

**EXCALIBUR**

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Adapted from "Le Morte D'Arthur"

by

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Draft

Final

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

metal  
flying  
each  
their  
their

Darkness. The sound of battle cries and the clang of  
upon metal. The forest lights up with huge sparks  
from sword and ax as armored knights hack and swing at  
other. Mounted knights collide head-on at full gallop,  
armor made incandescent in the clash. Sparks eddy in  
wakes and float to the ground. The forest catches fire.

battle

MAIN TITLES on the flames. Out of the sounds of ancient  
grows music, heroic and barbaric, shot through with  
melancholy.

man  
male;  
knowledge.  
hair

Two crazed eyes reflect the fire. The eyes belong to a  
without age, at once ancient and boyish, female and  
his eyes are pained from the burden of too much  
So close is he to the flames that a lock of his wild

annoying  
It is  
forest,

sizzles alight. He slaps at the fire as if it were an insect. He wears a cloak of black trimmed with silver. Merlin. The wizard weaves a path through the burning dodging the combatants, searching.

**MERLIN**

Lord Uther! Lord Uther!

follow  
flames

The forest around him weeps softly with the sounds that slaughter. Patches of undergrowth are smoldering. Small lick bark and branches.

bodies of

Smoke floats through the trees and hovers over the the dying and the dead.

horse.

A huge knight reins up beside Merlin on a lathered

He

His armor is blood spattered. He is weary from battle.

of

looks down at Merlin, his countenance fierce. The blade of his sword glows with an unnatural aura.

**MERLIN**

It's done. A truce. We meet at the river.

**UTHER**

(disgusted)

Talk. Lovers murmuring to each other...

**EXT. RIVER, FOREST - DAY**

the  
flanked by  
them.

Waiting on one bank of a small river that flows through forest is a warlord, the Duke of Cornwall. He is his armored warriors. Lot of Lowthean prominent among They are battle-weary and bloodied, but they look ready to fight. Behind them is an army of lesser knights.

to

smaller

To the opposite bank come Uther and Merlin, a much

surrounding force of knights, including Uryens, Lord of Gore,  
them.

**DUKE OF CORNWALL**

I spit on your truce, Uther. If you  
want peace, throw down your swords.

silence Uther and the Duke of Cornwall glare at each other in  
anger; across the river. Uther strains forward, burning with  
but Merlin restrains him.

**UTHER**

I should butcher all and every one  
of them. Merlin, what is this wagging  
of tongues?

**MERLIN**

Just show the sword.

the Uther unsheathes his mighty sword, and brandishes it in  
and air high over his head. The blade hums disquietingly  
marvel leaves a lingering electric hue upon the air. The  
instills dread in all present.

**MERLIN**

(waxing eloquent)

Behold the sword of power, Excalibur.  
Before Uther, it belonged to Lud,  
before Lud, to Beowulf, before Beowulf  
to Baldur the Good, before Baldur to  
Thor himself and that was when the  
world was young and there were more  
than seven colors in the rainbow.

(and in an aside to  
Uther)

Speak the words.

**UTHER**

(bellowing)

One land, one king! That is my peace!

his The Duke of Cornwall looks around nervously as some of  
knights fall to their knees in awe.

**DUKE OF CORNWALL**

Lord Uther, if I yield to the sword  
of power, what will you yield?

**UTHER**

Me, yield!?

Merlin urges Uther hard.

**MERLIN**

(a whisper)

He has given. Now you must.

with

The two knights glare at each other, rage contending  
anger.

**UTHER**

The land from here to the sea is  
yours if you will enforce the King's  
will.

The enemies lock eyes and Merlin watches anxiously.

**DUKE OF CORNWALL**

Done!

All men from both sides break out in wild cheers.

**DUKE OF CORNWALL**

My Lord King Uther, let us feast  
together. To my castle. Lord Merlin,  
you must join -

But Merlin is nowhere in sight.

