

Shadows over Camelot FAQ 1.0

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The following FAQ lists some of the most frequently asked questions surrounding the Shadows over Camelot boardgame. This list will be revised and expanded by the Authors as required.

Many of the points below are simply a repetition of some easily overlooked rules, while a few others offer clarifications or provide a definitive interpretation of rules. For your convenience, they have been regrouped and classified by general subject.

I. The Heroic Actions

A Knight may only do multiple actions during his turn if each of these actions is of a *DIFFERENT* nature.

For memory, the 5 possible action types are:

- A. Moving to a new place
- B. Performing a Quest-specific action
- C. Playing a Special White card
- D. Healing yourself
- E. Accusing another Knight of being the Traitor.

Example: It is Sir Tristan's turn, and he is on the Black Knight Quest.

He plays the last Fight card required to end the Quest (action of type B). He thus automatically returns to Camelot at no cost. This move does not count as an action, since it was automatically triggered by the completion of the Quest.

Once in Camelot, Tristan will neither be able to draw White cards nor fight the Siege Engines, if he chooses to perform a second Heroic Action. This is because this would be a second Quest-specific (Action of type B) action!

On the other hand, he could immediately move to another new Quest (because he hasn't chosen a Move action (Action of type A.) yet. Furthermore, this move will be free for him (because that move is his Special power).

Once there, he could also Heal himself (D), Play a Special White card (C) or accuse a fellow Knight (E), by sacrificing a Life Point to perform this second Heroic Action.

Action of type A : Moving to depart from a Quest

Are all the White cards played thus far on a Quest removed when the last Knight present leaves that Quest?

No, all the White (not Black!) cards are removed from a Quest only if that Quest is a Solo quest, ie Lancelot or the Black Knight's Quest.

Action of type B : Drawing White cards at the Round Table.

This action cannot be chosen if you already have 12 or more cards in hand.

A Knight with 11 cards in hand, may, when in Camelot, choose to draw White cards and end up with 13 in hand (or even 14 if he is Sir Gawain).

A Knight with 12 or more cards in hand may stay in Camelot, as long as he has a valid Action to perform there (eg fighting a Siege Engine, Healing himself, playing a Special White, making an Accusation). Otherwise he **MUST** move on to a new Quest.

Action of type B : In which orders must White Fight cards be played on Combat Quests?

- In the Wars against the Picts and Saxons, the Fight cards must be placed in increasing, sequential order from 1 to 5.

- On the Combat Quests (Black Knight, Lancelot & the Dragon), the order is at the player(s) choice. Let's take Lancelot's Quest as an example. The Knight present on that Quest first plays a Fight 3, on one of the spots of the pair. Next turn, he plays a 5 on one of the spots for the three-of-a-kind. In the following turns, he can alternate and play cards on the remaining open spots in the order of his choice, as long as he completes the flush with a pair of 3 and three 5s (but not three 3s and a pair of 5!).

Action of type C : Healing yourself

To heal himself, a Knight must discard 3 IDENTICAL white cards. Can he do so with the cards hidden face down? or must he show them, face up?

As usual the cards should be discarded face down. For this reason, it is important for all players to truly understand how you heal yourself. Discarding 3 Grail cards, or discarding 3 Fight cards of same value each works. However discarding 3 random Fight cards (say a 1, a 2 and a 4) does not work!

Also this assumes that the players are all playing by the rules! Being a Traitor does not allow one to cheat, even under cover of a face-down discard. The rules must still be respected. If players feel they cannot trust each other not to cheat, maybe they should look for other game partners ;)

Is it possible to simply pass your turn? ie to perform no Heroic Action whatsoever, for instance to stay put and benefit from the spoils of victory on a Quest about to be completed by another player?

No. You MUST always perform at least one Heroic Action during your turn. If you are on Quest on which you cannot perform the required Quest-specific action (for lack of the proper card, for instance), you must then either play a Special White card, discard three identical cards to heal yourself, accuse someone or... leave that Quest to move to a new one!

II. The Special cards:

Convocation

Is the Convocation compulsory, ie do the knights HAVE TO leave their Quest and go back to Camelot?

No, they don't. Only those that choose to answer the convocation go to Camelot.

Dark Forest :

Is the Dark Forest played on one of the empty spots on the Grail card, or simply laid down next to the Quest itself without covering a spot?

The card is played next to the Quest, not on an empty spot on the Quest, unlike the Despair and Desolation cards.

When the Dark Forest is in play, is it still possible to discard Grail cards to move Excalibur forward, or to heal yourself?

Yes.

What happens if the Dark Forest comes into play once the Grail Quest has ended?

A Siege Engine is added around Camelot instead, and the card is discarded.

Heroism

Do you need to be on a Quest to lay the Heroism card there?

No, you don't have to be on the Quest where you lay the Heroism card.

Lady of the Lake

What happens if a Knight not on Excalibur plays the Lady of the Lake to end that Quest without being present there?

