, conquered by our people.”

“But—”

“Shush!” Hilda says urgently.

The women begin a long, low sad dirge as the rest of the mourners place their gifts in the ship. When your turn comes, you put the silver plate down next to the other gifts of gold and silver. The chamber is filled with intricately carved swords, enameled brooches, decorated shields, and chain mail—the most treasured possessions of a people.

You come away from the ship back into the crowd. The dirge has become a high-pitched wailing. You can’t see Sigbert or Hilda anywhere.

No one is paying any attention to you. Now’s your chance to return to your mission. You could try to find an Anglo-Saxon poet who would know just when Artorius lived. Or you could jump back to the fifth century and resume your search for Artorius there.



Find the foremost Anglo-Saxon poet.

[Click here.](#)



Jump back to the fifth century.

[Click here.](#)



You are back on the Salisbury Plain, ten years after the Saxon raid on Drusilla's villa.

The Roman road you walked down with Lucius two centuries before is ruined and broken now. Grass and small bushes grow between its cracks, and its bridges have fallen into the streams they once spanned.

You recognize the Trebonius villa in the distance. You hope you can find your friend, Drusilla, there. When you come closer, you can see that one wing of the villa is still charred from the fire.

You give the great brass knocker a sharp rap. Everything is quite still. You wait, then knock again.

"Coming—I'm coming!" A feeble, complaining voice sounds from within the villa. The door creaks open, and a little old man with white hair and watery blue eyes peers out.

"What do you want? I don't have all day, you know," he snaps at you.

"I'm looking for Drusilla Trebonius," you respond.

"Well, she's not here."

"Do you know where I could find her?" you press.

"She's gone with her husband and her father to the so-called conference that fool Vortigern has called."

"A conference?"

"The peace conference between Briton and Saxon, of course. Her father's one of Vortigern's elders, and her husband's a soldier, so they didn't have any choice. But Drusilla should have known better." The old man shakes his head. "Anything that traitor Vortigern

plans is bound to end in disaster. He invited the Saxons into the country in the first place. Now he's trying to undo his mistake. But it's too late, I say!"

"Do you know where—" you begin, but the old man has just shut the door in your face.

You decide to jump to the peace conference and see what happens.



Click here.



You pull your woolen cloak about you to keep out the biting wind and bitter cold, and look up at the stars. In the black night, they seem very distant indeed. Far away on a hill-top, a single light gleams. Except for that light, you could be the only person in Dark-Age Britain.

Clippity-clop! You hear the sound of horses' hooves on the hard ground. You're not alone after all.

"Hey! Over here!" you shout, waving your arms.

The darkness is so impenetrable that you can't see the horses until they are pawing the ground beside you.

"What are you doing skulking about Cadbury Castle?" asks a disembodied voice.

"I'm not skulking," you reply. "I have come to present myself to Caius Aurelianus. I want to join the forces of Artorius."

One of the horsemen dismounts and takes you by the shoulders.

"I am Caius Aurelianus," the man replies. "What service can you offer Artorius?"

"I can handle any horse—trained or untrained," you boast.

"Can you indeed? Well, we shall see about that," replies Caius. "We are about to launch a new campaign, and our cavalry will need as many hands as possible."

He remounts his horse. "Jump up behind me," he orders.

You ride behind Caius all the way up a steep, wooded hill. The light you saw earlier was actually coming from the castle Caius calls Cadbury.

It's not much of a castle, though, you decide, when you see it by

daylight the next morning. The hilltop fort consists of one long wooden hall, surrounded by small outlying huts of wood or stone. The hall is smaller than the great Saxon halls you saw earlier.

But the fort is protected by a series of ramparts and earthworks running in parallel circles around the hill. And there is a wooden gatehouse with a watchtower. An enemy would never be able to plan a sneak attack.

After you spend a few days proving that you do indeed know your way around horses, Caius assigns you to his own unit.

“It seems you were not exaggerating about your gift with horses after all,” he says, smiling at you. “You are welcome to join the troops of Artorius. You will find him a brave man and a fair one. He is the only leader strong enough to unite the British tribes against the invaders.

“But since you are still getting used to military life, I will offer you a choice in your first campaign. Do you want to come with me to fight the Irish invaders in the west, or stay at Cadbury with the home guard? Artorius himself may be here soon, if his present recognisance is successful.”

Finally you may get to meet Artorius! But he may not show up, and you don’t want Caius to think you can’t be counted on in a real campaign.

What should you say?



Tell Caius you’ll come with him to the west. [Click here.](#)



Tell Caius you’ll stay at Cadbury. [Click here.](#)



Stop gawking and get to work!”

Hilda shouts impatiently.

You don't have any sugar cubes with you, so you can't do much to help catch the horse anyway. You open the gate of the pigsty and step gingerly inside. Hilda waddles off to help her husband.

Immediately all the pigs crowd around, jostling each other and ramming you with their snouts. The smell is overwhelming.

You back up against the fence to get away from them. They're much more curious about you than you are about them.

Still, you'd better get to know your new home. It looks as if you'll be stuck here with the pigs until you can find a way to jump in time without Hilda or Sigbert noticing. You decide to take a tour of the premises.

Tiptoeing through the mud and straw, you make your way around the edge of the pen to where the sow, Rosie, is lying on her side. Tiny pink piglets squirm next to her, each determined to claim the best feeding spot.

Why, these are sort of cute, you think. You pick up one little hairless fellow and hold him up in front of your face. He blinks back at you in surprise.

“How'd you like to be called Wilbur?” you ask aloud.

The piglet squeals in what you hope is delight.

“You no-good, lazy slave!” Hilda roars behind you.

Startled, you turn around—just in time to see the curly tail of the last pig twitch out of the sty. You left the gate open, and all the pigs have escaped!

