

GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Based on the medieval epic poem

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ON BLACK:

VOICE OVER

Gather all and listen for a tale to
begin,
From a time ruled by good King
Arthur Pendragon,
A quest full of magic, of mercy and
of might,
Of prideful Sir Gawain and the
fearsome Green Knight.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE FORESTS OF BROCELIADE - DAY

The brave knight SIR GAWAIN (30s) is in his prime. His shaggy beard and hair are full and impressive, and woven with several trinkets, talismans, and adornments, but not quite as many as he will soon have.

And he's bravely battling a GIANT.

The Black Giant of Broceliade, to be precise. Essentially the Giant is a thirty foot tall ape, covered with thick black fur, but with a slightly more human face.

An angry, furious, ferocious slightly human face.

GAWAIN

You know, there's something I never
quite understood about you giants.

The Giant slams his massive hands down.

GIANT

CRUUUUSH!!!

Gawain deftly dodges the swipe and ducks behind a large tree.

GAWAIN

You want to pretend you're the
biggest, baddest beasts around.
Flattening people like grapes, and
rampaging through villages.

GIANT

SMMMMAAAASSHH!!!

The Giant swings a massive fist, but only hits the tree that Gawain has now darted away from. The tree cracks and falls.

GAWAIN

But you insist on living in forests
surrounded by towering trees.

GIANT

FLAAAT!!!

The Giant clasps his hands together and pounds his fists into the ground. Gawain leaps backward, but just as quickly, he springs forward and lands on the Giant's outstretched arms.

Gawain dashes up the Giant's arms to stand on its shoulders.

GAWAIN

It's like you want to be reminded
how small you really are.

GIANT

SLLLLAAAAP!

The Giant slaps at Gawain but mostly just hits himself.

Gawain throws his arms around the Giant's neck and squeezes.

GAWAIN

My theory is secretly you want to
brought down low. Being big
actually scares you.

GIANT

AAAACCCKKK!!!

The Giant swats ineffectually at Gawain. And after a few moments, the Giant stumbles and falls to one knee.

GAWAIN

Deep down, you actually know how
insignificant you are. And you're
begging to be taken down a notch.

With a thundering THUD, the Giant crashes to the ground.

Dead.

Gawain jumps off and dusts his hands.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

You don't have to say anything. I'm
pretty sure I'm right.

INT. TAVERN - DAY

Amidst a crowd of mostly women, in a dirty poorly-lit tavern, Gawain regales anyone who will listen with his grand stories.

GAWAIN

And then I dropped that oafish, lop-sided giant! He crashed to the ground and his last thought was, "I never should've tangled with the great Sir Gawain."

(then adds with a shrug)

But what he said was just, "uuuhh."

Everyone laughs and "ooohs" with excitement.

Gawain lifts a foaming mug of ale and drains it in one go. He wipes dribble from his chin and lets out an impressive belch.

BAR MAID

I can't believe you were willing to go into the Forests of Broceliade?!

Gawain's eyes fall upon a lovely, young BAR MAID. A grin curls around the edges of his mouth, as he gestures for her to come sit on his lap. Which, of course, she does.

GAWAIN

A brave knight has got to be willing to journey deep into even the most dangerous places.

BAR MAID

I thought you said it was just the outermost edges?

GAWAIN

Well... Yeah... It was... But I was willing to go deeper, if necessary. I'm always willing to go deeper.

BAR MAID

You're so brave.

GAWAIN

And you're so beautiful.

The Bar Maid giggles at Gawain's boldness. But he just grabs her around the waist, and pulls her in tight. He tips her back and is about to kiss her when-

ANGRY MAN

GAWAIN!

An ANGRY MAN bursts in through the tavern's doors. And he's got a half dozen equally ANGRY FRIENDS following him.

ANGRY MAN (CONT'D)
You take your hands off my wife!

Gawain looks at the Bar Maid.

GAWAIN
You're married?!

BAR MAID
He's usually a very gentle man.

The Angry Man lifts a wooden chair over his red face, and brings it down furiously, reducing it to rubble.

BAR MAID (CONT'D)
Usually...

Gawain calmly ushers the Bar Maid aside, and strolls up to face the Angry Man and his Angry Friends.

GAWAIN
Now, everyone just calm down. I didn't know she was married.

ANGRY FRIEND #1
But you knew my wife was when you met her!

ANGRY FRIEND #2
Mine too!

Gawain holds out his hands.

GAWAIN
I assure you, they were all honest misunderstandings. Now, before things get ugly, I'm willing to let all this go. And I will walk out like a gentlemen.

Gawain heads for the door, but-

ANGRY MAN
COWARD!

Uh-oh. No one calls Gawain a coward. And the furious gritting of his teeth shows it. He spins to face the Angry Man and his Angry Friends.

GAWAIN
What did you call me?

ANGRY MAN

I said you're a miserable, shaking,
pitiful cow-

It's the last thing the Angry Man will be able to say for a while as Gawain rears back and lays the man out with a monstrous uppercut.

A bar fight erupts as the six Angry Friends all jump Gawain.

GAWAIN

I'm the great Sir Gawain! Do you
know who I am?!

With a few more powerful swings, he spreads out the charging men. But they keep coming.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I rattled the Roman legions!

Two men grab Gawain's arms and hold him in place as a third jabs him in the stomach.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I vanquished the Viking hordes!

He shakes off the two men holding him, and picks up the third man and tosses him. The Angry Friend crashes onto a table.

But then Gawain gets blind-sided by another fist.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I... ejected the Egyptiiii...

He takes another hit. And another and another and another.

Gawain's not looking too good now.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I... I... I...

This is it for Sir Gawain when-

A TRUMPET BLARES.

The Angry Friends stop swinging, and everyone turns to see an official TRUMPETER stands in the doorway.

They're all confused until-

KING ARTHUR (looking regal in his golden flecked armor and a rich, red cape) strides into the bar.

ANGRY FRIEND #1

Holy god!

KING ARTHUR

No, just a king. Although I do try
to be pious.

The bar fighters gape as they all bow down to one knee.

Gawain just slumps to the ground.

KING ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You may all go.

Everyone bolts for the door.

Arthur looks at Gawain laying in a bloody pulp on the ground.

GAWAIN

I'm the... great... Sir Gawain...

And Gawain blacks out.

EXT. CAMELOT TOWER - SUNSET

Atop the tallest tower of Camelot Castle, Gawain and Arthur
gaze out and watch the last rays of sunset.

Gawain dabs at his face with a wet rag, and cleans some of
the dried blood off of it.

KING ARTHUR

I must say, my friend, you've
looked better.

GAWAIN

Seven to one odds aren't good.
Especially when you don't have any
armor. Or weapons. And you're more
than a little drunk.

KING ARTHUR

Hopefully, you'll be better behaved
when my foreign dignitaries arrive.

GAWAIN

Put me in any tournament against
any fighter and I'll do you proud.

KING ARTHUR

I'm not so sure. There's some young
knights even in this kingdom that
you seem to be avoiding.

GAWAIN

You mean, what's his name...?!
Lancelain? Bragsalot? I'll take him
down a peg.

(under his breath)

We just haven't crossed paths
yet...

Arthur falls silent for a moment, and then-

KING ARTHUR

Sir Gawain, you've been a loyal
knight, and a true friend. But if
you continue on your path, I'll
have to dismiss you.

GAWAIN

Over a bar fight?!

KING ARTHUR

It's far more than a bar fight. You
also slew the Giant of Broceliade,
against my express wishes!

GAWAIN

It was on a rampage.

KING ARTHUR

Something needed to be done, I
don't disagree. But it was also
helping to close the northern
borders against the Saxons.

GAWAIN

He- But- The Giant was a menace!

KING ARTHUR

You rush into battle. Seeking
glory. But you fail to see the
whole board. I'm seeking to unite
the kingdoms. My own knights need
to be beyond reproach.

Gawain's head droops sadly.

KING ARTHUR (CONT'D)

People need guidance. They need
good and virtuous knights that can
be looked up to. Not men simply
driven by their pride.

Gawain turns away from Arthur. But Arthur persists.

KING ARTHUR (CONT'D)

In our profession, we don't always
live to be old men. We must always
be concerned for the name we leave
behind.

Arthur forces a smile and waves it all away. He laughs.

KING ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Enough of that, old friend. Come,
let's forget about the
inevitability of our destiny for a
night. Let's put it all behind us.
The winter feast is about to begin.

INT. FEASTING HALL - NIGHT

The grand feasting hall is packed with happy REVELLERS.

Moonlight sparkles in through towering stain-glassed windows.
Tall statues are buffed to a fine shine. And a long table
strains under the loads of food and drink.

The many strong, boisterous men clutch large foaming beer
mugs. They gnaw on enormous turkey legs.

Several ATTRACTIVE LADIES rush around and serve meat and
spirits. They slap away playful hands from happy men.

The men sing and laugh.

REVELLERS

Throw open the doors and bring out
the feast,
We've rescued the ladies and
battled the beast,
We've slain all the dragons,
So fill up our flagons,
Bring out the beer, the rolls, the
meat,
We're hungry men and we must eat!

Near the far end of the table, Gawain takes a bite of turkey
leg, chugs a beer, sloshes it down his front and sings along.

REVELLERS (CONT'D)

Bring beer made of barley, and
bread made of wheat,
Bring honey-glazed boar so tender
and sweet,
We've shed all our mail,
Now bring us more ale,
(MORE)

REVELLERS (CONT'D)

Then send the puddings, pies, and
treats,
We're famished knights and we must
eat!

A lovely lady rushes past Gawain with a wink. He casts her a big broad smile in return. He may have just made plans for later in the evening.

REVELLERS (CONT'D)

Line our long table with meat,
bread and cheese,
Mutton, and chicken, and ham, as
you please,
We've faced all our fears,
Now top off our beers,
We'll pound our forks and stomp our
feet,
We're starving warriors,
We're famished knights,
We're hungry men and we must eat!

Everyone cheers and laughs. It's a great time, when-
BOOM!

The doors swing open and THE GREEN KNIGHT strides in.

Seven feet tall, broad as a bull, and bearing an enormous double headed ax strapped to his back.

Silence falls over the great hall as everyone warily surveys this new entrant. For his part, The Green Knight strolls casually through the room with not a care in the world.

Gawain's hand falls to his sheathed sword. But he waits.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

I did not mean to halt your
revelries! Please let me join you!

The Green Knight snatches a tall mug of beer out of the hands of a gaping man, and finishes it in one. Then he tosses the empty cup unceremoniously down.

Slowly he makes his way toward King Arthur who sits at the head of the long table.

THE GREEN KNIGHT (CONT'D)

The Great King Arthur Pendragon!
What an honor!

KING ARTHUR

And might I have the pleasure of your name, sir? So that I might properly greet you.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

I am known simply as The Green Knight. A man who's might and strength is world renowned.

KING ARTHUR

I fear I haven't heard of you.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

I'm known mostly in the braver quarters of the world.

The subtle insult doesn't go unnoticed, and many of the men grumble, but-

Arthur raises a hand to silence them.

KING ARTHUR

We're always willing to welcome a brave knight. Come share our table.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

I would much rather share in your festivities. King Arthur, I challenge you to a duel.

Once again, the many men are at attention, and once again-

Arthur raises a hand to halt them.

KING ARTHUR

That's not what our celebration entails today. I must decline your-

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Because you're a coward.

The rabble rouses louder than ever.

Gawain and several other men rise to their feet, but-

KING ARTHUR

SIT DOWN! No one shall rise to his challenge. No one shall give him that power.

Everyone sits.

Everyone except the Green Knight who merely grins.

KING ARTHUR (CONT'D)

This is my castle and my hall. I
offered you the hand of friendship.
But now I ask you to leave.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Because you're afraid of me?!

All eyes are on Arthur again. He remains calm and measured.

KING ARTHUR

Because it is my right as the king.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

The fearful king. The frightened,
weakling king. The quaking,
quivering, cowering-

GAWAIN

ENOUGH!

And Gawain stands, but Arthur shouts back at him.

KING ARTHUR

Gawain, sit!

Gawain ignores his king as he strides over to face the
towering Green Knight.

GAWAIN

No man talks about my king like
that, and lives to tell the tale.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Ah, the Mighty Sir Gawain, is it?

KING ARTHUR

Gawain, don't-!

GAWAIN

I accept your duel.

(to Arthur)

I'll defend your honor, my liege.

Arthur pounds his fists down on the table in frustration.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

So, brave and proud Sir Gawain, you
consent to act as the guardian of
this kingdom's fate?

GAWAIN

I'll be the guardian of this
kingdom's honor against the likes
of you.

A burst of green light flashes through the air at these words. Everyone seems off-put by the strange occurrence.

Gawain grabs the hilt of his sword when-

The Green Knight raises a hand in hesitation.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Ho! We haven't come to terms yet!
We're still civilized men, Sir
Gawain. We must have rules.

GAWAIN

Name them. Let's get on with it.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

I have but one small condition. I'm
sure a noble man such as yourself
will agree.

GAWAIN

I'll meet any challenge you set.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Today we duel on your grounds. In
one year and one day, you must meet
me for a rematch in my realm.

GAWAIN

Done. Although once I'm finished
with you, I don't expect you'll be
in any fit condition for a rematch
in a year or at any other time.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Excellent. So we duel.

And The Green Knight draws the mighty double-headed ax from off his back. Gawain unsheathes his long, broad sword.

The fight commences.

And what a fight it is.

Gawain is knocked clear off his feet. In order to defend the rest of the people present, he dives at the Green Knight-

They crash through one of the ornate stain-glassed windows.

EXT. CAMELOT CASTLE - ROOFTOP

The two of them fall to the sloped rooftop. They continue to battle. Until they fall and crash onto-

EXT. CAMELOT MOAT

The frozen surface of the moat. It cracks beneath their feet as they fight.

