

Merlin Parnassus

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Synopsis

Merlin Parnassus was a Real Magician, a Navigator and a herbalist. He was the wizard at King Arthur's Court. Some say Merlin's existence ended when he was trapped by Morgana in the Crystal Cave; it didn't stop there.

Rating – 18+

'Magical Essence is created by having sex'; that is the basis for the story. There is no underage sex. Rape is mentioned and dealt with, after the event. If you find this distasteful then, I suggest, this story is not for you.

Lexical conventions

'Communications by Telepathy are shown in Italics and enclosed in single quotation marks'.

Tags: #Fantasy #DarkFantasy #Merlin #MerlinParnassus
#Romance #EroticaDubcon #RingsOfGaia #RealMagic
#PeterRendellAuth

Dedication

Thank you to my family for their support. The continuous supply of love and mugs of tea helped me keep going.

Chapter 1, The Early Years

Location: The glades of Parnassus, Mount Parnassus, Greece – 850BC.

I was born on a pile of woodland leaves, my body barely bigger than a rabbit, my mother lay half-naked on the ground next to me; there was blood everywhere!

“I name you Merlin” my mother, shouted.

My mother prayed to Gaia, asking for protection:

“Let my child receive your gifts and become your servant. Let my body become your magical essence.”

A gentle breeze took her prayer to those who listened.

I was being watched! A Little Owl sat on a branch above me. My mother’s voice grew louder as she sang out her plea; the owl left to deliver the message. My mother’s song comforted me, but her energy was failing. The chill wind of death crossed the valley. The sun shone between the branches of a Plane tree, and the sunbeams surrounded my mother. A black-hooded figure appeared in the adjacent trees. I watched my mother’s spirit rise and stand before the cloaked figure, while my little body responded to natural urges, I defecated on the leaves, and my stomach gurgled.

The hooded figure pulled back the hood, revealing the face of a young woman of my mother’s age; she walked towards me, picked me up, opened her cloak and wrapped me close to her bosom. I cooed with approval as I felt her warmth. She reached down to the far side of my mother’s body and picked up a silver dagger I hadn’t seen.

As the young woman walked, I saw the sky above, with glimpses of the owl as it flew ahead. My new mother was blessed with

milk, and I suckled from her ample bosom. Contented, I fell asleep.

Location: My new home in the Glades.

When I awoke, I was swinging in a hammock, next to a bed in a small cabin. Lit by oil lamps, my world was limited to my mother's face and a small table where she bathed and dressed me. For several months, I lived in the complete safety of my mother's arms. In the warm, dry weather, mother took me outside; my little lungs drew in the fresh mountain air.

The cabin walls and roof were made of logs; the roof was covered in pitch and alpine plants; we were well protected from the weather. The front had a door and two windows; the roof extended over a veranda that was the area where mother did business. A woodsman who courted my mother built the hut. My mother was a wise woman. People brought money and gifts to pay for her doctoring. She valued the gifts more than money; pots, jars, string, linen, muslin and papyrus; the writing materials were the highest value. Mother gave out medications in a mixture of herbs and spices, tied in bundles with bark strips or wrapped in dried leaves. When she had muslin available, she would hand out crushed preparations in small muslin bags.

Lessons...

Visitors called mother 'Sibyl', a title meaning 'wise woman'; we had many visitors each year. The visitors taught me about their travels and my mother listened-in; she said it was 'all part of the doctoring'. Each story was a valuable lesson. Mother said the stories helped her determine the correct medication for the visitor. We collected the gossip and filtered the wisdom. We

were the source of all knowledge; it was a simple matter of collation and redistribution.

Mother made it clear to all visitors:

“Gaia is the soul of the Earth, serving God, the creator. Worship is not required, but respect is everything.”

Lessons in the higher slopes...

The owl had a nesting box in the roof of the veranda. I named the owl 'Bobo'. Bobo would follow us everywhere, acting as our early warning system against predators and strangers.

My education began as soon as I had learned to talk. Mother taught me the names of everything she handled. She showed me the secrets of the plants and trees, how to survive in the wild, living on roots, berries and Fungi. We regularly returned to the glades of Parnassus. The foot of the mountain is full of olive groves, conifers, rocky limestone and mountain springs. We cultivated oregano and water-thyme and collected bark, leaves and roots of cedar, laurel and arbutus. In autumn, the forests were full of bright leaves; wildflowers carpeted the glades. In Spring, new flowers mixed with the snow patches left from the winter. Mother would show me the migrating birds - linnets, thrushes, woodpeckers and robins. Higher up the mountain, there were Orioles, vultures, harriers and golden eagles.

Home in the Glades...

My first loss was Bobo; it was such a deep pain to lose my close friend. Mother treated it as another lesson; owls only live for four or five years. Bobo's grandchildren will look after me. Life would go on; they would serve me as best they could.

Home in the Glades...844BC

I learned to read and write when I was six years old. A merchant sold us slates and chalk. Mother gave me a slate and taught me to draw. When the fun was over, she showed me letters and numbers. Mother bought more slates, for me to record traveller's stories, and clay tablets for more permanent information. On rare occasions, I copied my drafts to papyrus.

My birth memories were as strong as ever, and I felt the urge to write them down. Mother said it was fated she became my mother as she had just lost her own child. She had burned the body to send its spirit to its day of reckoning. It was while writing that I realised I couldn't remember all of my birth mother's face. A flow of tears marked the papyrus.

Home in the Glades...

A wild boar killed my father. Mother said he was not committed to her as she had failed to bear another child. She seemed unexpectedly detached from the loss of a companion.

The Journey to Delphi...841BC

On my ninth birthday, there were ponies outside the house. Mother was invited, some would say commanded, to travel to the Temple at Delphi. Persuaded of the benefits of a house built of stone and the warmth of a thatched roof, we left the Glade and our independence.

Location: The Temple of Delphi...

Mother continued her doctoring at the Temple; she had access to the stables so she could return to her old patch.

My new life mandated attendance at the temple school. It became routine for a teacher to take the first half of the lesson and then ask me to finish it. I realised just 'how well' I had been educated; my knowledge needed to be filtered. I felt terrible about hiding information, but some people just couldn't handle it. Knowledge is power.

Temple life was tedious. Mother had a house in a protected area. I was expected to sleep in the dormitories with the young priests, but they considered my lifestyle disruptive. After several impositions, I explained I was a farmer, I was given a room of my own.

The young priests arose early, so they thought; they would get up at 6am for prayer; I was up at 4am cultivating herbs. We grew herbs at the Temple, but some herbs needed the shade of trees. I would grab a pony and ride out to fetch herbs and still be back for breakfast.

I was twice the size of the other children; many of them were orphans and lacked motivation. The ones prone to pranks, I pulled them to one side and found them something to do; mucking-out the stables and moving the manure. There were gardens to dig, animals to feed and youngsters willing to miss prayers.

We got several breaks from school each year. The students collected olives, foraged for nuts and helped in the vineyards. They would act as beaters to round up wild pigs. Joints of boar were hung or smoked. It was a welcome change from eating goat.

I satisfied my thirst for knowledge by visiting the temple library. Most of the documents were in Greek, and I read them all; they

gave me a detailed understanding of the people. The bane of my life was the documents in Egyptian I couldn't understand. I had met Egyptians, but, none had time to spare, and I wondered if it was safe to let them see the documents.

On my eighteenth birthday, I graduated. I was asked to teach and to write down my mother's knowledge. They would supply me with all the papyrus available.

Location: The Oracle – 827BC

I was never sure 'when it started'. A rumour circulated that Sibyl had made several accurate predictions. She was getting a reputation as a talented soothsayer; the Temple preferred the term 'Oracle'. I didn't know Mother had been down to the Omphalos in the sacred catacombs.

Mother had been bathing in a local stream; it had plants that produced soaps and beneficial oils. She came back to the Temple, relaxed and scented. After visiting the stream and entering the lower Temple, she received visual inspiration. It was these euphoric feelings that had produced the predictions. She said what she saw.

I had studied brewing and noted the narcotic effects of the process. I theorised that similar vapours were being emitted from the ground beneath the Omphalos. We had often given predictions of the weather, listening to the winds, observing the streams; the signs were there, but, Mother's visions were something else.

Was it possible to see the future? I had an issue with predicting the future as I felt my destiny depended on what I did. It seemed unlikely that I would base any decisions on what Sibyl said. I asked Sibyl to restrict her bathing in this special place. If it

opened a window to the future, then the predictions could be dangerous. I screamed at mother:

“Predictions must be in private, and someone must protect you! Think of the ramifications. You might predict an assassination, betray a confidence or predict a disaster. There are things you should not say; it might be better to be silent.”

Location: The village of Delphi.

A village grew up around the Temple; we had lots of visitors. The merchants made souvenirs; potters made vases, carpenters made carvings and plaques. There was significant demand for memories of the Temple. Some travellers claimed they could tell your fortune. I suppose that it's just as believable as the Oracle. How can you justify Sibyl's activity if you allow the charlatans to exist just down the road?

Back at the Temple...

It had been 4 years since I wrote anything in my log. Mother lasted 2 years as the Oracle; she died in my arms.

Location: The Glade of my birth – 825BC.

I took mother's body back to my birthplace, built a funeral pyre, and sat back to meditate. My lips quivered as I murmured:

‘Gaia, please take my mother and let me take her place as your devoted servant.’

Three ladies approached; the first was Sibyl, my adopted mother, restored to the young woman that rescued me. The second, my birth mother, surprised me at how similar she was to Sibyl; they

could have been sisters. Somehow, I knew she had been with me throughout my life. The peace in her eyes said everything. The third woman had to be Gaia; her face was older, showing wisdom and authority; she was the mother of all.

The funeral pyre was lit by Gaia and burnt fiercely without damaging the trees; I stared into the flames as the ladies sang. My pain eased as the fire died down, my birth mother blew me a kiss, waved goodbye and floated away. Sibyl blew me a kiss, waved goodbye, and walked into the sunshine beyond the trees. Gaia smiled.

