The Pendragon Cycle: Rise of the* Merlin

It is the end of an era. The ancient gods lose their grip on the souls of mortal men. Rome retreats from Britain like the low tide, and in its' wake come a horde of despoilers, opportunists and invaders both from within and without. Chief among those being the invading Saxons from the North. Atlantis falls to ruin amidst fire and molten earth, it's island sinking into the sea and it's people evacuating to Britain where lesser men will speak of them as the fae.

But lo, destruction begets creation! Though the iniquity of ancient gods such as Baal and Cernunnos continues to be reflected in the sacrificial practices of druids as well as the craven ambitions of mortal men, so too is man's better nature a reflection of the coming Great Light (also known as God, YHWH etc). The great creator of the world (and perhaps, even the creatures within it that falsely call themselves gods), who sent His only begotten son to die for man's sins in a time long before Rome, and now turns His gaze on two men who will do much and sacrifice…a bit, in service of him.

The first of these men is Taliesin, rescued as a babe from the river by a once-unlucky druid. His peoples will come to both rescue and conflict with the king-in-exile of Atlantis, and Taliesin himself will begin a brief and passionate love affair with the Atlantean princess Charis (though not before being married, that would be improper).

The second of these men is his famous son Merlin, who after years of isolating madness and the beguiling whispers of the witch Morgan has at last returned to lay the ground for a Summer Kingdom in the Great Light's name: A land where all mercy flows like water, all men love each other as brothers and justice is the rule of law rather than the whims of a conquering king.

Or at least, so the visions have led both men to believe.

In the name of Yesu (ישוע), you have 1000 Christ Points. Go with God's grace. Or at least, modern America's idea of God's grace in pagan times.

Location and Time

You may start anywhere in the ancient Land of the Mighty, which will someday come to be known as Britain. You may choose to start at any time between the moment when Taliesin is adopted and raised by the druids, or 75 years after his death when Merlin sets out to complete his father's work.

It's very wet and muddy.

Backgrounds

In terms of age you may freely choose to be either a young adult, or the kind of tough and seasoned warrior/hag old enough to have grey hair who looks to have been through the wars but can still swing a sword and ride like a champ.

Drop-In: Well, so much for all that talk of myth and history. You literally just showed up out of the wind and rain one day. That's not surprising in times like this being honest, much of what will come to be known as Britain's folklore really stems from ignorant men telling and retelling things beyond their understanding. So, rest your soles weary traveller. This country has a long way to go before anyone finds out if you're another beggar here to lick the local lord's boots…or a true being of myth.

Bard (100 CP): In these troubled times, there's not much difference between a true adherent of the old ways, and an old fraud in a cloak with a very impressive stick. Whatever the truth of the matter, you've been trained in the old ways of those who walk Britain's glens to learn the lore of the forests, the arcane practices of ancient Atlantis, or perhaps stranger or more foreign arts. You definitely have the look of a witch or wizard. Whether you live up to your reputation is another matter.

Warrior: In these troubled times, there are two types of men: Those who lead the raids, and those who follow behind. With this alone you are a son of the battlefield, a warrior born-yet not yet truly in the saddle of command that is the only true semblance of safety. Stand proud and hold your shield high, for ere the eve of battle shall your mettle be-

-oh, bollocks to all that. Look, here's the deal: This is the background for living fast and dying hard. Casualty rates are high in ancient Britain, there's no replacement for missing eyes or hands, and the shot-callers are mostly the ones sensible enough to stay at the back lines. Watch yourself.

Atlantean (100 CP): Once, your kingdom was a beacon of enlightenment in a dark age. Once, your people dwelled in great pale palaces of carved stone, and watched nimble celebrants caper for the favour of your gods. Gone, gone now is Atlantis. As one of its' scions, you have made the long journey to the isle of Britain hoping for a better life under either the command of either King Avallach (King of Maridunum, who will come to be known as the Fisher King for settling near the waters) or King Custennin who rules within the woods. To you, the inhabitants generally look every bit as filthy, undereducated and ignorant as they seem to the viewing audience of this show. To the inhabitants of Britain, you may as well be wondrous beings from some exotic otherworld.