Hilda is hopping around the dirt yard and whacking at the pigs with a long stick.

“Get out here and help me, you rascal!”

You give the piglet back to its mother and help Hilda shoo all the pigs back into the pen. All, that is, but one. One fat sow has escaped into the forest for good.

“I’ll teach you to be so careless about valuable property,” Hilda says grimly. Holding you by one ear, she marches you through the village to the blacksmith’s hut.

“Brand this slave,” she orders the grimy blacksmith.

While Hilda handcuffs you to a wooden post in the center of the hut, the blacksmith heats up a red-hot branding iron, to be burned into your skin.

“Try the left cheek,” Hilda says, and leaves.

You don’t want a lifelong memento of your days among the Saxons. The moment the blacksmith’s back is turned—you jump!



Click here.



You are standing outside a crude stone fort on top of a hill. The rough terrain is full of rocks, and you pick your way among them as you near the entrance.

You step through the low doorway and walk down a dank stone corridor. In a small room at the end, a gray-haired woman sits on a stool and spins.

“What can I do for you?” she asks graciously.

“My family used to work for the Trebonius family in Salisbury,” you improvise. “I’m hoping to find out what has become of them.”

“I am Drusilla Trebonius,” she says, and you realize that almost forty years must have passed since you left her at Stonehenge. That must be why she doesn’t remember your face. Drusilla’s fingers keep twisting the thread on the spindle, their rhythm never varying.

“Though I fear you find us much changed from what we were. My father and my husband were both killed by Hengist in the Great Massacre, my son in the wars; our villa was razed by the Saxons and is now but a ruin.”

“What about your brother?” you ask, remembering the anxious night at Stonehenge.

“He didn’t survive the first Saxon raid,” she answers. “I am the only one left of my family—I and my grandson. My husband’s Welsh kinsman, Ambrosius Aurelianus, has provided for us. Here at Dinas Emrys we are safe.”

Drusilla’s bad fortune and the forty years of war in Britain upset you greatly.

“Will there ever be peace in this land?” you ask.



“My grandson thinks so. His cousin, a nephew of Ambrosius’, is gathering a troop to fight the invaders. My grandson could tell you about him. Caius!” she calls.

A red-haired young man only a few years older than you comes into the room, a hunting bow in his hand and a sheaf of arrows strapped to his shoulder.

“Caius,” Drusilla says, “here is someone who wants to know about your cousin.”

“His name isn’t by any chance Artorius?” you burst out, unable to contain yourself.

“Yes, it is,” Drusilla answers, with a faraway look. “Funny, someone asked me about an Artorius when I was a girl—said he was going to drive all the barbarians out of Britain. It must have been second sight—no one had heard of him then.”

“He has taken a vow to bring peace to Britain,” Caius says excitedly. “He is gathering together a troop of young men. When I am old enough, I am going to join him!”

“That won’t be for a few years,” Drusilla says. “I hate to see the last of my family go off to war. I only hope we finally have a leader worth fighting—and dying—for.”

She takes a small knife from the purse at her wrist and with a decisive gesture cuts the thread in two. “You young people may take your leave of me now,” she says, bowing her head.

You return the bow and follow Caius out of the room. “I, too, would like to join this Artorius,” you confide to Caius.

“You’ll have to wait a few years, just like me,” he says, laughing. “Now I’m off to the hunt. Maybe I’ll see you in battle!” He waves you a farewell and departs, humming to himself.

You understand now why it is so important to have a leader like Artorius in the fifth century. Generations of British youths have grown up knowing nothing but fighting.

But is this the Artorius you are looking for? Perhaps you should jump into the future to find out.



Find Arthur before he is king. [Click here.](#)



Find Arthur when he is already king, surrounded by his Knights of the Round Table. [Click here.](#)



Find Caius after he has joined Artorius' forces. [Click here.](#)



It is A.D. 680. You are next to a steep wall standing in a wide meadow. Cows graze contentedly in the field.

From over the wall you hear a harp, and then a voice raised in song. This must be the poet you were looking for.

You shinny up a fruit tree next to the wall and peer down into the garden below. The poet, dressed in the rough robe of a monk, lifts his eyes skyward as he sings.

*Now we praise the Guardian of Heaven,
The majesty of the Creator and his wisdom,
The warden of the world, worker of all wonders.
The Lord of Glory everlasting,
Who wrought first for the race of men
Heaven as a roof-tree,
Then made Middle Earth to be their mansion.*

The other monks pause in their gardening and gaze at the singer in awe.

“Caedmon has received a gift from God,” one of the monks murmurs to another as the song ends.

Slowly you climb down the tree. It is clear that the foremost Anglo-Saxon poet sings religious, not military, songs. Caedmon will not be able to tell you about a legendary British soldier.

It’s time to jump back to the fifth century. You still want to find out what happened to Drusilla after the massacre.



Click here.



King Arthur stares at you from his throne at the center of a great round table. His face is painted, and the table is hanging on a wall in a medieval hall.

You step back to get a better look. Then you hear people coming your way.

“. . . the greatest treasure of the Winchester Castle collection,” a voice is saying. A uniformed tour guide enters the hall. He’s followed by a group of straggling tourists. They’re all wearing shorts and sneakers—you must be back in the twentieth century.

“This table was commissioned by—” the guide continues. He stops when he sees you.

“So the trustees have decided the table deserves its own special lecturer, have they?” he snaps at you. “They’ve even found you a costume—though I must say you look more like a peasant than a person of noble birth. So, what would *you* care to tell us about King Arthur and his Round Table?” The man’s mustache quivers in indignation.

The guide seems to think you intend to take over his job. He’s so belligerent, you decide to accept his question as a challenge.

