

**Module 3: Exploring Good, Evil, and Noble Sacrifice**  
**Topic 4 Content: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* – Fytte Three Excerpt**  
**Translated by Kenneth G. T. Webster and W. A. Neilson**

*The lord of the castle suggests that they play a game. He will hunt each day, while Sir Gawain is welcome to enjoy his time at the castle. At the end of each day, they must exchange whatever "winnings" they receive that day. Sir Gawain is confused, but he agrees to the game. The next day, while the lord of the castle is hunting, the lady of the castle tries to seduce Sir Gawain. However, she only ends up getting him to kiss her. At the end of the day, Sir Gawain gives the woman's husband her kiss, while he gives Sir Gawain the venison he caught on his hunt. The next day, the lady ramps up her attempts to seduce Sir Gawain. She offers him many things, including a ring, but he ends up taking her green girdle, which she claims has magic properties which keep the owner safe from death.*

She reached him a rich ring of red gold work  
with a gleaming stone standing aloft,  
that shed blushing beams like the bright sun;  
know ye well it was worth wealth full huge.  
But the man refused it, and readily he said:  
"I desire no great gifts, my gay one, at this time.  
I have naught to give you, and naught will I take."  
She offered it him full pressingly,  
and he refused her offer,  
and swore swiftly on his sooth that he would not take it.  
And she sorrowed that he refused,  
and said thereafter,  
"If ye refuse my ring, since it seems too rich,  
and ye would not be so highly beholden to me,  
I shall give you my girdle,  
that will enrich you less."  
She lightly caught a lace that went about her sides,  
knit upon her kirtle<sup>1</sup> under the bright mantle.  
It was adorned with green silk,  
and ornamented with gold,  
broidered all around,  
decked with fringes;  
and that she offered to the hero,  
and gaily besought that,  
though it were unworthy,  
he would take it.  
And he denied that he would in any wise  
take either gold or present ere God sent him grace  
to achieve the chance that he had chosen there.

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<sup>1</sup> a gown

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“And therefore, I pray you,  
be not displeased, and give over your attempt;  
for I intend never to consent.  
I am dearly beholden to you because of your entertainment;  
and ever in hot and in cold I will be your true servant.”  
“Now refuse ye this silk,” said the lady then,  
“because it is simple in itself,  
as it certainly seems to be?  
Lo! little it is, and less it is worth;  
but whoso knew the virtues that are knit therein,  
he would esteem it at a greater price peradventure;  
for whatsoever man is girt with this green lace,  
while he has it fittingly wrapped about him,  
there is no warrior under heaven that can wound him;  
for he could not be slain by any device in the world.”  
Then the knight paused, and it came to his heart  
that it would be a jewel for the peril  
that awaited him when he arrived at the chapel to undergo his ordeal.  
Could he manage to be unslain, that were a noble device.  
Then he indulged her entreaties and suffered her to speak;  
and she pressed the belt on him and offered it to him eagerly.  
And he accepted it, and she gave it him with a good will,  
and besought him for her sake never to discover it,  
but to conceal it loyally from her lord.  
The man agreed that never person should know it indeed but they twain.  
Full oft he thanked her, right glad in heart and thought.  
By that she had kissed the stout knight three times.  
Then she takes her leave and leaves him there,  
for more entertainment she could not get from that man.  
When she was gone, Sir Gawain bestirs himself,  
rises and dresses in noble array.  
He lays up the love-lace the lady had given him,  
hides it full cleverly where he can find it again.  
Then promptly he takes his way to the chapel;  
quietly approaches to the priest and prays him there  
that he would elevate his life,  
and teach him better how his soul should be saved  
when he should go hence.  
Then he shrives him cleanly and shows his misdeeds,  
both the more and the less, beseeches mercy,  
and begs for absolution.  
And the priest assoils him thoroughly and set him as clean  
as if doomsday had been due on the morrow.

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And afterwards Gawain makes more mirth  
among the fair ladies that day with comely carols  
and all kinds of joy than ever he did before,  
till the dark night.  
Everyone had pleasure of him there,  
and said indeed that he had never been so merry since he came hither.