'I am Gaia. I am the soul of this planet; some call me "Mother Earth". I serve God, the creator. Worship is not required, but respect is everything.'

I stayed silent, accepting the vision; it was not my turn to speak.

'Your mother served me well and had great knowledge that I have added to your memories. I never meant Sibyl to become an Oracle, but free will changed her destiny. As a reward for your service, you will become a Master of Real Magic and live a very long life. Knowing you could live for millennia, are you still willing to be my servant?' Gaia asked with a deep calm and sincerity.

'Yes.' I accepted without hesitation.

'Merlin. Heaven and Hell are here, on Earth. There are many versions of Hell; you should end them if you have the power to do so; mercy is the greatest gift.'

Gaia paused, giving me time to absorb the information. She wanted me to accept the implications of mercy.

'The foundation of life is Reincarnation. Your body dies, and the spirit ascends; your life credits are added to your spirit credits. On your day of reckoning, your spirit credits are

assessed and determine your next life on Earth. With enough positive credits, your spirit may influence the choice for its next life. There is no excuse for being idle. Doing nothing, or ignoring me, will earn negative credits. You have the opportunity to help others who are less fortunate. Too many debits, and you might spend several lives as an animal before you return to life as a human being.'

Gaia left me to contemplate. I had no questions, and yet I had many. I didn't know where to start. By the time I dared to ask a question, Gaia had vanished.

I was her servant, so, I couldn't argue with her. She had given me the rights of Judge, Jury and Executioner, expecting me to apply mercy when needed. On the surface that sounded like putting a sick dog down. Dogs I can do, but people, not so much!

Suddenly, I became aware of my mother's memories. The shock of their presence drew me towards the richness of her life; I burst into tears. Eventually, my eyes cleared enough to see a little owl sat in the grass just in front of me. It was twittering like mad, to draw me back to the real world.

The main hall of the Temple of Delphi.

"I, Merlin, Servant of Gaia, Priest of Delphi, will never allow an Apothecary to become an Oracle. To lose an Oracle is bad enough, but to lose an Apothecary is a huge loss to the Temple."

My mother's cottage...825BC

After my declaration to the priests, I moved out of the Temple and into my mother's cottage. At my request, a priestess removed my mother's clothes; they would recycle them. I

checked mother's cache for valuables and found the silver dagger. It reminded me of the day I was born. I shivered and shook with the shock of my birth. My brain seemed to shrink to a simple child, and I soiled my underwear. When I recovered full consciousness, I thanked Gaia that I was in complete privacy and hastened to change my clothes.

This was the first time I wondered 'how my mother died'? I had never seen my mother's wounds. Was she killed, or was the dagger needed to release me into this world? Can the dagger tell me more? Could memories be stored in metal? I put the dagger back.

I took over my mother's surgery as the resident Apothecary, but, I didn't see this as my future.

The Oracle became famous because it predicted the future; it had become the focus of the Greek nation and consulted before all major political decisions. The Prophetai interpreted the Pythia's few words. The Oracle made a statement, and the priests made it happen. I was one of those priests.

The Temple Apollo - 800BC

One beautiful spring morning, a young man came to the Temple; his name was Apollo. He was tall and fit; he would run alongside me whenever I rode to the Glades. He stayed at the Temple teaching fitness, drama and music. He played the lyre with a skill that held the ladies in rapture; they would do whatever he asked. Naturally, they declared him to be a god.

There was little doubt in my mind that Apollo had strong powers of suggestion. Almost everyone did as he suggested with little or no resistance. Even I was susceptible to his friendly manner. I had my suspicions, and I practised meditation to resist his

charms. He had the grace to concede his attempts to manipulate me and promised he wouldn't do it again.

When Apollo heard about the Oracle, he was keen to find out what it was all about; he studied the ways of the Pythia. He postulated that vapours from the fissure were reacting with the scent acquired from the stream to cause the euphoria and the subsequent predictions. He set out to prove his theory.

He invited ladies to bathe in the local Spring and took them down into the lower Temple to study them. It seems that predictions can only be made by an intelligent woman when seated in a specific part of the Temple. Apollo said the sensitive area for predictions was a crack in the floor where heat entered from the hot rocks below.

Apollo introduced several new regular events to temple life. Foot races and wrestling became an annual event. He added races for people carrying stones and people carrying people. He added throwing events such as Javelin and stones, the latter became known as the discus. The games had a purpose. Apollo wanted a way of finding natural leaders and people with dedication. It would help the Temple select those who could judge and be fair. It would become a natural selection process for teachers, judges and police.

The planes of Delphi, the Pythian Games – 792BC

In 792BC, Apollo added drama and music to the event so that he could assess future candidates for the position of Pythia.

When Apollo moved on; the Temple was rededicated to him. His influence had been total, and Gaia was largely forgotten.

The Temple - Athena – 790BC

Athena came to the Temple as a Pythian Games Champion; she was the first woman to enter the games and proudly took on all challengers. No woman had ever competed in the wrestling, but Athena beat them all. There were a few complaints; some of the men said Athena's beauty was a major distraction. How could a man fight a woman in the wrestling? It was quite unthinkable. Athena was as arrogant as any male in her reply 'Prepare yourselves, for your enemy may well be female'.

Athena stayed for nearly twenty years and defended her title as Pythian Champion twice. Athena had many similarities with Apollo. Perhaps Apollo and Athena were more of Gaia's acolytes.

I wanted to take Athena as my wife, but she declined, she was not the mothering type. She told me that we were two of a kind. We had an obligation to travel so that our knowledge could be passed to the people. I was desolated when Athena left to go to the capital.

A new temple was built and dedicated to Athena. There were three factions at Delphi; the priests were dedicated to Gaia, but the rising stars were dedicated to Athena or Apollo; the split was gender based.

Olympia - First Olympic Games. 776BC

The reputation of the Pythian Games spread throughout Greece; it wasn't long before other cities adopted the game's philosophy. Jason was credited with inventing the Pentathlon, the "five competitions", that was added to the Olympic Games. The event was ordered - long jump, Javelin, discus, a foot race and finally wrestling. The Pentathlon was added to the Pythian Games at the next game.

At the Temple, almost two hundred years later – 590BC

It seems that no one has noticed I haven't aged since my twenty-fifth birthday. Gaia gave me the gift of a long life; that much is true. She also said I would become a Master of Magic; so far, not even a smell of real magic. I had ignored Athena's advice about travelling. I needed to get out and see the world. I would tour the schools, passing on my knowledge and healing the sick. I appointed a Prophetai at the Temple; he, or she, would take my place in supporting the Pythia. This would let me work independently of temple activities.

The social life of a priest is almost non-existent. It became the practice that those who had taken an oath of celibacy would wear white gowns, silks in the summer and linens in the winter; everyone else wore brown or grey denoting their disciplines. Within the Temple, I wore white to blend in with the rest. I had some new robes made. I chose a dark blue as I felt black would frighten children.

On the road – 590BC

In the first couple of years, my travels were limited to staying close to the Temple. I came back to the Apothecary regularly to collect medications. This was proving to be a significant restriction. I bought a pack horse and had some special packs made. I would have liked to use a cart, but the mountain routes would restrict its use. I spread my knowledge to a three days radius from the Temple. Within five years, I had extended that radius to five days. My maximum period away from the Temple was fourteen days. I would soon extend this to a month.

Over the next ten years, the Temple expanded to train teachers who would travel as I did. Blue gowns were a mark of the Oracle;

each teacher had spent at least seven years learning the skills of literacy and medicine. The teachers were priests who kept rooms at the Temple. The teachers would visit libraries whenever they found one; we slowly expanded our knowledge.

I set up apothecaries in each of the towns from Delphi to Athens; the trademark was the Owl of Athena. Each shop was staffed by a Sibyl and two assistants.

I set up stables near each of the apothecaries. The horses would carry supplies and messages; the service trademark was the wings of Hermes.

The company of the Temple was expanding; the trademark was the front of a temple. The school moved from the Temple and into the town of Delphi. Several large buildings were built in the town for a senior school, a library and a teachers college; the staff would live in the buildings until proper accommodation was available. These buildings significantly added to the size of the town.

Athens - 580BC.

My first trip to Athens was educational. I had never seen poverty before. The Temple in Delphi would pick up those who fell; in Athens, the fallen were left to rot. I was ashamed. My desire to stay at the Temple was in question. My mind said the Temple was important; we were training the teachers to meet the people.

I still didn't know real magic; I wondered when my education would begin, but the real concern is whether real magic would be of any use in fixing poverty. The people seemed to be getting food, and I hadn't seen any dead bodies, but there was no reason to feel good about it.

Athens was named after the goddess Athena. Was my Athena a reincarnation of the goddess? Yes, she was my Athena and would be forever. Somehow, I was sure that everyone else felt the same way. I would probably find her in the centre of the city. It was no surprise to me that she hit the capital with the full force of her beauty, physique and personality.

It became painfully apparent that I could not fight poverty. If I tried, then I would spend all my time dealing with the fallen when I should be tackling the source of the problem. With great anguish, I passed the poor to the priests and teachers. My responsibility was to go after the cause. That thought would return to me each evening.

Chapter 2, The Rings of Gaia

*Location: The main hall, the Temple of the Oracle, Delphi
– 560BC.*

The five rings of Gaia were donated by a merchant; the record stated they came from Sparta. The rings were strong and lighter than expected; they looked metallic, possibly steel. Stories about steel making in Sparta had been circulating for more than fifty years. The merchant suggested the rings become the bases for victory garlands. He showed how a laurel wreath could be made, and the ring removed once complete.

A fresh victory garland would be made by a priestess on the day of the games. The garland was in three parts, a wreath of laurels, a braided colour band and the ring of blessing. The ring of blessing would be removed during the crowning ceremony. The garland of laurels would soon die off leaving the braided colour band as the only remaining trophy.