**INT. TINTAGEL CASTLE - HALL - NIGHT**

lusty

She is

Cornwall

knights.

and

Drums and wailing flutes fill the banquet hall with a  
rhythm. Armored warriors watch a lone woman dancing.  
very beautiful, both sensuous and innocent.

Uther sits at the long table beside the Duke of  
with the barons and dukes of the land, and the lesser  
The table is stained with wine and littered with bones  
half-eaten fruit.

Uther's eyes burn with lust as he watches the dancer.

**DUKE OF CORNWALL**

I would wish you such a wife, Lord  
Uther, as my Igrayne. So innocent,  
but in bed, a furnace...

center  
him.  
The Duke rises and goes to his wife, be-striding the  
of the hall and Igrayne weaves circles of dance around  
He gloats with pride.

The words escape his lips:

**UTHER**

I must have her.

Lot spins to face him.

**LOT**

What? You're mad! What about the  
alliance?

**UTHER**

(oblivious)  
I must have her.

**LOT**

And risk all you've won? This castle  
commands the sea gate to the kingdom.

past  
him. Uther is not one for politics, and Lot's words sail  
him. The King lusts for Igrayne.

hall  
dawn  
Muffled  
heard  
Those  
drunk,  
A bell is struck not far away. The music ceases and the  
falls silent. The great door creaks open, revealing the  
light, and a monk steps into the hall and waits by it.  
by corridors of stone, a choir of monks can now be  
singing the high, ecstatic harmonies of the Te Deum.  
who have fallen asleep at the table are roused, those  
helped up.

**INT. PASSAGEWAY, TINTAGEL CASTLE - DAWN**

castle.  
in  
dark.  
bent,  
breathing  
of  
body. So  
mouth is  
an

The monk leads the party down the hallway of the  
Thin shafts of dawnlight filter through archers' slits  
the thick walls onto stone floors. Otherwise, it is  
Each person, lady and knight, proceeds alone, head  
some crossing themselves.  
Uther is among them. He stops in a dark alcove,  
heavily, waiting.  
As the lovely Igrayne drifts past him, he pulls her out  
sight of the others.  
In a shaft of pale light Uther clasps Igrayne to his  
breastplate, his iron arm wrapped around her frail  
violent is his embrace that she cannot breathe, her  
wide with fear, and her feet do not touch the ground;  
impaled butterfly.

**UTHER**

You will be mine. Wife and queen,  
bed and crown.

devour  
she  
can't. Even Uther understands this and lets her go.

**IGRAYNE**

(a fierce whisper)  
I want no other crown and no other  
bed than those I have.

armor,  
Igrayne backs away and joins the procession.  
Uther trembles with unreleased passion.

**INT. PASSAGEWAY OUTSIDE CHAPEL, TINTAGEL CASTLE - DAWN**

the  
Igrayne enters the candlelit chapel from which issues

chant, calling the castle to worship. She rushes to her husband's side, kneeling next to him and whispering.

The  
eyes.

Duke of Cornwall looks back at Uther, hatred in his

**EXT. WAR CAMP - BEFORE TINTAGEL CASTLE - DAY**

among  
rolling  
out  
of

Uther is in a towering rage. Sword drawn, he stalks the biers of fallen knights. Squires and clerics keep a healthy distance. The sky is lowering, pregnant with thunder. Beyond his encampment, high on a cliff rising of the sea stands the impregnable Tintagel Castle, seat the Duke of Cornwall, now under siege.

**UTHER**

(bellowing in all directions)

Merlin! Where are you!?

Ulfius, a

Just then a knight rides up and dismounts. It is lieutenant.

**UTHER**

Have you found him?

**ULFIUS**

No--

But he cannot finish. He is taken aback by the sudden appearance of a hideous hag who approaches, rattling a beggar's pan.

**HAG**

What a hurry you were in this morning, good sir. You forgot to give this old woman a coin.

