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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **ARTHUR'S STONE, MERLIN'S FIRE**

## **The Making of a King**

By  
KATHRYN PETERSEN



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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*Arthur's Stone, Merlin's Fire: The Making of a King* was first produced by The People's Light & Theatre Company, Malvern, Pa., November 2003, directed by Abigail Adams, with the following cast and production staff and crew:

Llewellynn / Caradoc / Saxon Foot Soldier. . . . . KEVIN BERGEN  
Bedwyr . . . . . KAMAL BOSTIC-SMITH  
Accolon / Kurdon. . . . . SÉAN CAMONI  
Ludmilla / Lady of the Lake . . . . . JOYCE COHEN  
Enid / Birch Tree Spirit. . . . . ALDA CORTESE  
Gydric / Saxon Priest . . . . . MICHAEL CRUZ  
Praydn. . . . . CAT HAAS  
Ceiwynn / Briton Druid Priest . . . . . AISHA HOBBS  
Chief Ector / Old Caledonian Pine Tree Spirit. . . . . MARK LAZAR  
Garr / Little Pine Tree Spirit . . . . . AUBIE MERRYLEES  
Kei . . . . . JOSEPH NEVIN  
Father Sansum . . . . . STEPHEN NOVELLI  
Queen Morgaine. . . . . MARY ELIZABETH SCALLEN  
Arthur . . . . . TOBIAS SEGAL  
Dawg of the One Eye. . . . . JOSH SHAFFER  
Norwenna / Ash Tree Spirit. . . . . CATHY SIMPSON  
Torag . . . . . GRAHAM SMITH  
Nimue. . . . . ELIZABETH WEBSTER  
Maximus. . . . . DAVID WHALEN

\* \* \* \*

Scenic Designer . . . . . LEWIS FOLDEN  
Costume Designer. . . . . ROSEMARIE E. MCKELVEY  
Lighting Designer . . . . . DENNIS PARICHY  
Composer . . . . . ROBERT MAGGIO  
Sound Designer . . . . . CHARLES T. BRASTOW  
Director of Production . . . . . PETER WRENN-MELECK  
Fight Choreography . . . . . SAMANTHA BELLOMO  
Stage Manager . . . . . CHARLES T. BRASTOW

# **ARTHUR'S STONE, MERLIN'S FIRE**

## **The Making of a King**

A Play in Two Acts  
For 12m., 7w. with doubling.  
May be expanded to up to 28 actors.

### **CHARACTERS**

#### WOMEN

ENID (E-nid) . . . . . Older clanswoman. Lives with Gydric.  
Survives by mead making and fishing. A believer in the old faith.

NORWENNA (Nor-way-na) . . . older clanswoman. Moorish descent. Mother of Bedwyr. A believer in the new faith—Christianity.

LUDMILLA (Lud-mil-la) . . . foster mother to Arthur, mother to Kei, bound to clan chief Ector.

CEIWYNN (Ki-win) . . . . . young clanswoman, 20s. Sister to children Praydn and Garr.

NIMUE (Ni-mew-a) . a maiden in her late teens/20s. Hails from Loch Tay up north.

QUEEN MORGAIN (Mor-gain) . . . . daughter of Igraine and Gorlois, stepdaughter to Uther, half-sister to Arthur. She is queen of the tribe from Dumnonia, one of the twelve tribes of Britain. Shape-shifts into the Raven Queen.

LADY OF THE LAKE. . . . . Celtic water deity.

WATER MAIDENS . . serve the Lady of the Lake in her watery kingdom.

### MEN

LLEWELLYN (Loo-well-in) . . Warrior in his late 20s. Of noble stock. Freshly come to town, having heard about the sword-stone.

GYDRIC (Gi-drik) . . . . . Lives with Enid. Survives by fishing.

CHIEF ECTOR (Ek-tor) . Clan chief. Bound to Ludmilla. Father to Kei.

MAXIMUS (Max-ih-mus). . . Brother and advisor to Ector. Best horse soldier in all of Britain.