Gawain goes through the ice, but bursts back out and cuts the Green Knight's head off.

Arthur and the other knights finally catch up in time to see-
The Green Knight rise and casually pick up his severed head.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

An excellent duel, Sir Gawain. Most thrilling. I will very much look forward to our rematch.

GAWAIN

Wuh-what?! No! You deceived me! I'm not fighting you again!

THE GREEN KNIGHT

You've declared yourself guardian of this kingdom. Its fate, and the fate of all its people, lands, and beasts are now bound to you. If you fail to appear in a year's time, then this kingdom falls to me.

Gawain is dumbfounded.

He turns and catches Arthur's eye, and the king looks furious.

The Green Knight fades into green mist but his voice booms.

THE GREEN KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Until that time, Sir Gawain, I bid you farewell.

GAWAIN

Wait! Where can I find you in a year and a day?

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Ah, but that wasn't part of our deal. You must do better when setting the terms of your bargains.

(MORE)

THE GREEN KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Yet I'm sure a clever man such as yourself can figure it out in the next twelve months. Til then...

The Green Knight vanishes in an unearthly wisp of green.

Gawain turns to see Arthur shaking his head in disappointment.

INT. GAWAIN'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Gawain stumbles into his simple, Spartan-like chambers. It's essentially a small room with a window and bed. Almost like a priest's cloister. But scattered about are prizes and trophies from his many journeys.

The tired knight flops down onto his bed. And falls asleep.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW-

The bare branches of a nearby tree creep across the horizon.

TIME PASSES

The sun rises and the tree branch quickly sprouts little leaves and tiny flower buds which blossom and open.

INSIDE THE WINDOW-

Gawain looks fresh and excited as he pulls on his armor. His armor is battle-tested and dented, but also painted with colorful symbols and runes. He's impressively decked out and ready for battle. He grabs his sword and heads out.

EXT. TOURNAMENT ARENA - DAY

The sunshine pours down on a circular arena with wooden stands packed with cheering ON-LOOKERS.

At the narrow end, a regal platform is constructed with opulent curtains and an ornate wooden throne. King Arthur looks toward the center of the arena where-

Four heavily armored knights are locked into combat.

More precisely, three knights have teamed up to try and take down Sir Gawain - easily recognizable by his decorated armor.

GAWAIN

Come now, lads! Three against one doesn't seem exactly sporting!

But Gawain isn't one to shrink before a challenge. He spins as he grabs one challenger's arm and tosses the man into a second man. They collide with a resounding rattle of armor.

The crowd cheers appreciatively.

And Gawain raises his arms to them, but then-

The third challenger charges, and tackles Gawain.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Can't a guy have a moment to work
the crowd?!

With the hilt of his sword, Gawain cracks the third challenger's helmet. The third challenger rolls off him.

Gawain gets to his feet just as the others run at him.

This time there's no nonsense, Gawain grips his sword and expertly defends the two men at once. His sword blazes in the sunlight, and he quickly takes the two challengers down.

All three of the other knights lie in a heap, and Gawain pulls off his helmet and raises his sword to the crowd.

The crowd goes wild.

Wiping his brow, Gawain turns to the king's platform-

Arthur smirks at him and claps along with the rest.

MOMENTS LATER-

Gawain goes down to one knee in front of the king's platform. Arthur descends and approaches Gawain with a wreath of flowers which he places on Gawain's head.

The crowd bellows in approval.

Arthur leans in to whisper in Gawain's ear.

KING ARTHUR

Well done, Sir Gawain. Although, if I'm being honest, I would've expected you to win this a little more handily.

GAWAIN

It's early spring. I'm still warming up.

INT. CASTLE LIBRARY - DAY

The castle library is dominated by towering shelves all filled with enormous leather-bound tomes.

Gawain sneaks into the mostly empty room, looking around as he enters to make sure no one is watching him.

They aren't.

Carefully, he draws several large books off of the shelf. They read:

NOTORIOUS KNIGHTS OF THE REALM
 MYSTICAL KINGDOMS OF LEGEND
 DARKEST FOES AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

Gawain plops them down onto an oak table near a window. He cracks open the first one, and reads.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW-

The sun shines brightly on the flowering tree branches.

TIME PASSES

The flowers fall away, and thick, full, luxurious green leaves fill every limb. The sun shines brighter than ever.

INSIDE-

Gawain still sits at the table. But he's now surrounded by stacks of books. In frustration, he slams a book shut.

His search isn't going well.

He rises and storms out of the library.

EXT. TOURNAMENT ARENA - DAY

Now atop his faithful horse, RINGOLET, Gawain prepares for a jousting event in the circular, outdoor arena. He pulls his helmet on, and an attendant places a lance in his right hand.

With his left hand, he pats the neck of Ringolet.

GAWAIN

All right, Ringolet, let's show
 them how it's done.

A woman in the center of the ring raises a handkerchief, and-

They're off.

Gawain and Ringolet gallop forward. The other LANCER charges from the other direction.

Closer.... Closer... Closer.. Closer.

CRASH!

Their lances strike and burst into shards of wood, and-
Gawain is knocked off his horse!

The crowd gasps in astonishment. *That never happens!*

From the dirt, Gawain rolls over painfully, and struggles to his knees. He looks over to the king's platform and sees-

King Arthur looking at him with disappointment and worry all over his regal face.

INT. CASTLE STABLES

Gingerly hobbling just a bit, Gawain leads Ringolet into the castle stables.

The knight removes his horse's bridle. Then Gawain brushes Ringolet. After a long silence-

GAWAIN

You want to tell me what happened out there?!

Ringolet snuffles indignantly.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Don't blame it on me! We've never lost a joust before. We've held that record for... I was counting on you.

The horse pulls his head away from Gawain's brush.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Oho! Don't get angry at me! You're the one who didn't hold up your end of the bargain.

Once again, Ringolet huffs. And backs away.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I didn't lose my nerve! I wouldn't-
If anyone did-
(bursting in frustration)
All right! You're right!
(MORE)

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
 It's not all your fault.
 (then sighs)
 It's not your fault at all...

The horse steps back up to Gawain and allows Gawain to brush him again. Gawain makes sure no one else is in the stables.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
 Can I be honest with you, Ringolet?

The horse blinks.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
 I haven't felt like myself for quite some time now. I think... I may have made a mistake. I'm a little nervous about this one...

Ringolet leans his head forward and nuzzles Gawain.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
 You're right. At least, I'll have you. And I'm still the greatest knight in the kingdom, right?

Ringolet neighs for him.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
 It'll be a great adventure. A great adventure...

INT. CASTLE LIBRARY - DAY

The tree limb outside the library's window is now covered in golden leaves. A breeze blows through and a few colored leaves cascade to the ground.

Gawain continues to flip through piles of books before he slams another book shut in frustration.

He buries his head in his hands.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

In a small, meager village, Gawain walks alone. Lost in his own thoughts. A chill breeze blows by, scattering some dead leaves, and Gawain ducks his head into the cold.

He raises his ear as he hears a taunting-

BULLIES

(taunting in rhyme)

Soured Coward, if you please,
Go get lost among the trees.
Never heard and never seen,
Go be taken by the green.

Gawain looks up and sees-

A group of BULLIES (all about 12 or 13) shoving and picking on slim, quiet BOY.

GAWAIN

Oy! Stop that!

Gawain chases over to the gang as he hears them-

BULLIES

(taunting in rhyme)

Scaredy baby, please go forth,
Far away and to the north.
In the ruins, cold and mean,
Go be taken by the green.

Gawain catches up, and grabs the largest Bully by the scruff.

GAWAIN

Who do you think you are?!
Outnumbering someone smaller than
you!

With an easy toss and a swing of his arms, Gawain disperses the Bullies who run off laughing and hissing at the Boy.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

You all right?

The Boy avoids Gawain's eye contact. He's clearly blinking back tears.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Don't worry. They're gone now. They
hurt you?

The Boy shakes his head. Still unable to speak.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Bunch of wretches. Attacking in a
gang. Shouting rhymes like-
(pause)
What were they saying to you?

The Boy clears his throat. His voice comes out a little shaky, but strong.

BOY

They called me a coward, because I
won't throw stones at an old cat.

GAWAIN

Yes, but... what was that rhyme? Go
ahead, boy, I need to know.

BOY

(reluctantly)

Scaredy baby, please go forth,
Far away and to the north.
In the ruins, cold and mean,
Go be taken by the green.

GAWAIN

What does that mean? "Go be taken
by the green?"

BOY

It's just a tease. There's supposed
to a monstrous man of green that
takes away cowards-

GAWAIN

"Far away and to the north."

BOY

I guess...

GAWAIN

"In the ruins..."

And Gawain is off and running.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Thanks, boy! If they come back, hit
them right here-

And Gawain points to his sternum. Gawain mimics a quick, hard
jab right to the sternum.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

-That'll shut them right up.

INT. CASTLE LIBRARY - NIGHT

Gawain bursts into the dark, torch-lit library. He rushes
over to the book shelves and pulls down-

LOST CIVILIZATIONS TO THE NORTH

INT. FEASTING HALL - NIGHT

The Feasting Hall is now host to a grand and elaborate masquerade party. Fair Lords and Gentle Ladies are all dressed in colorful costumes or garish attire. Many people wear masks. There's lively music and lots of dancing.

Gawain is dressed much like his normal self, but taken to the next level. His hair and beard are adorned with even more trinkets, amulets and talismans. His face is painted with interlocking runes. His clothes are colorful and worldly.

And he's using it all to impress a LOVELY LADY.

GAWAIN

When I came upon the Lady of the Fountain she was in a state of undress, of course. But she wasn't bashful about it. In fact, she encouraged me to join her. Which I felt obliged to do.

The Lovely Lady giggles just at the thought of it. Gawain grins and leans in toward her, when-

He catches a glimpse of a man all in green. *The Green Knight!*

Suddenly all joy disappears from Gawain's face. Panic sets in. Without a word, he leaves the Lovely Lady's side - and she looks more than a little put out.

But Gawain pushes his way into the crowd.

Colors and costumes blur together, but Gawain pursues the backside of the Green Knight. Gawain shoves people aside as he tries to catch up. He sees the great double-headed ax on the Green Knight's back.

Finally, Gawain pushes forward and catches the Green Knight by the shoulder. Gawain spins him around and grabs his robes.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Are you taunting me?! How dare you come back here?! I'll cut you down again right now!

KING ARTHUR (O.S.)

Sir Gawain, stop!

Gawain turns to see Arthur glaring at him.

The entire party has come to a halt.

All eyes are on Gawain.

He finally looks at the man in his clutches. He's just an ordinary man in a green costume. He's not even a very big or impressive man. And the ax looks quite fake.

Gawain lets him go.

GAWAIN

Sorry. I don't know what came over me.

KING ARTHUR

Start the music again! Come now, everyone. Enjoy the celebration!

The music starts, and people resume their dancing.

Arthur puts his arm around Gawain as they watch the frightened man costumed in green rush away.

With a lurch, they look around and see that several people are dressed in costumes resembling the fearsome Green Knight.

KING ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Costumes. It doesn't take long for people to forget about how serious business actually begins, does it?

GAWAIN

I'm sorry, my king.

Gawain bows his head, but Arthur lifts him up.

KING ARTHUR

Come now, you don't need to bow to me. But I do humbly ask that you walk with me.

They work their way through the crowd, and emerge out onto-

EXT. CAMELOT BALCONY - NIGHT

Gawain and Arthur move to the edge of the balcony, where Gawain grips the railing and leans just a bit.

Arthur gazes up at the full moon and the creeping clouds.

KING ARTHUR

A full moon on All Hallow's Eve.
It's a wonder we're not all losing our minds.

GAWAIN

I'm fine. Fine. Just too much to drink is all.

They stand together for a while in silence, until-

KING ARTHUR

I've heard you're preparing to leave. So soon? The year's not up.

GAWAIN

I've got a long journey ahead.

KING ARTHUR

You've found him then?

GAWAIN

What I've found is mostly whispers. Ghost villages up north. Lunatics who can barely mutter anything but "The Green Knight." Exciting...

KING ARTHUR

It's not much to go on.

GAWAIN

That's why I'm leaving early. It'll still take some time to find the exact location of the Knight's Chapel. But I'll find him.

KING ARTHUR

You know, you don't have to go.

GAWAIN

I made a promise.

KING ARTHUR

It wasn't exactly a fair wager. You were goaded and tricked. You don't owe him a rematch.

GAWAIN

He promised doom upon this land if I don't. From the few mentions I've found of him, he can deliver.

KING ARTHUR

I don't believe that for an instant.

GAWAIN

If it is true, I couldn't live with myself if I was the cause of it.

KING ARTHUR

I couldn't live with myself if I
let you die.

Gawain bows his head.

KING ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Stay, Gawain. I fear for you, if
you go. And I promise you, that we
shall all stand with you in your
hour of need.

GAWAIN

That's very kind of you, my king.
But I'm a man of my word. And I
must honor that.

KING ARTHUR

I'm not sure it's honor that's
guiding you. Be careful of your
pride, good Sir Gawain.

And Arthur pats his friend on the shoulder and leaves.

Gawain looks up into the night sky and watches as the silvery
clouds cover the full moon.

INT. GAWAIN'S CHAMBERS - MORNING

As daylight creeps into his sparse chambers, Gawain sits
upright in his bed. It's pretty clear he hasn't slept.

He glances around at his trophies and trinkets. Then he picks
up a small wooden amulet and braids it into his beard.

INT. CASTLE STABLES - DAY

Gawain is fully dressed now, and he's set his attention on-

Ringolet. The good knight is now weaving little shiny
talismans into the mane of his horse. Otherwise, the horse
looks ready to go. Saddlebags packed, loaded and ready for-

GAWAIN

An adventure! One that they'll very
probably write poems about. Great
epic poems with rhyming couplets.
"Sir Gawain and his Great Horse."
That'll be the title, you'll see.