This Knight is the one that receives Excalibur, because he is the one who completed the Quest.. However, he does not receive any life point and does not share in the White cards received as a result of the Quest's completion, because he is not present on the Quest itself. The other knights present on Excalibur, if any, share the White cards, and each get a life point. If no knight is present on the Quest, then no life point is gained, and the White cards are simply drawn and discarded! If no agreement is reached during the sharing, the cards are dealt randomly to the knights present on the Quest, starting with the Knight's of the Lady of the Lake's player's choice.

Merlin

Can a Merlin card be played to move Excalibur toward the Knight's edge of the river (the same way a Merlin card can be played to discard the last Standard black card played on another Quest)?

No, a Merlin card cannot be used by a Knight not present on the Excalibur Quest, to move Excalibur forward. Of course, a Merlin card can be discarded, face down, by a (admittedly traitorous or dumb!) Knight present on the Excalibur Quest, to move Excalibur one spot toward the good side.

Can a single Merlin card be played to remove the 12th Siege Engine and thus prevent the game from ending ?

No, a game is lost the instant a 12th Siege Engine appears on the board.

« Merlin » can cancel the last black card played. What does this mean, precisely ?

By playing a Merlin card (Heroic Action of type C), you can cancel the last Standard black card played on the quest of your choice. For instance:.

The Grail's Quest is in the following state :

Grail-Empty-Empty-Despair-Desolation- Despair - Despair

It is King Arthur's turn to play. He opts to draw a Black card during his Progression of Evil phase, and picks a new Despair card. The situation on the Quest becomes :

Grail-Empty- Despair -Despair-Desolation- Despair - Despair

As his Heroic Action, he chooses to play a Merlin, thus removing the most recent Despair just put into play. We are now back to:

Grail-Empty-Empty-Despair-Desolation- Despair - Despair

It is now Sir Gawain's turn. He also draws a black card during his Progression of Evil phase; it's a Black Knight card, which he plays face down on the Black Knight's Quest.

As his Heroic Action, he chooses to play a Merlin card to discard the last (current) black card on the Grail. The Grail now looks like this:

Grail-Empty-Empty-Empty-Desolation- Despair - Despair

It is now Sir Tristan's turn; he lays a Siege Engine during his Progression of Evil phase. As a Heroic Action, he could play a Merlin to discard the last Standard Black card played on a Quest. However, he cannot play a Merlin on the Grail's Quest now, because the last card played on that Quest now is Desolation card; it is a Special Black card, not a Standard black one; as such it cannot be removed by the play of a Merlin card. (note: the desolation could have been prevented from coming into play in the first place, by the collective play of 3 Merlin cards, like any other special Black card, but this "cancellation" of the card can ONLY be done at the time the Special Black comes into play. Once laid on the board, there is no way to cancel it – other than progressively filling up the Grail's Quest with White Grail cards, per the rules for that Quest).

Morgan :

One of the Morgan card states that the players must immediately draw and play the effects of the next 3 Black cards drawn from the pile. If this Morgan card is not immediately countered by the play of 3 Merlin cards, what happens if other Special black cards are among the three Black cards newly drawn?

If the Morgan card initially drawn was not countered, then the effects of the following 3 Black cards drawn as a result **MUST** be played out sequentially, without any possibility to counter them. If a Special Black is part of that mix, it cannot be countered then!

III. The End of a Quest

Sharing of the cards: How are the cards shared when a Quest is won?

As soon as a Quest is won, you must draw the number of White cards indicated and lay them face up on the table. If no agreement is found between the Knights present on the Quest, they are dealt randomly to each Knight, *starting with the Knight having just brought the Quest to successful completion.*

Sharing of the cards: What happens when a single Knight is present on a Quest when it is successfully completed?

That lone Knight receives all the White cards indicated in that Quest's victory conditions, but they are not dealt face up. He receives them face down, hidden from the view of the other players.

What happens if a Quest is victoriously completed while no Knight is present on it?

This can only happen on the Dragon and on Excalibur's Quest.

The corresponding number of White Swords are laid on the round table. No life point is gained, nor any White cards shared. The White cards are directly drawn and discarded. Whoever completed the Excalibur Quest receives the sword, even if not present.

What happens to the Excalibur and Despair/Desolation cards when their respective quests are completed?

If those cards are drawn after the corresponding Quest has ended, they instead add a Siege Engine around Camelot, as indicated on the back of these Quest's boards. Be careful not to stack the cards there, but back on the Black discard pile instead, however!

IV. The Knight's Special Powers

King Arthur : exchanging cards with another player

This exchange can only be initiated during King Arthur's own game turn, after his progression of Evil phase is completed. Any Knight may ask his king for an exchange, during the King's turn, as long as the rules regarding communication between players are observed.

In all cases, the cards are exchanged face down **AND SIMULTANEOUSLY**. This means that the receiving KNIGHT cannot look at a card he is receiving from his King before choosing the card he will give back. It also means that it is not possible to exchange a card with a Knight who has none to start with, nor for the receiving Knight to give back to Arthur the card he just received from him, as the exchange is simultaneous.