FATHER SANSUM (San-sum). . . . . Priest.

DAWG OF THE ONE EYE (Dog) . . . Guard and warrior, good fighter.

CARADOC (Kair-a-dok) . . . . Clansman, goatherd. Lives in the hills outside of town.

ACCOLON (A-ka-lon) . . . . Warrior. Queen Morgaine's consort from Dumnonia.

KURDON (Ker-don). . . Saxon warrior on chessboard. Friend of Torag's.

TORAG THE TINKER (Tor-ag). . . . Tinker by trade, friend to Arthur, passes through regularly, the Merlin in disguise.

ARTHUR . . . . . A young man of 18, foster son to Ludmilla and Ector, foster brother to Kei.

### YOUNG PEOPLE

KEI (Ki) . . . . . Son to Ector and Ludmilla and heir to position of clan chief, age 16.

BEDWYR (Bed-wer) . . . . . Of Moorish descent, Maximus and Norwenna's son, friend to Kei and Arthur, age 16.

GARR (Gar) . . . . . Age 13, Ceiwynn's brother

PRAYDN (Pray-din) . . . . . Age 10, Ceiwynn's sister

TREE SPIRITS

SAXON CHESS PIECES

TIME: The Dark Ages (around 500 AD).

SETTING: Act One - Trumontium—a hill fort in lowland Scotland.

Act Two - The Forest Perilous.

A NOTE ON MUSIC: See page 85.



## **DOUBLE-CASTING POSSIBILITIES**

### **MEN**

TORAG  
ARTHUR

LLEWELLYN / CARADOC / CHESS PIECE  
CHIEF ECTOR / OLD CALEDONIAN PINE  
MAXIMUS / CHESS PIECE  
ACCOLON / KURDON  
DAWG OF THE ONE EYE / CHESS PIECE  
FATHER SANSUM / CHESS PIECE  
GYDRIC / CHESS PIECE

### **WOMEN**

NIMUE

ENID / THE BIRCH  
NORWENNA / THE ASH  
CEIWYNN / CHESS PIECE  
LUDMILLA / LADY OF THE LAKE  
QUEEN MORGAINA / THE RAVEN QUEEN

### **YOUNG PEOPLE**

GARR / CHESS PIECE  
BEDWYR / CHESS PIECE  
KEI / CHESS PIECE  
PRAYDN / LITTLE PINE

# ACT ONE

## SCENE ONE

*(Music of Water Maidens singing or whispering “Where are my chiefs of old? Where are my kings of mighty name? We shall also be forgot.” Music changes to drumming. Lights come up on warrior training, where warriors aggressively spar with staffs and swords. A horn sounds and they stop. They rough-house with each other as they exit. KEI, a boy of sixteen, lingers and goes to a stone that has a sword jutting out of it. BEDWYR and ARTHUR sneak around to watch.)*

KEI. Oh mighty sword, weapon of warriors, diviner of kings, I know you want to be mine...mine. Come to me.  
*(He pulls.)*

BEDWYR. Oh, I do. I want to be yours. All yours.

ARTHUR. Put your strong hands on me again. Oh please, I long to feel your touch.

BEDWYR. No one's hands are like yours.

KEI. All right, very funny.

BEDWYR. This is your new love? We thought it was Lisandra.

ARTHUR. You'd get a lot further with Lisandra.

BEDWYR. So this is where you've been going after training?

KEI. It's got to come out sometime.

ARTHUR. Do you always talk to it?

BEDWYR. He brings it gifts. Flowers.

ARTHUR. Crimson laces.

BEDWYR. Crimson?

ARTHUR. It's the color of his face when he tries to pull it out.

KEI (*suddenly grabs the sword and pulls hard*). It moved!

BEDWYR. It didn't move.

KEI. I felt it give! Can you see more of the blade?

BEDWYR. Pull again.

KEI (*pulling*). Well?

BEDWYR. I can't tell.

ARTHUR. It didn't move.