“Arthur was king over all the Britons in the fifth century,” you begin. “He built this Round Table—I mean he had this Round Table built for him—”

“Hold it right there,” the guide interrupts. “It’s back to school for you. Obviously no one thought it necessary to fill you in on the basics.”

The guide turns back to his tourists. “To begin with, this table

was built in the thirteenth century in *imitation* of the legendary Round Table of King Arthur. Medieval knights and their ladies were fascinated by the old tales, and they used this table to hold mock Arthurian banquets. Notice how each seat around the table has been set aside for a different knight.”

A woman with horn-rimmed glasses raises her hand. “Did the real King Arthur have such a table?”

The tour guide laughs condescendingly. “No competent authority has ever established that there *was* a King Arthur. The whole Arthurian legend was dreamed up by Welsh bards and medieval troubadors. Any real-life model was probably some half-naked savage skulking about in the woods during the Dark Ages!”

The guide glares at you one more time. Then he shepherds his group off to the next room.

When they are gone, you look up at the table and try to decipher the names written around the edge. “Lancelot de Lake,” you read. “Gawaine, Mordred, Galahad . . . and King Arthur.”

Arthur has certainly exerted a hold over the imagination of people for centuries. But many people still find it hard to believe he actually existed. You know the tour guide is wrong about the original Arthur’s having been a savage—but what was he?

You see now that your only hope is to look for Artorius, not Arthur. You must jump back to the fifth century and find Caius—who may be able to lead you to him!



Click here.



You're still under a table! Terrified, you wonder what could have gone wrong.

You expect a long Saxon arm to reach under and pull you out. Then you realize you are surrounded by a forest of bare legs, criss-crossed with garters from the knee to the ankle.

Those are Saxon legs all right—but the voices above them are raised in song:

*In the bright mead halls, home of the warriors,
We drink to our lord, the golden ring-giver.*

These don't sound like men who have just massacred hundreds of unsuspecting Britons. You must have jumped to a different time.

Then one of those cross-gartered legs reaches out and kicks you!

"Ouch!" you cry.

"I've never heard a dog with such a high bark," someone booms. "What kind is it?"

The bench is pushed back, and you're dragged out from under the table.

"Looks like a British mongrel to me, Sigbert," says the fierce-looking man with long blond braids who has you by the scruff of the neck.

"What do you think the pup was doing under our table, Ceolwulf?" asks Sigbert, towering above his companion.

"Spying," Ceolwulf answers. "And I say we give the brat the reward all spies deserve." With his free hand he takes the short

sword from his belt and aims it at your throat!

“Stay your hand,” says Sigbert. “This one looks too young to be a spy—but not too young to be a slave! Why waste an extra worker?”

“Well . . .” Ceolwulf considers. The two men begin to argue your fate. Apparently you won’t be given any say in the matter, so you use the time to look around. You are in the same kind of high-raftered hall you were in before, but this one is hung with rich tapestries and paved with stones. And all the warriors at the long tables are Saxons.

“All right,” concludes Ceolwulf. “You can have the pup—in exchange for one of the piglets your sow has just dropped.”

“Fair exchange,” says Sigbert. Ceolwulf releases you, and Sigbert puts his heavy hand on your shoulder. “Let’s get going.”

He pushes you before him, out of the great hall and into the open yard beyond. The wooden hall is surrounded by wood and straw huts, small and primitive-looking. You must be in a Saxon village.

From one of the huts comes a large, sloppy-looking woman with a round red face. “Hilda,” Sigbert bellows, “I’ve brought you a new slave.”

Hilda looks you over critically. She pinches the muscles in your arms and opens your mouth to examine your teeth as if you are a horse on the auction block.

“This one’ll do,” she says finally. “We need a new swineherd now that Rosie is a mother. Come on, then.”

Hilda yanks you around to the back of the hut. Sigbert disappears in the other direction.

“Here’s your new home,” Hilda says, leaning her fat arms on a fence enclosing a pen full of pigs. “This is where you will eat, sleep, and live from now on. You’ll all be just one big, happy family.” She gives you an evil grin, revealing a gap where her two front teeth should be.

You look at the filthy pigsty. The pigs look contented enough, wallowing around in a sea of mud. But you don’t want to get within a foot of one of the creatures, let alone sleep with them. You



shudder.

“That sow over there”—Hilda points to a pig lying on her side and surrounded by little pink piglets—“is named Rosie. The day something happens to one of her piglets will be your last.”

“And that”—she points to an iron bucket by the side of the pen—“is the slop pail. You should fill it—”

Nneeighh!

Hilda’s explanation is cut short by a loud whinny and an enraged shout. A horse comes galloping around the corner. It is followed by Sigbert, bellowing in rage. The runaway lopes into the opposite field and comes to a stop. But every time Sigbert approaches him, he rears up and speeds off again.

You learned a lot about calming horses during your stay with Lucius. If you can catch this one, you may be able to cut short your career as a swineherd.

You need something that will lure the horse. If you brought sugar, you may be able to get close enough to the horse to seize it.



You brought sugar. [Click here.](#)



You didn’t bring sugar. [Click here.](#)



Cold and hard, the waves of the Irish Sea break upon the beach in the west of Britian. With Caius and the rest of his troops, you are waiting in the moonlit night for the Irish themselves to arrive.

“The Irish raiders rely on surprise, so we will surprise them,” Caius tells his troops. “They will land in curraghs, small wooden boats covered with hides. Some of you will disguise yourselves as peasants and draw the Irish farther and farther into the woods. Another contingent will wait in ambush. In the meantime, the rest of us will burn the curraghs and then close in from the rear.”

You are to be one of the decoys. In the woods a horse will be waiting to take you behind the rear lines.