**ULFIUS**

I saw you half a day's gallop from here. I asked you if you had seen Merlin. I returned here straight away. How did -

**HAG**

--I heard. I have come. I am also Merlin.

flowing

The figure straightens, the filthy rags become a cape, and the hair is swept back by the wind, and it is Merlin, laughing.

**MERLIN**

I have walked my way since the beginning of time. Sometimes I give, sometimes I take. It is mine to know which, and when.

**UTHER**

(exploding)

Dumb riddles, Merlin. I am your King.

Ulfius edges away.

**MERLIN**

I know the storm inside you, and what it has wrought. The alliance I forged is wrecked.

Selfish

The Duke of Cornwall under siege. All this for lust.

lust.

Uther grabs Merlin.

**UTHER**

For Igrayne. One night with her. Do it. Use the magic.

distances

Merlin frowns pensively, his gaze searching strange

Uther.

and wandering; then focusing, blazing straight at

**MERLIN**

You will swear by your true kingship to grant me what I wish. Then you shall have it.

blade,

Uther kneels and draws his sword and holds it up by the

a cross.

**UTHER**

I swear it. By Excalibur and the holy--

**MERLIN**

--What issues from your lust will be mine. Swear it again.

**UTHER**

I swear it.

Merlin looks down sorrowfully at the kneeling King.

**EXT. BATTLEMENTS, TINTAGEL CASTLE - EVENING**

riding  
passes  
The Duke of Cornwall watches a force of armored knights  
forth from Uther's war camp, with banners flying. It  
beneath the castle and on toward a distant cliff.

**DUKE OF CORNWALL**

(to a lieutenant)

It's Uther and all his best knights.  
He leaves behind little more than  
fledglings to guard his camp.

His eyes are as cold and as pale as ice.

**EXT. CLIFF ABOVE THE SEA - TWILIGHT**

the  
sea, is  
and  
moans  
Uther and his knights, and Merlin on a mule, ride to  
high promontory and dismount. Here, overlooking the  
a circle of ancient stones, carved with strange runes  
hieroglyphics, and as the wind moves through them it  
and sighs.

horse,  
The knights watch as Merlin and Uther, leading his  
walk toward the stones. Merlin strides into the circle,  
turning to look at Uther, who hesitates.

**MERLIN**

Come.

halts  
the  
Uther starts to make the sign of the cross, but Merlin  
him with a gesture. Uther's hand drops, and he enters  
circle with his horse.

Castle  
Merlin and Uther look out across the sea, to Tintagel

high upon the cliff.

Merlin solemnly raises his arms toward that distant  
castle,  
he  
wind  
Until  
wind  
and chants in an ancient language, the sounds of which  
marries to the roaring and whining of the wind. The  
becomes stronger, and Merlin's incantations become more  
intense, and the wind in turn becomes wilder still.  
Merlin is charged with a fierce, nonhuman power, as the  
buffets his slight frame.

And then, for all to understand:

**MERLIN**

I hold the balance of all things in  
my summoning. Arise mists. Come fog.

**EXT. VISTA FROM THE CLIFF - TINTAGLE CASTLE - TWILIGHT**

From the horizon a front of fog advances toward the  
castle  
circle  
to envelop it, and continues across the gulf to the  
of stones.

**EXT. GATE, TINTAGLE CASTLE - TWILIGHT**

The portal opens and a small force of armored men, led  
by  
around  
the Duke of Cornwall, exits. A fog is thickening all  
them.

**EXT. CLIFF ABOVE THE SEA - TWILIGHT**

The advancing front envelops Merlin and Uther, eddying  
around  
the stones. All else is obliterated.

**MERLIN**

Mount your horse.

The King does.

**MERLIN**

Ride straight to the castle, across  
the sea of fog.

reins Uther spurs straight for the edge of the cliff, then  
in his horse abruptly.

**UTHER**

But the cliff, the sea...

Merlin rages, crazed.

**MERLIN**

Ride across! Across the bridges of  
desire. Your lust will hold you up.  
For I have just woven it into the  
fabric of the world. This is magic -  
making solid what is in the mind,  
and unsolid, that which is already  
solid.