BLASPHEMOUS ENEMY OF GOD (+100 CP): Fie! Fie, and begone with you, brigand! Witch! NON-BELIEVER! In this land, even the proudest warrior or the most ruthless sage can be forgiven if he but does one thing: Acknowledge the Great Light as King of Kings and saviour of all men, and heed his virtues of charity, kindness, mercy and sex only after marriage. For some reason, your past in this world has hardened you in such a manner that this simple act feels unnatural. The circumstances matter little. You may be a fiercely conservative lord, a garrulous Saxon uncaring of quaint barbarian customs, a sinister advisor in a king's court, an ambitious Atlantean or simply someone disliked by the main cast. Either way, circumstances have set you up to oppose the plans of the Great Light-though nothing else compels you to actually follow through.

Seek Christ or at least stay out of His way, and all shall be well.

Perks

Drop-In

Silvertongue (100 CP): Men and women of renown have a certain flair to their wordplay, a deftness of wit and whim. You share that gift, able to disarm a man who mean you ill with a well-timed jab at his failings or lighten a suspicious man's demeanour with a glib remark. Such hubris may make you some enemies, but also win the hearts of many men and firm up the bonds of your comrades with biting insight into their next line.

Riverblood (200 CP): Some great talent runs in your line, equalled only in Taliesin and his son. And that talent is…for talent itself. Outdoorsmanship, courtly etiquette, warfare, medicine-should you but apply yourself and learn widely, it seems you have talent that makes others seem like apprentices next to a master for the same relative amount of training (or like background characters next to a designated protagonist in a fantasy TV show).

This is especially apparent in magic, should you have the basic capability. Whereas other mages must bloody their hands and make entreaties to cruel gods for illusions and other subtle workings, with this and **Druid** you could slay 70 men by yourself with a combination of unnatural raging vigour, burning blade and precise bursts of force. Or haul up a friend bound with iron and tossed into a lake with your mind, while forcing armed men trying to interrupt to the ground with will alone.

Legendsmith (400 CP): The lost arts of Atlantis gave rise to many wonders. It seems at least some of them have been preserved by you better than even the Atlanteans themselves, for you have mastered their arts of craft so well you can continue to make them even with what's available in ancient Britain. Give it your all, and masterworks such as the sword Excalibur will be within reach. But for a modest effort lesser wonders such as daggers that enhance the mystic worth of sacrifices or shields harder than iron which fly and return when cast by the wearer may be possible.

Divine Descendant (600 CP): It seems that you owe your heritage to more than the get of man. You are distantly descended from a union between one of the beings worshipped by antiquity and their mortal supplicant. Most of your gifts are subtle in how unnatural they are: A child of Baal for example would likely have the strength of a bull and a hide akin to leather armor as well as the stamina of ten, but not his progenitor's city-smiting wrath or horns and hooves. But in magic, you are greatly gifted. Not only are spells representing your progenitor so much more powerful that a single sword of flame could break a cavalry charge, but you can pass on the magic of this world to others. This scales

with your overall power; with this alone the effort will be akin to ploughing a field, though lessened greatly by sacrifice or other appropriate worship.

Bard

Oak and Ash and Thorn (100 CP): Knowing the worth of roots and leaves is a magic unto itself. You're well-versed in the herbalism of your homeland in this world, ably finding cures for everything from wounds to infections in the less developed regions of this world. Grinding, preserving and preparing them is your craft now.

Singer of Sagas (200 CP): If this land knew what angels were, they'd say you have the voice of one. Alongside that, you're gifted with such talent with an instrument of your choice that you could improvise music capable of moving suspicious kings to friendship or calming the hearts of a fearful army with voice, fingers or both. So great is your gift for song that it even subtly enhances any magic you cast with it, and you have a knack for composing or remembering songs on the fly that might strike a chord with your audience. Even without such insight, your voice is so pretty that you could sing "fa la la la" and make people misty-eyed.

Druid (400 CP): It's unquestionable now: You can do magic! See through the eyes of a swift bird, far away. Conjure illusions to seamlessly take on the visage and voice of long-dead loved ones. Commune with gods of old. Help animals deliver their young smoothly, or cure the sick and wounded by laying on hands so long as they are not too near Death's doorstep. Bind a man's tongue, and bring fortune to an army in battle so long as you raise your staff to the heavens.

Magic is an arbitrarily applicable and generally subtle art that can seemingly do whatever the plot needs it to, but no more, and it's inner workings are not well elaborated on. In Britain druids appear to commune with the gods for it, and in Atlantis it is known that the sacrifice of animals is how the power is conjured-though all know sorcerers and sorceresses seem to have power of their own nonetheless. Suffice to say that if a capability of magic isn't mentioned in this perk, it's almost certainly the work of Merlin, Taliesin or the Great Light-all of whom far surpass other sorcerers, regardless of their protests.