Across the choppy sea the Irish come. When they get closer you can see they are fierce-looking men with long hair blowing in the wind. Their crude spears and clubs look no match for the British bows and arrows.

Waaawhoo! The Irish chief spots your group of disguised soldiers and gives a loud blow on his trumpet. “There they are!”

You turn and flee with the rest. On and on you run, over stone, under bush, across stream. You are getting exhausted—and when you turn to look, one Irishman is close behind.

There’s your horse! You gird yourself for one last effort. But the horse must be frightened too. With a panicked whinny, it breaks its rope and heads off into the woods.

You’re too tired to go any farther. You roll into a ravine—and jump!





Jump north. [Click here.](#)



Jump south. [Click here.](#)



You wrench open your knapsack and look for your matches. Yes, they're still there—and still dry.

Now for some tinder. You reach under a pile of branches and drag out those that were protected by the storm. Then you light the dry sticks.

The red eyes are brighter now. Creeping even closer, the wolves are coming in for the kill.

Better hurry. You can see the dark bodies of the wolves against the white snow. There must be at least ten of them.

Your hands shaking, you use the small sticks to light a larger one. You hold the firebrand out in front of you and slowly circle around.

Out of the corner of your eye, you see a wolf poised for a leap—and he springs! You thrust the brand in his face. Howling, he runs away. Another tries—you manage to singe his coat.

Seconds later, the eyes are gone. Whew! The wolves must have decided to go after easier prey.

You've had enough of the frozen north. You're going to look for Artorius in the south of Britain.



Click here.





On guard!”

You are in the courtyard of a towering stone castle, where you’re watching a fencing match between two elegantly dressed young boys. They are so intent on the game they do not notice you—until they run so close that suddenly you are between them!

“On guard, oaf!” shouts the younger of the two boys. He thrusts his sword at you—and you find your back against the castle wall, with a sharp foil pointed at your heart!

“Have done, Henry,” commands the older boy, neatly parrying Henry’s sword and sending it spinning across the courtyard. “ ’Tis but a poor commoner.”

“This poor commoner has interfered with the royal sport and deserves to be punished,” Henry answers heatedly. “When you are king, Arthur, will you be so stupidly forgiving to all your subjects?”

“If they deserve my mercy, yes,” replies Arthur, who you realize must be the heir to the throne.

“I would scorn to be so weak,” Henry says, spitting out his words.

“Then it’s lucky for England that there will never be a King Henry the eighth,” retorts Prince Arthur.

Still arguing, the two leave the courtyard. You have been quite forgotten.

No wonder the castle is so big and the boys’ clothes are so grand. You have jumped far ahead in time—to the fifteenth century, when Henry VIII of England was still a prince. His older brother Arthur must not have lived to become king.



This is not the Arthur you are looking for. Perhaps you should try to find him with his Knights of the Round Table. Or perhaps an older Caius can lead you to him.



Find Arthur among his knights.

[Click here.](#)



Find Caius when he is older. [Click here.](#)



I think I'll wait for Artorius here,"
you tell Caius.

He gives you a curt nod and goes off to assemble his troops. You hope you've made the right decision.

After the troops have left, you don't know what to do with yourself. First you groom the remaining horses. Then you clean out the stables from top to bottom. Fighting the Irish might not be more fun—but it would definitely be less dirty!

Finally you climb up to the wooden watch-tower and moodily wait for Artorius to arrive. And you wait . . . and wait . . .

"A messenger!" exclaims the guard watching you. Sure enough, you can see an antlike figure moving on the plain below.

Hours later he arrives. "The Picts have overrun Hadrian's Wall again!" he announces as he rides through the gate. "And the Saxons have risen in the south!"

Vacation's over. It's time to move on.

You climb down the tower ladder and find a deserted stall in the stables. Where do you want to go?



Join Caius' troops in the west. [Click here.](#)



Join the troops in the north at Hadrian's Wall. [Click here.](#)



Join the troops in the south. [Click here.](#)



Blast! You forgot to bring matches. You have no protection against the wolves now.

Their red eyes are growing brighter. Stealthily the wolves continue to creep up on you.

You can see them now, black shapes against the white snow. Their slavering jaws are open, ready for the kill. There must be ten of them at least. . . .

And one of the ten is poised for a leap!
Jump anywhere—fast!



Click here.



Snow is swirling around you. It stings your face and blinds your eyes. You've jumped up north to find the British troops fighting the Picts. But all you've found is a snowstorm. Where are the troops?

You are stamping your feet to keep warm when you spy two shapes dimly through the whiteness.

"Here!" you shout, flapping your arms.

The two come closer. Now you can tell they're dressed only in furs, with naked arms and legs sticking out beneath them. And—you cup your hands over your eyes to see more clearly—they are tattooed! You've run into the Picts!

They start bounding through the drifts at the same time you do. But you have a better idea. If you make yourself as white as the landscape, they'll never find you.

You dive into a snowdrift. You clear a small space around your head with your hands and work one arm up through the snow until you have a breathing hole.

Now you're camouflaged—and almost cozy. You're warmer encased inside the snow than you would be above it. Slowly, you drift off to sleep.

When you wake up, it seems as if you've been in your makeshift igloo for hours. You'd better find the British or you'll freeze to death.

You pop out of your shelter. It's stopped snowing, but already it's dusk. Shivering, you wonder where you should go.

Then you see them—little pinpoints of light in the growing dark-



ness. They look too small to be campfires. And besides, they seem to come in pairs.

A blood-curdling howl pierces the night. It is echoed by a hundred others.

You're surrounded by wolves!

Fire must frighten wild animals. Did you bring matches?



If you brought matches, [click here.](#)



If you didn't bring matches, [click here.](#)



Nothing in the whole Arthurian quest,” a woman is saying, “is more mysterious than the twelfth-century excavation at Glastonbury.”