Ringolet snuffles at him.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
No, you can't have your name first!

EXT. CASTLE GATES - DAY

Dressed in his war-beaten, slightly painted armor, Gawain rides out of the castle gates atop his faithful steed.

Slowly they cross the drawbridge and nobly ride out into the countryside to face their destiny.

HIGH ATOP THE CASTLE WALLS-

King Arthur watches his friend trot forward, then dig his heels in, and gallop off into the distance. Worry and foreboding are thick on Arthur's royal face.

EXT. REALM OF LOGRES - DAY

Gawain and Ringolet ride through the wide open plains. At a brisk pace, they crest a small hillside.

EXT. ISLES OF ANGLESEY - DAY

The sea shimmers beside them as the knight and his horse ride along the shore with waves breaking along the rocky beach.

EXT. WILDERNESS OF WIRRAL - NIGHT

At the base of a mountain, Gawain sits beside a small fire. He braces himself against the snowy winds, and tears a bite of bread with his teeth. Then he holds it up for Ringolet.

The horse also tears off a bite.

EXT. HOLYWELL ABBEY - DAY

Gawain searches through an old abandoned chapel. He finds a statue of a woman with its head separated from the rest of the statue. He holds the head in fear.

EXT. PULFORD RUINS - NIGHT

Still on horseback, Gawain slowly enters a gray, desolate landscape. The ground is barren. The skies are bleak, and fog hangs heavy all around. Cold wind whips around Gawain, and a few flurried snowflakes float on the air.

Ringolet slows as they trot past the outermost remains of a crumbled castle. Scattered hunks of rock lie strewn about.

The fog blows aside for an instant to show-

A castle in utter ruins.

MOMENTS LATER-

Leading Ringolet by the reins, Gawain closes in on the largest portion of the castle that is still intact. It's a ragged wall that never reaches a ceiling. But there's still an old, molding wooden door with rusted hinges leading...

Somewhere...

Gawain reaches for the door handle.

GAWAIN

You stay here.

Ringolet neighs in assent.

Gawain opens the door, and enters the ruins.

INT. PULFORD RUINS - TUNNELS

Gawain carefully treads down a slippery flight of steps.

At his feet, rats scuttle by. He brushes down thick, white cobwebs and fat, black spiders scurry away.

Gawain takes an old torch out of its bracket on the wall. From his belt he takes out some flint, and strikes it.

DEEPER-

Gawain holds the now crackling torch aloft as he continues down into the depths of this once mighty castle.

He comes to another old door, and wrenches it open.

INT. PULFORD RUINS - DUNGEON

The dungeon is like something out of a nightmare. Heavy drips fall in through the crumbling ceiling. Scores of rusted metal shackles snake out from the walls.

Gawain scans the room and finally sees in one corner-

A skeleton. With tattered robes and a cloak. Clutched in its hands is an old, dust-covered leather book.

Gawain approaches and rips the book from the bone hands with a sickening crunch. He reads-

TERRIFIED MAN (V.O.)
 I FEAR THE DUNGEON WON'T KEEP ME
 SAFE MUCH LONGER. HE'S COMING.
 UNSTOPPABLE. UNTIRING. HE SURVIVED
 MY BLOW TO HIS HEART. NOW HE HAS
 CONSUMED MY LANDS. CRUSHED MY
 CASTLE. DECIMATED MY FOLLOWERS. I
 WISH I HAD NEVER AGREED TO HIS
 DEVIL'S DUEL. I WISH I HAD MET HIM
 IN HIS GREEN CHAPEL IN OLD
 SWYTHAMLEY. PERHAPS HE WOULD'VE
 SPARED MY PEOPLE. MY GOD... WHAT
 HAVE I DONE?

Gawain lowers the book and looks at the terrified skeleton. Then he sighs and repeats-

GAWAIN
 Old Swythamley...

He grumbles in disgust.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Galloping along, Gawain and Ringolet traverse a desolate bit of forest. There's no shortage of trees, but not a bit of green or warmth to be seen.

Gawain pulls on Ringolet's reins and they slow to a stop.

The brave knight takes in his surroundings when-

He hears a cracking noise and, in a flash, Gawain has his sword drawn and pointed at-

A rabbit.

Gawain grumbles, and pats Ringolet's flank.

GAWAIN
 You're getting jumpy, old friend.

Ringolet grumbles in a passable imitation of his master.

The rabbit sprints away in the direction Gawain just came.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I don't blame you. I don't much want to be heading in that direction myself. I'm not sure what's there for us.

A WOMAN'S TERRIFIED SCREAM tears through the night.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Well, there's that.

It doesn't take Gawain more than a second's thought as he urges Ringolet forward and they take off at a gallop-

THROUGH THE TREES

They streak through the barren forest, scanning the landscape until Gawain finally sees-

AHEAD IN A VALLEY

A BLONDE LADY in a simple ankle-length dress stands alone at the bottom of the valley.

Well, not exactly alone.

She's surrounded by a pack of wolves.

In her hands is a large tree branch, and she swings it desperately at the wolves. But it doesn't seem destined to hold them off for long.

THROUGH THE TREES

Gawain digs his heels into Ringolet's flanks and they leap forward even faster.

Swifter and swifter they ride across the cold wasteland toward the Blonde Lady. Gawain's growing closer to her, but the wolves are also growing closer.

Even from a distance, Gawain can hear their snarls and see their raised hackles and foaming mouths.

The Blonde Lady swings her branch and cracks one wolf that was getting too close for comfort. But the others seem even more restless.

Gawain urges Ringolet on. C'mon... C'mon... C'mon...

The wolves rear back. Prepared to pounce, but-

Finally, Gawain arrives. He leaps off of his horse. And as he brandishes his sword at the wolves, he sees-

Their eyes glow emerald green.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I guess you didn't housebreak them
when they were puppies.

THE LADY

You know, you miss feeding them one
time...

Gawain grins as he holds his arms out to shield the Blonde
Lady from the strange beasts. He turns to his horse and-

GAWAIN

Ringolet, get her out of here!

But the horse doesn't desert his master. He stamps his front
hooves at the foaming wolves.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Would you do what I tell you for
once?!

THE LADY

I think he knows you'll need his
help. And mine.

One of the wolves leaps and Gawain slashes at it. It falls
back, but the pack is looking more and more blood-thirsty.

GAWAIN

No. I won't put a lady in danger.

THE LADY

You didn't put me in danger. I put
myself here. And I intend to help
you get us both out of it.

She quickly kisses him on the cheek. Just a peck, but it's
the first warmth he's felt in a weeks. And it does the trick.

THE LADY (CONT'D)

For luck.

Gawain's smile doesn't last for long as-

The wolves pounce and Gawain thrusts himself into the middle
of the pack. He spins and slashes at them all, but he's
vastly outnumbered and there's too many of them.

GAWAIN

We need fire!

He tosses the Blonde Lady his flint and striking stone.

Another wolf pounces. Another slash from Gawain.

THE LADY

The wood will never catch!

Teeth. Pounce. Slash.

GAWAIN

If only there was some fabric
somewhere you could spare!

The Blonde Lady gets the hint and tears at her long dress,
ripping long strips of fabric, to wrap around her branch.

Two wolves leap at Gawain. He slashes one away, but-

The other sinks its teeth into his arm.

Gawain screams in pain as another wolf pounces on him. And
another. And another. Their sharp teeth rip into his flesh.

The Blonde Lady sparks at the fabric. Nothing. Not yet.

Gawain falls to his knees at the onslaught of wolves. They're
about to over take him when-

Ringolet stomps in and kicks two of the wolves. The rest of
the pack scatters for a moment. Gawain finally rises and
slashes again.

The horse kicks another wolf, and as it falls to the ground,
Gawain leaps forward and brings his sword down upon it.

Another wolf springs at him, but-

CRACK! The wolf is struck by the club of a tree branch.

THE LADY

Who needs fire?

GAWAIN

I had it under control...

Two wolves cower, and Gawain strikes at them. In an instant
they fall dead.

Between the Blonde Lady's club, Gawain's sword, and
Ringolet's stomping hooves, the wolves don't stand a chance.

In a matter of minutes, the beasts all lie dead, and Gawain
stands heaving and bloody in the cold night air.

THE LADY

I can't thank you enough. If you hadn't come when you did...

GAWAIN

That's what... a knight... is for...

And Gawain collapses and falls unconscious.

BLACK OUT:

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - NIGHT

Gawain groggily awakens in an unusual bedroom. There's a huge, drafty hole in the wall, and not much of a ceiling. In fact, the entire place seems to be crumbling around him.

Gawain gets a good look at things and sees that this place isn't in much better shape than the ruins he recently left.

But SIR BERTILAK, a good-natured, handsome lord, plops down on the bed beside Gawain.

SIR BERTILAK

Excellent! You're awake. I was worried you'd miss your own feast!

GAWAIN

Where am I?

SIR BERTILAK

Welcome to Hautdesert Castle! My humble home. I am your host, Sir Bertilak. At your service. Never mind the condition of the place. I've always preferred fresh air.

GAWAIN

How did I get here?

SIR BERTILAK

Well, my most excellent friend, it seems you have a most excellent horse. He and my most excellent wife were able to bring you here.

GAWAIN

Your wife?

SIR BERTILAK

I believe you're already acquainted with her.

Sir Bertilak gestures to the doorway.

Gawain lifts his head to see the Blonde Lady standing there in a new, clean dress. He lets his head fall back to his pillow. *Wife? Why are the good ones always married?*

The Blonde Lady steps into the room and joins them.

GAWAIN

Lady Bertilak.

LADY BERTILAK

I'm afraid in all the commotion I was quite rude and never got your name, good sir knight.

SIR BERTILAK

Ah yes! We must know the name of our guest of honor!

GAWAIN

Gawain. Sir Gawain of the court of King Arthur Pendragon.

SIR BERTILAK

Well, Sir Gawain of the court of King Arthur Pendragon, tonight we honor you. You've brought my wife back safely. I cannot give you enough thanks!

Gawain struggles to sit up, but winces in terrible pain. Nonetheless, he continues to try and fight out of bed.

GAWAIN

You don't understand. I have a duel I must get to.

SIR BERTILAK

You don't understand how bad of a condition you're in.

GAWAIN

I don't think The Green Knight will care about that.

Sir and Lady Bertilak exchange a glance at the name. All the joy drains out of Sir Bertilak's face.

SIR BERTILAK

Oh, him...

Gawain is at attention now.

GAWAIN

You know him? You know where I can find him?

SIR BERTILAK

I'm afraid we all do around these parts. We try to stay away, of course, and sometimes it's easiest to avoid a trap when you know where it is.

GAWAIN

Then his chapel is in Old Swythamley?

SIR BERTILAK

Yes... Dreadful place. Not far from here. I can take you there myself, but first you must rest.

GAWAIN

No...

SIR BERTILAK

Yes. You wouldn't be any good against him at the moment anyhow.

LADY BERTILAK

Please, Sir Gawain, it would be *my-*
(looking to her husband)
-our honor to have you as our guest.

Gawain looks up at the lady. God, she's beautiful. And her eyes are saying that she needs him. At least, that's what he wants to believe they're saying.

Gawain grumbles and bows his head.

Almost immediately, Sir Bertilak's jovial nature resurfaces.

SIR BERTILAK

It's settled then! We'll get you patched up, and then you'll join us for the feast. Nelle!

GAWAIN

No, I-

NELLE, a tentative young woman, appears at the doorway with eyes cast downward.

SIR BERTILAK
 Nonsense, Nelle here will take
 excellent care of you. And we'll
 see you in the blink of an eye.

Sir Bertilak heads for the door-

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)
 I must see that everything's taken
 care of. It's going to be quite a
 feast!

And he's gone. Lady Bertilak, after casting a longing glance
 at Gawain, follows closely on her husband's heels.

Gawain shifts uncomfortably as Nelle approaches with a bowl
 of water and some rags. Quietly she wrings the water out of a
 rag, and reaches for Gawain's wound. He waves her away.

GAWAIN
 You don't have to do that.

She lowers her eyes.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
 I don't need fussing over.

NELLE
 B-b-but, sir, they said-

GAWAIN
 You don't have to call me "sir"!

NELLE
 You don't have to yell...

GAWAIN
 I'm not yelling! I'm just saying-

NELLE
 I-I just thought that-

GAWAIN
 -I don't need help.

NELLE
 I just thought you weren't supposed
 to be such a whimpering, monstrous
 baby...

Gawain's jaw drops in surprise. *What did she say?!*

NELLE (CONT'D)

I thought you were strong enough to
handle a little sting...

Nelle lifts her head just high enough to show-

A mousy, wry smile.

Gawain emits a large, belly-laugh. Now comfortable with
Nelle, Gawain lifts his arm to her, and-

She dabs carefully at it with the rag.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - BONFIRE

Wrapped in a few clean bandages, and dressed in comfortable
clothes, Gawain emerges out into the cold night air and sees-

A huge bonfire reaching up into the sky.

All around it, a party is underway. People are eating and
drinking and laughing and carousing.

As he works his way through the crowd, people thrust food and
wine on him. Gawain accepts a hunk of charred meat, and bites
into it with relish. Then he tips back his goblet of wine.

REYNARD

Thank the muses! Now there's a man
who knows how to enjoy himself!

Gawain turns to see REYNARD, a funny thin man with reddish-
blonde hair and a short twisting beard, approaching him.

GAWAIN

It feels good to be the one to
doing the biting.

REYNARD

Ah, yes! I heard all about your
dance of death with the wolves. A
thrilling tale...