Disciple of the Great Light (600 CP): You have been shown a revelation of the Summer Kingdom. And with it, entrusted with the favour of the Great Light. So long as you at least pay lip service to the virtues of Christianity (as understood by a modern American audience) and preferably follow them in earnest, He will show you visions beyond mortal ken that guide you to all success in both His wish for grace and mercy for all mankind, and to a lesser degree in your personal ambitions. You will find yourself meeting men so worthy as to be kings of all

Britain, winning the friendship of Atlantean kings, leaving your rivals scorned and emasculated by your sharp insight and generally engaging with life as if the Great Light were written a vaguely Christian-themed power fantasy. But remember hubris is a sin, that even the most devout may face great trials and tragedies for the sake of a goal they may not live to see, and the Great Light works in mysterious ways.

In times of great need, should your faith be true the Great Light may even work miracles through you-bringing the dead back to life, turning the tide in battle with allies making an impossibly convenient entrance or even letting you perceive reality so precisely time crawls to a halt for you briefly, or letting you commune with the dead in the afterlife and send your consciousness back to your past self.

As an aside, by taking this perk you gain a great amount of leeway for being a *dick* for the purpose of being assessed by things like karmic systems as well as society at large. One might find it cruel to toy with a naysayer by ending his career publicly or to vent your frustrations by blasting confused soldiers with your arcane powers, but it seems the Great Light is blind to many of your sins.

Warrior

King's Man (100 CP): A man is worthless to a king if he doesn't know how to fight. You do. You can hoist up a shield and maintain a wall. You can swing axe, spear and sword with the familiarity of a career soldier, if not with exceptional skill. You have a constitution of a man used to grappling in the mud. You know how to fight. Try not to die too.

People's King (200 CP): Aurelius is more than just any descendant of Rome's garrison in Britian, oh no! He is a paragon of justice and equality in this savage age. He is a gifted speaker that can easily win the hearts and minds of the common soldiery, skilled with the blade enough to defeat warriors with far more experience than him at a young age, and in time will prove to be a gifted administrator for the Summer Kingdom. You too have these qualities. And if you wish, his bloodline.

You may also have an equal claim to the throne of Britain. Which is to say, you may optionally be Roman. Not even necessarily related to Aurelius. Just descended from Roman high command.

Do note that sharing a bloodline with Aurelius will however definitely give you a certain masculine handsomeness, letting you wear a beard well and give you the kind of hair you'd expect from a movie star rather than an ancient warlord. Otherwise, it's a crapshoot.

Petty King (400 CP): There is much more to rule than pretty words and pretty faces to ruling, you know that full well. Whether or not you also have the throne to go with it, you have the skills of a seasoned warlord: To ably command men in battle, and to collect taxes and administrate land as ably as any in Britain. Finally, you have an odd fortune for coming across other traitors in any faction you're part of, and in easily winning them over to your cause. It's not that you're a particularly competent betrayer, it's just that the less loyal people are to a different authority the easier it is to make them loyal to *you* instead.

King of War (600 CP): Aurelius' brother Uther has many flaws, but few can withstand a charge led by him in war-or you. Without magic or foreign blood, you are now ranked with him, Aurelius and Merlin's trusty servant as the best fighters in Britain. But unique to you and Uther is your gift for taking command in battle: Holding a line, leading raids on villages that spare the innocent and sensing the flow of battle adroitly. Under your watchful presence, you could lead an army of two thousand to withstand an army of fifteen thousand on an open field-and should even fewer reinforcements come at an opportune time, you could prevail.

Atlantean

Blood of Atlantis (Free, mandatory and exclusive to Atlantean. Conditional for **BLASPHEMOUS ENEMY OF GOD**): The Atlanteans may be human, but they are of far sturdier stock than those of Britain. They can live for centuries at least without aging as soon as they reach adulthood, walk off a stab to the gut and in battle outmatch most men of Britain-though of course they must train to reach such potential. In all areas, they're more well educated than any Briton. As an Atlantean, these traits are now yours. Try not to be too annoyed by the smelly islanders.

This perk can be taken as **BLASPHEMOUS ENEMY OF GOD** for 100 CP.

