

GALAHAD AND THE HOLY GRAIL

**by
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Program and Manual Contents © 1982 Douglas Crockford

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Introduction

Legendary background

You are a knight, a stranger in a mystical land, on a quest to find the Holy Grail. You will face many dangers, including a fire-breathing dragon and giant spiders.

Loosely based on the King Arthur legend, Galahad involves no typing or display of text. Instead, it uses graphics and sound effects extensively. This is a complex game. Look over these instructions before beginning your journey.

The story of the quest for the Holy Grail is steeped in early Christian mysticism. It was the custom of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table not to sit down to dinner on the Pentecost until a miracle occurred. One year, the miracles began with the appointment of Sir Galahad, son of Lancelot and the last descendant of Joseph of Arimathea, to the Round Table at the seat called Siege Perelous.

That night, after evensong, there was a great sound of thunder and a blinding light. The Holy Grail was carried through the hall by a maiden. It was covered with white samite so no one could see it. It had the fragrant odor of spices. Food and drink of each's desire appeared. And the grail was gone.

Sir Gawain and many other knights swore that they would depart the next day on a quest to find the Grail. This made Arthur very sad, for he knew that many good knights would not return, and that perhaps the Fellowship of the Round Table would be broken.

After many miraculous adventures, Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, and Sir Bors, by authority of their great virtue, succeeded in the mysterious quest. Galahad's soul was taken by angels, and a hand appeared also taking the Grail and the Spear to heaven. Sir Percivale died about a year later. Sir Bors returned to Camelot and reported Sir Galahad's last words: "Remember how ephemeral is the earth!"

For the Spear was the one that had pierced Jesus Christ. The Grail was the cup in which drops of His blood had been collected. Both had been taken to Britain by Joseph of Arimathea. Or so the story goes.

Required accessories

- 32K RAM
- ATARI 810 Disk Drive
- ATARI Joystick Controller

Contacting the author

Users wishing to contact the author about Galahad and the Holy Grail may write to him at:

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Getting started

Loading GALAHAD into computer memory

1. Remove any cartridges from the cartridge slot of your computer.
2. Plug a joystick into the number 1 (leftmost) controller jack at the front of your computer console.
3. Have your computer turned OFF.
4. Turn on your disk drive.
5. When the busy light goes out, open the disk drive door and insert the GALAHAD diskette with the label in the lower right-hand corner nearest to you. Close the door.
6. After a few seconds, Sir Gawain's speech will display. When the White Chapel appears, you may begin your quest.
7. To start a new game at any time, press the SYSTEM RESET button.

Playing a simplified version

To play a simplified form of GALAHAD, press the SELECT button at any time. Selecting the simple version changes three features.

- It unlocks the three doors.
- The path to the Grail begins at the White Castle.
- The White Chapel turns black to indicate that you selected the simplified version of the game.

Playing Galahad and the Holy Grail

Movement

Move your knight by pushing the joystick up, down, left, and right. You'll discover that you can move more easily on roads and meadows than through forests and up stairs. Some surfaces are deadly (like deep water). Some, like walls and mountains, cannot normally be passed through. Beware of walls, for they are enchanted and may pull you in.

There are portals in various places. If you move through one, you will be transported to another place. The four most important portals are in the mountains, in the forest, in the Black Castle, and in the White Castle.

Some places have secret passages. You can't see them, but you can move through them. The problem, of course, is finding them.

Helpful objects

Several objects are scattered around that may help you in your quest. To pick one up, bump into it. To drop it, press the joystick button and move away from it. You can carry only one object at a time.

Sword. Use the sword to fight monsters, battle knights, and frighten insects. It works best when you keep your foes to your left or right.

Action Wedge. The wedge helps you run your fastest and jump your highest.

Magic Ring. The magic ring protects you from monsters and hand grenades.

Holy Hand Grenade of Antloch. The hand grenade explodes three seconds after you drop it. It breaks down walls and kills anything in the room. It doesn't open locked doors. Don't use it near portals because it might close them forever.

Keys. Three keys unlock the three doors. The keys are color coded to the doors they open.

Dangers

Your quest is fraught with peril. Should you die, you return to the White Chapel and anyone or thing you may have killed is resurrected.

The occasional traps around the maze remain in the same place from game to game. The knights and monsters are mobile.

Knights Errant. There are knights travelling about looking for challenges. They know nothing of your quest, but they know of your great skill as a knight and want to test themselves by fighting you to the death. They are fair knights, and won't fight you unarmed.

Dragon. The dragon flies, breathes fire, and has sharp teeth and claws.

Rabbit. This creature is so foul and cruel that no man has fought with it and lived.

Spiders. These insects lurk in close spaces and in sticky webs.

Monster Moth. It was a graveyard smoth.

Start. You die if you press the START key.

Winning

Set your goals before you start. Swear to do one or more of the following (or make up a goal of your own).

- To find the three keys
- To find the Holy Grail
- To return the Grail to the White Chapel
- To not press the SELECT key
- To attain the goal in one life
- To attain the goal in (some fixed amount of time)
- To slay all the monsters

Whether or not you meet your goal is a matter of your own honor as a knight. The program neither judges you nor rewards you with points.

Tournament play

When playing with two or more players, first agree on goals. One player plays a complete game, and then passes the joystick on to the next contestant. The winner is the one to meet the goals in the smallest number of lives (with ties being settled by the smallest amount of time), or in the smallest amount of time (with close times being settled by the smallest number of lives).

Another way to play is to take turns during the same game. After each life ends (or after an agreed upon period of time), hand the joystick to the next player. The winner is the player holding the joystick at the attainment of the goal.

Further reading

The definitive source on Arthur is Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. It was published by William Caxton in 1484. It has been rendered for modern readers in at least two newer editions, one by Robert Graves (from which I took Sir Gawain's speech) and another, *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* by John Steinbeck. Like all great stories, Arthur is told and retold. Perhaps the finest retelling is *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White. Perhaps the most inventive retelling is Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

The other source is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. It may have been written around 1400. Its author is unknown. There is a wonderful verse translation by J.R.R. Tolkien.

There are similar works of more recent origin that are also magical and heroic. J.R.R. Tolkien was also the author of the Middle Earth cycle. The best introduction to Middle Earth is *The Hobbit*. Also very good is the Earthsea Trilogy, beginning with *A Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin.

There have been many recent movies in this genre. Among these are *Dragonslayer*, John Boorman's *Excalibur*, George Romero's *Knightriders*, and *Monty Python and The Holy Grail*. *Knightriders* is about people in the 80's trying to live by the standards of the Round Table. The Monty Python film, while being very funny, is probably closer to the truth of the real Arthur than is *Excalibur*.

A final note. Most of what we know about Arthur comes from works written a thousand years later. When we think about the Knights of the Round Table, we think of the armor and chivalry. But those were invented centuries after Arthur. Malory gave his work about a great English king a French title. That may have been stylish after the Norman invasion, but would have been insulting in Arthur's day.