The Olympic rings symbol comes from the way the five victory garlands were laid out on the altar at the Apollo temple in Delphi. There was one garland for each winner of the four Panhellenic games; the fifth would go to the supreme champion.

The Temple of Apollo, Delphi.- 560BC

I had the same dream every night: 'Gaia crowned the supreme champion, removed the ring and put it on my head'. I pondered on the meaning for days on end. In desperation, I took the problem to the Pythia; she considered the problem for several days before calling me back to her inner sanctum. She had considered the problem and wanted to try an experiment. She had the rings of blessing in her hands. She asked me to sit on the Omphalos and clear my mind. Pythia didn't know which of the

rings had been used to make the garland of the supreme champion, so she placed all five rings on my head. She held them in place, and we shared the visions.

The meaning of the dream was now clear; the crowning ceremony had a greater significance. Made by man, and blessed by Gaia, the rings had become magical artefacts. Gaia had added memories and a little permanent magic. Crowning a champion added knowledge and permanent magic to the victor. The rings had copied memories into my body, not just my head, I was tingling all over. It took a while for the new memories to be assimilated. I felt like I had a black box in my head. There was something I wanted, but I couldn't quite remember what it was.

The Pythia wanted to resign from her position. She wanted to be my wife and become part of the magic. I considered her offer very seriously. If she resigned, then I would have to appoint a new Pythia. The potential for a fight between two women vying for power was something I did not want. I turned down her request to resign. However, no rule stated the Pythia must be a virgin.

Location: My private rooms at the Temple. – 560BC

Pythia lost her virginity that night; I sensed the new magical essence.

'What was that?' I asked.

'Sexual intercourse creates magical essence,' came echoing from the ring.

Pythia was still connected to my thoughts; she was smiling.

'How do we avoid pregnancy?' I asked.

'Make yourself sterile; Make your woman sterile or avoid sex.'

We laughed until it hurt. I declared Pythia to be my wife. She resigned her position as Pythia, the first to have done so, and reverted to her birth name of Penelope. The first spell we used was to avoid pregnancy.

I soon found out that I didn't have to have sex to create magical essence; I could do it by proxy. Young couples came to the Temple to have their marriage blessed. A wreath was placed on their heads and the couple would be given the magical blessing 'Can create magical essence'. As they did not have the ability to control the essence, the blessing was of no use to them. I could collect the essence at any time; usually, when they came to have their first child blessed.

My second thought was about magical essence.

'What is magical essence?'

'In its raw form, it is a liquid, that is greasy to touch and taste; it has a half-life of one year; so, it can disappear in two.'

Hardly surprising nobody found it.

Location: Our home in the village of Delphi. – 560BC

I gave up my rooms at the Temple and moved into a large house in the town. I reduced my travelling roles to one month in Spring, Summer and Autumn. I balanced my obligations to the public and my duties to my family.

We raised two beautiful children Adam and Daphne. Adam was killed in the chariot racing. Daphne became a priestess at the Temple.

Location: Our home in the village of Delphi. - 530BC

Penelope died aged 65. Daphne was distraught and pleaded to become the next Pythia; she saw it as an easy way to follow her mother. All pleas to stay and comfort me were lost in her grief.

“Dad. I am getting old!” There was great pain in her voice. “How can you ask me to stay when you are still so young?”

Her words stabbed me deep in my heart. I knew this was coming. I was at a complete loss; how could I placate her?

“I am deeply sorry that I failed you. It is moments like this that, my blessing of a long life feels more like a curse. The Egyptians had real magicians but, few spells of value. Every day, I wondered how I might keep you young, and now I need something to make you young again. I am sorry that I don’t have that knowledge.” I was hurting bad and voicing my pain with a strangled voice.

Daphne fell into my arms, crying.

“Dad. I wouldn’t want a long life like you. I am not even sure I want to remember this life when I have entered my next. Apart from my memories of you, I have nothing of value to carry forward.”

“Is that so? Surely, you have learned things that you would wish to keep? Perhaps you have thought who you would like to be in your next life? Let’s start with the first choice, male or female?”

“What? Why would I want to be male?”

“Just think about it. Are you serious about wanting to be Pythia?”

“Yes, I have thought about it many times.”

“You know, I am always trying to extend the life of the Pythia? I will not let you go that easily.”

“Whatever. As it comes.”

Our home in the village of Delphi. - 525BC

Daphne died 5 years later; I had managed to delay her demise despite her misery.

I mourned the passing of Penelope and Daphne for many years. I gave up my house and returned to the Temple.

The Temple of Delphi – 525BC

It took me a long time to discover that there were more secrets in the rings. I had stupidly assumed that being crowned was a one-off event. It was a long time before I put a ring back on my head and tried to meditate. I wanted to know if I could create somewhere safe to keep personal items. The ring revealed the ability to create a personal virtual store.

A ‘Virtual Store’ is weightless, invisible and has the same effect on its contents; the store is the space in front of your body wherever you are. Your store is accessed by thinking of an opening and reaching into it to get what you want. When you die, your virtual store disintegrates destroying everything within. It is the only safe place to store personal writings or a spell book.

A ‘Virtual Store’ still took up space! It could restrict your movements if not correctly organised; so, I couldn’t use it as a herb store. A sack in front of each leg was all I could manage while riding a horse. This was a significant disappointment.

Merlin's home, Athens – 500BC

A house in Athens became my new home; I shared it with the current Sibyl from the local Apothecary. We now had six apothecaries in Athens paired with stables. The demands for the messenger service was high.

Communicating by telepathy, my dog and two owls kept a watch on those responsible for poverty. There were thousands of greedy people with their snouts in the trough. I fixed a few of them, but it was a terrible waste of magical essence and my time.

Marathon – 490BC

The battle of Marathon occurred in 490BC. The Pythia experienced Immense pressure for predictions on the war. With our troops outnumbered by the vast Persian forces, I was drawn into the conflict. My pony messenger service was supporting the army. I had a choice; operate with an army mandate or risk being imprisoned.

It was a face-off at Marathon. There were a dozen Persian ships on the beach. Exits from the beach were guarded by troops from Athens and Plataea. The Oracle had told the generals to 'avoid the cavalry'; it was a pointless statement as any good general already knew this. It was not clear why the Persians were waiting. The Athenians were waiting for support by the Spartans who would come when their religious period ended. With the threat that the Persian fleet could sail around Cape Sounion to attack Athens, the Spartans were best left to defend Athens. Expecting support from the Spartans was not realistic.

The Persian cavalry re-embarked their ships. It was an operation that took several hours. After the cavalry left, a dog, and an owl crossed the beach. Taken as a sign from Athena, the Athenians

attacked and won a great battle. To celebrate the battle of Marathon, a new event called the Marathon was added to the Pythian Games. The new event was a foot-race that was the distance between Athens and Marathon. The new foot-race was adopted by the other city games.

Peace at last – 480BC

I missed most of the war having volunteered to look after the citizens of Athens; I took them to the north and supported them until they could return to the city. While I was away in Athens, falling boulders destroyed the Athena temple in Delphi. Were the Persians trying to destroy the Oracle? If so, then they hit the wrong Temple.

The Temple at Delphi – 448BC

In 448BC, with the help of Sparta, Delphi regained its independence. Calling this a Holy War was an exaggeration. Soldiers confronted the occupants to hand over control of the Oracle, but after much persuasion, Pericles returned the Shrine to the citizens of Delphi.

The Temple at Delphi – 400BC

In 400BC, with the cessations of the wars, emphasis returned to physical and mental fitness of the citizens. The soldiers were persuaded to put their competitive energies into wrestling and weightlifting. They built a new gymnasium and theatre. The teachers were encouraged to produce plays promoting the stories of Homer, Aesop and Jason. The most popular productions were short stories by Aesop.

After one hundred years of trying to fix poverty, I conceded defeat. I gave up my room in my house in Athens and returned to my rooms at the Temple of Delphi; I needed the services of the Pythia and a return to a position of political clout. None knew me at the Temple; it took a decade to rebuild the respect I used to hold. I sent out my new spies to look for people who really needed my help.

The next 500 years

An earthquake destroyed the Apollonian Temple in Delphi in 373BC. I used magic to break up the boulders around the Omphalos and explained the destruction away as after-shocks. The hot water fissures were still open. The government claimed to own the Temple, but none dared to challenge the priest's right to be there. The Temple paid nothing to the state and was self-supporting. The state exercised rights to control who had access to the Temple and claimed responsibility to rebuild it. It took ten years to rebuild the Temple. Greece went through several occupations by foreign powers. Aetolia and the Phokers rescued the Shrine from the Gauls in 279BC. The Shrine was controlled by the Romans from 190BC, and in 87BC, Emperor Domitian gave the Apollo Temple a makeover.

I outlived all of them. No one ever commented about my age, and I made the others forget.

The Temple of the Oracle. – 150AD

In 150AD, Parchment and vellum were invented. It created a huge demand to copy older valuable documents. The priests of the Temple were contracted to make 2 copies of an Egyptian medical papyrus of herbal knowledge dating back to circa 1550BC. We made two extra copies and hid them for temple use.

I checked every medication. There was just enough new knowledge to justify the cost of producing the copies. I kept one copy in my own archives.

The Temple of the Oracle. – 180AD

This was a first. Pausanias was an enterprising man. In 180AD, he showed me a document he had produced for travellers to Athens. It displayed the magnificence of the Parthenon and the surrounding temples. He was convinced that people would travel to the best places to eat and be entertained. He wanted to do a similar document on Delphi with a history of the Oracle. I had difficulty in grasping the idea of a tourist.