He gives the horse a stinging blow with his staff.

stepping The horse and Uther charge forward into a gallop and  
hoofbeats off where the hidden edge of the cliff would be,  
they ceasing and the horse dropping for the blink of an eye,  
gallop across the fog.

**EXT. MERLIN'S FOG**

advance Galloping on no visible terrain, Uther and his horse  
animal through the restless fog, and as they recede rider and  
become a wavering, changeable form within the cloud.

**EXT. GATE, TINTAGEL CASTLE - NIGHT**

Horse and rider pull up at the gate.

**RIDER**

(calling)

Wake up in there. It is I.

eyes If it was not for the electric blue hue burning in the  
resemblance to of the man entering the castle, the same magic hue that  
Excalibur left upon the air when wielded, the  
the Duke if Cornwall would be perfect.

After a moment the portal opens.

**INT. INNER GATE, INTAGEL CASTLE - NIGHT**

behind.  
Duke

He passes into an inner court, the portal closing  
Armed men emerge cautiously. Thinking that it is their  
they help him dismount.

**'DUKE' OF CORNWALL**

Have the horse ready. I ride out  
before sunrise.

An inner gate opens and the 'Duke' goes through it.

**EXT. UATHER'S WAR CAMP - NIGHT**

camp,  
trapped  
squawking  
unhorsed  
staggers

The real Duke and his men ride through the fogbound  
cutting the ropes of the tents, stabbing the men  
beneath the canvas. When a frightened crow flies  
into the face of the Duke's horse, which rears. He is  
and falls, and impales himself on a tent stake.  
Dying, the true Lord of Tintagel Castle rises and  
forward, blood pumping from him.

**INT. CHAMBER, TINTAGEL CASTLE - NIGHT**

lone

A little girl of four awakens from a nightmare, a small  
figure in her canopied bed. Her eyes are ice, like her  
father's.

**MORGANA**

Papa... Papa...

bed,

Igrayne is soon at her side, lifting the child from the  
holding her tight.

**MORGANA**

My father is dead...

**INT. IGRAYNE'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT**

The 'Duke' enters. The room is empty, but the door to  
Morgana's room is open.

**INT. MORGANA'S CHAMBER - NIGHT**

The 'Duke' stands in the doorway. Igrayne herself is surprised.

**IGRAYNE**

Look, here is your father. It was just a dream, little one.

**'DUKE' OF CORNWALL**

Come Igrayne.

own  
to  
Igrayne kisses Morgana, tucks her in and returns to her room, closing the door. The child doesn't know whether to believe the truth of the dream or the waking truth.

**INT. IGRAYNE'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT**

Igrayne on  
eyes  
passion,  
armor.  
In full armor, the 'Duke' bears down on the naked her marriage bed. She stares at him, wondering. But his are closed, and finally he carries her in his wild her white limbs tangling around the lustre of his armor.

**EXT. CLIFF ABOVE THE SEA - NIGHT**

coming  
And Merlin is jolted awake from deep within himself, out of a trance.

**MERLIN**

It is done. The future has found root in the present.

midst of  
mighty  
together  
He lifts himself up on his staff. He stands in the the ancient stones, bristling with excitement. Uther's knights are asleep, a deep unnatural sleep, huddled and surrounded by their horses. And then Merlin swoons, collapsing to the ground.

**INT. HALL, TINTAGEL CASTLE - DAWN**

bloodless  
and  
and  
the  
gown.

His lieutenants deposit the Duke of Cornwall's  
body upon the long table. His eyes are wide open, icy  
cunning even in death. The ladies of the castle support  
comfort the grief-stricken Igrayne as she approaches  
body of her husband. Morgana hangs onto her mother's

**IGRAYNE**

When did it happen? Where?

**LIEUTENANT**

In the camp of Uther, my lady, just  
after nightfall.

**IGRAYNE**

It can't be. He came to me, to his  
bed, last night.

