

THE MASQUE OF THE GRAIL

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The Masque of the Grail by Ernest Rhys

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ERNEST RHYS

**THE MASQUE
OF THE GRAIL**

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THE MASQUE OF THE GRAIL

First Produced at the COURT THEATRE, on
the 3rd of July, 1908, with incidental music by
VINCENT THOMAS, under the stage direction of
MISS EDITH RHYS and MR. WILLIAM POEL.

By the same Author

LAYS OF THE ROUND TABLE.

GWENEVERE: A LYRIC PLAY. Produced at
the CORONET THEATRE in 1905.

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THE MASQUE OF THE
GRAIL

BY
ERNEST RHYS

LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET
1908

CHARACTERS IN THE MASQUE ¹

PERCIVAL. }
GAWAIN. } The Questing Knights.
CLAMADOS. }
LAUNCELOT. }
GALAHAD. }
ARTHUR. King of Britain.
GWENEVERE. His Queen.
KAY. His Seneschal.
A HERMIT.
A SAILOR.
PELLEAS. Castellan of Carbonek; known also as "Sir Fisherman."
NIMDE. The Lady of the Lake.
TIMOR MORTIS. Representing Death, or rather the Fear-of-Death.
TRADITION.
ARCH-DRUID.
DRUIDESS (CERIDWEN).

Druids, Druidesses, Knights, Pages, Ladies, Damsels of the Lake, Nuns, and Tradition's Child.

¹ See Notes at the end of the Masque.

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THE MASQUE OF THE GRAIL

SCENE I

PROLOGUE

The SCENE opens in a grove of oak trees, with a gray boulder in their midst. The lights are arranged to represent moonlight.

A horn is blown thrice in the trees beyond, and then enter the Prologue, TRADITION, as a young woman, leading a CHILD by the hand. She wears a long gray cloak over a green robe: the CHILD is in white and green, and carries a mistletoe branch. TRADITION mounts the stone, while the CHILD sits on its edge, and plucks the leaves from the branch one by one while she speaks.

TRADITION

I am Tradition. If my cloak is gray
And winter-like, and stitched with memories,
My tree is green: [Pointing to the CHILD.

He brings the blesséd bough,
 Fresh as the spring and new as nursery-tale.
 To-night I tell you of a Mystery
 The story of a Quest that shall not fail
 Until the castle of the Grail be found:
 I tell you of the cauldron and the spear,—
 The first gave dead men life, the last did lap
 The crimson life-blood up: both made me think
 By night of that, the Sancgréal to come,
 Whose Quest should beckon men into the waste,
 Or bid them cross the sea, and never end
 Until the towers of Sarras town appear.
 That Cup, that Cauldron, and that sanguine Spear,
 The Knights that quested, and their deathless dream,
 All shall be painted on the dark to-night
 And pass before you in our Mystery:
 I am Tradition. Listen to my tale.

*[Harp plays, as TRADITION and the CHILD
 retire. Then again the Horn sounds
 thrice, and a file of white-robed DRUIDS
 advance from the grove of trees in silence.
 They take their positions, around the
 stone, and sing:*