Travelling by horse for any distance was slow and uncomfortable; I thought no one would do it for fun. Travelling in Greece improved when the Gauls arrived. The Gauls had a horse carriage called a Rheda that could carry up to 5 passengers. It was a box on four wheels with doors and windows for the passengers; it was slow, cumbersome, and best pulled by Oxon. The Romans took this design to produce the Carruca; it was a slimmed-down version designed to carry a driver and two passengers. The Delphic Shrine reached new popularity under Hadrian and his successors. I guess I was wrong about tourism as the Oracle took more money after the publicity by Pausanias.

The Temple of the Oracle. – 392AD

In 392AD, Theodosius, the emperor of Rome, declared Christianity the state religion. The Edict stated the end of the worshipping of all Roman and Greek Gods. The Pythia screamed:

“This is the end—send the rings to the winds—leave now.”

Her unprompted vision left me in no doubt as to the source of the warning. Many of our personnel were already Christians; for them, it would be business as usual.

The Pythia would move to my house in Athens.

I had groomed four trusted priests and priestesses ready for such an event; they would become ring bearers. I had trained each couple as magic users, and they would raise a family to pass on their knowledge. The priests will leave with their priestesses posing as honeymoon couples and the rings disguised as bridal garlands. I feared for their lives; the Romans were known for crucifixions. The threat to the priests was real.

I prepared to leave with the first ring, saving valuable documents in my virtual store. The treasury was emptied and distributed; each magic user had a pile of gold coins in their virtual store.

The second ring party, Daedalus and Pasiphae, left by sea in an open public display. Daedalus had been a celibate until I outlined the escape plan. After I released him from his oath, he allowed Pasiphae, a high priestess, to be introduced to him intending to marry. Their relationship had less than a month to develop before they left. Nobody knew they wouldn't return, and that they were heading for Cyprus.

The third ring party, Celsus and Anthea, left at dawn the next day; they went north-east with a goatherd towards the mountain of Parnassus. No one would dare follow them. Celsus and Anthea were very brave to take this route.

The fourth ring party, Aelius and Alexis, were already acquainted when I proposed the escape plan and were very nervous when outside the Temple. They did not want to be seen leaving and left by sea the same night; they were heading to Sicily.

Travelling by horse from Delphi to Montenegro - 392AD

The fifth ring party, Pithios and Callisto, and my party of four scribes and four priestesses, headed north-west on horseback; this was the obvious route, and we expected to be pursued. We joined a spice caravan; the horses carried valuable spices and were heavily guarded. Horses can do 20 miles per day if the rider is on one horse and the packs are on separate horses. Delphi to Stuttgart is 1360 miles (68 days). After 25 days and 500 miles, we arrived in Montenegro.

Montenegro. – 392AD

Pithios and Callisto elected to stay in Montenegro for a few days and then swing north-east to Romania.

Exhausted after the charge to the Roman fort of Cannstatt (a suburb of Stuttgart on the river Neckar); we could rest, and risk being discovered, or we could leave and rest on a boat going down the river. I followed the spices; a merchant had bought the spices and was taking them to Britain. A sailing barge, a spritsail, would leave shortly. The barge had 3 holds for grain; 2 were full, and the captain was waiting for another grain shipment. I bought the spices, giving the merchant a generous profit. He cancelled his trip. I had hammocks installed in the boat and paid well for my party and spices to travel.

The journey down the Rhine was pleasant. The river was bounded by steep hills with many castles capable of harassing shipping. If we hadn't been suffering from nervous exhaustion and paranoia, we would have enjoyed the sunshine and dry weather. We considered each boat on the river as a potential threat, so, we spent a lot of time below decks, sleeping whenever we could, playing cards and spinning yarns.

The sailing across the North Sea was rough with a strong north wind. I had persuaded the captain to do a night crossing; the captain was in a good mood having consumed a substantial measure of hard liquor; he was an excellent sailor, and we sighted the Essex coast in the early dawn. My party awoke from a sleep-spell cast for their comfort.

Camulodunum (Colchester) – 392AD

The barge sailed into a small harbour near Camulodunum (Colchester); the grain destined for the Roman troops in the town. A dozen grain wagons were waiting for the ship's cargo. I hired three grain-wagons with drivers and had the grain and spices loaded to the carts. My party would travel 3 to a cart sitting on top of the cargo. I decided to go to Caerleon-upon-Usk, following 3 other wagons to the Roman legionary fortress Castra Isca Augusta; it was 200 miles, 15 to 20 days for a draft horse; we arrived 25 days later.

A farm in Caerleon-upon-Usk. – 392AD

I rented a farm from the local church; it was a 5-year lease with an 'option to buy'. We rested for a week before assessing the farm. The farm had a large orchard and a dozen fields. The group set about pruning the apple trees while I scouted the territory. I found an empty shop in the town and set up an apothecary using the spices we brought. I opened business accounts with the merchants and applied for a license to trade. The permit was issued by the town hall having been approved by the church. At the next livestock market, we purchased goats, geese, ducks, chickens and sheep. The geese would act as a burglar alarm.

Caerleon. – 392AD

We established a foundation in the town disguised as a worker's Guild. The Guild hired all the local stone masons, bought land and began building cottages. The foundation became known as The Masons. In 393AD, King Belinus offered the Guild a charter to build a forge, a school and a teaching college. The Romans that occupied the fort were the local police force. Occupation of the fort was diminishing as it was cold and damp. Personnel were moving into our cottages as soon as they were finished.

A scribe and priestess ran the Apothecary; they had been wed at the local church. They had daily contact with the villagers and were quickly accepted. Two of the priests were running the Masons Foundation and had set up a shop to offer document copying. The remaining scribe and three priestesses were running the farm and would extend the farm business into brewing cider. With renewed confidence, we bought the farm from the church.

We had unlimited credit at the church who would act as our bank for the foreseeable future. We had deposited assets of gold coins and rare spices. The large sack of Saffron was of immense value. It was a small part of the wealth from my virtual store. We were slowly converting the gold into flexible assets. Our housing program would produce a steady income in rent.

Cheltenham. – 392AD

I travelled to Cheltenham regularly where I deposited gold in the Cheltenham banks. The town hall was next to the corn exchange; it had a library for public reference. I spent many hours in that room studying local history. The most useful items were market auction records. The library was the focal point for news. I arranged for the messenger service to drop a news sheet into

the foundation each week. I had learned the value of communications at my house in Athens.

Cheltenham was a focal point for travellers; the Romani were keen on horse racing and attracted the interest of the lorded gentry who hijacked the event to cash in on its popularity. We needed a horse suitable for pulling a cart and a few horses for travelling. The Romany knew the value of Saffron and readily accepted payment for all my purchases.

Caerleon. – 410AD

In 410AD, the Second Legion Augusta received the Command to decommission. The soldiers who had been recruited locally returned to their homes. A cohort, about 480 men, elected to stay as a peace-keeping force; the rest marched to Camulodunum (Colchester) to return to Rome. The foundation bought much of the land with options to purchase the rest, the crown claimed the fortress.

For the next 150 years, it was business as usual. While the rest of Britain dealt with border battles, the foundation continued to build the town of Caerleon. The forge and stables were kept busy by the cider brewery; several public houses had appeared around the town. The foundation had a stable income used to support the schools and colleges in Caerleon and Cheltenham. I started wandering again. Travelling the West Country. I would visit town halls to pick up news at least once a week.

With a list of schools provided by the Town Hall, I was authorised to teach my skills as an Apothecary and to perform conjuring tricks for the children.

Chapter 3, The Pendragons

Merlin's home in Caerleon...15-Mar-559AD

The name Pendragon meant "Chief Dragon", it was an honorary title, not a surname. My Romany friends had warned me to stay away from the dragons. I wondered if that meant the Pendragons because the last dragon was killed by a Roman called George in 303AD. How do you prove the absence of something? The few references I have seen about dragons say they are magical beasts. Does that mean "real magic beasts?" If they still exist, then they are not being seen. Have they found the ability to become invisible? They would also need to become weightless; otherwise, they would leave footprints. It would also mean they had become reclusive and were no longer attacking the public. When sheep went missing, they always blamed the dragons. Maybe, there was some truth in that statement?

I never met Uther Pendragon. Uther meant 'the bad', he was King Constantine's youngest son, King Aedan of Dalriada. Uther Pendragon was Scottish.

I received a message at Caerleon, delivered by a monk. The letter was from a Lady Ygerne Del Acqs asking for medical help; I must be discrete.

Tintagel Castle. – 30-Mar-559AD

It took two weeks to get to Tintagel Castle. When I arrived, the Lady was in great distress. Her husband, the Lord Gorlois, was away fighting usurpers. While Lord Gorlois was away, Uther Pendragon had raped Igraine and left her pregnant. Rape was commonplace amongst the nobility who expected to have any woman of their choosing. It was a great dishonour for the Lady.

“My Lady Igraine, you have several options. You could claim it is your husband’s child and play ‘wait and see’; you can hide the pregnancy, and I will take the baby when it is born; or, you can say a wizard has disguised someone as your husband.”

“Oh, Merlin. The last option sounds best. It will leave me without blame.”

“I will spread the rumour at the appropriate time.”

I gave Igraine several lotions to take care of her skin and Chamomile tea to drink before bed. Learning real magic had been tedious. If there were any other real magic users, then, like me, they felt it safer to hide their skills. I had come close to revealing my skills to the Lady Igraine, but I felt the risks were too high.

Four months later Lord Gorlois was killed in battle defending his land against the forces of Uther Pendragon. Igraine refused all requests by Uther to present his favour.

Arthur is born, Tintagel Castle. – 30-Sep-559AD

Igraine gave birth to Arthur on the 30th of September of 559AD. It was sad to see Igraine’s total rejection of Arthur; she refused to breastfeed him.

Fortunately, I had predicted this. My spies, four dogs and five owls, had been monitoring medics, healers, and pregnant women within twenty miles of the castle. An owl, named Oliver, came back with a report:

‘A young woman, named Eve, has lost her child in a tragic accident; the child has been strangled by the umbilical cord during birth.’

