

QUICK CARD: *SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT*



Reference	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> , trans. J.R.R.Tolkien (1979) ISBN: 978-0345277602
Plot	A mysterious green knight challenges King Arthur's renowned knights to a daring challenge, with the stipulation that the feat be reciprocated in one year's time by the one who receives the dare.
Setting	The setting begins in the court of King Arthur during a holiday festival. It constitutes a kind of merry ghost story which lends itself to a contemplation of courage, loyalty, righteousness, and humanity. It spans the course of a year, eventually ranging to include Gawain's journey to another kingdom in which magic is afoot.
Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sir Gawain • The Green Knight (aka Bertilak de Hautdesert), Gawain's eventual host and the knight of Morgana. He is a foil to King Arthur and a symbol of Law and Justice and the value of verbal contracts. • Bertilak's wife, the seductress • Morgan le Faye, the old woman at the castle, a renowned witch (ie <i>fay</i>) in the Arthurian legends, the half-sister of Arthur, and the aunt of Gawain. • King Arthur, the golden king of Camelot • The knights of the round table
Conflict	<p>Gawain wants to be perfectly virtuous and chivalrous (as defined by the chivalric code) and to pass the test: "Sir Gawain, now take heed / lest fear make thee refrain / from daring the dangerous deed / that thou in hand hast ta/en!" He aspires to be faultless. Can perfect virtue exist in a fallen world/in fallen man?</p> <p>Obstacles: The Green Knight (Man vs. Man) Gawain's fear (Man vs. Self) The temptations of the Host's lady (Man vs. Man) Morgan la Fay (Man vs. Man/Man vs. Supernatural)</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Theme</p>	<p>The Chivalric Code of friendship, generosity, chastity, courtesy, and piety The Nature of Chivalry OR Idealism vs Reality The frailty of man (in opposition to the chivalric ideal of perfection) The compromising nature of fear The brotherhood of man Justice vs. Mercy OR Law vs. Grace</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Literary Devices</p>	<p>Symbolism – the girdle, which symbolizes the green knight, life, cowardice, sin, and human frailty. Gawain himself represents the chivalric ideal in the perfection to which he aspires.</p> <p>Alliteration, the repetition of initial consonant sounds.</p> <p>14th c. Alliterative Revival - Old English meter, which connects the two halves of each poetic line through alliteration. Rhyme structures the stanzas. Each group of long alliterative lines ends with a word or a phrase containing two syllables and a quatrain, which are known as the “bob and the wheel.” Spinning terms, they well express the way the poetry spins the narrative story.</p> <p>Literary structure:</p> <p>Part One: A mythical account of Britain’s founding and the story of the New Year’s beheading game/challenge.</p> <p>Parts Two and Three: The exchange of winnings.</p> <p>Part Four: The Morgan le Faye narrative frame.</p>