



THE MARRIAGE OF COUNT RODERICK

Early Phase (480–495)



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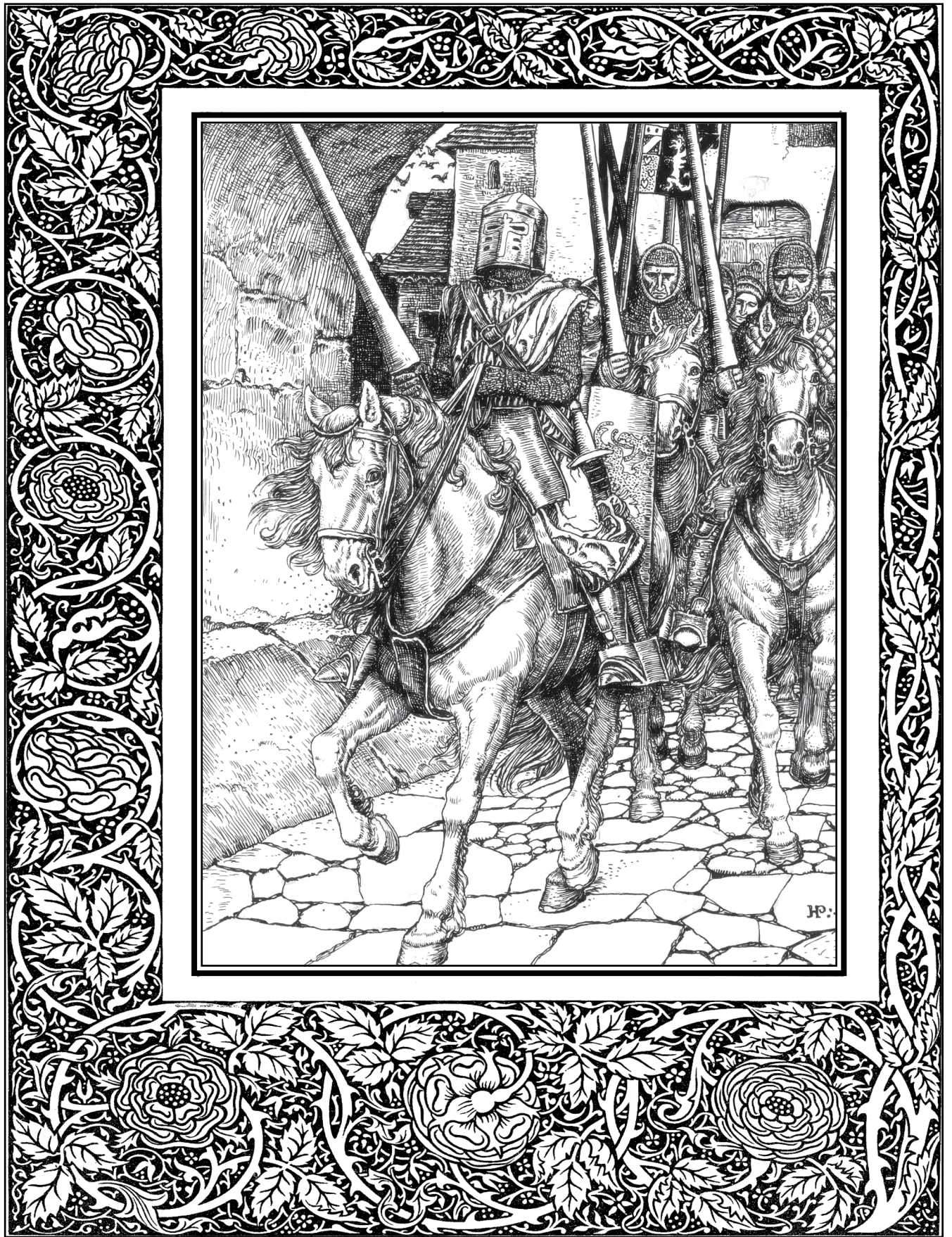
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THE MARRIAGE OF COUNT RODERICK

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.
She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.
She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

— Holy Bible, Proverbs 31:12–14

This multi-part scenario is designed to be an incidental episode — that is, not the main scenario of the year but rather a short event that occurs before or after the main activity. It illustrates how marriages are typically arranged amongst the nobility in *King Arthur Pendragon* and provides an example of how to play a visit to a court other than the Player-knights' own.