(clears his throat)

The mighty knight, Did lose a bite,
In fearsome fight, Until the light,
Did try to smite... Um...
Eh... It needs some work...

Gawain looks at Reynard like he's a crazy man.

REYNARD (CONT'D)

Oh! Dearest me to the gods! I should've explained to you my destiny. You see, I am a poet.

GAWAIN

Really?!

REYNARD

Well, I dabble. I have yet to do anything of great renown. I'm still searching for the right subject. Something funny yet exciting yet tragic yet uplifting yet... simple. That's not asking too much is it?

Reynard mumbles in a bit of embarrassment, but-

Not to fear! Gawain is here!

The noble knight puts his arm around Reynard's shoulder.

GAWAIN

I have the perfect subject for you. Listen to this... "Sir Gawain and his Great Horse!" You should probably be writing this down.

Reynard opens his mouth to respond, when-

A hush falls over the party.

A single lovely note wafts through the air, and all of the guests turn to see-

Lady Bertilak silhouetted in front of the blazing fire. She emits one long, perfect note until all eyes are on her, and then she begins to sing her song-

LADY BERTILAK

(singing)

Oooh-Rah-De-Da-Sadie,
There was a Wind Lady,
She breezed where she pleased,
And she cooled all she met.
Through meadows and clover,
She knocked all things over,
She whistled and tickled,
Her chill did beset.

The beautiful, blonde lady begins to dance around the fire. Her simple, long dress flicks and swishes as she sways along with the breeze. It's beautiful and completely entrancing.

And Gawain gets the impression that she's looking at him.

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)

(singing)

Aaah-Rah-Te-Ta-Eyre,
The King of the Fire,
He razed and he blazed,
And he scorched on and on.
Always consuming,
His tall pyres pluming,
So much did he touch,
And he smote til was gone.

Now her eyes definitely are on Gawain. The flames crackle and ripple behind her as she sways and dances like the wind.

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)

(singing)

Oooh-Aaah-Sadie-Eyre,
The wind met the fire,
They danced and they lanced
And made love all night long,
Her breeze urged him higher,
She raised on the fire,
They fed one another,
Then shrank like this song.

She finishes with a flourish, and everyone cheers and whistles at her. She bows to the crowd and curtsseys.

Lady Bertilak raises her eyes and locks her gaze on Gawain. He stares right back. *Damn, he wants her.*

But then Gawain sees over Lady Bertilak's shoulder-

Nelle shakes her head softly. Sadly.

Gawain frowns and tries to make sense of it when-

Sir Bertilak flops down beside Gawain.

SIR BERTILAK

Quite the celebration, eh, my
friend?

GAWAIN

Yes it is.

SIR BERTILAK

We're a simple people, but we do
enjoy ourselves.

Sir Bertilak tips his mug back, Gawain does the same, and the two men take a long drink.

Gawain looks around at the crumbling castle.

GAWAIN

Maybe you've enjoyed yourself a bit too much. You might want to spend more time on castle upkeep.

SIR BERTILAK

Ah, but that's the true beauty of the feast. Despite our troubles, some good food, some good wine, and some good song help to lift everyone's spirits.

GAWAIN

But what has befallen-

SIR BERTILAK

Nothing to worry yourself over.

GAWAIN

Please, I might be able to help.

Sir Bertilak waves a dismissive hand.

SIR BERTILAK

The lands are running wild. We've had some trouble with our crops. And our waters. And the surrounding beasts have turned against us.

Gawain stares at him. *That's not nothing!*

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

I promise you, it's nothing to be afraid of. Come the spring, all will be right again.

GAWAIN

Once I've finish my journey, and have fulfilled my vow with the Green Knight. You have my word that I'll come back to help you.

SIR BERTILAK

You truly are an unimpeachable hero, aren't you?

GAWAIN

I wouldn't say that...

And Gawain's eyes once again fall upon the lovely form of Lady Bertilak, illuminated by the raging fire.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
I simply owe you for your kindness.

SIR BERTILAK
Ha! You owe me?! I owe you, Sir
Gawain! I owe you everything.

GAWAIN
We can just call things even then.

SIR BERTILAK
Even...?
(something occurs to him)
I'll tell you what? Tomorrow I'll
be out on the hunt, and I want you
to do something for me while I'm
away.

Gawain freezes. His eyes dart to Lady Bertilak once more. Is he really about to hear what he thinks he's going to hear?

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)
I'll make you a deal. Whatever I
catch on the hunt, I'll give to
you. And whatever you may receive
in the castle, you can give to me.

GAWAIN
I doubt I'll catch anything
tomorrow.

SIR BERTILAK
It's a castle with no walls. I
imagine a man of your stature can
at least manage to catch a mouse or
two.

GAWAIN
We have a gentleman's agreement.

The two men clink their mugs together and drink again.

And, all around them, the party rages on.

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - GAWAIN'S ROOM

The next morning, sunlight creeps in through the hole in Gawain's wall. But he just lies flopped in bed, clutching his head, and covering his eyes.

GAWAIN

Damn, that sun! Ugh... The only thing I expect to have to show for today is a vicious, throbbing, pounding, bloody head...

Someone giggles from the doorway.

Gawain uncovers his eyes, and sees-

Nelle looking in on him. With arms full of bandages.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Go away...

NELLE

I'm, I'm just here to... My lord, I'm here to change your bandages.

GAWAIN

Be quick with it then...

Nelle approaches, and quietly she cuts away his old dirty bandages and wraps on new ones.

As she finishes one around his arm-

She traces a strange, circular symbol over the covered wound.

Gawain casts her a questioning look.

NELLE

It's a binding symbol. It may be silly, but-

GAWAIN

Not silly at all!

Gawain twists and grabs a bit of his armor that lies in a pile in the corner. He points to a chipped, painted rune.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

This is from a Celtic clan I met on an adventure. It's for protection.

Nelle smiles, and after a pause, she draws another more complicated symbol over a bandage on Gawain's leg.

NELLE

My family's been using that one for centuries. It's meant to quicken the blood clots.

GAWAIN

Your family? You come from a long
line of healers?

NELLE

Something like that...

Gawain twists and waves his newly wrapped limbs.

GAWAIN

Well, it feels better already.

Quietly, Nelle dresses Gawain's wounds. From time to time,
she places her hands on an injury or traces a strange symbol.

Gawain watches the silent woman with great interest.

NELLE

If you're interested, my lord, I do
have another treatment. It might
help your "vicious, throbbing,
pounding, bloody head."

GAWAIN

Eh? What's that?

NELLE

More wine?

That mousy, wry smile of hers is back.

Gawain laughs and shakes his head in mock disgust.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The bright sun shines through the barren trees, and Sir
Bertilak, his men and their horses cut through the cold
forest. The breath of each of the men comes out thick. The
hooves of the horses clop upon the hard, frozen ground.

At Sir Bertilak's side, Reynard tries to compose a poem.

REYNARD

*"His name was Gawain, He tussled
with pain,"* No, no... *"The Tale of
Gawain, Both bold and Profane,"*
Eh... Not quite right...

SIR BERTILAK

Reynard...

REYNARD

The problem with Gawain is the only words that rhyme with his name are so bleak. "*Pain,*" "*Rain,*" "*Slain.*"

SIR BERTILAK

Reynard, could we please have some silence?

REYNARD

You're just jealous because I'm not working on a poem for you. Worry not, my lord, my muse is never far from you.

SIR BERTILAK

It's not that, my friend. I have full faith in your poetic prowess. It's just that we're on the hunt at the moment. I need to concentrate.

REYNARD

We haven't seen so much as a lark all morning.

SIR BERTILAK

I would welcome a lark. I've been following these faint tracks...

Sir Bertilak points at hoof prints scratched into the dirt.

REYNARD

Ah! Well spotted, my excellent lord. Another horse, you think?

SIR BERTILAK

Too narrow to be a horse.

The hoof prints become thicker and more numerous.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

And I think there's more than one.

They continue to follow, and the tracks become more and more numerous until the entire earth is scratched and scored.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

Many, many more.

REYNARD

My lord...?

Sir Bertilak looks up to see only fifty yards away or so-

A small army of tall, powerful harts. But their mighty antlers have sharp points and razor edges. Their mouths foam.

And their eyes are all glowing emerald green.

SIR BERTILAK
Weapons, men...

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - GAWAIN'S ROOM

Gawain and Nelle sit on his bed. Laughing. Enjoying themselves as she traces another symbol along his side.

GAWAIN
Ah! That tickles!

NELLE
It's the trifold arrow! It's supposed to tickle!

GAWAIN
And what's this one for?

NELLE
To make your piss like a raging river!

They both burst out in hearty laughter when-

LADY BERTILAK (O.S.)
Nelle. That'll be all.

Both Gawain and Nelle stop laughing and look to the door.

Lady Bertilak stands framed in the doorway, looking in at Gawain. *Really taking him in.*

Very quickly, Gawain is really taking her in too.

Nelle's face drops and she quickly becomes serious.

NELLE
I'm sorry, m'lady. I was only-

LADY BERTILAK
It's quite all right.

GAWAIN
She and I were just sharing-

LADY BERTILAK
I'm not upset in the least. Nelle, would you please leave us?

NELLE
I was just finishing-

LADY BERTILAK
Leave us.

Nelle bows, and then quickly hurries out the door.

Lady Bertilak steps into the room.

GAWAIN
She was only showing me some of her
healing symbols. Don't be angry
with her.

LADY BERTILAK
Oh, I could never be angry with
Nelle. In many ways, I don't know
who serves who. She's a sweet,
gentle thing...

And Lady Bertilak forcefully pulls the door shut behind her.

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)
Unlike me.

Gawain gazes at Lady Bertilak. And she gives him the softest,
faintest smile. It's a while until either of them can speak.

GAWAIN
I... don't know if you should be in
here, Lady Bertilak.

LADY BERTILAK
I don't know if I should be either.

She sits down on the bed beside Gawain.

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)
But I can't stop thinking about
you. And my husband is busy
elsewhere at the moment.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Sir Bertilak, Reynard and the men certainly are busy as they
lock into battle with the rampaging army of harts.

The mens' swords clash against the mighty antlers and there's
a rattle like steel upon steel.

REYNARD

I'm not sure blows to the head are
going to work, my lord!

In the blink of an eye, Sir Bertilak has his bow out and has
an arrow pulled into place.

SIR BERTILAK

Well, there's only one way to take
down a hart!

Twang! He lets his arrow fly, and-

It buries itself into the breast of a hart. The beast falls.

In a flash, Sir Bertilak has a new arrow drawn and placed in
his bow. He fires another. And another. And another.

The charging harts are falling all around.

He's an incredible bowman.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

How's this as a poem for you,
Reynard!?

REYNARD

An epic, my lord! Truly an epic!

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - GAWAIN'S ROOM

Lady Bertilak sits on the bed beside Gawain.

LADY BERTILAK

I want to thank you for saving my
life, Sir Gawain.

GAWAIN

Not necessary, m'lady. I'm a
knight. Saving beautiful ladies is
all part of the job.

LADY BERTILAK

You think I'm beautiful then?

She leans in to kiss him.

But Gawain stops her, and gently holds her at arms length.

GAWAIN

As much as I'd like to, and believe
me I would like to, I can't. I
didn't save you for this.

Lady Bertilak leans back, and blinks away a tear.

LADY BERTILAK

God... I knew you were a brave man.
I didn't know you were a good one.

GAWAIN

Your husband seems to be, as well.

LADY BERTILAK

He is. He's kind and courageous and
true-

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The harts are falling fast, and Sir Bertilak seems energized by the battle.

His handsome face is lit up by a broad smile and splash of sunshine through the trees.

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - GAWAIN'S ROOM

Lady Bertilak's face is pale and ashen as she continues to speak with Gawain.

LADY BERTILAK

(continuous)

-But I'm not sure he can save us.

GAWAIN

What do you mean?

LADY BERTILAK

My husband wouldn't like me to tell you. But I suspect you already know...

GAWAIN

That the Green Knight has a grip on these lands too.

Lady Bertilak nods.

LADY BERTILAK

You mustn't think any less of us. Sir Bertilak ignored many entreaties and taunts for a long, long time. He's a humble man.

GAWAIN

That's one thing we don't have in common then...

LADY BERTILAK

The Green Knight has many tricks. He takes many guises.

GAWAIN

You mean he can look like anyone?

LADY BERTILAK

I mean, he'll do whatever it takes to get his way. He finally fooled my husband into an archery contest. Sir Bertilak struck the Green Knight with a perfect shot into the heart. And the Green Knight casually drew it out.

GAWAIN

And demanded the right to return the shot in a year and a day.

Lady Bertilak nods again.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

But he didn't go?

LADY BERTILAK

How could he? It would've meant certain death. No one can survive against the Green Knight.

Gawain sighs. *Everyone keeps saying that...*

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)

Ever since that day, our lands have turned against us. The waters turned dirty. The land refused to grow. All manner of animal have become furious and terrible. And the Green Knight promised to come back, and finish the job.

GAWAIN

Not if I can help it.

LADY BERTILAK

There's no way you can defeat him.

GAWAIN

But maybe I can take him with me. And free your lands in the process.

LADY BERTILAK

I don't think I've ever met anyone
like you, Sir Gawain. The world
will be worse off without you in
it.

Gawain seems lost in his thoughts over this bleak sentiment.

In that moment, Lady Bertilak leans in-

And kisses Gawain on the cheek.

This snaps him out of his trance.

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)

For luck.

Then she rises, opens the door and is gone.

Gawain heaves and stares at the doorway. *What a woman...*

SIR BERTILAK (O.S.)

Gawain! Ho!

Once again, Gawain snaps out of it, and looks around in confusion until he realizes where the voice was coming from.