You are in the rear of a large lecture hall, and the instructor is talking earnestly to a roomful of students.

“At first scholars were inclined to dismiss the so-called discovery of Arthur’s bones as a fake,” the woman continues. “After all, Glastonbury Abbey had just burned down, and the monks needed money to rebuild it. But twentieth-century excavations have proved that there was a burial just where the monks said there was, and that it was very old, even in the twelfth century. Unfortunately, the bones have subsequently been lost.”

A student raises his hand. “What about the iron cross?” he asks.

“Another mystery,” the woman answers. “But before the cross too was lost, someone made a copy of it. Scholars are able to demonstrate that the Latin letters on the cross are carved in the style of the sixth or seventh century, not the eleventh century.

“But even though the burial was not a complete fake, we still cannot prove that these were the bones of King Arthur.”

So no one knows who was buried in the grave you saw dug up at Glastonbury, you think as you leave the lecture hall. Maybe you should jump back to Glastonbury, just after Artorius was wounded, to see for yourself.



Click here.



You are in very marshy land. With every step you take, your feet sink down farther into the mud. A short distance away from you, a picturesque thatched cottage sends up a plume of smoke through its chimney. It must be on more solid ground. You decide you'd better head in its direction.

Suddenly you hear the pounding of hooves. A group of fierce-looking warriors with sharp horns on their helmets are riding up to the door of the cottage.

You crouch down in the marsh, not daring to move a muscle in case they see you. Who are these savage men? They don't look like any of the invaders you saw in Artorius' time.

The intruders storm inside and drag a poor peasant woman out of her house. Before she has a chance to run away, they have her by the throat. You cannot hear what they are saying, but they seem to be trying to shake some information out of her. Finally they thrust her aside and she drops down, unconscious.

The intruders set fire to the hut, jump back onto their horses, and ride away.

While you're wondering if its safe to move yet, you hear a stirring behind you.

"Hsst!"

You turn and see a strange being rise out of the waters of the marsh. It looks like some fantastic sea monster, dripping with weeds and mud.

"Have the Vikings gone?" the monster asks in a whisper. Why this is just an ordinary, though sopping-wet man!

So those fierce men were Vikings, you think, realizing that this must be about A.D. 850. And they were searching for this man.

“Yes,” you answer. “Where were you hiding? I didn’t see you.”

“I was under the water, and breathing through this reed.” Grinning, the man holds out a thin, pipelike stalk. “An old boyhood trick.”

Awkwardly, he wades through the marsh toward you. “But the time for games is past. Now I’ll need a more permanent disguise. I shall hide in the countryside until I can gather my forces together. Ever since the Vikings landed in England in their dragon-prowed ships, they have caused death and destruction wherever they’ve gone. I will put a stop to them—but I need time.”

You look at the fugitive more closely. Beneath the filth, the clothes of this pleasant, fair-haired man are brightly-colored and trimmed with gold. He must be a nobleman. It will be hard for him to hide among the peasants.

Then you have an idea. You’re almost at the end of your mission—and this beleaguered young man needs your cloak more than you do.

“Here, take this,” you say, unclasping the brooch at your throat and taking off your cloak. “This will be the perfect disguise.”

“But I can’t leave you to freeze in the coming winter,” the man protests.

“I have another at home,” you lie.

“In that case, I most gratefully accept your gift,” the man says grandly, taking the cloak. “You have just saved King Alfred and perhaps all of England from the clutches of the pitiless Vikings. It is due to fine, faithful commoners like yourself that I am able to keep myself hidden from the enemy Vikings and do my work to save all of England from being conquered by these brutes. You have a monarch’s most heartfelt thanks.”

King Alfred drapes the cloak about his shoulders, favors you with a small bow, and heads in the direction of the burning cottage.

King Alfred the Great! You never would have thought you’d meet a king hiding in a swamp! You hope he will be able to save England



from the Vikings.

You realize that four hundred years after Artorius' death, Britain is still open to attacks from the sea. Peace in Britain has remained precarious for centuries.

Do you want to jump to the future to find out if Britain has to suffer any more invasions, or do you want to jump back to the last year of Artorius' leadership? You need to find out why the Arthurian legend has endured.



Jump into the future. [Click here.](#)



Jump back to find Artorius. [Click here.](#)



The army digs in and waits for Cerdic's Saxon army to attack. Throughout the long night, the mist crawls down the hills and covers the plains and the valleys. It settles like a blanket over Artorius' camp. You can no longer see Mount Badon from your post by the horse enclosure. You can barely see the hand in front of your face.

A short distance away, the soft orange glow of a campfire assures you that Artorius, too, is awake in the long night. His shadow passes back and forth in front of the light as he paces, impatient for the Saxons to arrive.

"Hssst!" Someone appears so abruptly out of the black mist that your heart gives a sudden leap. "Artorius needs his horse! Hurry!"

Quickly you saddle Artorius' great white horse and lead it out of the paddock. Artorius is conferring with Caius as you lead it up.

"The scout has just spotted Cerdic's ragtag army about five miles from here," Artorius says. "They're advancing as softly as barbarians can. No doubt they mean to surprise us in the fog. But we'll be ready for them." You can hear the hint of steel in his voice.

"I'll notify the troops," declares Cerdic.

"And I will encourage the tribal chiefs personally," replies Artorius. "Follow me with my horse," he says to you. "I want to be ready the moment the Saxons attack."

Holding the restless horse by the bridle, you follow Artorius from chieftain to chieftain. All—from the clean-shaven horsemen of the Midland region to the bearded infantrymen of Wales—listen to Artorius with respect. Now that you see all the British tribes

together for the first time, you can see how different they truly are.