The scenario has four parts, spread over four years, each of which ought not take more than fifteen minutes to play.

PROCEDURE FOR VISITING A COURT

The following procedure is recommended for each of the events, with whatever variants the Gamemaster desires.

First, one of Count Roderick's leading diplomats (roll or choose from Table 1.1: Diplomat) tells the Player-knights that he has chosen them to accompany him on a simple mission.

TRAVEL

The second step for each of event is to point out the route on the map as the party travels, counting off twenty miles per day. Poor weather, such as an early spring thaw, can halve the distance travelled.

TABLE 1.1: DIPLOMAT

D20	ENVOY
1-2	Sir Elad, the Marshal
3	Sir Rufon, the Seneschal
4-5	Sir Nidian, the Constable
6-8	Sir Amig, the Dapifier
09	Sir Jarran, the Castellan (DuPlain)
10	Sir Hyfaidd, the Castellan (Borders)
11-12	Sir Kenian, an eschille leader
13-16	Abbot Brugyn
17-20	Abbot Moriad

EXPERIENCE

The Player-knights have duties to follow while escorting the officer during the trip that normally require their attention and duty to their knightly responsibilities. They do get some off-time, and during that time they may choose to engage in some activity that provides an opportunity for advancement. The Player-knight may choose a Skill or contest from Table 1.2: Courtly Experience, or he can choose not to attempt anything. If he succeeds in the Skill roll, he gets a check. Contests (in bold) are Opposed: the Gamemaster rolls 1d20 for the Skill/Trait/STR value of the opponent and another

Alternatively, the Gamemaster may choose or roll on Table 1.2.



TABLE 1.2: COURTLY EXPERIENCE

D20	SKILL
1	Compose
2	Courtesy
3	Dancing
4	Falconry
5	Flirting: If successful, the Player-knight may attempt a Lustful roll. A success in Lustful will give a Lustful check, -1 Love (Wife) and a possible bastard child.
6	Folklore
7	Gaming
8	Heraldry
9	Hunting
10	Intrigue: A success gives special information (see each particular journey below).
11	Orate
12	Play (Instrument)
13	Recognize
14	Religion
15	Singing
16	Horsemanship
17	Duel to first blood: Pick a weapon Skill and gain a Reckless check. On a loss, take 2d6 damage, on a fumble 3d6. Armor has already been accounted for and thus does not reduce this damage.
18	Armwrestling: Roll STR. On a loss, take 1d6 damage, on a fumble 2d6. Armor does not help.
19	Bragging contest: Roll Modest or Proud. On a loss, take a check to the opposite Trait.
20	Drinking contest: Roll Temperate or Indulgent. On a loss, take a check to the opposite Trait.



1d20 for the Skill/Trait/STR roll, comparing it with the Player-knight's roll. If he wins, the Player-knight gains 10 Glory (20 Glory on a critical) and a check in the Skill or Trait used (but not in STR). The consequence of a loss depends on the contest. On a fumble in a Skill or a contest, the Player-knight not only fails but also embarrasses himself (and possibly the whole delegation) in some manner.

In addition to the Skill or contest roll opportunity, all knights visiting another court have to roll the following Traits: Honest/Deceitful, Temperate/Indulgent and Trusting/Suspicious. The player decides which side of the Trait-pair to roll.

YEAR 480: LADY ELLEN

Count Roderick sends his delegation early in the spring to the Baron of Wynchbank.

Travel to Wynchbank Castle, to visit Sir Gwylon, Baron of Wynchbank and his daughter, Lady Ellen. The trip from Sarum takes a week (due to the early spring thaw).

A young maid of thirteen (b. 467), Lady Ellen is not yet of marriageable age, still growing into her looks (APP 13). She seems to eschew finery, unlike many other young girls, and abstains from excess at the feast (notable Trait: Temperate). Lady Ellen is the only surviving child of her father, making her the heiress of extensive lands in Salisbury and various manors in Logres.

Experience: As described in "Experience," above.

Intrigue: Sir Gwylon has resisted marriage efforts by Sir Blains, a Notable knight in the household of Baron Ulfus, a good friend of Prince Uther.