He walks over to the gaping hole in his wall and looks out-

IN THE DISTANCE

Sir Bertilak, Reynard, and the rest of the men ride in with their horses and wagons laden with the carcasses of harts.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

I've got a good harvest for you!

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - FIRE PIT - SUNSET

As the last remaining rays of sunlight die away, Sir Bertilak directs his servants to prepare for the upcoming feast.

SIR BERTILAK

Build up the fire! I want it bigger
and brighter than last night!

Then he points more servants toward the pile of dead harts.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

Take the beasts upwind to carve
them. Save us the stench. But we'll
have fine steaks tonight!

All of the servants dutifully do as they're told.

A couple of them pile massive amounts of wood.

Gawain approaches, still walking a little gingerly, but overall looking much better.

GAWAIN

Should we really be eating them?

SIR BERTILAK

Why not?! It's what we've been eating for months. It's what you ate last night.

Gawain grimaces.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

Don't worry about it, my friend. I insist you eat it. It's all my gift to you, after all. Now, have you got anything for me?

Gawain pauses uncomfortably.

GAWAIN

Just some new bandages, if you'd like to share them...

Gawain pulls at his bandages, but Sir Bertilak stops him.

SIR BERTILAK

No, no, no! You need those much more than I, my friend! Although I must say, you are looking better already.

GAWAIN

I've always been a fast healer. And your wife's nurse is excellent.

SIR BERTILAK

Nelle certainly is. But, Sir Gawain, you're avoiding our game! Are you sure you've nothing else to show from your day?

GAWAIN

It's been a quiet day.

SIR BERTILAK

Nothing at all?! Surely, you're holding out on me. Come now, Sir Gawain, that wasn't the agreement!

A funny smirk crosses Gawain's face. Then after a moment-
He quickly leans in and kisses Sir Bertilak on the cheek.

Sir Bertilak is a big talker but this shuts him up for a minute. He stares at Gawain in confusion for a second. But then comprehension dawns on him-

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)
You dog! Who?!

GAWAIN
Ah, but that wasn't part of the game.

Sir Bertilak laughs heartily, slaps an arm around Gawain, then turns to declare-

SIR BERTILAK
Let's get this feast started! We have a lot to celebrate!

Almost on the word, a spark is struck, and the pile of wood bursts into flames.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - BONFIRE - NIGHT

A new bonfire rages tall and hot.

The celebration also rages on once again.

A large crowd of men, women, and children crowd around the fire. They laugh and talk. They eat dripping, delicious food. They drink tall mugs of plentiful wine.

Sir Bertilak works the crowd, bouncing from group to group as he laughs and charms and makes sure that everyone has anything that they could need.

Lady Bertilak follows her husband, but seems somewhat subdued and ill at ease.

Gawain surrounds himself with several of the men that were out on the hunt including Reynard, who is doing his best to enthusiastically recap the day.

REYNARD
There must've been a thousand of them! Am I right?

Several of the other men just laugh and shake their heads.

Gawain only half listens.

REYNARD (CONT'D)

An army! A horde! A monsoon of
beasts! Pouring down upon us with
all the intensity of-

Gawain looks across the fire and sees a small group including-
Nelle.

Even from this distance, it's clear that she's not speaking.
And not enjoying herself. She looks sulky and sad.

GAWAIN

Excuse me, my good men.

Gawain extricates himself from the men as Reynard continues.

REYNARD

Their hooves rattles like thunder!
Like an earthquake!

Gawain moves away from them, crosses through several other
crowds, and approaches Nelle.

GAWAIN

You don't seem to be enjoying
yourself.

NELLE

Of course I am. Look, see... I have
monster meat.

GAWAIN

Ugh... I disposed of mine as fast
as possible. The fire hides all.

NELLE

Cover me.

Gawain steps in front of Nelle to shield her as she deftly
approaches the fire, fakes a cough, and-

Tosses her steak into the flames.

GAWAIN

Well done.

NELLE

The meat? Or the maneuver?

Gawain laughs.

GAWAIN

You still don't seem very relieved.
What's the real problem?

NELLE

Nothing... There's nothing wrong.

GAWAIN

You can tell me. I know what's
going on around here. Lady Bertilak
told me all about-

NELLE

No one has a clue what they're
really facing here.

Gawain stares at Nelle, dumbfounded by her sudden darkness.

NELLE (CONT'D)

They feast and they make merry. All
because they killed a few deer. But
worse will come. And they'll keep
coming. And coming. Until the job
is done.

GAWAIN

Sir Bertilak seems up to the task
of holding off the vicious beasts.

NELLE

For now. But he can't stop it.

GAWAIN

Why don't the people just leave
then?

NELLE

They're simple people. And they're
afraid. Sir Bertilak keeps them
happy with wine and feasts. But
he's leading them to their doom.

GAWAIN

But why don't you leave?

NELLE

I'm bound to this place. The magic-

She finally catches herself, realizing she's said way too
much, and she drops her eyes again in her usual way.

Gawain stares at her.

NELLE (CONT'D)

Forget what I said. I'm sorry, Sir
Gawain. I shouldn't have-

GAWAIN

I'm going to save you all, Nelle.
I'm going to stop this.

NELLE

You'll try. You'll fail.

Her head is still bowed. And Gawain gently lifts her chin and
sees her eyes properly for the first time. One eye is blue.

And one is a shimmering green.

Gawain's taken aback for a moment, when there's a sudden
cheering in the crowd. He turns and sees-

Reynard. Who begins to dance and sing around the fire.

REYNARD

Through darkest night,
Through fiercest fight,
The fearsome beasts
Quaked at our sight!
We fell upon
The vicious throng
Our mighty reach
Was swift and strong!

Gawain smiles, then turns back to find-

Nelle has disappeared from his side.

REYNARD (CONT'D)

Their antlers slashed,
Their fierce hooves crashed,
And foaming mouths
Spit, bit, and gnashed.
Our arrows clashed,
Our hammers smashed,
The things fell low
As strong we lashed!

Gawain scans the crowd but Nelle is nowhere.

REYNARD (CONT'D)

The beasts fell back,
From our attack,
Our might hack,
Left them no slack.
Saved by the sword,
Of our Mighty Lord,
(MORE)

REYNARD (CONT'D)

The brave and righteous
Bertilak!

Everyone cheers at the end of the song, and they raise their mugs to chant-

EVERYONE

The brave and righteous Bertilak!

For his part, Sir Bertilak waves it away and shakes his head. He calls and laughs-

SIR BERTILAK

This is a celebration for all of
us, isn't it?! More wine! More
music! More dancing!

Several MUSICIANS begin a lively tune. Everyone starts dancing. And the crowd swirls and sways.

Gawain moves into the party and ducks in and around the twirling dancers. He tries to find Nelle, but no luck.

GAWAIN

Nelle? Have you seen Nelle? The
little nurse? Have you seen-

Suddenly he's grabbed by the shoulder. He spins to see-
Lady Bertilak.

She grabs his hand, and throws her arm around his waist.

LADY BERTILAK

Dance with me.

GAWAIN

Have you seen Nelle?

Gawain could've been imagining it, but-

It seems like Lady Bertilak just shuddered.

LADY BERTILAK

Forget about her for the moment.
Just dance with me.

GAWAIN

But-

LADY BERTILAK

Shhh... Just for tonight. Just for
this moment. Please.

(MORE)

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)

You make me feel safe in a way that
I haven't for many moons...

Gawain finally looks into her eyes. Big and longing and soulful. How can he resist?

They dance. Slowly at first, melting into the crowd. Then faster and faster. Turns out Gawain is pretty good on his feet. He spins and twirls Lady Bertilak, and they laugh and smile and-

They manage to look pretty damn happy.

Off to the side, Sir Bertilak watches Gawain's display with his wife, and-

He doesn't look happy at all.

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - GAWAIN'S ROOM - MORNING

The next morning, Gawain stirs in his bed as light shines through the hole in his wall. Stiffly, he sits up.

He looks out the open door to see-

Sir Bertilak walking by and pulling on his riding gloves.

GAWAIN

Sir Bertilak! My lord!

Gawain gets to his feet and hurries to catch Sir Bertilak.

SIR BERTILAK

Ah, I trust you slept well.

GAWAIN

Your feast helped. And I'm healing surprisingly fast.

SIR BERTILAK

Glad to hear it. I'm sorry I can't see to your breakfast. I'm off for the day's hunt.

GAWAIN

I see that. So does our previous arrangement still stand?

This makes Sir Bertilak smile. He was seeming a little frosty before, but now he lightens up.

SIR BERTILAK

It does! Of course, it does, my friend! Whatever I catch is yours.

GAWAIN

And I'll try to slay some spiders here for you.

SIR BERTILAK

Ah, I still think you held out on me yesterday. I'm going to be more strict tonight.

(shouting suddenly)

Nelle!

The tiny nurse appears from around the corner.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

Get him cleaned up. He's starting to stink.

And Sir Bertilak quickly strides away.

Nelle sniffs at Gawain and grimaces.

NELLE

Does he expect me to work miracles?

Gawain chuckles.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Once again, Sir Bertilak, Reynard, and his men ride out into the cold, barren forest.

REYNARD

After last night's rousing success, I need an equally thrilling follow-up... What do you think, should I dive into the adventures of Sir Gawain tonight?

SIR BERTILAK

Can we not talk about our distinguished guest at the moment?

REYNARD

Is someone getting hero envy?

SIR BERTILAK

I can't listen to the trees with your constant prattle!

Reynard falls silent for a long moment, until-

REYNARD

There's nothing to hear.

Sir Bertilak holds up a hand to quiet him. Then he strains his ears. Listening for something faint, quiet, barely there-

SIR BERTILAK

I hear a rustle... A rattle... A breath... A... snort?

Suddenly, A LOUD GRUNT bursts out, and-

A massive BOAR charges out of the underbrush. But this isn't any ordinary pig. It's three times as big as a normal boar, nearly the size of the horses. It's also got two foot long tusks on either side of its foaming mouth.

And, of course, it has unnatural emerald green eyes.

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - GAWAIN'S ROOM

With a tearing sound, Nelle finishes putting a new bandage on Gawain's leg. Then she rises to leave, but-

GAWAIN

Wait! Aren't you forgetting something?!

Nelle turns to him with a confused look.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

You didn't give me my protection charm?

Nelle smiles her mousy, wry smile and sinks back to sit beside him. She traces several complicated interlocking symbols along his legs, arms and chest.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

There. Bring on The Green Knight.

Her smile vanishes. She bows her head further.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

That was just a joke.

After a moment, Nelle fumbles into a pocket in her apron and pulls out-

A tear-drop shaped silver amulet.

She reaches for Gawain's beard but-

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
What are you doing? What's that?

NELLE
It's for The Green Knight.

GAWAIN
Where did you get-

NELLE
Please, just trust me. It will-

GAWAIN
I can't accept that.

NELLE
It could make your death easier!

But Gawain pushes her hands away.

They sit in stoney silence for a long moment.

GAWAIN
I'd have to give it to Sir Bertilak
by the end of the day anyway. It'd
be hard to deny something that was
plain on my face.

Nelle gaze drops and she whispers sadly-

NELLE
I don't want to see you suffer.

GAWAIN
Nelle, you know more than you're
telling me. What's going on here?

It takes a moment, but Nelle finally opens her mouth
uncertainly. It's costing her everything she has, but-

NELLE
I'm the servant of-

LADY BERTILAK (O.S.)
Nelle?

Gawain looks up to find Lady Bertilak in his doorway.

Nelle barely glimpses her, before she stands and quickly
rushes out of the room without so much as a word.

GAWAIN

I should go after-

But Lady Bertilak pulls the door shut-

And throws herself at Gawain.

He catches her by the shoulders, and turns his face just in time to avoid her kiss. But it catches him on the cheek.

One kiss.

Gawain holds Lady Bertilak away as she struggles to get closer to him, and as tears stream down her face.

LADY BERTILAK

Please, Sir Gawain, don't stand on ceremony any longer. I need you.

GAWAIN

I can't kiss you, Lady Bertilak.

LADY BERTILAK

Then don't kiss me. I thought it might make it easier for you, but I'm not asking for that. Please! Please, just get me out of here...

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The battle with the boar rages fiercely.

The boar charges at several of the men on horseback. Their horses rear up and narrowly dodge the beast.

Sir Bertilak lets an arrow fly and it buries into the boar's back. But it does nothing to stop it.

It just makes the boar angry.

The massive beast turns and charges at Sir Bertilak.

He fires an arrow at the boar. And a second. And a third.

They either bounce off of its tusks, or bury themselves uselessly in its hide.

Suddenly, Sir Bertilak's horse rears, and Sir Bertilak is bucked to the ground. He lands painfully and loses his bow.

He scrambles to get his bearings and hears-

An angry grunt.

He spins to see the boar charging at him.

Sir Bertilak screws up his face in anticipation when-

REYNARD

My lord!

Reynard leaps off of his horse and onto the back of the terrible, furious boar.

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - GAWAIN'S ROOM - DAY

Lady Bertilak sobs into Gawain's arms.

GAWAIN

It's going to be all right...
You'll see, I'm going to face him.
And I'm going to win.

The lady raises her tear-streaked face.

LADY BERTILAK

No. If you face him, you will die.

GAWAIN

Everyone keeps saying that...

LADY BERTILAK

My husband can't stop him. You
can't stop him. Nothing can stop
him.

Her words pierce Sir Gawain, and the hope drains from him.

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)

But we can escape.

GAWAIN

What?

LADY BERTILAK

You and I can run away from here.
We can escape from him. You could
keep us safe. And I could keep us
happy.

Once again, she kisses him.

On the lips. Softly, tenderly. This time he accepts it.

Two kisses.

And Gawain's resolve is crumbling.

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)

Will you do it? Will you leave here with me?

GAWAIN

What about the others? All the people here?