**LADY**

It was his spirit, yearning for you  
in his hour of death, that visited  
you.

**IGRAYNE**

His spirit?

Pale with grief, Igrayne stares at her dead husband in  
silence.

again,

Then her hand drifts to her stomach. When she talks  
undone and resolved, it is to all and herself:

**IGRAYNE**

Tintagel Castle falls to Uther. But  
what shall become of me, and the  
child I bear?

across  
that  
cunning

Morgana shows no distress. She runs her baby hands  
her father's face and closes his eyes. The intensity  
was frozen in them is now added to her own pale and  
eyes.

**EXT. CLIFF ABOVE THE SEA - DAY**

He is  
awake.  
Merlin has been propped up against one of the stones.  
in a deep trance and Uther is attempting to shake him

**UTHER**

I want her, Merlin. I cannot be  
without her. Tintagel is mine. Can I  
take her now? Tell me!

puzzling  
Merlin's eyes open but he sees nothing, and only a  
squeal issues from him.

**INT. IGRAYNE'S BEDCHAMBER, TINTAGEL CASTLE- EVENING**

Morgana watches from a corner. The ladies of the castle  
surround Igrayne who is giving birth.

notices.  
Noisy crows alight on the windowsill. Only Morgana

**INT. PASSAGEWAY, TINTAGEL CASTLE - NIGHT**

knights  
spattered.  
Uther strides to Igrayne's bedchamber, his warrior  
following. He is dirty and his iron dress is blood-

**UTHER**

(bellowing)

Three horses died under me, so hard  
did I spur them here. Is it born? Is  
it alive?

**INT. IGRAYNE'S BEDCHAMBER, TINTAGEL CASTLE - NIGHT**

and  
on the  
arms,  
At his approach and entrance the ladies shrink back,  
Morgana edges closer to her mother, and seats herself  
bed beside her. Ingrain holds her newborn baby in her  
the blood of birth still wet upon it.

**UTHER**

Out!

The ladies slip past him to the door, and he goes up to  
Igrayne.

**UTHER**

What is it, lady?

Terrified of him, Igrayne faces him the best she can.

**IGRAYNE**

A boy, sir. Rest yourself.

Uther waves away her words but does sit down on the  
bed,

exhausted. He notices Morgana, who stares at him.

**UTHER**

Send the girl away.

**IGRAYNE**

She is just a child -

**UTHER**

Out!

Igrayne draws the child to her and kisses her cheek.

**IGRAYNE**

(whispering)

Go now. Come back later.

The child leaves silently, hatred in her eyes.

**UTHER**

She watches me with her father's  
eyes.

He grasps the newborn baby with his iron hand, and  
pulls it  
to himself. He looks upon it with wonder, with a  
gentleness  
that is unexpected.

**UTHER**

Igrayne, is he mine, or -

He can't bring himself to say his name. She hesitates  
on the  
edge of tears, worried for the infant lying in its iron  
cradle.

**IGRAYNE**

The night he died, a man loved me  
with great fierceness. He looked  
like my husband, spoke like, smelled  
like, felt like my own husband. But  
it was not he, for he was already

dead. It wasn't his spirit, for this child, who was conceived that night, is flesh and blood. I know nothing more.

Uther draws a dagger. He lifts it.

**IGRAYNE**

No--

leather  
casts  
beaming,

But he uses it before Igrayne can move. He severs the thongs that bind the iron breastplate to his chest. He it to the floor. His chest is smooth and milk-white in striking contrast to his creased, weathered face. And he holds the baby to it.

**UTHER**

Through him, I will learn to love them, for I am tired of battle. I will stay by his side and  
(looking shyly at Igrayne)  
his mother's...

becoming

Igrayne's hatred for the man is at the very edge of love. The baby starts to cry.

**UTHER**

Here. It's hungry.

swollen  
bubbles  
suckles.

And his free hand opens her shift, and he holds a breast in his gloved hand, squeezing gently. Milk from it and he thrusts the baby's mouth onto it. Igrayne weeps and Uther watches proudly as the baby

iridescent  
perched

Merlin advances from the window, his cape the same green-black as the feathers of the crows that were perched by the window.