Return home: The Count first interviews his envoy separately. He then summons the Player-knights, excluding any who embarrassed themselves (fumbled). He wishes to hear their impressions of Lady Ellen, and any other observations that may be of value.

During the Spring Court of 480, both Count Roderick and Baron Gwylon have their hands full with Saxon and Irish invasions and so thoughts of marriage are prioritized accordingly. After all, Lady Ellen is still too young to marry, so why rush things?

Treat these Trait rolls as any other. A success gains a check. On a failure, roll on the opposing Trait and gain a check in that if successful. These rolls may have additional consequences as the Gamemaster deems appropriate.

DEATH OF SIR GWYLON

Baron Gwylon dies in the Battle of Salisbury with King Aurelius Ambrosius. King Uther reclaims properties gifted for life to Gwylon, including Wynchbank Castle. Lady Ellen, still an heiress to extensive landholdings, becomes Uther's ward. Immediately several lords proposition the King for her hand, including the new Duke of the Vale, Sir Ulfus, speaking for his man, Sir Blains. Uther claims it is too early to make a decision, Ellen is still a girl and a complete inventory needs to be taken of the inheritance. Two clear front-runners emerge, though: Count Roderick and Sir Blains, the latter elevated to the Stewardship of Levcomagus by Duke Ulfus. Count Roderick is keeping his eye on the other eligible maidens in the kingdom.

YEAR 481: LADY ROSALYN

Travel to Leir's Castle to visit Sir Edaris, Duke of the Marche and his daughter, Lady Rosalyn. The trip from Sarum to Leir's Castle in County Lambor via Corinium takes a week.

Lady Rosalyn is an attractive girl (APP 15) of fifteen (b. 466). The Player-knights will easily pick up stories of her open-handedness in the Duke's court (notable Trait: Generous). Rosalyn has a dowry of half a dozen manors and, having two brothers, is third in line to inherit.

Experience: As described in "Experience," above.

Intrigue: Sir Edaris hopes to capitalize on Lady Ellen's current unavailability to pressure Count Roderick into marrying his daughter, and hence requests the Count to respond by the end of the year with his decision.

Return home: The Count first interviews the leader separately. He then summons the Player-knights, excluding any who embarrassed themselves (fumbled). He wishes to hear their impressions of Lady Rosalyn, and any other observations that may be of value.

Count Roderick decides against marrying Lady Rosalyn, sending word back to Sir Edaris politely informing the Duke of the Marche that he is unable to decide so swiftly on this very important matter, despite the lady's many fine qualities.

YEAR 482: LADY LLYLLA

Travel to the Castle of Vigor to visit Sir Ederyn, Baron of Warcastle and his sister Lady Llylla. The trip from Sarum to The Castle of Vigor in County Caercolun takes nine days.

Lady Llylla is eighteen years old (b. 464) and very beautiful (APP 23). During their stay, the Player-knights witness her abusive nature towards the servants (Notable Trait: Cruel). She brings a dowry of three manors to the marriage. Should her brother and his three children perish, she would split the honour with her younger sister.

Experience: As described in "Experience," above.

Intrigue: Sir Ederyn has declined proposals from quite eligible men, even from two barons so far.

Return home: The Count first interviews the leader separately. He then summons the Player-knights, excluding any who embarrassed themselves (fumbled). He wishes to hear their impressions of Lady Llylla, and any other observations that may be of value.

The Count is quite interested in Llylla's beauty, and contemplates perhaps accepting Sir Ederyn's invitation to visit in person next year. However, his ardor is cooled if the knights warn him of the Lady's Cruel nature.

YEAR 483: AMBUSH ON THE WAY TO THE ROYAL COURT

In the Christmas Court of 482, King Uther indicates that he will be making a decision on the marriage of Lady Ellen (15 years old in 482) during the year 483. Thus, many hopeful suitors will be gearing up for the Easter Court of 483, to try and convince the King to favor their suit. Count Roderick intends to press his own proposal and prepares to travel to the Easter Court.

If the Player-knights have no other greater adventure for the year, they are chosen as part of a group to accompany the Count and his guards, under Sir Elad's command. They are part of a party of ten knights and ten other members of the comital court. They lead several packhorses which have presents for the king.