A Life Long Lived (100 CP): Time can be a burden of sorts, for those who live to see all they once built fall into decay. Your will is furnished against such loss and grief, neither the death of loved ones nor the faded glory of your halls will prevent you from giving your all to immediate endeavours. And you'll always be able to find at least a little hope in exile.

Fay Semblance (200 CP): Though considered otherworldly, only a few Atlanteans like the princesses have the athletic, well-toned beauty and fair visage to truly be mistaken as otherworldly beings on sight. You share such grace, being lithe of form and swift of limb enough to flip over a charging bull. You've also been trained in courtly etiquette and demeanour well enough to impress the nobles of Atlantis.

If you're feeling mean, all this is enough to trick the credulous folk of Britain into thinking you really are a fairy.

A Bridge Between Peoples (400 CP): Atlantis have had a troubled past, but that need not doom it's future. Your presence soothes and eases the tensions between peoples partly through your excellent rapport with foreigners as well as general good fortune for letting those you wish to ally integrate well with your culture. Ah, but that's not to say you support the total loss of your culture-in fact, your presence also upholds and preserves all that was deemed virtuous in it, letting it live on if only in spirit. Atlantis may have fallen, but Camelot may one day personify all that was once glorious about it.

Kingmaker (600 CP): Perhaps the Great Light has a plan for you beyond your ken? Those you confer your support to have a tendency to experience greatness and success in their endeavours. A petty king may rise to become a lord of all the land (so long as he has no significant opposition), and a sorcerer may find reserve of power he never knew he had. There must be a strong bond between you and the targets-that of parent or child for example, or trust great enough to confer a

storied treasure of your people on them. Beyond that, it seems the power of love makes kings and queens out of all those you open your heart to.

BLASPHEMOUS ENEMY OF GOD

Sensual Serpent (100 CP): What delectable power and wisdom those old fools have! A seductive young thing like yourself should surely be weasel your way into getting what you want. You have the kind of body, face and aggressively sexual demeanour that makes old men feel young again. You could probably also catch a fetching but good-hearted lad or lass with your looks, but there's none with the power you deserve around…right?

In Heartfelt Guise (200 CP): Between your oddly trusty demeanour, your knack for saying what you need to sow doubt and engender trust, and your strong sense for what a man's price is, you're the kind of schemer that could go from being a runaway princess to a trusted advisor in a king. By the standard of ancient Britain, you're a social expert-you could even feign being another man's long lost love.

Strangely enough, whatever the quality of your advice your presence does in fact seem to slightly improve the stability and overall fortune of the kingdom whose lot you throw in with. What a nice wicked witch you are.

Rule of Blood and Iron (400 CP): Honor? Kindness? HA. There is only one rule between kings, and it is the rule of the iron gauntlet. When you defeat an authority in honourable man-to-man combat, the rightness of might is made apparent and all but the most loyal, personally ambitious or unhinged subordinates witnessing the duel will accept your command. Conversely though, the old preexisting oaths and codes of honour seem to favour you similarly when you try to invoke them for the sake of favour amongst others. A savage Saxon king may still rough you up as a show of force, but even should you have nothing but the promises of your long-dead kingly father to compel him will ultimately bring his army to war with you in battle.

Crimson Alter (600 CP): Sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice. In both life and magic, you know that the core truth of this world is that sometimes to make something, you have to break something. And now, this principle is encoded into your very being: When you destroy something living or dear to you, circumstance and fortune will bring a tangible and proportionate benefit to you somewhere down the line. Stab a brother in the back and you may win the favour of a king. Cast aside your wedding ring and you might just find a rare jewel a few weeks later. Of course, this empowers any actual sacrifice-fuelled magic you may have-one calf's death doing the work of ten.

Be warned: The only sacrifice the Great Light approves of comes from the self.

Items

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. (Matthew 6:19)

Shackles (50 CP): Have a grudge against someone, then? This here ball and set of chains will dunk them in a lake right and proper. Otherwise they're a bit of a waste of metal in this economy innit. The Great Light would not appreciate such behaviour.

Sword (50 CP): You've got a hunk of iron crudely beaten into a sharp edge by sons of mudgrubbers who now make sharp rocks for the betterment of scared, violent men fighting over clae upon a cold, wet and windy rock. Such is the nature of man's folly without the Great Light to guide him.

Can be a mace or spear or something, can be repurchased.