But Artorius has the same inspiring words for everyone: “Fight that we may rid ourselves of the Saxon menace for good. Fight, not for the Catuvellauni or the Trinovantes or the Iceni, but for Britain—for all of Britain—and we will win!”

“For Britain,” echo the chieftains.

Artorius even takes the time to talk to you. “Is this your first time in battle?” he asks.

“Yes, it is,” you admit.

“You hold yourself like a staunch soldier,” he says. “I’m going to make you my standard bearer. All you have to do is stay near me—and stay away from the Saxons. Think you can do it?”

“Yes, sir,” you answer excitedly. Now you’ll have firsthand knowledge of how this Artorius fights.

Long before the Saxons actually appear, the British cavalry is in formation. You wait next to Artorius in the front lines and peer with the rest through the mist.

Just as the dawn breaks, you make out the first, indistinct forms of the advancing Saxons. “Charge!” Arthur bellows. The horses pound away into the mist.

You run to keep up. At first you can make out nothing in the dust and chaos. Then you see Arthur, on his white horse, leading the British into the ranks of the enemy. His sword slashes about him, opening a path through the sea of foot soldiers. You follow in his wake.

Arrrrrgggghh! With a tremendous roar, a Saxon churl swings at you with his broadax. You swipe at him with your standard and send him flying.

Then you notice something horrifying. Instead of trying to knock the British riders off their mounts, the earthbound Saxons are injuring the horses! They are cutting the tendons on the backs of the horses’ legs—hamstringing them—so they go lame!

You dash at the first Saxon you see doing this and knock the sword out of his hand with your standard.

Then you see a Saxon sneaking up behind Artorius’ horse!



“Look out!” you cry, trying to get into position to swipe at the Saxon’s sword.

Artorius hears you, swings his horse around, and plunges his sword through the Saxon’s heart.

“Thank you, my young friend,” he shouts at you through the tumult.

In the end the Saxons are no match for the mounted Britons. Without the advantage of surprise, they are routed by the disciplined cavalry charge of Artorius’ trained troops. Artorius has won the day—and Cerdic’s people retreat once more to the small area in the south of Britain they have made their homeland.

You have seen Artorius bring all the British tribes together to win the Battle of Mount Badon. And you have seen him scatter Britain’s primary enemy.

But you can’t help wondering if the peace can last. You can find out by jumping twenty years into the future.



Click here.



The dirt hole at your feet is at least ten feet long and who knows how many feet deep. You peer down into its depth.

“Catch!” calls out one of the monks digging at its bottom.

A blurry white shape comes flying out of the hole. Instinctively, you hold out your hands and catch it—it’s a human skull!

Startled, you let it drop. A few people around you laugh. You grin, a bit sheepishly.

It is 1191, and you are watching a grave being excavated in the ancient cemetery of Glastonbury Abbey. Curious monks and richly dressed noblemen stand idly by, waiting for a discovery. In front of you rises the great hill of Glastonbury Tor.

“Stop fooling around and keep digging, Brother William.”

The monk who tossed you the skull complains, “We’re already eight feet down and we find merely the bones of commoners, Abbot.”

“We are looking for an ancient grave,” retorts the abbot. “Deeper.”

Brother William gives his spade one more halfhearted thrust.

Clunk. His spade has hit something solid!

Within moments, the monks have dug out a stone slab. Under the slab there is a leaden cross, which they hand up to the abbot.

“ ‘Here lies buried the renowned King Arthur in the Isle of Avalon,’ ” he reads from the Latin letters inscribed on the cross. “Keep digging, brothers!”

Finally, nine feet farther down, the monks unearth a large coffin

made from hollowed-out logs. They fasten pulleys around the coffin and slowly hoist it up to ground level.

You watch as the coffin lid is pried open. There you see the yellowed skeleton of a very large man, together with some smaller bones and a hank of golden hair.

“King Arthur and his Lady Guinevere!” the abbot exclaims. “We have proved that Glastonbury is the final resting place of Britain’s most famous king!”

You back away from the coffin as others in the group peer in. “We haven’t proved anything, Abbot,” you hear one of the noblemen mutter to himself. “All we’ve demonstrated is that you monks know how to stage a fake discovery.”

Are these really the bones of Arthur, or is the nobleman right? You can jump forward to the twentieth century to find out what a modern scholar says about this medieval find. Or you can jump back to Glastonbury to the time right after Artorius was wounded at the Battle of Camlann.



Jump forward to the twentieth century.

[Click here.](#)



Jump back to the fifth century.

[Click here.](#)





Bong! Bong! Bells peel out from the tower of a London cathedral. It is Christmas Day, 1066. You crane your neck to see over the heads of the crowds of people lining the road to the cathedral.

“Here he comes!” the woman next to you shouts. “William the Conqueror has come to to claim the throne of England!”

“He should have stayed home in Normandy where he belongs,” another man grumbles. “We don’t want a French court in England.”

“We’ve had enough of foreign invasions,” someone else agrees.

The procession passes in front of you. A proud man, dressed in armor and a long ermine cloak, walks solemnly behind a line of priests. This must be England’s most recent conqueror, soon to be crowned King William I.

After Artorius’ death, England was swept by a wave of invasions—Saxon, Viking, Norman. No wonder the Arthurian legend kept alive the story of a man who was able to repel foreigners for even a short time.

You’re ready to jump back to the last year of Artorius’ leadership.



[Click here.](#)



The heavy tread of hooves alerts you that someone is approaching you from behind. Looking around quickly, you realize that you are on the old Roman road running from Calleva to Londinium.

“’Allo, young stranger!” A sturdy farmer driving an ox-cart pulls up beside you. “Would you like a ride?”