LADY BERTILAK

You've heard them. They're all fools. Cheering on my husband as this place crumbles around them.

GAWAIN

Where would we go?

LADY BERTILAK

We can go back to your home.

GAWAIN

Then the Green Knight will surely take my lands.

LADY BERTILAK

Then we'll go somewhere else. We'll stay on the move. He'll never find us. But we'll have each other.

She leans in to kiss him once more. She gets close.

But, at the last moment, he stops her.

GAWAIN

No. I won't run. I'll face him.

LADY BERTILAK

But-

GAWAIN

I'll let him kill me, if I have to. But I'll keep my end of my bargain.

LADY BERTILAK

You won't save me?

GAWAIN

I can't. Not like this.

Once again, Lady Bertilak weeps bitterly.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry...

Suddenly she lashes out at him.

LADY BERTILAK

I thought you were a brave knight!
But you're not a knight! You're
just a coward!

GAWAIN

I'm not a coward...

LADY BERTILAK

Yes, you are! A coward fights a
losing battle out of pride and-

GAWAIN

This isn't pride...

LADY BERTILAK

Yes, it is! You're trying to prove
once again that you're the mighty
Sir Gawain, willing to die for no
reason except for the glory of
being able to say you had the
courage to march to your end when
no one else would. But that's not
courageous. It's foolish. It's
prideful. It's cowardly.

Gawain has no response. He sits there silently after her
harsh and brutal truths. Finally-

GAWAIN

It's the right thing to do.

After a moment, Lady Bertilak shakes her head and rises.
She's nearly to the door when.

They hear SHOUTING FROM OUTSIDE.

SIR BERTILAK (O.S.)

Sir Gawain! I have your gifts for
the day!

After a moment, Gawain stands and moves to the gaping hole in
his wall. He looks out, and once again, he sees-

IN THE DISTANCE-

Sir Bertilak rides toward the castle with his men. They drag
their usual carts and wagons behind them.

He motions to the massive body of the dead boar.

Then he flips back a white sheet from a second cart to reveal-

The dead body of Reynard.

Sir Bertilak sags in despair.

FROM THE CASTLE WINDOW-

Gawain does the same.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - BONFIRE - NIGHT

A third bonfire blazes with its flames rising high and tickling the black night sky. Crackles of flame pop and break away to join the twinkling stars over head for just an instant before dying alone in the sky.

Everyone is there again. All the men, women and children.

But there's no joy this time.

At one end of the fire, there's a huge mound of dirt. And Sir Bertilak stands with his back to it as he addresses the onlookers.

SIR BERTILAK

Reynard was a good friend. He was a good man. He was a... poet. While he might not have had time to compose a poem that would withstand the test of time, his memory shall stay with us forever.

Sir Bertilak sings a funeral dirge for his fallen friend.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

(singing)

The new year birthed
On a cold dark winter's night,
It took first breath
Under an icy light
The white snow lay,
That new birth day,
And melted down
Beneath the youngling sprite.

Second Verse:

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

The new year child
Stumbled through the spring,
It found its feet
While butterflies took wing,
It warmed and slept,
It laughed and wept,
The childhood passed
With roses and kite string.

Third Verse:

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

The new year grew
Through summer into man,
The warm sun shone
O'er the year's longest span,
The days stretched long,
Grown tall and strong,
And left too quick
As through its time it ran.

Fourth Verse:

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

The new year slowed
In brisk cool autumn's wind,
And sunsets dimmed
Wise eyes that seldom sinned,
The gold leaves fell,
Time cast its spell,
And wrinkles crept
Along the well-lived skin.

Final Verse:

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

The winter's peace
Returned to greet the year,
With snow white smile
And single frozen tear,
The two embraced,
Close interlaced,
And then made way
To welcome the next year.

His funeral dirge falls into silence for a long moment as everyone stands silently to gaze at the mound of earth.

Sir Bertilak raises a cup and everyone follows suit.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

To Lord Reynard!

EVERYONE

Lord Reynard!

They all drink. But Sir Bertilak can't help but notice that-

His wife's eyes seem to be especially puffy and red, as if she'd be crying all day.

And she seems to only have eyes for Sir Gawain.

LATER THAT NIGHT-

Everyone eats and drinks. But there's no music. There's no laughter. There's not even much conversation.

Sir Bertilak approaches Gawain.

SIR BERTILAK

I gave you what came to me today,
Sir Gawain. Now it's your turn.
What have you for me?

GAWAIN

I have nothing to help you, Sir
Bertilak.

SIR BERTILAK

Give me what's mine. That I might
ease my sadness.

GAWAIN

Nothing can relieve your grief.

SIR BERTILAK

What have you got?!

GAWAIN

Just let it be.

Sir Bertilak shoves Gawain and stares him down.

SIR BERTILAK

We had an agreement. Give me what's
mine!

For a long moment, Gawain just stares at Sir Bertilak then-
He grabs him and kisses him on the cheek.

Sir Gawain grumbles, struggling with the decision, then-
Quickly kisses Sir Bertilak on the other cheek.

Two kisses.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

Who?

GAWAIN

Not the deal.

The two men stare each other down for a bit. Daring each
other to make a move. Not sure what will happen next.

Then Sir Bertilak breaks down into tears in Gawain's arms.
Gawain holds the sobbing man, not sure what else to do.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - STABLES - THE NEXT MORNING

The sun shines brightly once again the next morning. As if to mock the mourning men.

In the stables, Sir Bertilak and his men are suiting up again and preparing to ride out. They also load up their horses.

Gawain enters, looking strong and ready again.

SIR BERTILAK
Go back to bed, Sir Gawain.

GAWAIN
Let me ride with you, Bertilak.

SIR BERTILAK
You need to rest.

GAWAIN
It's dangerous out there. You shouldn't be risking yourself.

SIR BERTILAK
I'm well up to this task.

GAWAIN
And I'm well up for the hunt. You need another man.

SIR BERTILAK
I said stay here!

Gawain is taken aback by the sudden outburst.

Sir Bertilak mounts onto his horse and his men do the same.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)
Our deal stands. I'll see you at the sunset.

And Sir Bertilak rides out with his men.

They leave the stables.

THE FIRE PIT-

Ashes smolder in the large fire pit that just hours ago held a towering bonfire.

Sir Bertilak and his men gallop past the fire pit, and past the large mound of earth where Reynard was buried the night before. But, as they pass, none of them notice-

The mound of earth throbs and breaks.

THE STABLES-

Gawain watches the horses go. Then he turns around and finds Ringolet stabled. Gawain strides over to his horse.

Ringolet huffs at Gawain's approach.

GAWAIN

Sorry to have left you here, my friend. I hope you've been well-treated.

Ringolet neighs indignantly.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I said I'm sorry! I didn't mean to leave you here. I wasn't exactly in the best of conditions myself.

The horse turns away as Gawain reaches to stroke his mane.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Stop being a colt! At least you're well rested. And you got some good feeding.

The horse still pulls his head away.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I'm ready to get out of here too. But I won't pretend that some things won't be harder to leave than others.

Ringolet blinks at his master.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

You see her too, don't you?

They turn and hidden in the corner is Nelle.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

You don't have to hide from me.

Quietly and with her head bowed as usual, she comes out of her corner and approaches Gawain.

NELLE

I never really hide. It's just that people usually don't notice me.

GAWAIN

Their mistake.

NELLE

You'd be surprised what I can pick up while the men are preparing to leave. All sorts of little treasures and secrets.

The two of them stand beside each other.

GAWAIN

Is that why you're here?

NELLE

No, I'm here to tell you to go. Right now. Don't tell anyone, don't say good-bye. Just go.

GAWAIN

Why would I do that?

NELLE

I don't want you to be here when it comes.

GAWAIN

Maybe I can help.

NELLE

You can't this place is doomed. Nothing can save it.

GAWAIN

Maybe I can. Maybe I can save you all.

Nelle just smiles. A small, sad smile.

NELLE

No. It doesn't matter what you do. You won't be able to save me.

GAWAIN

I'm going to go and face the Green Knight. I'm going to take up his challenge. I believe I can save you. All of you.

Nelle touches his face.

NELLE

You can go and die, if you like. I won't try and stop you. Just don't do it here. Don't make me watch. Don't make me feel it.

GAWAIN

Feel it?

Gawain looks at her with confusion.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

What if I scooped you up, and we ran away from here together?

NELLE

Why would you want me to run away with you?

GAWAIN

Why wouldn't I?

Gawain brushes aside her thin hair. He lifts her down-turned face. But as he leans in to kiss her-

She pushes him away.

NELLE

Please... Just go...

Gawain nods in agreement and rushes out.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Once more, Sir Bertilak and his men ride through the forest on the hunt. But they're all quiet this time. No talking. No joking. No smiles.

A shadow passes over them all. But no one acknowledges it.

They scan the cold, hard terrain for any sign of enemies.

Another shadow. This time, Sir Bertilak stops.

He raises his hand, and his men stop. They all look around for something, and they strain their ears in silence, when they hear the faintest whisper-

WHISPER

...Fall back...

Sir Bertilak looks around. His men are doing the same. But they can't locate the faint whisper.

WHISPER (CONT'D)
...Attack...

More whispers. More looking. More nothing.

WHISPER (CONT'D)
...Hack...

Sir Bertilak finally looks up and sees-

The Undead Reynard perched up in the branches above him. His clothes are filthy from his burial mound. His face is pale and bluish.

And his eyes glow an emerald green.

REYNARD
*...The brave and righteous
 Bertilak...*

The Undead Man springs from the trees, falling upon them, and attacks.

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - GAWAIN'S ROOM

Gawain returns to his chambers. He quickly gathers his things into a small rucksack. He's just about to turn to leave when-

LADY BERTILAK (O.S.)
 You're going...?

He spins to find Lady Bertilak lurking again in his doorway.

GAWAIN
 I have to. I will do the brave thing. I'm going to find The Green Knight, as soon as I can. I'll keep my bargain. And, maybe, I can free this land from yours.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The Undead Reynard is more brutal and fearsome than he ever was when he was alive.

He leaps from one man to another and his powerful blows make the men crumble beneath his brutality.

Reynard grabs one man, slams him into a tree, and lifts him up into the air by the throat.

Sir Bertilak fires an arrow into Reynard's back. But the dead man doesn't flinch. He looks over his shoulder at Sir Bertilak then, almost casually, he snaps the neck of the man he holds in the air.

SIR BERTILAK

Please, my friend, don't do this.

Reynard tosses the dead body aside like a rag doll.

Then he springs at Sir Bertilak.

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - GAWAIN'S ROOM - DAY

Gawain pleads with Lady Bertilak who remains in the doorway.

GAWAIN

I have to go. In all the readings I've done. In all the places I've visited, no one has ever stood up to him.

LADY BERTILAK

Because you're certain to die.

GAWAIN

No, I don't think so. He tries to scare everyone so they won't return. But, I think, if I stand up to him. His power will break.

LADY BERTILAK

But how far will you have to go to keep your end of the bargain?

GAWAIN

As far as I have to.

LADY BERTILAK

Even if he demands that, to show your courage, you must die?

Gawain nods.

Lady Bertilak's eyes tear up, but she doesn't try to stop him. Instead-

She draws a thin, nearly transparent green sash out of her bodice.

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)

This sash has been passed down by the women in my family for generations.

She tries to press it into Gawain's hands. But he forces it away again.

GAWAIN

No-

LADY BERTILAK

It has powerful protections. Wear it beneath your armor. Or tuck it into the toe of your boot, if you wish. It will fit almost anywhere. It can keep you safe.

GAWAIN

Why didn't you give this to your husband when his rematch loomed?

Lady Bertilak sputters for a moment before finally replying-

LADY BERTILAK

I would have, but he didn't even go to his rematch. Maybe it can still help you.

GAWAIN

I cannot accept that.

LADY BERTILAK

Please, you saved my life. Maybe I can repay the favor.

She places the sash into Gawain's hand, and she closes his fingers around it. He nods.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Reynard has Sir Bertilak pinned to the ground. Sir Bertilak struggles with all of his might, and it seems like Reynard is barely even trying.

Reynard's hands close around Sir Bertilak's neck. Sir Bertilak sees one of his men's swords laying a few feet away.

He stretches. His finger tips brush the handle.

Reynard's face is a merciless grimace.

SIR BERTILAK
I'm sorry, my friend.

And Sir Bertilak swings the sword. Reynard's headless body falls backward. Sir Bertilak heaves in exhaustion.

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - GAWAIN'S ROOM

Gawain finishes putting on the last piece of his armor. He picks up his helmet under his arm.

Lady Bertilak watches it all.

GAWAIN
Thank you. I won't fail you and
your people.

Gawain is about to move past Lady Bertilak, but she stops him and positions him in front of the hole in the wall as-

She grabs him and kisses him, powerfully, on the lips.

LADY BERTILAK
For luck.

As they break from the kiss they see through the hole in the wall-

IN THE DISTANCE-

Sir Bertilak.

He trudges slowly and sadly toward the castle, but it's clear that he just saw everything.

Gawain and Lady Bertilak are clearly framed in hole in the wall. Sir Bertilak looks at them and points angrily.

SIR BERTILAK
You!

Lady Bertilak ducks her head and quickly hurries away.

Gawain winces and leaves the room.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - SUNSET

Gawain walks out the front to find Sir Bertilak striding up to him. There's fury in the man's eyes.

SIR BERTILAK

What have you got for me today, Sir
Gawain?

GAWAIN

You don't understand what you just
saw.

SIR BERTILAK

What have you got for me?!

GAWAIN

Nothing...

SIR BERTILAK

I have six dead men for you. And
you've got nothing for me?!

Gawain grits his jaw then-

Takes out the silky green sash.

He bunches it up and throws it at Sir Bertilak's feet.