Board (50 CP): You've got a crude wheel of wood rimmed with steel or somesuch, real fancy-like. It'll save your arse from arrows and the skinnier kind of sword, and maybe even bounce off a blow or two from a mace. The Great Light would appreciate you using this to defend the meek and innocent.

Can be repurchased, can be any type of shield.

Atlantean Crossbow (50 CP): What an ornately made crossbow! Though slow to reload, there's little better in this day and age for even a svelte woman to put an arrow (of which it comes with a fine golden quiver full of that restocks every week) through the heart of the man she loves instead of the sister she hates. The moral, the Great Light teaches, is to do unto others what you would have others do unto you.

Cloak (50 CP): It's waterproof, it covers most of your body and it's made of some animal hide that keeps you warm. It's a luxury by British standards. Like the very embrace of the Great Light himself.

Helmet (50 CP): The Great Light says safety first! It's made of metal. It covers your head and lets you see clearly. Mostly.

Can be repurchased. Can be different type of helmet if for some reason you want the big Saxon horns or something.

Archer's Gear (50 CP): Longbow and a quiver full of big arrows. Perfect for killing from a distance. The Great Light would prefer you use this to put food on the table for kith and kin instead.

Full Plate (50/100 CP): Interlocking plate that'll keep you safe from slashes and stabs right up until someone works a knife through the folds or cracks you open like a crab with his mace. At least, it is for 50 CP. For 100 CP it's also ornately decorated in a style befitting what you stand for in this world. The Great Light doesn't need to be flattered through this thing but feels there are few worthier causes.

Sage's Staff (100 CP): Crafted from some vaguely mystical wood of ancient and venerable repute, this staff's a pretty good channel for magic of all sorts. For all the good it'll do here. To be honest, it's never clear how much things like staffs or wands actually matter for casting magic. The Great Light doesn't actually seem to have an issue with magic itself, but would like to gently remind his adherents that true power comes from faith.

Fisherman's Folly (100 CP): It's a well-made fishing net for the period that's decent for catching fish. But in a strange twist of fortune, you also have a tendency to catch interesting people with it! Not constantly of course, but keep throwing it in the same place for about a month and you're almost guaranteed to accidentally dredge up a talented bard, a knight-errant or someone else with a useful but mundane who's generally inclined to be helpful to you. Almost like the Great Light wanted you to make some new friends.

Wooden Fleet (200 CP): With hand-woven sails and sturdy wood, these ships have but one purpose-to let the bloodthirsty Saxons lay claim to Britain's fair shores. Or possibly for Britain to lay claim to whatever cold foul land those bloody Saxons come from. Either way, to the average petty king of this time seaworthiness might as well be witchcraft so be careful about who you let know you have this. The Great Light reminds you to take plenty of provisions and to please try to rescue sailors hurled abroad.

Sorcerous sanctum (200 CP): Here is a place that has been set aside for mystic workings from this world, loaded up with restocking reagents, tools, breeding herds of cattle, places of spiritual power and whatever else is needed to perform complex rituals to enhance one's spellcraft. It could be a circle of menhirs, an elaborate temple or a simple hut exposed to the elements. But the Great Light strongly discourages worshipping false idols for paltry tricks-should that be something you do here that is.

Petty Kingdom (100/200/400 CP): A king is what people make of him in these dark times, and what that often amounts to is the most successful killer of men who can keep under killers under his banner. In time, a fairer kingdom may rise, but for now it seems some violent bastards have decided you are their liege, if only for political purposes.

For 100 CP, between 70 to a 100 hardy warriors follow you. They're little more than a particularly warlike band of brigands, or perhaps one of the hillfolk tribes. Either way, they compensate for their low quality arms and armour with a familiarity with the land they live off.

For 200 CP, you're a peer to any of the kings of Britain. Those who choose to take and hold land will have a castle with suitable court and staff, a reasonably sustainable village full of reasonably content peasants, and sufficient fields and herd animals to last the winter. In other words, it's virtually a paradise by Britain's standards. There's even wooden palisades and stone walls to keep out interlopers, clean well water and a small standing army! Those who commit to war will have a force equal to Aurelius and Uther's army.

Finally, for 400 CP you're a peer to the Atlantean kings. Your kingdom occupies terrain both remote and advantageous in some manner, and it enjoys architecture, arms, armor and education far superior to that of lowly Britain. Even then, it is likely a shadow of its glory though the mystical and technological secrets it has preserved far exceed those of Britain; you may even have a court wizard or two. Your palace is akin to that of the locals' fairytales, your nobles wear fine silks, you dine on well-cultivated delicacies and your people have strange traits akin to those of the Atlanteans. Or perhaps yours is a different colony, from distant Irem or even faraway Themyscira?