KEI. I felt it! Help me, Arthur. If we pull together—

ARTHUR. How does pulling a sword out of a stone make anyone a king?

KEI. It was whispered by the water maidens. (*BEDWYR goes to help KEI.*)

ARTHUR. Bedwyr!

BEDWYR. Well it was. Gydric swore he heard them out in the storm.

ARTHUR. And he drinks a lot of mead. Water is what we get our fish from, not our destiny. And a sword is a weapon we bloody, we wipe clean, and bloody again, we don't whisper sweet nothings to it.

BEDWYR. Kei does. (*KEI hits BEDWYR and pulls on the sword. BEDWYR joins in.*)

ARTHUR. It's a sword stuck in a stone, that's all it is.

*(A group of VILLAGERS and a well-dressed warrior, LLEWELLYN, enter. He is drinking mead.)*

GYDRIC. Over there, stranger.

LLEWELLYN. It fell from the sky, you said?

GYDRIC. Just a moon ago. The blackest winds we ever saw blew down.

ENID (*pouring mead from a pitcher into his cup*). Never been a storm like it. All our thatches—blown away.

NORWENNA. The heavens roared loud—and then fire—

GARR. It was a flaming spear!

NORWENNA. —It came down and hit our beloved church—

ENID. Beloved to some—

NORWENNA. Beloved to most except Enid's stubborn soul. When the sun showed itself again, our church was ash—

PRAYDN. —and buried deep in the ash was this sword-stone.

GARR. I was the first to touch it.

PRAYDN. You were not.

GARR. After Father Sansum I was.

PRAYDN. No you weren't! Dawg was.

DAWG OF THE ONE EYE. That's right, I was!

FATHER SANSUM. It doesn't matter who touched it first; it's who can pull it out that matters. (*They all look at LLEWELLYN.*)

LLEWELLYN. The sword was in the stone, just like this?

GYDRIC. That's how we found it. We carted the ruins of the church away.

CEIWYNN. We'll build a new one after Beltane, right, Father?

FATHER SANSUM. As soon as the winds blow warm off the firth.

ENID. Why you need a thatch to worship your God is beyond me.

NORWENNA/CEIWYNN. Enid.

LLEWELLYN. How many have tried to free it? (*Holding out his cup for more mead.*)

ENID. Over a hundred. (*Pouring.*)

LLEWELLYN. To the brim, Enid. When I'm king, I'll proclaim you my royal mead maker. (*He drinks.*)

KEI (*to ARTHUR and BEDWYR*). When he's king...

LLEWELLYN. Have you lads tried your hand at it?

KEI. It's a sword stuck in a stone; that's all it is.

GYDRIC. Have you ever slain a Saxon?

LLEWELLYN. I have my share of skulls reeking of cedar.

GARR. He has five beards on his shield!

BEDWYR/KEI (*coming over*). Five!/Let me see.

LLEWELLYN. This ring? It's from a Saxon chief. I cut off his finger to get it.

PRAYDN. Let me see! Let me see!

GARR. He doesn't have the finger with him, silly.

ARTHUR. Kei, those beards could be anybody's.

KEI. Let me see the ring.

LLEWELLYN. See that? Saxon skin.

KEI/BEDWYR/GARR/PRAYDN. Let me see!/Move over!/Oooh!

(*CHIEF ECTOR, chief of the clan, MAXIMUS, his advisor, and LUDMILLA, his wife, enter.*)

GYDRIC. Chief Ector, this is Llewellyn from Natanleag. You lead a war band of how many?

LLEWELLYN. Three hundred. Give or take a few horsemen.

MAXIMUS. Natanleag. Named after your father?

LLEWELLYN. That's right.

MAXIMUS. I'm Maximus. I served in Uther the Pendragon's war band and fought with your father against Cerdic. Didn't your father cross over in that battle?

LLEWELLYN. He was captured and quartered in front of our clan.

MAXIMUS. If you are cut from the same cloth, you're a fierce warrior indeed.

CHIEF ECTOR. Llewellyn of Natanleag, welcome to Trumontium. What brings you North?