**UTHER**

Merlin! Out of the sick sleep at last.

**MERLIN**

Doing what I did for you, it wasn't easy, you know. It takes it's toll. It took nine moons to get back my strength.

Uther avoids looking at him.

**MERLIN**

Now you must pay me.

**UTHER**

I?

**MERLIN**

The child is mine, Uther. I have come for him.

Uther is shaken to his roots. Igrayne watches, trying to understand.

**UTHER**

The oath. You didn't say--

**MERLIN**

You didn't ask!

**IGRAYNE**

Uther, is it true? Don't let him take the child.

**UTHER**

I swore an oath, Igrayne. I made a pact with Merlin.

Igrayne suddenly understands. She glares at Uther.

**IGRAYNE**

It was you? You came to me that night. You are the father.

Uther is caught, and turns to Merlin who is harsh and unswaying.

**MERLIN**

It's not for you, Uther, hearth and home, wife and child.

**UTHER**

To kill and be king, is that all?

**MERLIN**

Maybe not even that, Uther. I thought once that you were the one to unite the land under one sword. But it'll take another, a greater king...

**UTHER**

You strike me with words as hard as steel.

**MERLIN**

They are not weapons, my friend, but truths. You betrayed the Duke, stole his wife and took his castle, now no one trusts you. Lot, Uryens, your allies will turn against you. Give me the child, Uther, I will protect him. Go back to your war tent.

hands Uther wrenches the baby from it's mother's breast and  
him to Merlin.

**UTHER**

(in torment)

By the oath, take the devil child.  
Take him!

Igrayne With the bawling baby under his cape, Merlin exits.  
under pulls herself out of the bed, weak, her legs giving  
her. She starts after Merlin.

**IGRAYNE**

WHY?... Why must he have the baby?

his Uther stops her with his bulk and she claws savagely at  
around chest to get past him. He weeps as he folds his arms  
her.

**INT. PASSAGEWAY, TINTAGEL CASTLE - NIGHT**

his As Merlin walks through the castle, the baby crying in  
intervene arms, the knights and ladies step back, afraid to  
in royal matters.

**INT. HALL, TINTAGEL CASTLE - NIGHT.**

Merlin comes across the empty banquet hall, cooing to the baby, strangely pacifying him. Morgana steps out of the shadows in his path, and Merlin stops at the sight of the little girl, her pale eyes glaring at him. She speaks haltingly and clearly while far-off Igrayne cries out her distress.

**MORGANA**

Merlin, are you now the father, and the mother, of the baby?

Staring at her, Merlin shudders and without answering he continues away, faster now, and into an unlit passageway, disappearing from sight a bit sooner than an ordinary mortal would have.

**EXT. FOREST - DAY**

The forest is dark and shiny with rain. An unseen battle rages.

The first combatant in sight is Uther, who swings the mighty Excalibur, cutting an attacker in half at the waist.

Uther and a small force of knights, Ulfius among them, are retreating through the slippery wet forest, completely outnumbered.

Lord Lot of Lowthean and Lord Uryens of Gore are the leaders of the attack.

**URYENS**

(to his men)

The King's sword. I must have it.

Ulfius and his men stand their ground so the King may escape the onslaught. They are hacked down.

tree

Uther flees alone, severing the limbs of any man and  
that stands in his way.

**EXT. STONE IN THE FOREST - DAY**

clearing  
forest  
blood. He  
a

Uther has gained on his pursuers. He comes to a small  
where the spine of a buried boulder rises through the  
floor. He stops upon it, breathing hard, dripping  
rages aloud, but his throat is raw and cracked and only  
whisper comes out.

**UTHER**

Merlin, where are you? To weave a  
mist, to hide us...

He hears his pursuers closing in.