Either way, all temporal power is well…temporary, and ultimate authority rests with the Great Light.

- Touch of the Arcane (200 CP): Beyond the minimum (largely nonexistent) magical knowledge heretofore established, your kingdom has dedicated itself to the study of the mystical arts. This is an add-on purchase that ensures the general population has studied magic as thoroughly as the druids who raised Taliesin did if you purchased the 100 CP option. To tether this purchase to the higher order kingdoms is to field an unprecedented force on the island.

Excalibur (300 CP): With an ornate gem-encrusted hilt and a blade sharp enough to pierce cleanly through stone in one thrust, this sword is a masterwork rescued from the fires that consumed Atlantis-or at least, a convincing facsimile, or an equal in quality if not appearance. Though it seems to hold no other powers, those who draw it seem destined for grand things. This is after all the sword meant for Aurelius to draw in order to found his Summer Kingdom. Those who wield it in battle seem buffered against misfortune and violence-not comprehensively protected, but expect to go into battle without a helmet and come out without a scar on your face so long as you can defend the rest of yourself ably.

This is, most definitely, the weapon by which the Great Light selects his ordained king of Britain.

Companions

Great British Seaside Holiday (50 CP): Look, if you're going to be stranded on this horrible wet island for a decade you might as well share the misery with someone else. 50 CP to create/import a companion, each gets 700 to spend on whatever they want (including paying for backgrounds), companions can't buy other companions, you know the drill.

All companions receive a complimentary meal of fish and chips upon departing this jump.

Brexit (Free/50 CP): You've made the perplexing decision to take people away from the possibility of ascending to the kingdom of Heaven, but the Great Light understands sometimes kids need their space. If you can convince someone here to leave despite forsaking the chance to save their eternal soul (you don't have to tell them about that part) you can turn them into a companion (denying them the chance to dwell in the Great Light's presence). For 50 CP you're guaranteed a good meeting with one of them in order to tempt them away from the life and the resurrection that is the Great Light.

Merlin (50 CP): No, not the bard. This actual merlin, this hunting bird, seems to have taken a liking to you. It flies swiftly and unerringly, being well-trained at carrying messages or engaging in the lordly art of falconry. Unerringly intelligent, it seems to almost have a dry wit like the real Merlin and strangely seems to be a good conduit for magic. It would be a most loyal and insightful familiar, for those with the gift of working magic through animals.

Heathen Savage (50 CP, free/optional with Drop-In): Hailing from the far frozen north, this wild-eyed red-haired reaver has come from the far north to slay weak southerners and kidnap sheep. And Britain's all out of sheep to steal today. Quick of thought for such a savage and mighty of thew enough to send a man flying with a kick, the warband this fearless force leads holds her appetite for beer and gold in awe. But the most blasphemous thing about this boisterous berserker is…her gender. She's a woman! A woman taking up arms in pitched battle and shaming men! What a disgrace to Christendom! Depending on who you are she's either decided you're alright for a southerner or that you'll raid and pillage this land better as a team.

Atlantean Tradwife Gymnast (50 CP, free/optional with Bard): Tall, blonde and athletic to a fault, much like Princess Charis this stately princess once had few concerns beyond her athletic animal evasion-based religious duties. However, while jumping over sheep to honour Morpheus, she had a strange vision where one of the sheep spoke to her, calling himself the Lamb of God. In an instant, she was enlightened to her true purpose: To spread the word of the Great Light, and found a different kingdom under his benevolent rule which just happens to resemble a wildly inaccurate and nostalgically biased vision of 1950s-era America! That vision also showed her that she was meant to be your servile inoffensive but responsible spouse. While also doing Atlantean princess things. Like backflipping over sheep in what amounts to an Atlantean bikini.

Bro of the Battlefield (50 CP, free/optional with Warrior): Your brother in arms, who has been at your side since you were children, would walk through fire and war to see you to safe harbour. He is in every way the opposite of what Uther is to Aurelius, or perhaps he is what Aurelius would be if Uther was chosen to be king of the Britons instead. Virtuous and loyal to a fault, he strives to disarm others with words and goodwill first but will not hesitate to break a nose with a shield or turn his brilliance of the battlefield against your foes to keep you safe. Also, he's unrealistically hot for a man born in this era. His hair is somehow perpetually airbrushed. He has a lean but muscular build that can do pushups one-handed indefinitely. He has prime Steve Rogers' ass. He is also comically naïve about courting, let alone sexuality.

