

Gil Kane and John Jakes recreate the violent and desperate times of King Arthur in the novel **Excalibur**. A conversation between Sir Gawain, nephew of the king and regarded in early romances as the model of chivalry, and King Arthur provide insight into knightly concepts of individual dedication, the gist of which, however metaphorical, applies to each of us today.

Just as this sword, no matter what its qualities, can only be used if it is picked up, wielded, so too a man's life. You may let it lay or let others pick it up and use it for their designs. Or you may take it and decide its best use in light of your own convictions.

Just as this sword is my weapon, the vessel that holds the means of my defense and offense, so am I a weapon of our people, a vessel of our spirit. Our people . . . their combined bloods, mingled visions that hold together more than the sum of their parts — they are our master. I shall have their dreams to lead me, to pick me up.