**UTHER**

No one shall have the sword. No one  
shall wield Excalibur but me.

pointing  
up his  
rage  
widens  
pink  
his

He holds it by the hilt with both hands, the blade  
to the ground of stone. He flexes his knees. He lifts  
hands above his head. And with all the strength that  
and pain can muster, and more, he drives the blade of  
Excalibur into the stone, nearly to the hilt. His mouth  
in an awful silent scream, and then the foam of saliva  
with blood issues from deep within him, so violent was  
effort.

As the sword cuts into the rock, the earth shudders.

**EXT. FOREST - DAY**

in

The forest quakes. The knights searching for Uther halt  
fear.

**EXT. FIELDS, WOODS - DAY**

a  
birds. The  
from  
his

And far away, a caped figure is crossing a field toward  
wood, when the earth shakes, stirring animals and  
man turns. He is Merlin, the two day-old baby peeking  
his cape. Merlin is amazed at the phenomenon, he puts  
ear to a rock protruding from the earth.

**MERLIN**

Into the spine of the dragon!  
(and then he is  
saddened)  
Uther... I loved you, mighty child.

whisks

And tears welling, and giggling at the same time, he  
away into the woods.

**EXT. STONE IN THE FOREST - DAY**

is  
mouth

Uther staggers away, colliding with trees, staggering,  
crashing to the ground. Until the only life left in him  
the coursing of his blood, flowing from his gaping  
onto the leaves on the forest floor.

at  
and  
Uryens  
and

The enemy knights advance through the trees. They prod  
the fallen leviathan, they roll him over to get at his  
scabbard. Only then do they see the sword in the stone,  
they stop, amazed and afraid. Their captains appear.  
sees what they are staring at, and races to the sword  
attempts to pull it out.

He strains with all his might, but it is immovable.

**LOT**

Let me.

either,

He shoves Uryens aside, but he can't loosen the sword  
and he rages with frustration.

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**LEGEND APPEARS:**

"Fifteen years passed and the land was without a king."

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. FIELDS - DAY**

fleeing a  
in the  
past the  
their  
leaves in

Peasants spill over the crest of a hill. They are  
force of armored knights, their plumed helmets forged  
semblance of predatory animals. The knights thunder  
peasants, trampling the ripening crops. Sir Uryens is  
leader, his hard face indifferent to the havoc he  
his wake.

The peasants watch in mute anger.

**EXT. FARMYARD - EVENING**

pigs  
lives  
water and  
who  
as

Sir Lot leading another group of mounted knights comes  
galloping into a small hamlet, panicked chickens and  
scattering at their approach. The farmers run for their  
as the steel men dismount, leading their horses to  
hay, and searching for vittles. A knight spots a woman  
stands frozen with fear, and he drags her into the barn  
her crying child watches.

**EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT - MOONLIGHT**

figures  
knight  
new  
jousting  
he

A farmhouse is burning nearby, and three mounted  
make their way along a trail at a walking pace - an old  
in leather and mail, a young knight proud in gleaming  
armor; and on a farm horse, a squire with baggage and  
lance. The old knight, Sir Ector, is troubled by what  
sees.

**SIR ECTOR**

It is a dark hour... everywhere  
lawlessness and destruction, and no  
one to lead us out of it.

darkness,  
They  
slices

Just then, ten crazed peasants emerge from the  
hurling stones and armed with clubs and pronged sticks.  
surround the three riders. Sir Ector wheels around and  
the air with his sword to ward off the ambushers.

**SIR ECTOR**

Listen all. I am Sir Ector of Morven  
and these are my sons. You would  
wrong me, for I have never stolen  
from others, or destroyed the fruit  
of the land.

the  
the

The peasants edge closer, working up the nerve to rush  
horsemen. The sound of thundering hooves cuts through  
clamor.

tears.

A cavalcade of riders, armor gleaming in the moonlight,  
advances across the fields at a gallop. Immediately the  
peasants scatter. The old knight is on the verge of

**SIR ECTOR**

The people's anger is just. It is  
sad that for our own safety, we will  
have to ride to the tournament with  
these robber knights.

