

STUDY GUIDE: THE PROSE MERLIN

Part One: The Harrowing of Hell

Part Two: Merlin's Birth and Defense of his Mother

1. How was Merlin conceived?
2. What unusual traits does Merlin possess as a baby?
3. How does Merlin save his mother's life?
4. What special gifts to God and Satan give to Merlin?
5. What becomes of the judge who threatens to condemn Merlin's mother?

Part Three: Merlin's Instructions to Blaise

6. Who is Blaise, and what is his role in the narrative?
7. What are the contents of the Blaise's book?
8. Why does Merlin claim it will bring him (Merlin) much suffering?

Part Four: The Testing of Merlin's Wisdom

9. What secret does Merlin share with the two brothers, Pendragon and Uther?
10. How does one of Pendragon's barons put Merlin to the test?
11. How does Merlin get the best of this baron?

Part Five: The Battle of Salisbury

12. Preceding the Battle of Salisbury, why have the Saxons returned to England?
13. What kind of advice does Merlin give the king about this battle?
14. What answer does Merlin give when the two brothers ask if one of them will die in battle? (Compare the death of this brother with the portrayal in Geoffrey of Monmouth)
15. How does the author account for the building of Stonehenge? (Compare with Geoffrey of Monmouth's explanation about Stonehenge.)

Part Six: The Creation of the Round Table

16. What secret about himself does Merlin tell Uther?
17. What, according to this text, are the origins of the Round Table?
18. How many seats are at the Round Table?
19. Why is one seat at the Round Table kept empty?

Part Seven: Uther Pendragon's Desire for Ygerne

20. How does Uther first encounter Ygerne? (Compare this scene with its analogue in Geoffrey of Monmouth.)
21. How does Ygerne react to Uther?

22. When Urfin suggests that Merlin can help Uther win Ygerne, Uther is afraid that he has angered Merlin. Why?
23. Who is the old man Urfin encounters as he is riding through the camp?
24. Describe Merlin's rash boon on page 337.
25. After the death of Ygerne's husband, how does Uther make amends?
26. What reason does Uther give Ygerne for fostering Arthur to another family?
27. According to this text, how many sisters does Arthur have, and what becomes of each of them?
28. To whom is Arthur fostered?
29. What is Ygerne's reaction to the loss of her child? (Compare this reaction to the portrayal in Geoffrey of Monmouth.)