Sir Bertilak takes a swing at Gawain. Gawain answers in kind.

The two men wail on each other. It turns into quite the
brawl. But finally-

Gawain drops his hands and lets Sir Bertilak hit him
undefended.

GAWAIN

I won't fight you.

Sir Bertilak hits him again. Gawain takes the hit.

SIR BERTILAK

Fight back!

Another swing from Sir Bertilak. Gawain takes another.

GAWAIN

(spits blood)

No...

SIR BERTILAK

Hit me!

GAWAIN

I won't.

Sir Bertilak hits Gawain again and again. Gawain falls to his
knees and takes the beating.

Eventually, Gawain collapses.

But Sir Bertilak keeps hitting. It's getting rough. But still Gawain won't fight it. He lets himself get beaten to a pulp.

Finally, Sir Bertilak stops.

And Sir Bertilak drops down to the ground beside Gawain.

After a long moment, Gawain manages to sit up.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I owed you that. I deserved it.

Sir Bertilak nods.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Now, I'm going to go.

Again, Sir Bertilak just nods.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

But, first, at least let me help you with your men. I owe you that too.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - FIRE PIT - SUNSET

There's no feast tonight. No celebration.

But there is a fire.

A large funeral pyre burns stacked with the bodies of Sir Bertilak's men.

Gawain is cleaned up, but his face still looks bad. He stands beside Sir Bertilak to watch the fire.

SIR BERTILAK

I'm the only one left. How can I possibly hope to defend my lands now?

GAWAIN

Maybe I can help you with that.

Sir Bertilak looks at Gawain with confusion.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I'm going to ride out in the morning to meet The Green Knight. I'll ask him to take me, and spare you and your people.

A long moment of silence. Then Sir Bertilak nods solemnly.

SIR BERTILAK

You really *aren't* an unimpeachable hero, are you?

GAWAIN

Not exactly. No...

They gaze into the tall fire.

SIR BERTILAK

At first light, I'll ride out with you. I'll take you to Old Swythamley. And point you toward the Green Knight's Chapel.

GAWAIN

Thank you. However my duel turns out, one way or another, I hope it'll improve your fortunes.

Sir Bertilak nods again. And walks away.

Gawain stares into the flames.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - STABLES - THE NEXT MORNING

Mounted upon Ringolet, Gawain rides out of the stables as the first rays of light creep over the horizon.

Just ahead of him, Sir Bertilak leads the way.

The two men head out silently.

Once they're gone-

Nelle comes out of her hiding place in the stables. She watches them go.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The two men ride quietly through the cold, barren forest. The only sound is the clip-clopping of their horses' hooves.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Sir Bertilak leads Gawain up to the edge of a ravine. It's a steep, rocky slope down to a small stream down below.

Sir Bertilak points down into the ravine at the stream.

SIR BERTILAK

Follow the ravine until it reaches
the crest of those mountains.

He points again to show two mountains that are separated by
the ravine. A dark shadow lies between them.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

In the shadow of the mountains, at
the end of the ravine, you'll find
his chapel.

GAWAIN

Thank you, Sir Bertilak.

SIR BERTILAK

Good luck, Sir Gawain of the court
of King Arthur Pendragon.

Gawain musters a bit of his old swagger as he forces a joke.

GAWAIN

When I return in an inevitable
blaze of glory with the blood of
the Green Knight on my sword, I'll
help you rebuild your castle.

SIR BERTILAK

Until then.

Gawain and Sir Bertilak shake hands.

Then Gawain urges Ringolet on. Slowly and carefully, the
horse works his way down the rocky slope of the ravine.

LATER AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RAVINE-

Ringolet trots through the small stream. It's a bleak, gray
place. But Gawain keeps his spirits up.

GAWAIN

Not bad, eh, Ringolet?

The horse snuffles at him.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I'm not saying we should live here.
But it's quite an adven- Aaahh!

SWOOSH! An arrow plunges itself into a chink in the back of
Gawain's armor.

The impact of it knocks Gawain off of his horse.

He falls into the stream face first.

The arrow protrudes out of his left flank. He twists but can't reach it, and his head ducks into the small stream.

He struggles to lift his head out of the few inches of water, and he looks up to-

THE TOP OF THE RAVINE-

Sir Bertilak sits atop his horse, and raises his bow. He waves a sad farewell to Gawain.

Then Sir Bertilak turns his horse, and rides away.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RAVINE-

Gawain coughs and sputters as he barely manages to keep his head above the small amount of water.

He can't reach the arrow. He can't keep his head up-

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
The mighty Sir Gawain...
(his face falls underwater
for a moment)
...Beaten by a trickle...

And his head falls into the water again.

He can't get his face out of the water. It's a long time. Too long, when-

A mouth bites onto his leg.

Ringolet gets his teeth on Gawain, and drags him out of the water. Slowly, slowly, slowly, the two of them drag and crawl Gawain onto the rocky bank.

But he still lays face down. And he still can't reach the arrow. A stream of blood is running from his armor.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
Thanks... old friend... Now, get
out of here... Go live a long,
horse life...

But the loyal horse won't leave.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
Would you do what I say for once?!

The horse shakes its head.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
You're a good friend...

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - HALLWAYS - DAY

Lady Bertilak wanders the halls of the crumbling castle. She stops at the doorway to Gawain's room and glances in.

It's empty and cold.

She sighs at the loss of him when-

SIR BERTILAK (O.S.)
Everyone! Come out to the feasting
pit! Come! I must speak to you!

Lady Bertilak's face furrows and she dashes out.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - FIRE PIT

Sir Bertilak stands in front of the empty fire pit as people slowly emerge from the castle and the nearby grounds.

SIR BERTILAK
Come! Come closer!

Men, women, and children stumble in closer to their leader as he waves his arms and urges them ever closer.

Lady Bertilak exits the castle and posts herself near the back of the crowd.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)
My friends! I have made a decision!

He seems more than a little unhinged. Nothing like his usual jovial, carefree self.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)
We're going to run! The hordes of
beasts may soon press down upon us!
They've been growing stronger and
coming closer for weeks now-

Lady Bertilak watches her husband in dismay and confusion.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)
-But now, all of us together, men,
women and children, have a chance.
To run!

His weird disjointed speech, however, doesn't have the intended effect.

No one cheers him on. In fact, several of them jeer.

CROWD

But this is our home!

SIR BERTILAK

And it's lost! I'm sorry to say,
but it's over here. So we'll gather
up all that we can carry and make a
run for freedom!

CROWD

We can't outrun the beasts.

SIR BERTILAK

Of course, we can! And I think
there will be precious few
following us anyway. We can easily
fight those off.

CROWD

We don't know how to fight.

SIR BERTILAK

Come now! Look, even a child can
hold a sword. See!

Sir Bertilak draws his sword and forces it into the hands of a small child standing nearby.

The child nearly falls over from the weight of it.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

See! We can make it! Together!

The crowd grumbles angrily. Many of the people are even begin to disperse. Sir Bertilak seems oblivious.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

Excellent! Go! Get weapons! And get
your things! Wonderful! Onward!

Lady Bertilak rushes over to her crazed husband.

LADY BERTILAK

What's happened to you?!

SIR BERTILAK

Nothing! Nothing's happened!

LADY BERTILAK

You can't honestly expect small children and old women to fight bears and wolves.

SIR BERTILAK

And why not?! This land has turned against us. There's no place for us anymore. But we may be able to run.

LADY BERTILAK

The Green Knight will come for you.

The crazed look in Sir Bertilak's eyes returns.

SIR BERTILAK

I don't think so. I think he'll be busy with larger fish soon.

LADY BERTILAK

What have you done? What's happened to Sir Gawain?

Sir Bertilak smiles maniacally.

SIR BERTILAK

Forget about him. He's served his purpose. He'll give us cover while we escape. We can run away-

But there's a loud GROWLING noise that cuts him off.

Sir Bertilak's face drops and he turns to see-

A huge BEAR lumbering toward the fire pit with teeth bared and mouth foaming.

And eyes glowing emerald green.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

At the bottom of the ravine, Gawain lays face down. Unconscious. Bleeding out.

Ringolet nudges and nuzzles his master.

But there's no response.

After a long moment-

Nelle hurries in.

The little nurse shakes him gently. Then insistently. Then quite hard. Still nothing.

Finally, she grabs a hold of the arrow.

NELLE

Sleep through this, you big monstrous baby.

And she rips the arrow out of his back. *That does the trick!*

Gawain wakes and arches his back with a roaring scream.

GAWAIN

Aaaahh!

(seeing her)

What is wrong with you, woman?!

NELLE

I thought you were supposed to be strong enough to handle a little sting...

Gawain grimaces and touches his back.

GAWAIN

Excellent... You made the bleeding faster...

NELLE

Just be quiet.

(then)

You great whimpering puppy.

Slowly, Nelle presses her hands to Gawain's back.

At first, he winces with ragged and sharp breaths.

Nelle moves her hands in a series of complicated movements.

A gust of wind blows through. And Gawain is able to breath a little easier.

Nelle touches his wound and draws another complex shape on it. She wobbles momentarily and winces in pain of her own. But she forces herself on.

Gawain is now able to lift himself.

Nelle draws the tear-drop shaped silver talisman out of her apron. With shaking fingers, she carefully weaves it into Gawain's beard.

And Gawain is able to breathe easier.

GAWAIN

How are you-

NELLE

Shhh.

Finally, Nelle pulls her hands away and-
Gawain is able to sit up. Easily. He even stretches.
But Nelle stumbles and faints with a pained gasp.
Gawain catches her.

GAWAIN

Are you all right?

NELLE

I'm not a weakling... Like you...

She smiles her wry, mousy smile.

But she's weak and gasping.

GAWAIN

That's how you managed to heal me
so quickly back at the castle.

Nelle nods.

NELLE

But I took it slowly then. I didn't
think you'd go and get yourself
shot with an arrow.

GAWAIN

Your family were more than simple
healers, weren't they?

NELLE

Witches. Drawing healing power from
the trees and streams. Until the
Green Knight came. Killed all who
fought back. Turned our own power
against us. Made our healing the
source of our pain.

GAWAIN

And forced you to be his slave.

NELLE

A spy. I look after those who've
fallen under the Green Knight's
power. I'm sorry...

GAWAIN

What did you tell him about me?

NELLE

That you're a big, monstrous baby.
Who'll bring the end once and for
all.

She smiles that wry, mousy smile at him once again.

Gawain lifts her up in his arms.

He puts her on the back of Ringolet.

GAWAIN

Get her to safety. Back to the
castle.

NELLE

No... I can help you...

Ringolet snuffles indignantly at Gawain.

But Gawain looks the horse in the eyes.

GAWAIN

It was noble before, but now, you
must take care of the lady.

NELLE

I'm not a lady...

GAWAIN

Yes, you are. Maybe more than any
woman I've ever known.

He touches her face and gives her hand a squeeze.

NELLE

What will you do?

GAWAIN

Bring the end once and for all.

Gawain slaps Ringolet's rump, and he trots up the ravine.

For his part, Gawain heads deeper along the stream.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - DAY

Sir Bertilak backs slowly into his run-down, nearly collapsed castle. At his back are dozens of ragged, tired men, women, and children.

And they all have their eyes on a small horde of beasts.

Bears, wolves, hawks, rats, foxes, crows.

And all of them have glowing emerald eyes.

SIR BERTILAK

Don't take me... Please... Take
Gawain instead...

EXT. THE GREEN KNIGHT'S CHAPEL - DAY

Along the ravine, Gawain continues to stomp through the trickle of a stream.

Up ahead of him he sees-

A little wooden cabin/chapel with a tall, pointed roof. The entire place is made of stacked logs, but every inch of it is covered by thick green moss and snaking vines. It gives it an otherworldly green hue amongst the grey landscape.

Gawain heads right for it.

INT. THE GREEN KNIGHT'S CHAPEL

The large, heavy wood door creaks open, and Gawain enters.

It's essentially a large, cavernous log cabin. A hunter's lodge to put all others to shame. Heads of deer, wolves, bears are on the wall. Stuffed eagles and hawks are decoratively arranged.

Suits of armor from fallen knights stand in every corner.

And a tall wooden throne is against the back wall with The Green Knight eagerly watching the arrival of Gawain.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Ah, Sir Gawain! I am most impressed
to see you here!

GAWAIN

We had an appointment, I believe.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

You might be surprised how precious
few people show up for their
appointments.

GAWAIN

Clearly I'm a lot less intelligent
than most people.

(then)

But a lot more ruggedly handsome.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

You truly are a man of honor.

The Green Knight rises out of his throne. He draws the massive double-headed ax from off of his back.

THE GREEN KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Shall we then?

GAWAIN

First, a request.

The Green Knight pauses expectantly.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

I am always willing to listen.

GAWAIN

I'm here to square our deal. Please
add one more to it. Spare Sir
Bertilak's lands and his people.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

And Sir Bertilak himself?

Gawain waffles and shrugs.

GAWAIN

Him too. The great, scheming git.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

But what do I get out of it?

Gawain falls silent for a moment. He takes a deep breath to steel his courage then-

He flips his sword, and offers it to the Green Knight.

GAWAIN

I'll let you strike me down
undefended. I won't put up a fight.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Why do you think I'd be interested
in that?

GAWAIN

Because you're worried I might know a way to beat you. As far as I can tell, no one's ever shown up for their rematch. You've scared them all away. Because you can be beaten. And if anyone would be able to do it, it's me.

(pause)

Yet I'm willing to give it all up.

Gawain offers his sword again.

The Green Knight takes it.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

You truly are an exceptional knight, Sir Gawain.

The Green Knight strides forward and takes Gawain's sword by the hilt. The Green Knight raises the sword high over his head, ready to strike.

THE GREEN KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Are you truly this courageous? This bold? This proud?