THE MARRIAGE OF COUNT RODERICK

Easter Court is held at the Castle of the Slippery Ford, Lonazep. On the way they are ambushed by some cavalymen and Saxons.

The Salisbury knights are outnumbered. They have barely enough warning to arm themselves. Every Player-knight rolls Awareness:

Critical: You are unengaged and can help another, engaged knight

Success: You get attacked by two Saxons or a cavalryman with a sword (roll 1d2 to see which)

Failure: You get attacked by three Saxons

Fumble: You are attacked by three Saxons, and you start unarmed (-5/+5 for the first round)

These foes remain in combat until wounded to half their hit points, upon which they try to run away. They know the penalty for attacking a Baron (death), so they will not surrender willingly, but fight like cornered rats if they cannot flee.

If the Player-knights are not killed in the first couple of rounds the Gamemaster should feel free to have some of the count's own guards intervene to help them out. Thus, by the end the count and his treasure are saved, but several knights and

comital court members are wounded; a couple of them are dead. The wounded are taken to a nearby abbey to rest and heal.

If any of the ambushers survive for questioning with torture, they claim to be mercenaries from Malahaut, hired by a masked man with silver and promises of rich plunder. Any ambushers who are fit to travel are taken to the King to face his justice (hanged); badly wounded ones are mercifully killed.

Once the Count arrives to the Royal Court, he gives the presents to the King, who seems quite pleased by the Count's generosity. [**Intrigue:** The presents compare favorably to the ones that Sir Blains brought earlier.]

THE WEDDING OF COUNT RODERICK

In Summer 483, King Uther makes his decision. He chooses Count Roderick, who will go with an escort to wherever the king is to claim his wife. The wedding takes place in the king's company, who gives away the bride. This is the first time that the count and Lady Ellen have ever laid eyes on each other.

The bride (Lady Ellen), groom (Count Roderick), and guests assemble and, with full entourage, parade to the church. The actual marriage occurs outside the church, in front of the front doors. The formal promises of dower and dowry are exchanged there before the collected witnesses. The bride's warden (King Uther) formally gives her to the groom. Both parties voice acceptance of the bond, and rings are exchanged. The whole wedding party then goes into the church for a Mass to consecrate the union.

A grand feast follows the Mass. This is a lavish and joyful affair, with six courses of food and entertainment between each course. The newlyweds sit side by side at the front, and throughout the meal share spiced wine from a loving cup. Multiple toasts from the guests increase the intake of wine. Dancing follows the meal. At an appropriately late hour the pair departs the feast, followed by their groomsmen, bridesmaids and best friends.

The participating Player-knights gain 25 Glory, have a chance at Courtly Experience rolls and have to make Temperate/Indulgent rolls. Even Temperate knights join in toasts, but avoid overindulging.

See the Book of the Entourage, p. 34, for more details on wedding ceremonies.

SAXON WARRIOR

SIZ 16, DEX 8, STR 14, CON 14, APP 11, Move 3
Armor 6+shield, Unconscious 8, Maj. Wound 14
Knockdown 16, Hit Points 30, Healing Rate 3
Damage 5d6 + 1d6 vs. shield (from Axe)

Combat Skills: Axe 14, Javelin 13, Spear 13

Skills: Awareness 15

Traits: Valorous 12

Passions: Honor 10

Remember that the mounted knights enjoy a height advantage (+5/-5) against each Saxon (on foot).

CAVALRYMAN

SIZ 13, DEX 10, STR 13, CON 15, APP 10, Move 3
Armor 10+shield, Unconscious 7, Maj. Wound 15
Knockdown 13, Hit Points 28, Healing Rate 3
Damage 4d6

Combat Skills: Lance 13, Sword 13

Skills: Awareness 10

Traits: Valorous 14

Horse: Poor charger (5d6)

Appendix A: Future Events

THE CHILDREN OF COUNT RODERICK AND LADY ELLEN

Within a few months of the wedding, Lady Ellen is pregnant. She gives birth to their firstborn in 484. Unfortunately, the child is a girl, christened Jenna, rather than the hoped-for male heir. The advisors console themselves that a son will surely soon follow. However, it takes almost ten more years before finally a son survives, christened Robert, in 492.

