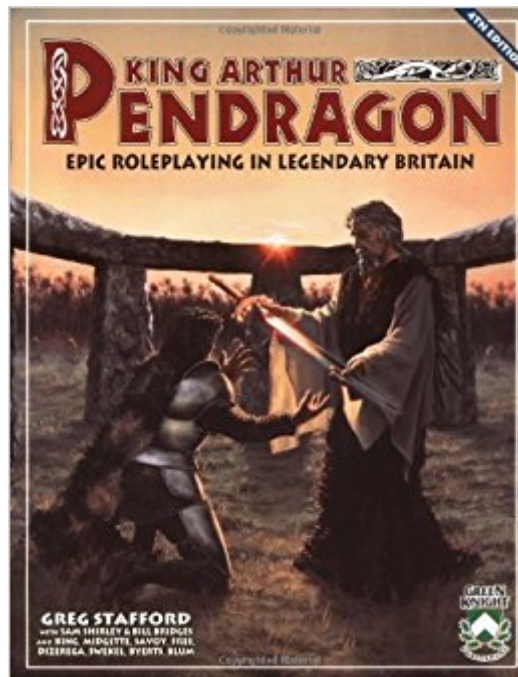




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King Arthur Pendragon : Epic Roleplaying In Legendary Britain



Synopsis

Live the glory of King Arthur's court. Smite bloodthirsty giants, crush treacherous invaders, brave the mysterious lands of faerie, and dabble in Celtic magic. Pendragon is a roleplaying game based on the legends of King Arthur, Lancelot, Guenever, and the Knights of the Round Table. To become a knight of the Round Table you must uphold the chivalric ideals of courage, honesty, fair play, and justice. Armed and armored, you are the law of the land, in a life-or-death struggle to join the fellowship of the Round Table. This book contains everything you need to explore the mysteries and dangers of Arthur's Britain

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Customer Reviews

Still usable but pretty dog eared and some staining

It's been a while since I've played this, or any other game. This game lives up to its title. While, perhaps, a bit more gritty than the "Once and Future King" stories, the rules do an excellent job of re-creating the world of King Arthur. I've been Role Playing for quite a while now... 14 years? And this is one of the best games out there, and a very refreshing change from the Monty Haul-ism of D&D and the like. The emphasis here is on ROLE PLAYING. The rules focus on attempting to become a perfect knight, a paragon of virtue, and a knight of renown. Unlike other games, this game incorporates a "winter season" that assumes downtime, and allows your character to age. Yes, aging is a part of this game, and perhaps your character's children will get to adventure as well. The Traits operate on a balance scale of 20 points - The total of these two attributes add up to 20. So

you have, perhaps, Merciful 17 - Cruel 3. Passions are things you feel strongly about, your Lord, hate of the Saxons, etc. This is a sample of the way the rules are designed to help you Role Play rather than Roll Play. Combat and Magic are taken much more seriously than in D&D. Your character's hit points are derived from their stats, and stay that way for the rest of the game (more or less). The most hit points you can have is 39. Armor absorbs damage. Now, what's the most damage our 39 hit point character can do with his sword? 7D6 - that's up to 42 points, with an average of 24/25. Combat is to be taken seriously! As for Magic, well. This isn't D&D. There's none of the flash-bang Magic that there is in D&D. In fact, Merlin would be impressed by the magic a 2nd level D&D wizard could do. Spells take a long time to cast. Holy Ground, High Holidays, group ceremonies, etc. have a great effect on the outcome of spells. This is a game where players will spend weeks or months preparing spells, to be cast in holy places, on high holy days. Then spending time resting and recuperating after spells have been cast. I don't know how supplements handle magic, Faerie, etc. Notice again that the emphasis here is on Role Playing, Storytelling, not FLASH-BANG effects. This game gives you opportunities to describe events, tournaments, adventures, celebrations, not just hack-and-slash fighting. This game isn't for everyone, even those who it is for may take a while to acclimate. Like Castle Falkenstein, and Amber, this game is designed to help you tell a story. The rules add to the drama, they aren't just a collection of rules on how to create powerful characters and how to fight with them. Role Playing came out of Wargaming, and it shows. This is one of the few games that elevates Role Playing to the status of art. This is a game that returns to us the lost art of Story Telling.

Now, part of the review guidelines for this forum is that one should not simply praise without giving good reason why: however, in this case there are so many good reasons for praise that I am overwhelmed. So, to keep it simple: this is the Arthurian roleplaying game. You play a knight, or maybe a clerk or lady, or maybe even (though I would not recommend it) a magician. Yes, that is about it for "character classes". You see, the game depends a lot more on your characters background and personality than his "powers". Do not worry though, there will be lots of fights anyway. If you like medieval stuff (but not so much that you let facts get in the way of fun, which the medievals themselves would find silly) you will like this game. A lot. The not - so - simple, pretentious version... I suppose one way to start would be its base material, the most splendid cycle of legend in Britain, the chronicle of King Arthur Pendragon. Sadly, the legend in our time has been tainted by superficial sentimentality, dried out by cheap attempts at making it historical (often just an excuse to make it but another version of poor Conan the Barbarian), and mocked by new - age foolishness.

The wonder of this game is that it takes all these limited approaches and simply lets them be absorbed by the original noble medieval tales, creating a setting of vibrant richness. Another important point: this is a game that is much larger on the inside than the outside. There are mysteries in it that simply never will be solved, even though one feels a hint of their massive importance. But building on them is a clear, if complex, world of heroism and everyday responsibilities. But even if you try to stick to "normal" knightly deeds, you can still get caught up in the labyrinths of politics and romance. Last but not least, this game does exactly what it was intended to: rules, mood, and setting are in perfect symbiosis. This becomes painfully clear when talented but lesser designers try to muck about with the basics: just look at fourth editions pathetic magic system. Still, at least they had the good sense to make it optional. This is the best role-playing game in the world. Try to be worthy of it.

King Arthur's Pendragon is what more role-playing games should be about. That is story. The game mechanics are all directed to telling the epic story of a group of knights as they advance through the years. Through the years is an important point. Unlike some games where players seem to go from one battle to the next for no more reason than "killing is fun" and "we get more gold that way", Pendragon is about how people grow and change. They start out as young knights who rapidly rise in prowess until age finally starts to nibble away at them leaving them old and infirm. Not to worry, each character aims to have heirs that will take up the cause and follow in their father's legendary foot steps. The scope of the game covers usually 60+ years in the life of Arthur (starting at his age of 3 if you use the expanded time of Anarchy). The game mechanics are simple and straight forward with events resolved usually by a skill test on d20 and damage rolled with d6. One element that adds much to the colour of the game are the Personality traits and passions. Personality traits are 13 matched pairs of qualities that define how the character often behaves (example is Wordly and Generous) with each pair adding to 20. Knights who possess high levels in certain passions gain fame for their chivalrous or religious behaviour. Passions represent oaths and duties to others. Strong passions can aid a character to do impossible feats but can also blind a character to other situations. This game is a classic that has withstood the test of time for a reason and that is it one of the best games around. I especially like running this game with more mature players who want more than another slasher flick or want a more heroic tale to tell.

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