Smug Druid (50 CP, free/optional with Atlantean): Every other day, this pallid brunette will enter your quarters/throne room/sorcerous sanctum/hovel (delete as appropriate), utter some gnomic sentence, and then leave without explanation. She has the eyes of a wildcat, a dour and sarcastic demeanour to cope with her deeply felt responsibilities, and a profound conviction that you have a role to play in Britain's salvation (and while not necessarily a devotee to the Great Light, does not seem to support a role in conflict with Aurelius' own rise). You have her undivided support and loyalty, and perhaps in time can be a sort of confidante to her many worries about wielding her power responsibly. While she's not *quite* as powerful as Taliesin or Merlin, it'd be hard-pressed for most to tell the difference when she's turning into swarms of crows or calling up roots to drag riders from horses. Or stopping time. That's worrisome too.

Atlantean Femcel Witch (50 CP, free/optional with **BLASPHEMOUS ENEMY OF GOD**): One could almost pity this conniving, curvaceous blonde if the flash of emerald in her eyes didn't fail to hide her deep thirst for power and prestige. Though naturally gifted in the ways of seduction and flattery as well as having pried much knowledge of witchcraft from carelessly guarded libraries, she hasn't had a chance to use any of these burgeoning talents well. You see, unlike

princess Morgan she is most decidedly not royalty. Before Atlantis fell, her father sold her into slavery to get out of a debt. You were the creditor. Halfway through bending her considerable…assets and gift of the gab to seducing you, she suddenly realised she was falling in love which has caused her to constantly bumble attempts at both seducing and manipulating you. Secretly she's started to fret that the universe, perhaps even the so-called Great Light himself, is somehow contriving to thwart her love quest-punishing her for trying to rise above her station. If you can talk her out of her chronic self-confidence issues, you'll have an able sorceress and advisor at your side. Perhaps a queen as well.

Drawbacks:

The Daily Unwiring (+0 CP): Wait a minute. Constant deluges of thinly veiled Christian propaganda? Ganieda being relegated entirely to existing in flashbacks? Morgan being a jilted lover and nothing else? *This isn't the story you remember.* Choose this and you can go to the actual Pendragon Cycle books by Stephen R. Lawhead instead of…whatever this hot mess is.

Jesu's Little Helper (+0 CP, requires the Bard background): As you enter this world, you see a vision. A vision of a baby, scooped up by loving hands, who you intuitively know will grow up to have an uneventful but well-loved life. The Great Light smiles upon you. You have taken the role of either Taliesin or Merlin in this story, including taking their names. This means at some point in your life *you* will be the one to receive a divine vision in which the Great Light will speak his plan for the Summer Kingdom to you instead of the man who would be Merlin or Taliesin. At least, if you're male. If you're female, well…the Great Light will provide.

Prepare to live in Interesting Times.

Hawkeye (100 CP): Much as Merlin has the eyes of a hunting bird, you too have some distinguishing feature that arouses the (generally superstitious, credulous) attention of the local populace and makes you really easy to spot for anyone carrying a grudge. Cloven hooves, a ram's horns, perhaps even the ears of a cat?

"Silver"tongue (100 CP): You have a tendency to patter on in purple prose about how very deeply felt your feelings are and how you absolutely have to relate them to everyone around you now. It is not enough to say you are angry, you must proclaim that your righteous wrath has been aroused by the vile rebels that haunt your dreams like iron-shod horses! This confuses and puts off people (even those who do it themselves) and sometimes leaves you lost in your own metaphors.

Plot Mandated Irrelevance (100 CP): Hey so, remember Ganieda? Who, you ask? That girl Merlin's been seeing all season! His lost love! The one who's been haunting him all…o-oh, she was Morgan under an illusion all along. Okay then, much like The Pendragon Cycle: Rise of the Merlin seems determined to have events conspire to make your presence easily forgotten and overlooked. This confers as much danger as safety, for it's as easy to be abandoned in the highlands as it is to be taken for granted as a political threat-and an army attacking indiscriminately will stab anyone just standing there. In extreme cases your accomplishments might even be hijacked by others of note.