THE FEUD BETWEEN SALISBURY AND LEVCOMAGUS

Roderick holds Sir Blains, the Steward of Levcomagus, responsible for the ambush where a couple of his knights died and demands compensation for their families. When Blains rejects that demand, claiming to be innocent, the arguments devolve into name-calling at court. Both men fume at the insults delivered, but King's Peace is main-

tained. However, soon raiding parties cross the border between the two holdings, with each side claiming to just be retaliating to the provocations of the other. See "The Skirmish of Allington" scenario (*King Arthur Pendragon* 5.1, pp. 198-199, suggested date 485) as an example of the raiding going on throughout the rest of the Uther Period.

In 495, King Uther and most of the nobility of Britain, including Count Roderick, are poisoned and die. The kingdom is thrown into turmoil, and Salisbury is left in the hands of Countess Ellen ruling in the name of her 3-year old son, Robert.

A possible scenario thread for the Anarchy Period is whether Sir Blains will try to marry the widowed Ellen, still a woman in her childbearing years. How will the Player-knights feel about the possibility of having Sir Blains as their liege lord? What will Sir Blains do if his suit is rejected? Would Ellen have actually preferred to marry Sir Blains in 483 and what will she do now? These are some of the interesting questions the Gamemaster can explore during the Anarchy Period. Be sure to consider the future complication to the campaign that this subplot would engender.



Appendix B: Suitors and Rivals

Azure, four bars Or
(Four gold horizontal bars on a blue field)

Sir Roderick Count of Salisbury

Glory: 4,044 (Renowned)

Age: 30 in 480 (b. 450)

Physique: Strong and lean

Personality: Energetic, fearless, loyal to King Uther and his own men, hates Saxons

Style: Energetic, bustling



Sir Roderick is the default liege lord of the Player-knights in *King Arthur Pendragon 5.1*. He is an heir of ancient lineage holding onto an ancient demesne. The Count of Salisbury is the most powerful person in Salisbury County and is one of the few Great Barons of the kingdom, with wealthy lands outside Salisbury, too.

Sir Roderick is a warrior famed for his prowess, having fought under Prince Uther against the Saxons to the east. He hates the Saxons because his father, Sir Reginald, was treacherously slain by Saxons during the Night of Long Knives in 463. He is as yet (in 480) unmarried and is the most eligible bachelor in Logres after Prince Uther; his advisors are pressing him to marry and sire heirs, lest this ancient lineage is broken.

In late 480, Uther becomes king, and the death of Baron Gwylon throws the Count's marriage plans into disarray. While Roderick is a trusted companion of Uther, he is not a favorite, like Duke Ulfius. Thus, he suspects that Sir Blains' suit will be favored, adding to his dislike of his rival and causing him to pursue other options.

Sir Blains Steward of Levcomagus

Glory: 2,600 (Respected)

Age: 28 in 480 (b. 452)

Physique: Tall, powerful

Personality: Calculating, slow to anger but unforgiving, loyal to Baron (later Duke) Ulfius

Style: Deliberate



Per fess Or and Azure, a fox rampant proper

(A fox on a divided field, gold on top, blue on bottom)

In heraldry, the fox denotes one who is cunning, resourceful and sharp-witted.

Sir Blains is a household knight of Baron Ulfius in 480. He has served Ulfius faithfully and is due to be rewarded, having saved the Baron's life during the Frisian campaign in 479. Blains has his eye on Lady Ellen, but the girl's father, Baron Gwylon, feels he is not of suitable rank despite Ulfius' backing.

In late 480, Ulfius, the newly raised Duke of the Vale, rewards Sir Blains' service by making him the Steward of Levcomagus and continues to support Blains' efforts to marry the wealthy heiress. This is politics as usual between the Great Barons: if Blains marries Ellen, Ulfius gains prestige and power by having a stronger and very grateful vassal, whereas if Roderick marries Ellen, he will widen the wealth and power gap between him and Ulfius.

Sir Blains is a common visitor at Uther's Court between 481 and 483, trying to win favor with the King and to woo Ellen at the same time. When his efforts are thwarted in 483, the mutual enmity between him and Count Roderick becomes a deadly feud (see Appendix A).