The King is allowed to **FORCE** an exchange with any one of the Knights. If that Knight has a single card in his hand before the exchange, he **MUST** give that card to the King, in exchange for the one he will simultaneously receive.

Sir Kay : can Sir Kay use his special power to help another player win a fight against Siege Engines?

No, Sir Kay may only add a Fight card at the issue of a combat in which he is present. So while Sir Kay could add a Fight card on the Dragon's Quest if he is there when that Quest ends, he cannot do so with Siege Engines. Even if he is in Camelot when a Siege Engine is fought, that fight is considered to be an individual one, in the field, and Sir Kay cannot participate in it from Camelot.

Is Sir Kay constrained by the combination of Fight cards played on a Quest?

No, Sir Kay can add any Fight card - so he could play a Fight 3 on set of pairs of 1 and 5, for instance.

Percival :

What happens when Sir Percival wins Lancelot's Armor?

When Sir Percival owns Lancelot's Armor, before choosing his progression of evil action, the player draws 2 Black cards, discards one back under the Black pile, and puts the other one back on top of the Black draw pile, before deciding whether to draw and play that card or choosing another evil action.

Sir Bedivere:

If Sir Bedivere is in Camelot with 12 or more cards in hand, can he still use his special power?

Yes, what the rules forbid is to stay in Camelot to draw cards AS A HEROIC ACTION. Sir Bedivere Special Power remains in effect regardless of the number of cards he has in hand.

V. The Relics :

When falling down to zero life point and being brought back to life with the Grail, must you give back all your White cards?

A dying Knight drinking from the Grail is immediately revitalized back to 4 Life points, and keeps his white cards. His turn ends immediately however, and he does not share in the spoils of victory, if he had sacrificed his last point to help finish the Quest!

In the rare case where a Knight would be dying as he plays the Lady of the Lake while no one is present on the Excalibur Quest, the player who gives him the Holy Grail to drink from is the one who would then receive the Excalibur sword. If that Knight happens to be the dying one (ie if he was the one in possession of the Holy Grail), then he gets to keep Excalibur for himself when winning that Quest.

VI. Accusations :

Can a dead Knight be accused?

A dead Knight is dead. He does not and will not reveal his Loyalty card; He also cannot be the subject of an accusation once dead (nor the source of one either, of course!). If the Traitor dies before the end of the game, he does not get to turn 2 White swords over to Black at the end of the game.

What happens if a false accusation is made when there are no White Swords on the round table to be turned over?

In that case, the accusation entails no risk (aside from the fact of losing a precious turn while there are already 6 Siege Engines or 6 Black Swords on the Round Table). Usually the Knights are already in deep trouble (though not necessarily realizing it yet!) when this occurs.

What happens if there were 6 Siege Engines around Camelot (and less than 6 Swords on the Round Table) and that some Siege Engines are fought and eliminated, bringing the number of Siege Engines back down to less than 6? Can accusations still be made?

No, the players need to wait until 6 Siege Engines or more (or 6 Swords) are back on the board before they can make another accusation.

VII. The unmasked Traitor:

Once unmasked, does the Traitor still draw or keep any White cards?

No. Once unmasked, the Traitor can only draw 1 White card at random from the hands of 1 fellow Knight and discard it immediately without playing it, THEN add a Siege Engine around Camelot or draw and play the first Black card from the Black draw pile.

What does the Traitor do, once unmasked, if a Fate or Reinforcement card is played?

The Traitor is off the board, and does not receive any White card or any consequences from these cards, when played once he is unmasked.

VIII. Endgame: Special cases

During a defeat against the Picts (or Saxons) where a 12th Siege Engine is laid simultaneously with a 12th sword, of which a majority are white, is the game won (because of the majority of White swords) or lost (because of the 12 Siege Engines)?

In this case the game is lost: It is lost the instant a 12th Siege Engine is laid around Camelot, before there is even a chance for the Knights to count the White swords!

Can the loyal Knights win even if they all die when the game ends?

No, if all the Loyal Knights are dead, the game is lost the instant the last Loyal Knight dies, even if there are 12 or more swords of which a majority are white coming on board when the last Knight dies.

There are 4 White swords and 7 Black on the round table. The knights win the Grail quest with Heroism on it, gaining 4 more White swords, for a final total of 8 white to 7 black. Are the loyal Knights victorious?

No, because the game should have stopped the minute the 7th Black sword was laid on the round table.

Can the Traitor win even if dead?

Yes, the Traitor can win posthumously.

IX. 3 player games :

In 3 player games, it is recommended for the Loyalty cards to be dealt to the Knights at the game's start, but for the players to wait until a 6th Sword or Siege Engine is laid down on the board before looking at them to see their loyalty. See the updated PDF of the rules on www.shadowsovercamelot.com for more details.