Simpering Sorceress, Passionate Prince (100/200 CP): You are hopelessly entitled or besotted, and the Great Light has seen fit to punish you for it. Either you hold tremendous ardour to someone or something and the world just constantly keeps conspiring to ensure you can't have it-failing to play the perfect song or always being short on food, if not seeing the one you love from this world snatched away by another. Or you find yourself ardently entitled to some status or object, to the point your survival instincts barely stop you from just walking up to armed men and demanding it. Never quite lethal, expect this obsession to leave you constantly humiliated and left flatfooted. For 200 CP, you have both afflictions, not necessarily for the same subject.

Land of the Mighty Oafs (200/300 CP): Boy, the warlords of Britain sure are an ignorant, violent bunch eh? For 200 CP things have gotten so bad that Aurelius hasn't gotten very far with them, and that while he and his brother's army remain true the rest of the British warlords will refuse to join his banner. Even if they don't immediately go to war, it's every man out for himself. And for 300 CP, the Saxons invade early-a week into your stay here.

Seven years ago, on a woodland glen… (200 CP): This show sure has a tendency to jump backwards and forwards in time, confusingly pivoting from Merlin's descent into madness to events in his youth then back again. Unfortunately, now everyone seems to be suffering the consequences. People you meet will randomly forget things that have come to pass, or remember things that haven't (somehow NOT considering this divination) and act unpredictably as a result. Expect those who have foreseen their own deaths to panic. And while you'll still leave this world in 10 subjective years, even your consciousness might be at random warped back into a past version of yourself to relive future events every now and then. The Great Light must be having too much fun.

Plot Mandated Christianity (200 CP): The coming of the Great Light coincides with the coming of Christendom, and you're now obliged to play along. For the duration of the jump you must abide by what a modern American would consider to be the model image of a God-fearing Christian man. Charitable, generally conservative and turning the other cheek to a fault. Without Merlin's acerbic wit, Taliesin's easy charm or both men's faculty with violence you'll be hard pressed to survive.

Can't Get My Staff Up (300 CP): It sure has been a while since one of those powerloss drawbacks has come up, huh? Well, like that old Atlantean sage Morgan ceased to seduce because he just ran out of magic for completely unexplained reasons you've somehow just lost all your supernatural abilities from outside this jump. Perhaps like his son, the Great Will wishes you to experience this world as a mortal. Perhaps you're just old and tired.

The Shadow of Madness (300 CP): Tarnation. You're mad! You shamble about the woods, gibbering to yourself, barely able to eat things off the ground or drink from streams as you rant and rave. Whether from a traumatic religious experience, grief at the loved one's loss or frying your mind from magic you're just a total mess. Somewhere between several months and a year you'll regain your faculties. Hopefully, you can put what's left of your life back together after.

Plot Mandated Conundrum (300 CP): Sometimes the plot has to go on, and the king is a little TOO wise or one's allies TOO reliable. That's when this little showrunner trick kicks in. Whenever things are going good for you but you're faced with a potential future danger, you will be struck by a sudden and irresistible impulse to make things worse. This will never kill you immediately but you may, say, declare war on a potential ally for requesting basic land rights and immediately view them as ungrateful louts. The worst thing is trying to apologise afterwards will be the psychological equivalent of trying to drink water while having rabies. Expect to make many enemies here.

Plot Mandated HEATHEN GOD BATTLE (300 CP): You've done it now, haven't you? An old god of this land once reached out for you to be their champion, and your righteously refused (for the Great Light is the only god worthy of your devotion). That spiteful deity now curses you. Avoid carvings of it and that which falls under its' domain, for it may strike at you with curses on par with miscarriage though great mystic power and the Great Light's protection may yet thwart it. It's devotees will be offered its' favour to hunt you down, and it's area of authority will turn against you in subtle but pervasive ways. Anger it long enough, and it may well even try to muster devastation great enough to level Atlantis or even assail you in person-though the Great Light would surely offer some form of support against this.

Go home

Accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, and stay here

Move on

Notes

The worst thing about this show is that there are genuinely decent moments to it and the actors certainly seem to be trying their best, but the writing just takes the most baffling decisions possible for the hell of it.

I am way too done with this hobby to adjudicate how the hell The Daily Wire's idea of YWHH interacts with your chain, fanwank something.

*Yes really, that's the show's title even though "Merlin" is just a name in the show.