Time was not on my side; Arthur would soon be screaming for his first feed. I had three or four hours to find Eve and to get her back to the castle. With Eve having just given birth, she will not be in a fit state to travel, and she will be an emotional wreck.

Finding Eve. – 30-Sep-559AD

I ran down to the castle stables. I was in luck; a small cart of hay was being unloaded and was now half empty; the horse was still in-harness. I grabbed the driver:

“I am on business for the Lady Igraine. Who is your best driver?”

“Well, I am Sir. Where do you want to go in such a hurry?”

“I need you to drive this cart like a racing chariot, as fast as it can go. Is this your best horse? I can allow you fifteen minutes to change it.”

“Why do you need the cart, Sir?”

“We have to fetch a young woman who has just had a baby. She won’t be fit enough to ride a horse and barely fit enough to travel; this hay will give her some comfort on her journey. We have a maximum of three hours for the round trip.”

“Right lads. Remove the sideboards and front board,” the driver shouted.

Five minutes later, we were ready. We followed the owl, Oliver, for the next hour and ended up at a small house in the suburbs. I found Eve on her bed. Clearly, she had been abandoned by the medics and any family.

I left a note:

“To who it may concern, Eve is now in service to the Crown. Contact Merlin at the castle.”

I wrapped Eve up in a couple of warm blankets and carried her to the cart. I suspected that Eve had been treated with Mandragora, a sleeping drug from the Mandrake plant. Not knowing how much she had been given, it was too dangerous to give her anymore. I made her as comfortable as possible on the journey back to the castle.

Eve was carried, on a litter, up to the anterooms of Igraine's chambers. I dismissed all the staff and carried Eve to the Nursery, placing Eve on a bed next to Arthur. Arthur was whimpering. Nature should do the rest.

Presenting Eve to Igraine. – 30-Sep-559AD

"My lady Igraine."

"Yes, Merlin."

"Please follow me."

I took Igraine up to a high corridor and pulled back a small curtain.

"Now you can see Arthur and hopefully the new wet-nurse; her name is Eve."

Arthur began screaming to be fed; Eve was still asleep. Eve got up from her bed and breastfed Arthur totally automatically; she was drawn to Arthur like a magnet. Nature had control of her body, while the Mandragora still held her mind.

"Merlin. I was raped! I have no wish to see the bastard born by such violence." Igraine stated in a hushed scream. "Please take him away, along with the wet-nurse. Protect them both and protect my reputation."

Travelling back to Caerleon. – 1-Oct-559AD

The Romany King of Wessex, King Borgus, was a Seer and knew of Arthur. His owl, Cedric, came to me to deliver a message:

‘King Borgus of Wessex welcomes Merlin of Caerleon. I am a Seer. Having observed the birth of Arthur, it is my pleasure and duty to offer you the use of my caravan to travel back to Caerleon with Eve and Arthur.’

‘Thank you, Cedric. Please deliver my reply – Yes, please, and thank you.’

I took Arthur and Eve back to Caerleon in the luxury of a Romany Caravan; it was very heavy and pulled by four oxen. We could do a maximum of ten miles per day.

The caravan was based on the Roman Carpentum, all wood with a curved roof; it had iron-shod wooden wheels and was very noisy. This caravan was two Carpentums hooked-up as a single unit; they could still be disconnected and towed separately if required. On the rear unit, the driver’s seat had been replaced by a platform that had a curved front edge that allowed for the turning movements of the driver unit. The platform enabled safe passage between the units when in motion.

The front unit had a small stove to keep the unit warm; the trailer unit had a larger wrought-iron range-oven. It was luxury by anybody’s standards.

Both units had bench seats; one side bench was fixed and held stores for food and bedding. The other side bench could be used as a narrow single bed or could be slid sideways across the floor to form a double bed. It was currently configured this way for Eve and Arthur.

I had no idea that there were relay stations every ten miles between Tintagel and Caerleon. King Borgus had provided a

driver with the caravan. The driver delivered breakfast before fetching a fresh set of Oxen for the next leg of the journey.

Porridge was available all day and every day; a large iron pot lived on the range just on the edge of the cooking ring. The driver seemed to live on a basic diet of porridge; however, close observation showed he added herbs and vegetables according to taste. The driver often stopped to forage in the hedgerows.

In the late Autumn months, most of the berries were over. We collected a few Rosehips and Sloes.

Caerleon – 22 Oct-559AD

I converted the upstairs rooms at the Apothecary into a room for Arthur and accommodation for Eve. Eve was devoted to Arthur and extended her motherly nature around me. I developed a strong fondness for Eve; her large breasts had awoken the beast within me. I fell in love with Eve; her world became mine. We got married at the local church, adopted Arthur and raised him as our own.

Caerleon – 22-Oct-560AD

A year later, a message came from Tintagel. Uther Pendragon had apologised to Igraine for the rape. He had proposed to marry, and she had accepted. They would remain at Tintagel.

Knight school, the Castle in Caerleon....569AD

At ten years old, I took Arthur to the castle school in Caerleon, where he would learn as much as they could teach him. He would live in the school dormitory. He was very excited at the

prospect of living with children of his own age. I flatter myself that I had taught Arthur well. I taught him the mathematics of Euclid and Pythagoras. He had learned Greek and English and could read and write in both languages. I taught him herbs, farming, driving a cart and riding a horse. He loved to study the battles of the Greeks. Arthur was a keen student learning French and Keltic. He joined the School of Squires to learn how to handle a sword.

It took a great deal of money to get Arthur into the school of squires as I had to prove Arthur was of noble birth without revealing his real parents. His heraldry would be 'a white lion rampant on a red background' as he was of the 'Du Lac' family. I would offer nothing else until he qualified as a knight.

Caerleon Castle....571AD

On Arthur's twelfth birthday, Lady Igraine came to claim her son. Eve accepted the inevitable. I told Arthur that Igraine was his blood mother, and Uther Pendragon was his blood father; he was of royal blood with a higher destiny. Arthur did not take the news well. He said he would struggle to call Igraine 'mother'. Eve burst into tears and gave Arthur a great hug. With her encouragement and blessing, Arthur followed his parents to his new home at Tintagel.

Caerleon Castle, West Wing....10am, 10-Oct-575AD

Arthur came to Caerleon on his sixteenth year; he was heir to the throne with the title Pendragon and leader of the knights of the Britons. Arthur came to Caerleon with a small guard and asked me to go to the castle as bringing his entourage to my Apothecary was impractical. We met in the West Wing at 10am.

“Honored father. Will you permit me to call you Merlin?”

“Arthur. The honour is mine. It was a pleasure to be your father, even for a short time. Forgive me for not using your titles, old habits are hard to break.”

After a late breakfast, we had long discussions about old Greek battles; Arthur seemed to be honing his battle skills. Eventually, he got around to what was troubling him.

“Merlin. I know little about bedding a woman.”

“Ah, that old chestnut.” I smiled and grinned.

“Please Merlin; this is serious; don’t interrupt! This story is complete. My older sister Morgana offered to teach me. My ignorance was total; I welcomed her attention, and she is now pregnant.”

I stayed silent.

“My first experience has come at a high price. It shocked me that Morgana was proud of the outcome and claimed to have made it happen. She said she was a witch! Many call her Morgana Le Fey. She has even named the male child Mordred before it is born!”

“First, if you fuck a fertile woman every day of a month then you will get her pregnant. Did I miss that part of your education?”

“Yes, father. Most fathers fail to teach that lesson.”

“How remiss of me. I am sorry; I should not have assumed that your mother would do it. Look, as heir to the throne, you are expected to sow your oats. Morgana obviously expected to raise the child on her own, so, you have nothing to worry about.”

“Merlin, there is more. Morgana has claimed Mordred will take my throne. Her powers will make that happen!”

“Really?”

“Do you believe in magic? Could Morgana make this happen? Is the future set in stone?”

I let him ramble on. He wasn't looking at me as if he expected answers; disbelief was painted on his face.

At 4pm in Arthur's study, 10-Oct-575AD

A runner had been dispatched to the Apothecary to fetch my guests.

“Arthur, let me introduce you to a close friend, the Lady Isle du Lac, also known as the ‘Lady of the Lake’; she is a healer. I pronounce her name as ‘Eel’; she was a handmaiden to your mother. Eel came to stay with Eve when you went to Tintagel. She lived in your old room.”

“My Lady. Have we met before?”

Was it possible he remembered her from the day he was born? Eel had brought a present for Arthur, carried by a young blacksmith who opened the sack to reveal a magnificent sword. Arthur accepted it with a hushed reverence and invited me to inspect the weapon.

I took the hilt and felt a tingle in my palm. There was magic in this sword. I looked at Eel, but her face gave nothing away. My gaze returned to the sword. It was a steel sword modelled on the Keltic broadswords of old. There were three black runes at the base of the blade; I recognised one as a symbol of justice. With his muscular country boy build, he would wield the sword with ease. The blade shone with raw power.

“This is EXCALIBUR.” Eel declared as I passed the sword to Arthur.

Tintagel Castle, 10-Feb-576AD

My first meeting with Morgana was also my last. I was paying my respects to Igraine and Uther at Tintagel Castle. I had hoped to see Arthur, but he was away fighting yet another battle. Igraine introduced me to Morgana, who was Arthur's older sister; her father was the late Lord Gorlois. Morgana smiled as she shook my hand.

After a large evening meal, Igraine retired to her chambers. Uther was drunk and carried away by two huge guards. It puzzled me when Morgana said I was to attend Igraine in her chambers. I found Igraine fast asleep on the sofa. As I hesitated to wake her, Morgana put a hand on my right arm and pricked me with a ring. I couldn't move. With a simple spell, she carried me down to the cave below the castle.