“Thanks,” you say, jumping up beside him on the rickety wooden seat. “Are you going to Londinium?”

“To Londinium and back,” he answers cheerily. “These old Roman roads are a marvel. In the twenty years since Artorius was pronounced high king over all the Britons, he’s tried to patch up the ruins left by the Saxon invaders. To keep communication and trading open between the tribes, y’know.”

“So there’s been no trouble with the Saxons lately?”

“They’ve been as subdued as sea after storm. They know that as long as our good Artorius is king, he can rally all the tribes behind him. So they tend their own gardens and leave us to tend ours.” He grins. “There’s a lot of prize-winning vegetables being grown in Britain this year.”

You notice one of the old Roman rest houses up ahead of you.

“I’ll get out here,” you tell the farmer. “Thanks for the ride!”

“Anytime,” he answers. You hop down.

So Artorius really did bring peace to Britain. But why was he remembered after his death? And what will happen to Britain when Artorius is no longer around to keep the peace?

You already know that after Artorius is gone, the Saxons will

achieve final victory over the Britons. But what happens in the centuries after that? Is Britain finally at peace?



Jump to the last year of Arthur's kingship. [Click here.](#)



Jump 450 years into the future. [Click here.](#)



The army camp in the south of Britain is alive with activity. Standing in the middle of the hubbub, you try to avoid getting in the soldiers' way. Leather tents and rough huts spring up suddenly on the open plain. In the distance you see a steep hill surmounted by what looks like a crumbling fort.

Two men are standing in the middle of the camp, their helmets in their hands. With a wide sweep of his arm, one of them gestures toward the hill. As he turns in your direction, you can see it is Caius.

"We could hold up on Mount Badon and await Cerdic's army there," Caius is saying. "That way we'd command the highest spot in the surrounding country."

"But then Cerdic's foot soldiers would have the advantage in battle," the other points out. "Our cavalry would be useless on the hillside."

"So we do nothing, Artorius?"

"We will await the Saxons on the open plain," Caius' companion answers firmly. "We will wait for the rabble to attack—and mow them down."

This must actually be Artorius! He looks much like any other British officer you have seen—dark-haired and bearded, though a bit taller than most. He speaks with authority, as if accustomed to command.

But can this be the Arthur of legend?

"Caius!" you exclaim, drawing yourself to his attention.

"So there you are," Caius says. "Go see to the horses. We're expecting Cerdic and his Saxons to attack at any moment." He

resumes his discussion with Artorius, who has given you merely a passing glance.

You are disappointed. Obviously Caius is too busy to introduce you to Artorius right now. You must have arrived in time for a real crisis.

As you go to find the horses, you wonder whether you've found the right Arthur at last. By now you have stopped looking for medieval castles and knights in shining armor. But did *this* Arthur do anything to make himself remembered?

The upcoming battle may hold the key.



Click here.



A desolate battlefield extends around you. For all the men and horses who once fought here, the battle is over. Just their corpses remain to tell the story of their fight.

Only two figures seem to be alive in this bleak place. One is Artorius. He sits slumped on a fallen tree trunk, his head in his hands. The other is Caius. He is standing in front of his leader and talking urgently. Both men have turned gray in the years since you've seen them.

Coming up from behind Caius, you approach the two. Artorius does not lift his head.

"We must leave Camlann, sire," Caius says firmly. "Some of your enemies may still be about. It is not safe."

"I do not care about my enemies," says Artorius in an expressionless voice. There is blood on his clothes, but you can't tell whether it's his or someone else's. "These enemies you speak of used to be my friends. I will sit here awhile and survey the ruin of my hopes and the ruin of Britian."

Artorius raises his head and for the first time notices you standing behind Caius. He does not seem surprised to see someone appear so unexpectedly. Nor does he recognize you, since the last time he saw you was thirty years ago.

"Why, child, you're shivering," he says kindly. Indeed you have been so absorbed by their conversation you hadn't noticed it. "Here, you can have my cloak. I will not need it for much longer."

Artorius unclasps the broach that fastens his cloak together and takes off the red woolen garment. He beckons you over.



“This will keep you warm in the long life ahead of you,” Artorius says, wrapping the cloak around your frigid body. Now that he is no longer wearing the cloak, you can tell that he is, indeed, wounded. His wounds do not look deep, however.

“What has happened here?” you ask, barely able to trust your voice.

“The union of the British tribes has been destroyed,” Artorius answers. “The chieftains became jealous of each other and jealous of my position. They forgot who their real enemies are and attacked each other. And, now,” he says, looking around, “they are all dead.

“But you—you are alive,” Artorius continues, fastening his brooch at your throat. “May mine be the only blood ever to stain this cloak. And may you share in a future for Britain that is as peaceful as your own life.”

“You too will be here to see that future,” Caius insists.

“No, my friend.” Artorius’ voice is calm. “This is the end—I can feel it.”

Caius turns and looks at the battlefield around you. “It feels like the end of the whole world,” he murmurs.

“Artorius! NO!” you scream out.

But you are too late.

A hand holding a dagger has appeared over Artorius’ shoulder. One of his enemies is not dead at all—and he stabs Artorius in the back!

Artorius falls over on his face. With a cry of rage and anguish, Caius jumps on the assassin, ready to kill. He shouts at you, “Go seek assistance! Quickly!”

With one last, long look at the wounded king, you take off. You dash over the battlefield, through the woods, and down a country path. At last you spy some fishermen by the edge of the river Cam.

“Artorius is wounded—he needs help,” you manage to gasp. You point back toward the spot where Caius is watching over his dying king. The fishermen look stunned. Then one shouts, “Artorius is in need of us!” In a single motion, the fishermen cast their nets aside and start back in the direction you came from.