LLEWELLYN. This sword with my name on it! *(The crowd cheers.)* I am a King of Mighty Name! *(They cheer.)* I am a King of Mighty Name! *(They cheer.)* I am a King of Mighty Name! *(They cheer. He is inebriated. He goes for the sword.)* AAGH! *(It doesn't budge. He shakes himself out and goes for the sword again.)* AAGGH! *(It doesn't budge. He is angry. He shakes out his legs, his arms and head and goes for the sword again.)* AAAGGGHHH! Oh...oh...oh. *(He stands straight and transfixed.)*

ENID. He's not moving.

NORWENNA. He's seeing the face of God! *(LLEWELLYN is mumbling softly, without moving a muscle.)*

BEDWYR. What's he saying?

LUDMILLA. He's uttering something.

CEIWYNN. Is he having a vision, Father?

FATHER SANSUM. I'm not sure.

LLEWELLYN *(mumbling)* ...back.

GYDRIC. He said move back! *(They all step back. LLEWELLYN keeps mumbling.)*

GARR. Maybe God's telling him how to pull it out.

ENID. What is he saying? *(PRAYDN goes close to him to hear what he's saying.)*

CEIWYNN. Praydn, don't!

LUDMILLA. Praydn, come back here.

PRAYDN. I think he hurt his back.

LLEWELLYN (*whimpering*). Mm-mmm.

ENID. Gydric, take him to our thatch. He can have my pallet.

LLEWELLYN (*as GYDRIC helps him off*). Owwwwwww!

Oh, oh...

PRAYDN (*running around*). The stone wins again. The stone wins again.

GARR. Stop it.

PRAYDN. Make me. (*GARR chases PRAYDN around the stone.*)

ARTHUR (*carving a hatch mark in the stone*). One hundred and five.

CEIWYNN. I thought he was the one.

NORWENNA. I've never met anyone who slew that many Saxons.

CEIWYNN. If he leads three hundred warriors, why can't he pull—

GARR & PRAYDN. The stone wins again. The stone wins again.

CEIWYNN (*overlapping*). Garr, Praydn, stop waggin' your tongues! STOP!

BEDWYR (*acting as pompous LLEWELLYN*). Enid of Trumontium, I'll make you my royal mead maker! And my royal food chewer! Did you know, I commanded a war band? Give or take a hundred.

KEI (*acting as inebriated LLEWELLYN, going up to the sword-stone*). I'll smite all the Saxons! I'll slice off their heads with this— (*Reaching for it, but he acts too drunk to see it.*) Where'd it go? Oh. (*Trying to pull it out.*) Aaaaghhhhhhh! Oh... Oh...Oh. (*He falls over.*)

ARTHUR (*laughing, running to sword-stone*). Kei, you forgot his shaking. (*Exaggerating the shaking*.) I am a King of Mighty Name. I am a King— (*He pulls the sword out with ease. Everyone is stunned. No one knows what to do. Quite a pause. He rushes over and hands it to CHIEF ECTOR.*)

CHIEF ECTOR. I wondered how much more this sword could take with all of you pulling on it. Together, we freed this trapped sword and together we will use it to beat back those barbarous Saxon whelps that plunder our land. Today we are all kings with mighty names!

PRAYDN. Me too?

CHIEF ECTOR. You most of all. This day shall be called All Kings Day, and to celebrate we shall feast in royal style. Wine or mead, no cup shall be without today. Don't fret, Enid, my purse will pay.

LUDMILLA. But, Ector, Arthur—

CHIEF ECTOR. Ludmilla, go tell our servants to roll out three wine casks. Norwenna, I want you kickin' up your heels. Lead the way, King Garr! Maximus, make sure everyone's cups are full, then come back. Pour me a cup, Gydric!

PRAYDN. What about Arthur? He pulled—

CHIEF ECTOR (*ushering them off*). We'll join you soon. Off with you, King Praydn!