Gawain stares the Green Knight in the eyes.

GAWAIN

I'm not proud at all for the things I've done. Go ahead. Strike.

And the Green Knight does. He drives the sword all the way through Gawain.

The mighty Sir Gawain falls to his knees and collapses.

The Green Knight laughs and claps.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Truly a thrilling display.

Then the Green Knight heads for the door.

Gasping, Gawain struggles to call out to him.

GAWAIN

Where... are you going...?

THE GREEN KNIGHT

To conquer Sir Bertilak and his lands, of course. And then yours.

GAWAIN

But...

THE GREEN KNIGHT

I don't keep agreements with dead men. You need to stop being so trusting, Sir Gawain.

And the Green Knight dissolves into green mist-

And Sir Gawain is left to die.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - NIGHT

The madness outside of Bertilak's castle is at a peak.

Beasts swarm all about. The meager group of people is doing little to slow them down. Yet Sir Bertilak urges them on.

SIR BERTILAK

Fight! Every last man, woman, and child! Take up arms! Push back!

But he's sounding more and more crazed.

And the fight is hopeless.

A massive roaring bear lumbers forward and swipes at an old man who crumples helplessly. A group of women try to fend off a pack of foxes with their brooms, but it does little good. A hawk swoops down and slashes the arm of a small boy.

The screams and shrieks of pain fill the night air.

SIR BERTILAK (CONT'D)

What are you scared of? Fight!
Fight! We can win!

Slowly, the small pack of people are forced back against the outer wall of the castle. The beasts press forward when-

Ringolet, with Nelle atop his back, gallops into the fray.

The mighty horse throws all its weight into the mass of beasts and succeeds in momentarily scattering them.

In the moment that the beasts fall back, Nelle slides off of Ringolet. She's still weak and unsteady, but determined.

NELLE

Everyone... follow me... We have to barricade ourselves in the dungeon.

She leads them all over to a heavy, oak door and tries to wrench it open. But she's too weak.

SIR BERTILAK

What are you doing? We can't give up! We can still save our lands!

But no one is willing to follow him anymore.

Several of the other servants help Nelle, and they get the dungeon door open. They all hurry inside.

Ringolet stamps at several of the beasts, and they fall back a step again. Nelle pats him on the neck.

NELLE

You've done all you can here...
Go... Get out of here...

And the mighty horse gallops off into the night.

Now all of the servants, men, women, and children are inside. Nelle heads for the door and-

Reaches the handle at the same time as Sir Bertilak.

Nelle shoves him backward.

SIR BERTILAK

You've got to let me in too!

But they both turn to see-

A thick green mist floating in. It solidifies into the vague shape of a towering, brute of a knight.

NELLE

I think you still have an appointment.

And Nelle ducks into the dungeon, pulling the door shut behind her.

Sir Bertilak turns to face the now fully materialized Green Knight. The once proud lord falls to his knees.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

It's time to pay your debt, Sir Bertilak.

SIR BERTILAK

Please... End this... I gave you Sir Gawain! Wasn't that enough?!

INT. THE GREEN KNIGHT'S CHAPEL

Gawain lies dead. A motionless, still, peaceful body.

Until his eyes open.

He rises all at once with a gasp of breath. Slowly and miraculously, he pulls the sword out and toss it aside.

After a moment of confusion, he cracks open the tear-drop shaped amulet that had been woven into his beard by Nelle.

Inside is the green sash crumbled into the tiniest of balls.

GAWAIN

How did she...?

(with recognition)

The stables. She could pick up all sorts of treasures and secrets.

Gawain gets to his feet. He runs for the door. When-

BAM!

The doors to the chapel burst open and-

Ringolet gallops in.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

What took you so long?!

Ringolet huffs at him.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - NIGHT

Sir Bertilak is on his knees in front of the Green Knight.

The horde of beasts stands behind him, snarling and roaring.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Men like you, full of pride, but ultimately cowardice bring these fates upon themselves.

SIR BERTILAK

You've taken my lands! Killed my people! Destroyed my castle! Haven't you taken enough?!

THE GREEN KNIGHT

That wasn't our deal. You were only too happy to proudly show off your skill, until you learned the cost. And you still owe me.

The Green Knight takes his massive double-headed ax off of his back. He raises it high into the air-

SIR BERTILAK

Please, please, I tried-

SWOOSH!

Sir Bertilak's head rolls away and his body crumbles.

Then the Green Knight raises his hand and urges forward the horde of beasts.

The bears, wolves, foxes, hawks, rats, and all manner of beast rush forward upon the door to the dungeon. They pound at the wood, scratch at the ground, and claw at the walls.

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - DUNGEON

Everyone huddles together in fear down in the cold, dark dungeon. They can clearly hear the pounding, the howling, the clawing. The women and children shake in terror.

But Nelle remains strong.

NELLE

We'll be all right... We'll make it through this...

(beat)

Now... Who's hurt?

No one makes a move or says a thing.

NELLE (CONT'D)

Come now! We've just been through a battle! There's no need for anyone else to die down here! Who's hurt?

An Old Man holds in his arms the young boy who was clawed by the hawk. The Old Man presents the boy to Nelle.

Nelle grits her jaw. She's already very weak, but she takes a deep breath and places her hands on the child.

The brave nurse tends to the wounded as the rattling madness outside echoes through the night.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - NIGHT

The animals rip at the dungeon door and it seems to be on the verge of giving way. Pound, rip, scratch, tear...

The door buckles. It splinters and is about to fall when-
BOOM!

There's a burst of flame behind them.

The Green Knight and the horde of animals all turn to see-

Sir Gawain standing beside Ringolet. A tall bonfire blazes behind them. Preparing to pounce, the beasts snarl and spit at the knight and his horse.

GAWAIN

Ready to die, my friend?

Ringolet shakes his head.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Me neither. I guess, we'll have to slay them instead.

Ringolet nods. And neighs. *Hell yeah.*

But the Green Knight strides confidently forward.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Ah, the mighty Sir Gawain. It seems you have many tricks up your sleeve. And here I thought you were an honest man.

GAWAIN

I wouldn't speak of honesty if I were you. You miserable, sneaking coward.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Coward? I'm not the one who needs my back to a fire.

GAWAIN

It seems to be the only sure way to keep you and your beasts at bay. Which is why you never struck at night.

(pause)

And why you wouldn't light that torch against the wolves.

The Green Knight cocks his head looking bemused. *Go on...*

GAWAIN (CONT'D)
Isn't that right, Lady Bertilak?

The Green Knight grins and then-

Transforms into Lady Bertilak.

She's still dressed in the green armor and she still easily wields the huge double-headed ax despite being much smaller.

LADY BERTILAK
I'm impressed, Sir Gawain. How long have you known?

GAWAIN
There's been something strange about you from the beginning. But it all comes down to the fact that you would've said and done anything to keep me away from my rematch. Just like you did with your husband.

LADY BERTILAK
Ah, but that's the true test of pride. It's not merely the battle and the rematch. It's the build-up, the anticipation. The fight against fear. It's keeping your word even when it means certain doom.

GAWAIN
Shall we finally have our rematch?

LADY BERTILAK
Ah, but now you have a secret... How did you survive in my chapel?

Gawain pulls out the green sash.

LADY BERTILAK (CONT'D)
Nelle. And she had always been such a good servant. Her family died fighting me. But she was too afraid. Well, she'll die now.

GAWAIN
Only if you walk away from here.

Gawain tosses the green sash into the fire. It flares and is consumed in moments.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

No more tricks. Just you and I. For these lands and for my own. I'll put an end to your villainy.

Lady Bertilak smiles, then takes a step closer to Gawain-
And punches him so hard he's sent flying in the air.

LADY BERTILAK

I'm really frightened...

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - DUNGEON

Nelle pulls her hands off of a woman's leg. The skin is bare, unblemished and remarkably healed.

But Nelle's not looking so good. Every move seems like an effort. Every breath is a struggle.

NELLE

Who's... next...?

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - BONFIRE - NIGHT

Gawain and Lady Bertilak lock into a wild battle. She swings her ax. Gawain defends with his broad sword.

But the impact knocks him to the ground.

A wolf snarls and lunges forward, but before it can take a bite out of Gawain-

Ringolet leaps in and stomps on the wolf. The horse gallops and grinds its hooves to keep the other beasts at bay.

Gawain spins and slashes at Lady Bertilak. Almost too easily, she catches the blade with her free hand.

LADY BERTILAK

I will give you credit, Sir Gawain. You're the strongest man I've yet destroyed.

GAWAIN

I take that as a compliment. I've seen much of your handiwork.

LADY BERTILAK

It's been a pleasure bringing foolish, proud men to their knees.

She twists the blade and Gawain goes down to his knees.

A bear lumbers forward.

Ringolet darts to the rescue and kicks the bear with his hind legs. The bear tumbles into the fire then disappears into a green mist with a roar.

GAWAIN

You won't have many servants left soon.

With amazing strength, Lady Bertilak lifts Gawain up in to the air, flips him, and pushes him toward the fire.

LADY BERTILAK

I don't need any servants. Just me.

Gawain struggles with all his might, but his feet are slipping in the dirt. He inches backward toward the fire.

INT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - DUNGEON - NIGHT

Nelle's hands drop from the side of the old man who was hit by the bear. His ribs are now healed.

But Nelle collapses to the floor. Unconscious. Dying.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - BONFIRE - DAY

Lady Bertilak is about to shove Gawain into the fire.

LADY BERTILAK

Can't you see! You brought this destruction upon yourself and those you care about. You are the King of the Fire. Smiting all that come in contact with you. I'm merely the wind lady. Feeding the flames within you.

GAWAIN

No! I'm a good man.

LADY BERTILAK

No, no, no. You're a disaster. You're a disrupter. You're a nightmare.

The flames of the bonfire tickle at Gawain's back. He growls with pain, but then-

GAWAIN

Well, if I'm the King of the Fire!

He grabs Lady Bertilak in a bear hug and he leaps backward thrusting them both through the massive flames.

They emerge on the other side both smoking and cindering, but it's taken more of a toll on Lady Bertilak.

In the quick instant of weakness, Gawain grabs his sword and-
Stabs Lady Bertilak in the stomach.

She screams in pain, and at the same moment, all of the beasts fall writhing in similar pain and anguish.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

I know you could just pull that out, but it should slow you down long enough for me to put you in the fire where you belong.

Gawain lifts her up and raises her near the fire.

LADY BERTILAK

You think you've won...? No... King Arthur still won't be safe.

Gawain pauses in surprise.

GAWAIN

What does he have to do with this?!

LADY BERTILAK

He was always my eventual goal. All the others were just practice. My Queen's been dying to get at Arthur.

GAWAIN

Your Queen?

LADY BERTILAK

The Queen of the Feys. I was only a simple woman with a simple talent for destroying the simple men who bothered me. Until she gave me real power. When she comes for you, she'll make you wish I'd killed you.

GAWAIN

Let her come! I'll slay her just
like I've slain you and all your
servants!

Gawain rears back to throw Lady Bertilak in the fire, but-
Lady Bertilak cackles.

LADY BERTILAK

All my servants?

Gawain pauses and sees-

THE DUNGEON DOOR

An Old Man emerges from the dungeon, and-

He carries Nelle in his arms. She writhes in pain and anguish
just like all of the beasts who serve Lady Bertilak.

GAWAIN

No!

LADY BERTILAK

Did you think this would be easy,
Sir Gawain? Doing the right thing
seldom is.

Across the fire, Gawain locks eyes with Nelle. She's
struggling and fighting, and it's clear that she's in agony.

NELLE

Do it... Please... Finish this...

Gawain grips Lady Bertilak tighter. But he can't throw her.
He roars in frustration as tears stream down his face.

LADY BERTILAK

Could you ever be proud of yourself
again?

NELLE

It's all right... End it...

LADY BERTILAK

Can you really let that poor girl
die?

NELLE

Please... I forgive you...

LADY BERTILAK

She's so much better than you.

Finally, even though it takes every ounce of strength he has, Gawain tosses Lady Bertilak into the fire.

She screams as she burns. But she dissolves into a burst of green and explodes.

All around the bears, wolves, foxes, hawks and beasts writhe and begin to fade away into a quickly vanishing green mist.

Gawain races over to Nelle's side. He takes her from the Old Man, and Gawain holds Nelle as she slowly fades away.

GAWAIN

I'm so so sorry.

NELLE

You did what had to be done... You should be proud...

GAWAIN

I don't know if I can ever be proud again.

Nelle lifts herself enough to be face-to-face with Gawain.

They kiss.

NELLE

Of course you can. You big, whimpering, sobbing baby.

She smiles at him. And vanishes into the green mist.

Gawain crumbles. Whimpering and sobbing. Like a baby.

EXT. BERTILAK'S CASTLE - FIRE PIT - MORNING

As the morning's sunrise crests over the horizon, the last smoldering embers of the once massive bonfire slowly die out.

Gawain lies on the ground when-

Ringolet approaches. The horse nuzzles his master.

Reluctantly, Gawain gets to his feet and pats Ringolet on the mane. He turns and sees all of the people standing around. Men, women, and children all looking for guidance.

GAWAIN

The danger's past now. You can rebuild. I'd take you with me if I could, but-

(MORE)

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

(pause)

-You'll be safer without me.

Gawain turns back to Ringolet and mounts him.

GAWAIN (CONT'D)

Come on, old friend. Let's go home.

And they ride toward the softly cresting horizon together.

VOICE OVER

With hearts full of sadness,
They rode on for their homes,
They took many months
Their exploits could fill tomes.
But onward they rode south
Kept steady their course.
And return'd home *victorious*
Sir Gawain and his horse.

But even as he rides off into the gently falling snow, the mighty Sir Gawain sags in his saddle and weeps.

BLACK OUT

THE END