You try to catch your breath. You can't believe that Artorius is really about to die. Not only did he bring the rival tribes of Britain together, but he also earned the trust of everyone in the kingdom. And then he was brought down—not by Saxon invaders, but by fighting among his own men.

Will Artorius really die here at Camlann? Sir Thomas Malory, you remember, wrote that Arthur was buried in the isle of Glastonbury. Maybe you should try to find his grave.



Jump to Glastonbury. [Click here.](#)



You are back at Glastonbury—but how different it looks! Now the Tor and the hills around it are surrounded by water, like a wide moat. Down by the water's edge, Caius kneels and looks out toward the Tor.

You come up next to him. “Where is Artorius?” you ask.

“Out there,” he says. He stands and points into the shimmering distance.

Your eyes follow his finger. You see a dark shape, like a boat, moving across the water. The mist is so thick that you can't see who is in the boat or who is rowing it.

“Artorius has requested that no one follow,” Caius says. “It is fitting, though, that the one who tried to save his life should see him depart!”

“But—but I still have his cloak,” you say.

“He wanted you to keep it. In hopes that your future, and the future of Britain, might be secure against the threat of war—isn't that what he said?” Caius smiles down at you. Then, with one last lingering look after his departed leader, he turns and slowly walks away.

You say nothing as you gaze out at the fast-receding boat.

Artorius may or may not be buried at Glastonbury Abbey. But you know now that the memory of this obscure leader from a half-forgotten age has survived for centuries in the legend of King Arthur. If once upon a time a wise and just ruler brought peace to a war torn land, it can happen again—in any land, at any time.

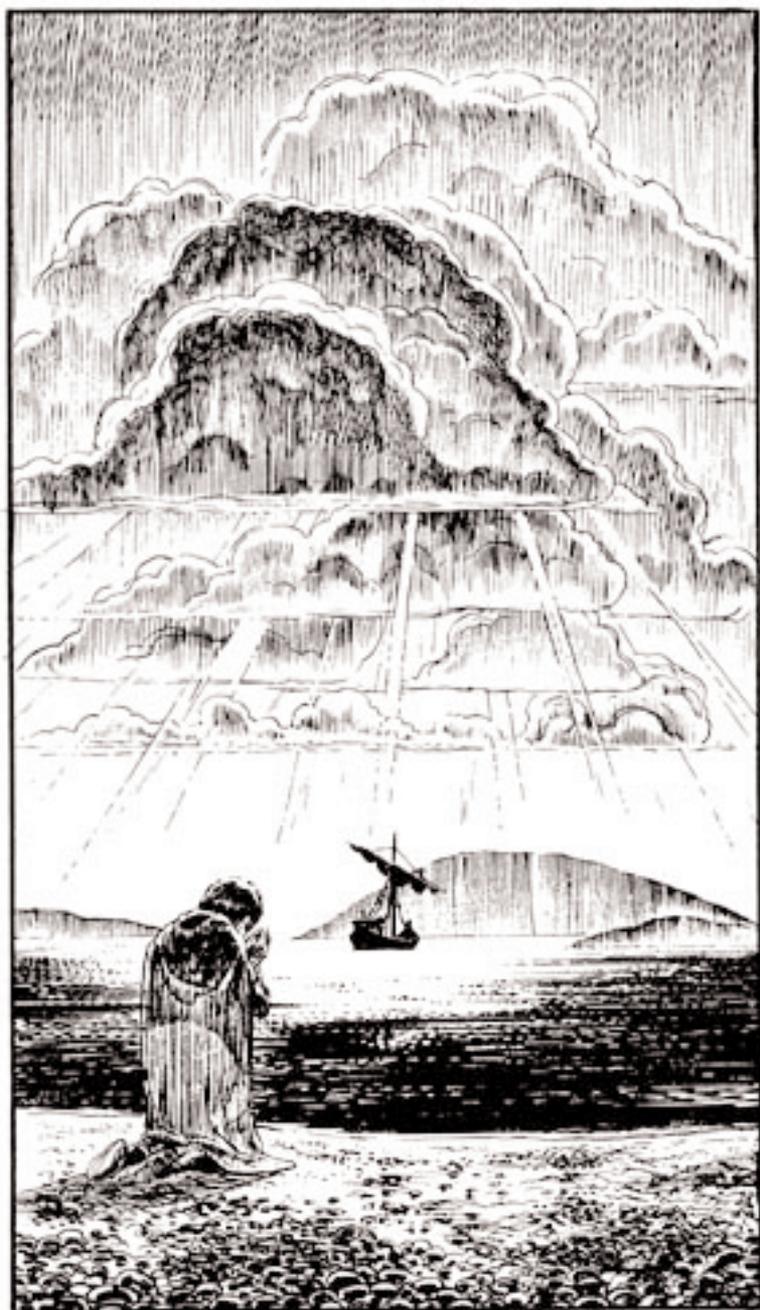
You remember the last words of Malory's manuscript:

ARTHURUS,
REX QUONDAM REXQUE FUTURUS

Arthur,
the once and future king.

You wrap your cloak tightly against the cold. Your mission has been successful—now it's time to go home.

MISSION COMPLETED.



DATA FILE

Page 10: Who would be more likely to know about King Arthur—an Englishman or a Frenchman?

Page 12: How long will it be before the British accept Roman rule?

Page 21: Count carefully.

Page 26: What do you think you'll find in Britain before the arrival of the Romans?

Page 45: When did Sir Thomas Malory say Arthur may have lived?

Page 49: Is it likely that an Anglo-Saxon poet would sing about a British hero?

Page 53: Artorius will probably be where the action is.

Page 59: What is the name of the man you are looking for?

Page 98: Which is the most direct way to complete your mission?

About the Contributors

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