*(Everyone leaves. ARTHUR picks up the sword. He doesn't know what to do with it. He puts it back into the stone. CHIEF ECTOR returns and storms over to ARTHUR.)*



ARTHUR. I—I didn't mean to pull it out. We were fooling around. Kei pulled at it and— (*CHIEF ECTOR knocks ARTHUR down into the dirt.*)

CHIEF ECTOR. Didn't you and I have an understanding? You get to stay here if you serve my son.

ARTHUR. I do serve Kei.

CHIEF ECTOR. How is parading like a king serving my son?!

ARTHUR. I can't help it if it came out in my hand!

CHIEF ECTOR. I know what you're after and you're not going to get it. You know why? 'Cause you're nothing. You come from nothing and you're worth nothing. (*ARTHUR gets up.*) You want to come at me? Come on. Show me what a mighty king you are. (*ARTHUR doesn't move. ECTOR laughs and ARTHUR attacks. They struggle and ARTHUR lands on the ground.*)

(*LUDMILLA enters and rushes over to ARTHUR's side.*)

LUDMILLA. Arthur?

ARTHUR. I'm all right. (*Getting up.*) I—I fell.

CHIEF ECTOR. DAWG! DAWG! (*To LUDMILLA.*) I want him...DAWG!

DAWG OF THE ONE EYE. Here I am.

CHIEF ECTOR. Get him out of here! Take him to his quarters and stand guard there!

LUDMILLA/DAWG OF THE ONE EYE. What?!/You want me to guard Arthur?

CHIEF ECTOR. Didn't I just say that?

DAWG OF THE ONE EYE. For his safety?

CHIEF ECTOR. YES, SO I DON'T BREAK HIM IN TWO! (*DAWG hurries ARTHUR off.*)

LUDMILLA. What are you doing?!

CHIEF ECTOR. Don't start with me—

LUDMILLA. Under guard?

CHIEF ECTOR. How much more proof do you need? He's stealing Kei's place here—

LUDMILLA. He's not stealing anything!

CHIEF ECTOR. The bards will be singing about him all winter long!

*(MAXIMUS and FATHER SANSUM appear.)*

LUDMILLA. Ector, this was a miracle!

CHIEF ECTOR. Why don't you fight for your son for a change? *(Seeing MAXIMUS and SANSUM.)* She thinks this was a miracle!

MAXIMUS. The sword was loose. The next to lay hands on it would have freed it. It could have been you—

LUDMILLA. But it wasn't. And it wasn't you, it was Arthur.

FATHER SANSUM. Maybe the miracle was that he came along when it was ready to be done.

MAXIMUS. Father, there is nothing supernatural about this sword-stone.

LUDMILLA. It just appeared one day for no reason? God put this sword-stone here, Maximus, to show us our next Pendragon.

CHIEF ECTOR/MAXIMUS. Arthur is not the Pendragon! / You're getting carried away—

LUDMILLA. How long will it be before Saxons occupy all of Britain? Before they sail up the firth and build homesteads on our bones? Don't we need a Pendragon to save us?

CHIEF ECTOR. YES! YES! YES we do! But we need someone who can unite all of the chieftains. You think any one of them is going to listen to Arthur?

MAXIMUS. He can't lead a war band, Ludmilla.

LUDMILLA. If he can pull a sword from a stone, what else might he be capable of?! He did something here no one else could do!

MAXIMUS. It doesn't matter who pulls out that sword. The Pendragon needs to know how to use it.

LUDMILLA. Maximus, you know too much and hope for too little. *(To ECTOR.)* Arthur will be in my private quarters.

CHIEF ECTOR. He stays where he is.

LUDMILLA. I am not subject to your command.

MAXIMUS. But I am. I will enforce his will.

LUDMILLA. How long do you plan to keep him shut away?

CHIEF ECTOR. Until I know what I'm going to do with him! *(She exits.)* I should have gotten rid of him long ago.

MAXIMUS. Get rid of him now.

CHIEF ECTOR/SANSUM. What?/What?

MAXIMUS. Send him away on one of the trading ships. I know several merchants who owe you a favor.