"Merlin. You are a meddling old fool, and I cannot allow you to protect Arthur from my plans for his future. You are protected by magic so I cannot kill you, but, I can seal you into the wall at the back of this cave with spells that suspend you in time. It will hold your body in suspended animation. You will live forever. Ha-ha." Could she see into my virtual store? If she had, then I would have lost the ring.

The Crystal Cave below Tintagel Castle, 10-Feb-576AD.

Morgana hid my body in the wall of the cave, and there I would have remained, forever, if it hadn't been for a freak accident. Ah yes 'Serendipity', a happy accident. Y Ddraig Goch 'the red dragon' came to my rescue, and he knew nothing about it.

Morgana thought her trap was foolproof; she had designed it against anything known to man, but she had forgotten about dragons. Now a dragon is a magical beast; it is a powerful magic

user. Dragons are shy by nature and lead a hermit lifestyle. It is nigh on impossible to keep a dragon out of a cave.

The red dragon dropped in, on his way south for the winter. As the dragon slept, its great scales rubbed against the back wall breaking the time and space spells. My body reentered the current reality but remained in suspended animation. The spell clock ran down, and the spell collapsed. I fell to the floor as fresh as when Morgana paralysed me. My stomach was still full of the Pendragon's feast. Morgana's smirking voice was still fresh in my mind. I would never have known what had happened if the dragon hadn't shed its skin. I broke off a dozen scales to create magical essence; at last, I had access to my virtual store. I put the dragon's skin in my virtual store and cleansed the cave.

I climbed the steps to the castle only to find it in ruins. There were trees around that showed their age at 500 years. People were walking around, excitedly discussing the legend of King Arthur. I now knew that I was out of his life.

Tintagel Castle, 5-Jan-1075.

Watching the visitors, I observed their manner of dress and morphed my clothes to match one of the guides. I looked for signs of real magic and found a museum full of fakes. Leaving the castle and wandering around the town, my mind began to process the developments. The only person who might remember me was Morgana. As Morgana was a powerful magic user, I had to assume she may also be blessed with long life. She would be sure I was still frozen in the cave and may even live locally. I could not risk meeting her. I had to flee.

Bodmin Moor, 5-Jan-1075

I walked due south surviving on herbs and roots I found in the hedgerows. Travelling at night, guided by the stars, I crossed the treacherous Bodmin moor with the help of a wild pony. Continuing my trek south, I came to the port of St. Austelles. Resting with the Romany, I confirmed the date as the 10th of January 1075 and brought myself up to date on 500 years of history. I stayed for as long as my nerves could stand it. Morgana had instilled in me a deep shock at the fragility of my existence. I had become an entrenched coward. I couldn't go to the new capital of London. All my fears lay to the North and the East.

St. Austelles...10-Jan-1075

Large sails, fair weather and warm sun were drawing me south. The English winter was biting; I decided to take the next sailing ship out that was taking the spice routes. I traded one of my old coins for modern currency; the value of my money had gone up a thousand-fold, but converting it to currency was a long and arduous task. There was significant suspicion because my gold didn't look 500 years old. I couldn't offer more money to the museum as there was a high risk of claims of 'treasure trove' and I would lose the lot to the state. No change there then!

With a new currency in my pocket, I hired a pony and made my way to Fowey. I took the pony to the harbour stables and registered it for the return to St Austelles. I started looking for passage out of here.

Fowey...11-Jan-1075

I guessed the crews would stay on their ships keeping their money for the local ale; a good bath and a soft bed were not a priority, without a good woman. The best dressed would be the ship's captains. I found a captain who recognised that my coins

had a higher value at our destination. We would head to Paphos in Cyprus, a distance of 3,200 nautical miles. Captain Alexou Marsh made the round trip up to four times a year. The captain, had blue eyes, jet black hair and a dark orange rough skin. With a moustache, a short square beard, a goatskin waistcoat over a white shirt, and trousers, he was the typical Greek Cypriot.

Chapter 4, The Andromeda

The Andromeda, 15-Jan-1075

We left Fowey in the early hours of the 15th of January 1075. I carried a heavy kit bag; I was now one of the crew. Including the Captain and myself, we had a crew of sixteen. The ship's name was Andromeda; she was one of the latest Cog ships built in Muiden in the Netherlands. They built the Andromeda to the special order of the Prince of Denmark. She was 65ft long with a 20ft beam and could carry a 150-ton cargo. With a single central mast and a square rig, she could average 5 knots.

The Prince had added a few luxuries of his own. At the top of the turret, at the stern, was the poop deck; this was the deck above the cabins; the poop deck held the ships steering wheel and compass binnacle. The steering wheel was connected to the tiller through a series of block-and-tackle ropes that made the rudder easy to steer the ship. Previous ships of this type had been steered with an oar. The rope system with a block and tackle power assistance was revolutionary. If a rope broke, then it would take several strong men to control the tiller.

There were cabins on either side of the poop cabin. All three cabins had rear windows that could close and seal against storms. Internal stairs went from the lower stores up to the poop cabin and then up to the poop deck. Hatches could close over the stairs in storm conditions. Starboard was the captain and navigator quarters with two bunks and a maps table. Port was the ship's galley that contained a small wood-burning stove; the exhaust chimney came out of the rear of the poop deck. Captain Marsh was proud of the galley he had purchased in Friesland; it was handy for hot drinks and stews. Most of the meals on board would be cold meats, cheeses and fruit. As the longest journey was expected to be 14 days, there was no cause to worry about nutrition. Captain Marsh reckoned to make the trip to Paphos in

4 to 6 weeks. The sail was set; we tacked out into the English Channel against the prevailing south-west wind.

Brest, France...16-Jan-1075AD

Our first port of call was Brest, in North-West France, in the late evening of the second day. After a good hot meal, we picked up a small cargo of Cognac and Burgundy. The weather forecast for the Bay of Biscay was bad; they advised us to delay our journey for at least 48 hours. My knowledge of French was poor; Captain Marsh was fluent. We played Backgammon with the proprietor of the port café for most of the first afternoon. The second day was my turn on watch. On the third morning, we left on the early tide. A brisk North Wind carried us to the North coast of Spain in three and a half days.

Balcagia, North Spain...22-Jan-1075AD

We anchored just outside the port of Balcagia (now known as Baiona, Pontevedra). The crew caught a few mackerel and cooked them in the galley. Oh, the joy of eating fresh fish.

As I took my first turn at the helm, Captain Marsh said I was looking at the secret of his success as a Ships Master; the compass was his lifeline. It had cost him a great deal of money. The compass was a brass bowl with a thick glass cover; it was suspended like a hanging basket. A compass-map had been hand-drawn onto a circle of vellum. A thread of silk went through the centre of the map and was tied around a lodestone; the map was glued to the stone. The other end of the silk was threaded through the glass dome and attached to a clip. It all looked fragile. There was another compass in the navigator's cabin.

The next 2 days were fractious as we battled the North Atlantic Ocean. It was a balance between the offshore winds from Portugal and the full swells of the Atlantic. It was my first experience with seasickness. I blamed the Mackerel I had eaten the night before.

Lisbon, Portugal...25-Jan-1075AD

I arrived in Lisbon, severely shaken. We had travelled 867 nautical miles. We accepted the offer of a pilot, and they guided Andromeda into the harbour where we tied up. I supervised the loading of the cargo of Madeira fortified wines while most of the crew were in town enjoying themselves. We left on the morning tide.

Ship's log:

* Strait of Gibraltar, Alboran Sea, Port Annaba Algeria North Africa; 1021 nautical miles; 9 days. Loaded a cargo of spices. – 3-Feb-1075AD.

* Mediterranean Sea, Gela Sicily; 383 nautical miles; 4 days. Exchanged 2 casks of Madeira for 2 casks of Masala, 2 casks of Noto and 2 casks of Amoro. – 7-Feb-1075AD.

* the Ionian Sea, Chandax (Heraklion) Crete; 645 nautical miles; 6 days; Loaded personal cargo of herbs: Sage, Rosemary, Thyme, Oregano, Cretan dittany (hop-Marjoram), Ironwort (herbal tea), Chamomile and Saffron. I took a significant risk by paying with two gold coins; the second coin was for the Saffron. 13-Feb-1075AD.

* East Mediterranean Sea; Paphos, Cyprus; 404 nautical miles; 4 days.

East of Chandax...24-Feb-1075AD

It had taken a week to pick up our cargo in Chandax. I opened a bank account at the local merchant's union with Captain Marsh acting as guarantor. A deposit of 10 gold coins, as gold bullion, enabled me to withdraw local currency. I hired a horse and went looking for Saffron. I purchased enough herbs to set up an Apothecary. When I returned to the ship, it was ready to sale.

Compared to crossing the North Sea, the trip to Cyprus was easy. While becoming great friends with Captain Marsh and his crew, I learned to become a sailor and a navigator. I soon discovered that the real navigator was Captain Marsh, who had an astounding knowledge of the stars, the winds and the sea currents. He knew, instinctively, if we had veered off course. His knowledge of birds and their migration patterns helped confirm his position on the sea. Now and then, the Captain smiled as he stared ahead; those were the moments to ask him for the story; he could keep you entertained for hours.

"Captain. Who owns this ship?"

"I do. It's mine."

"Tell me how that happened."

"The Prince of Denmark commissioned the Andromeda. He was touring the shipyard in Muiden while I was studying to be a navigator. The Prince was an inveterate gambler, loving to play Backgammon. He had heard I was an enthusiastic player, and we played regularly. In the early days, he beat me frequently and insisted I become a navigator for the Andromeda to pay off my debt. With such royal patronage, how could I lose? Unfortunately for the Prince, I was studying his habits and tells. I was beginning to win and giving him a run for his money. He began to bet one per cent of the ship against my bet of one

year's service on the boat. I was playing for my life, and at one point, I owed him ten-years of service. After two years, I managed to break even; we had done very little sailing. After another five years, I owned 50% of the ship. The Prince had lost his enthusiasm for Backgammon and the ship. He signed the ship over to me and stated he would take 20% of my earnings. He will reduce his fee to 10% after 10 years. I thought I was in a dream; I had my own ship, and it's one of the best around."

"If this is the best, then I fear the rest are very uncomfortable."

"Oh Merlin, not everyone is as tall as you."

The Captain was getting excited as he approached his home, and here was I, thinking he lived on his ship.

Paphos, Cyprus...1-Mar-1075AD, 7am

We arrived on the 1st of March in a strong west wind. I thought we were coming into the harbour too fast, but the Captain's skill with the mainsail and the tiller was impressive as he used the wind as a brake. While the crew tied up and prepared to unload, the good Captain took me to meet his family.

Ten-minutes-walk from the dock, when we came to his home; it was a sizeable stone-built house that had been passed down through several generations. It was a home built and repaired by the manpower of his crew.

In front of the house, Captain Marsh introduced me to his family; his wife Helen had bourn five daughters: Angela, Catherine, Phoebe, Rhoda and Vanessa; they were all boisterous teenagers.

Paphos, Cyprus...1-Mar-1075AD, 10am

The Captain was highly respected in Paphos having been the town Mayor for the years that his ship was being built. He vouched for me when I applied for licenses to trade, bank accounts and trade accounts, and helped me find a suitable building where I could live and set up my Apothecary.

The crew unloaded my cargo from the Andromeda and left me to settle in. On checking my stock, I was delighted to find a small cask of Madeira.

Nico's Taverna...1-Mar-1075AD, 10pm

I ended my long hard day in the local Taverna, chatting with the proprietor; his name was Nico Gregoriou. He made me welcome and introduced me to his wife, whose name was 'Thea', but everyone called her 'Tee'. She ruled the kitchen as the family Matriarch. Nico and Tee had four sons Alex, Brygus, Cole and Demetri; and three daughters Callia, Maria and Georgia. It was a modest size for a Greek family.

As I became familiar with the local dialect, I opened to the family. With Tee's rigid control of the kitchen, it was two weeks before I had a chance meeting with the daughters. They were formally introduced when I first met Nico, but they didn't get much free time. Callia was the first to approach me; she was keen to discuss my knowledge of herbs and spices. She was a bubbly person and became quite excited when I said I would discuss recipes with her.

Nico's Taverna...15-Mar-1075AD, 10pm

Employment opportunities were rare in Paphos; the new Apothecary drew a steady stream of applicants. I was looking for a manager and an assistant; I had been impressed at the 'get up

and go' attitude of Callia. I risked annoying Nico and Tee, but they were very supportive as I offered the manager position to Callia. Any embarrassment I had, was promptly raised again as Callia hired her sister Georgia as an assistant. They felt they could work the Apothecary during the day and the kitchen during the evening. As good cooks, they were familiar with half of my stock. They would sell my current stock while I gave them training on the rest.

Nico's Taverna...1-Jun-1075AD, 10pm

I spent the first month studying the town hall records. Nico helped me when I got stuck. He gave me a good grounding in the modern Cypriot language and the local customs.

I had barely sneezed. Three months had passed, and Captain Marsh was back. Over several bottles of Vino, Captain Marsh, Nico and I discussed the future. I suggested we buy an olive grove as a shared business. The olive oil would become our leading export. To keep their interest, I said they didn't have to put any money up front and could earn their share over five years; they could retire after ten years. Captain Marsh was on board immediately; he knew the land and would soon find suitable opportunities. Feeling his crew would also be interested in small shares, he sent a runner to tell the crew they would have a meeting the next day.

We had a feast the following evening with all the crew and their families, to discuss the details of operating the olive grove. The most significant demand for manpower would be at harvest time. Captain Marsh suggested he would have the Andromeda serviced at that time so that the crew and their families would be available. This was the crew's annual holiday that they spent with their families. The wives thought it was a great idea. Four

crew members were in for a 5% share, Nico was in for a 20% share; Captain Marsh and I had 30% shares.

Captain Marsh was in no hurry to sail away. He sent the crew out searching for land, farms or established groves that were, or might be, for sale. I went to the town hall to check the deaths register and made the notaries aware that I was in the market to buy. I talked to, Gregory Apostolou, the Bishop of Paphos; he told me of the local mafia. Between us, we drew up a short list. Captain Marsh would manage the mafia. I selected a Notary to act on our behalf; he would set up the company named "Sativus-Paphos". This would take a couple of months and so Captain Marsh, and his crew would make a round trip back to the new unified state of England.

Nico's Taverna...1-Sep-1075AD, 10pm

I asked Captain Marsh if he was up for a gamble; he would get a 10% recovery fee. I gave him several letters with the appropriate seals. The Captain was authorised to transfer my deposits from my bank in Cheltenham, of 500 years ago, to my bank in Paphos. He had letters from me to my bank with my account identity and seal. A letter from my bank in Paphos appointed him as an authorised agent for the transfer, and a letter from me naming him as my licensed agent. He had a letter from my notary stating that Merlin of Paphos was a legitimate heir to the estate of Merlin of Caerleon; and, finally, he had a letter, in Latin, from the Bishop of Paphos addressed to the Bishop of Cheltenham asking for support in securing the transfer. The Bishop and the bank both wanted 3% transfer fees. The amount to be collected was 200 gold coins. This was a gamble because the bank may no longer exist or had been renamed. The gold coins may be lost or stolen. Captain Marsh could find himself locked up. Captain Marsh accepted the gamble. I also asked him to repeat my list of

purchases in Crete on his return trip. I gave him two gold coins in case his unique mission was unsuccessful.

Merlin's Apothecary...1-Dec-1075AD, 10pm

It was three months before the Captain returned; the summer was fading. His trip had been successful, but it hadn't worked as planned. The gold was escorted straight to the Bank of Paphos. Captain Marsh gave me the bank receipts. Twenty-four coins had been deducted for fees charged by the Bishop of Cheltenham, the Bank of Cheltenham, the Bank of Paphos and the Bishop of Paphos. It was a minor miracle. I would have written the coins off. I suppose the unexpected escort stopped Captain Marsh from running off with the coins, but I trusted him anyway. Captain Marsh said the escort had soured the whole affair being poor sailors. The guards returned to England full of Greek hospitality, but not before they had been hijacked to do some Olive harvesting. The young male soldiers were popular with the ladies. My Apothecary was closed more often than it should have been.

Captain Marsh had his fee, 20 gold coins, paid into the new business. I added 100 gold coins from my new reserve. We purchased a large olive grove, a vineyard, a small farm with a high pasture, a yard with offices on the harbour road, and plots of land behind the harbour and along the harbour road. The offices would become the head offices of Sativus.

Paphos, Christmas 1075AD

Christmas in Paphos was the first time I truly relaxed. There was no Christmas tree. The families were Catholics; I joined them at midnight mass. The Bishop was pleased to see me. We had become good friends having spent many hours discussing

religion and the local people. I had revealed my reverence for Gaia, and the Bishop saw no conflict between my beliefs and Christianity. He saw many benefits in promoting Gaia as it may reduce the raping of the Earth; he was against the clearance of trees to make way for an Olive Grove. Captain Marsh had invited the Bishop to join us for Christmas, but the Bishop said he was too busy.

The main event at Nico's on Christmas Day was a hog roast. Callia took responsibility for the food as it was Tee's responsibility to be the host. The Melomakarona, Christmas Cookies, were popular. Callia had travelled several times to Crete to collect recipes; she was hoping to open her own restaurant. Her Kalitsounia Kritis and Sweet Cheese Pastries were consumed with passion. After the feasting, music was supplied by Callia on a Pandura; it is a three-stringed instrument like a lute. Much to my surprise, Captain Marsh joined in with a set of Pan Pipes; I had no idea he had such talent. He later informed me he felt it was bad luck to play them on the ship, so he never took them on board. The music was refreshing. There were many toasts that night. I was drunk, out of my head. The embarrassment came when I awoke in my bed, not knowing who had undressed me and put me there.

Merlin's Apothecary...10-Jan-1076AD

After a successful retrieval of assets from the Bank of Cheltenham, it was too tempting to try again. Caerleon, Bristol and Glestingaburg, 'Glastonbury' were all on the list. We succeeded at Caerleon and Bristol, who used the same escort service as Cheltenham, but the Bank in Glestingaburg was not cooperating. It seemed that banks were trustworthy, but for the withdrawal of substantial assets, they put up as much resistance as they could. The bank in Glestingaburg did not trust the escort

method of transfer. When I suggested that the escort should be doubled, and the bank's fee increased to 4%, the deal went through. I was now getting nervous, I had too many assets in a single bank.

Sativus offices, Paphos...1-July 1076AD.

Nico became head of Sativus with his son Alex as his second in command; Alex would look after a new company called "Genesis-Cyprus". They shared 2 secretaries who looked after all their paperwork. Nico's jobs at the Taverna were taken by Maria and a new cellarman.

As head of Genesis, Alex hired two local stone masons, two carpenters and a Farrier; Genesis was in the business of construction. Sativus commissioned Genesis to build a large barn at the farm.

I discussed my plans for Genesis with Alex and Nico. I saw Genesis as a pool of manual labour. Genesis personnel would be builders 10 months of the year; the other 2 months would be spent harvesting olives or vines according to demand. Our farm was self-sufficient but vastly underutilised. It produced sheep, goats and cheese; most went to Nico's restaurant. The Olive Grove had several year's production held in large barrels. The vineyards were in a similar state. There was a shortage of small barrels. It was time for Andromeda to go and "bring back the empties".

The Andromeda...2-Jul-1076AD

Callia and I boarded the Andromeda on her next trip out; we were heading to Chandax in Crete to find sources of Saffron, herbs and olives. I also had plans for Sativas and Genesis. It was a

little creepy for me to be travelling four days closer to my perceived hell on Earth, but history stated that Crete was the birthplace of Athena and I held a flicker of hope that I might see her avatar.