FATHER SANSUM. Kei will be heartbroken if Arthur leaves.

CHIEF ECTOR. If he stays, Kei will always be in his shadow. Send word to one of the merchants—

FATHER SANSUM. Weren't you taking Kei hunting today?

CHIEF ECTOR. Hunting?

FATHER SANSUM. Arthur doesn't need to be sent away.

Maybe the clan just needs to get their mind on something else. Some other feat, perhaps? And with the feast of Samhain two days away...

CHIEF ECTOR. Father, find Kei, and Bedwyr too, and send them to the stables. Maximus, forget about that merchant. We're going hunting. By sundown, I'll give the bards something to sing about. *(They exit.)*

## NOTE ON MUSIC

All melodies, except for “A-Begging I Will Go,” can be composed by the producers of the piece. The songs are simple and reveal the voice of the character(s) in that moment. The water maidens represent the other world that is bubbling up, trying to anoint a chosen one. They can whisper, chant, sing or a combination of the three for these songs. In the original production, a female choir was recorded. “A-Beggin I Will Go” is a traditional Celtic song. Its melody can be found on-line.

### Songs Sung by the Clan

#### **A Begging I Will Go/p.19**

*(Lyrics and music traditional, additional lyrics by Kathryn Petersen)*

#### Verse

Of all the trades in Britain, a-begging is the best.  
For when a beggar’s tired, you can lay him down to rest.

#### Chorus

And a-begging I will go, a-begging I will go.  
I’ve got no title, land, or purse,  
No fame or fortune to be my curse,  
Just a song to sing on the open road—  
And so a-begging I will go.

Verse

I sleep beneath an open tree, and there I pay no rent.  
The good Lord provides for me, and I am well content.

Chorus

And a-begging I will go, a-begging I will go.  
I've got no title, land, or purse,  
No fame or fortune to be my curse,  
Just a song to sing on the open road—  
And so a-begging I will go.

Verse

I got a pocket for me oatmeal and another for me rye.  
I got a bottle by me side to drink when I am dry.

Verse

I fear no plots against me. I live in an open cell.  
Who would be a king then when beggars live so well.

Chorus

And a-begging I will go, a-begging I will go.  
I've got no title, land, or purse,  
No fame or fortune to be my curse,  
Just a song to sing on the open road—  
And so a-begging I will go.

Verse

I travel the world over; all my belongings are in my  
cart,  
But I come back to Trumontium, cause it's where  
I've left my heart.

### **Feasting Fools/p.37**

*(Lyrics by Kathryn Petersen)*

And all around, let our horns sound  
For we are feasting fools, hurrah!  
For we are feasting fools!

### **The Samhain Song/p.45**

*(Lyrics adapted by Kathryn Petersen from the poem, The Night Song of the Bards by James Macpherson 1746-1796)*

The whirlwind is in the wood, the murmur in the  
vale;  
It is the mighty army of the dead, returning from the  
air.  
The moon shines above the hill, long shadows on the  
trees.  
The year is worn, the veil is torn, and time for light to  
cease.  
The year is worn, the veil is torn, and time for light to  
cease.

## Water Maidens' Songs

### **“You’ll Never Enjoy the World Aright”/p.40 and p.63 and p.82.**

*(Lyrics adapted by Kathryn Petersen from a Thomas Traherne meditation (1636?-1674))*

You’ll never enjoy the world aright,  
Till the sea itself floweth in your veins,  
Till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned  
with the stars,  
Till you’ve heard the trees’ secrets and danced with  
the moon.  
Know my child, you inherit this world  
And everyone in it inherits it too.

### **“Where are My Chiefs of Old?”/top of play and p.80** *(Lyrics adapted by Kathryn Petersen from the poem, The Night Song of the Bards by James Macpherson 1746-1796)*

Where are my chiefs of old? Where are my kings of  
mighty name?  
Silent are their fields of battle. Scarce their mossy  
tombs remain.  
We shall also be forgot. We shall also be forgot.