Callia had been to Chandax several times with Captain Marsh as they explored the local cuisine. It was now my turn to visit the restaurants, tavernas, farms and vineyards.

Captain Marsh had allocated the state cabin to Callia and I. In his eyes, we were a couple; this was the first time I had even considered the possibility. I was fond of Callia, but I hadn't expressed any feelings for her; I was rather slow in that respect. Callia was excitable, lively and happy almost all the time; that was just her nature. I found it difficult to discern if any of it was directed at me. I wondered if Callia felt the same as Captain Marsh. We entered the state cabin and closed the door behind us.

"Callia, are you alright with this? Captain Marsh seems to think we are a couple."

"Merlin. Are you not fond of me? Don't you find me attractive?"

"Yes, you are very beautiful, but we have been pushed into this."

"And who do you think is doing the pushing?"

"Why, Captain Marsh of course."

"Really? Haven't you noticed my flirtations?"

"With me? I guess not."

"How hard does a woman have to work to get your attention?"

"Not hard, but I don't do 'subtle'. Fluttering your eyelids or wiggling your bottom is just a waste of time; I can only guess at what you mean, and I usually get it wrong."

We took off our heavy coats and hung them on hooks beside the bed. Underneath, I was wearing a silk blouse and waistcoat; a thick belt held my heavy linen trousers in place; I was dressed for sailing. Callia did not look comfortable in the late summer heat; she untied several bows on her blouse and dress and fluttered her lapels to cool down. She uncovered her neck and throat, revealing a necklace of white pearls. She was quick to notice my casual glance and released another bow on her blouse. She turned to face me.

“So, you are faced with the question – do you want to go to bed with me, and don’t be obscure, that also means I am willing to go to bed with you.”

Callia stood there, just in front of me, with a soft melting smile that expected a kiss, but I held back.

“Come on, Merlin, let go, and be with me.”

My brain blurred as time paused. Callia stepped forward, taking my hands in hers, and holding them up between us; she had me in her spell. We were standing toe to toe; she released my hands, putting hers on my waist, leaving my hands fumbling in space. Her eyes held mine as my hands slid clumsily onto her shoulders. I became aware of my heartbeat as time resumed.

“Merlin, you have permission to touch. Let your body meet mine.”

I could feel her warmth touch me at many points, but my eyes were held by hers.

“Merlin, you have many plans for me, but I am just a waif of a girl, I would have more credibility as your wife.”

Her little smile became a delightful blush that ran down her skin to disappear under her blouse. That blush blossomed into a raging heat that demanded some response from me.

“Yes, you are right. I will ask Nico for his blessing when we get back.”

“Merlin! Say it! I love you.”

“I love you.”

The Athena Inn, Chandax (Heraklion), Crete...6-Jul-1076AD

Captain Marsh continued, on to England and would pick us up on the return trip. He had dropped us off at the Athena Inn, which was on the coast, a couple of miles east of Chandax. The Athena Inn had stone walls and a thatched roof; wooden shutters on the windows could be closed in a storm. Muslin curtains were closed to keep out the flies. It was a warm sultry evening.

We had a large double room at the Athena and were presenting as a couple. Callia had grown with confidence in the four days on the Andromeda. She was unpacking our trunks into drawers and wardrobes.

“Callia. Are you ready to start a list of what we want?”

“Well, shouldn’t we decide on where we want to live after we get married?”

“Of course. I thought that first on the list would be a restaurant and Inn for you.”

Callia squealed with delight. She rushed forward and kissed me, almost knocking me off my feet. She was very excited.

“Oh Merlin, that would be wonderful. We could build it here so that we don’t compete with mum and dad.”

“I thought you would want to be close to your parents?”

“Maybe? I have wondered about that many times. My family is close, and wherever I go will stretch relationships, but, if I set up a restaurant, then Georgia will want to come too. Mother will get some comfort out of Georgia being with me.”

“In that case, Georgia can look after the Inn while you can run Sativus? We will need a warehouse with offices on the dockyard.”

Chandax Merchant Union's Bank...7-Jul-1076AD

I presented references from the bank, and the Bishop, in Paphos to open separate bank accounts for Callia and me, in the Bank of Chandax. Using the bank's lawyers, I set up 'Sativus-Crete' with Callia and myself as directors; the articles of Association were the same as for "Sativus-Paphos". A company bank account was created for Sativus-Crete. Transferring substantial funds from Paphos into the three new accounts, we were ready to do business.

I informed the notaries of my intent to buy. Runners would bring messages to the Athena Inn. I had offered a high percentage 'Finder's Fee' payable on a purchase. I wanted action immediately, not six months later.

Callia took me to see several small holdings that were cultivating herbs as a sideline to their olives and goats; two of the farms were producing Saffron in small quantities. I offered the owners a deal. Each farm would join our group in a mutually beneficial arrangement. We would invest money in their businesses, provide extra manpower when needed, and would buy all their output, leaving them with a modest profit and a good standard of living. If they wish to sell their farms, then we would have the first option to buy.

Callia took me to her favourite places in Crete. She showed me many restaurants and kitchens, making sure I noticed where the olive oil and wine were stored and how they were presented to the customers. She flirted with me whenever she could; a reminder of her intentions.

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Author's comments

The Third Edition

I am always trying to improve my story telling skills. This novel is the same story, but the last chapter has been rewritten.

Bad grammar and spelling cause many arguments and lost readers. I have left the last word to the computer application 'Grammarly' to apply English grammar and punctuation; the language option selected was "English (British)".

Another computer application called 'Fictionary', analyses story structure, flow, pacing and characters. It helped identify any shifts in location, time or character.

King Arthur References:

Article 1: "Fact or Fable" by Kelly d. Whittaker.

The legend of King Arthur has survived from the 6th century. People still debate on whether Arthur was a myth or a real King of Briton. Many scholars have recorded Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table and Gunivere. The records were recorded some 100 years after Arthur had died. Deep skepticism has formed on the birth and death of Arthur. The Welsh claim Arthur as their son but recent interpretations of the old manuscripts suggest that Arthur, Lancelot, Galahad and Cornwall were all Scots or Celts of Dalriada.

Article 2: Family Tree according to the late Dr. Norma Lorre Goodrich.

NOTE: Main tree as defined by Goodrich. Dates added from other sources.

King Constantine was the first Roman Christian monarch.

King Constantine's youngest son King Aedan of Dalriada (Uther Pendragon??)

+ Ygerna del Acqs (540-) her second marriage.

Son: Arthur Pendragon (559-603??) born in the castle of his mother Ygerna del Acqs.

Ygerna del Acqs (540-) True High Queen of the Celtic Kingdoms. Celtic Christian Church. First Marriage: Gwyr-Llew, Dux of Carlisle. The Duke of Carlisle had been sent south to become Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall. Second Marriage: King Aedan (mac gabran?) of Dalriada (. Title: Uther (the bad) Pendragon (Chief Dragon). – Children: Arthuir mac Aiden, Eochaid Buide.

Arthur Pendragon (559-603???) born in the castle of his mother Ygerna del Acqs.

559 AD. Arthur was born. Arthur's mother was Ygerna del Acqs, the High Queen of the Celtic kingdoms. Ygerna was married to Gwyr-Llew, Dux of Carlisle. The Duke of Carlisle had been sent south to become Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall. During this time is when Aedan of Dalriada became totally enthralled with the beauty of Ygerna or better known as Igrain. Later on in years, after Cornwall had died, Igraine married Aedan making Arthur a legitimate heir to the throne.

575AD. When Columba ordained King Aedan of Dalriada, records show Arthur, age 16, being Aedan's eldest son. Arthur was a Roman Christian. Arthur was appointed sovereign Guletic (commander).

576AD. Arthur age 17. Arthur's first big battle.

The twelve battles that Arthur was in are as follows:

1. Ostium fluminis. Glein = mouth of the River Glein
2. allied flumen Dubglas in reione Linnuis = another River, the Dubglas in the Linnuis area
3. same
4. same
5. same
6. Flumen. Basses = River Bassas
7. in silva Celidonis, Cat Coit Celidon = in the Celidon Wood, Battle of Celidon
8. in castello Guinnion = in Fort Guinnon
9. in urbe Legionis = in the city of the Legion
10. in litore fluminis Tribruit = on the banks of the River Tribruit
11. in monte Agned = on Mount Agned
12. in monte Badonis = on Mount Badon

(589 AD ???). His death was reported to be during “the strife of Camlann in which Arthur and Merdraut fell”

Arthur did have brothers. Their names were Eochaid Find, Domingart and Eochaid Buide. Merlin was appointed to Arthur because he was the eldest. One may conclude that Merlin did raise and protect Arthur.

Mordred: Some manuscripts in the historical record do indicate that there was a relationship between Arthur and his half-sister Morganna. While this act was generally frowned upon, it did follow established protocols for preservation of royal bloodlines, based upon the ancient Pharaonic Egyptian concept of the “sister-bride” duality characterizing a marital relationship. From this union of Arthur and Morganna, a son and royal heir was born, named Modred. These facts of the historical record confirm other parts of the Arthurian legends related to the role of Morganna involving an incestuous relationship and a resulting son of “King Arthur”.

Guinivere: King Arthur did marry Queen Gwenhwyfar of Brittany. Gwenhwyfar is known to us as Guinivere or modern translation of Jennifer. Guinivere was a Celt priestess and a Queen by her own rights. She was recorded by Columba as being a fierce fighting woman. Sir Lancelot was actually her knight before her and Arthur were married. She brought Lancelot into the Pendragon’s service.

The treacherous affair between Lancelot and Guinivere was recorded by the St. Columba and other scholars at the time. King Urien of Gorre makes a declaration of war because he claimed Guinivere and her lands as his. King Urien actually kidnaps the Queen. Lancelot comes to her rescue that in turn leads to their affair.

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