**EXT. SITE OF THE SWORD IN THE STONE - SUNRISE**

stone  
each  
burly

Red with the first light of day, Excalibur rests in the  
as King Uther left it. The field is itched with tents,  
flying its heraldic banner. Knights and squires are  
everywhere, preparing horses and armor for the joust. A  
man in religious robes harangues the crowd, vying for  
attention.

**BISHOP**

This is Easter day, when Christ rose  
again. Who will find strength in  
victory of arms? Who will draw the

sword?

throng,  
and  
over

The Bishop goes among the tents, through the teeming solemnly casting holy water upon man and horse, armor banner. The knights kneel at the Bishop's transit, but ceremony does not lift the air of grimness that lies the event.

**EXT. JOUSTING GROUND, SWORD IN THE STONE - DAY**

thunder  
jousting  
deflected  
crowd,  
around  
again  
time  
unhorsed.

Their armor ablaze with sunlight, two mounted knights toward each other at full gallop, lowering their long lances. As they meet, the lance of each knight is by the shield of the other. A gasp goes through the and the two knights charge past each other. They wheel at the end of the jousting ground and go at each other from the other direction. Again lances strike, and this one of the men is hit in the chest and violently The crowd cheers.

**EXT. THE SWORD IN THE STONE - DAY**

dismounts.  
comes  
although

The victor, Leondegrance, rides up to the stone and Each great knight with his coterie of lesser knights to watch. A charge of expectation is in the air, most knights are glowering with envy.

Leondegrance of Camelyarde ascends to the sword, grabs it by the hilt, and begins to tug with all his might. Excalibur is immovable. The moment of tension passes. Leondegrance staggers toward his waiting squires, who lead him away. All the others return to the battle sport.

**EXT. JOUSTING GROUND - DAY**

Kay  
buckling  
small  
empty. He

At the edge of the jousting ground Sir Ector's son Sir  
is getting ready for a bout. His brother Arthur is  
the new armor while his father fusses about him, making  
adjustments when he notices that Kay's scabbard is  
turns to Arthur and grab's him by the ear.

**SIR ECTOR**

Arthur, where is Kay's sword? A good  
squire doesn't forget his knight's  
sword.

The fifteen year-old boy blushes.

**ARTHUR**

I left it in the tent, sir.

**SIR ECTOR**

Well hurry then, and get it.

without

The boy dashes off as Sir Ector shakes his head, not  
affection beneath the sternness.

**EXT. TENTS - DAY**

Arthur runs in search of their tent. He finds it.

**INT. TENT - DAY**

floor,  
verge

He enters. The saddle trunk has been emptied on the  
equipment is scattered all over. Arthur is shocked,  
nonetheless he rummages madly. Finally he stops, on the  
of tears.

**ARTHUR**

It's been stolen....

**EXT. TENTS - DAY**

by two  
left

He comes out, utterly defeated, and frantic. He stops  
knights who are arguing angrily; and one of them has  
his sword in the grass.

can't.

Arthur looks at it. He is tempted to steal it, but he  
Head down, he wanders off.

**EXT. JOUSTING GROUND - DAY**

Sir Ector and Sir Kay are waiting.

**SIR KAY**

Father, I'll go and see what's keeping  
him.

**EXT. THE SWORD IN THE STONE - DAY**

dejected,  
his  
as

Arthur stops at the edge of the dark forest, totally  
when he sees the sword in the stone. He walks up to it,  
face lighting up, brimming with innocence. He is alone,  
everyone has returned to the jousting ground.

**ARTHUR**

If only Kay could have it...

in a  
comes

He smiles, forgetting his troubles, a boy again living  
fairy tale. He grasps the sword by the hilt and it  
away easily from its stone lock.

arm

Not expecting it to, he nearly falls. He stares at it,  
terribly excited and surprised: he tucks it under his  
and rushes back.

**EXT. TENTS - DAY**

He bumps into Kay.

**ARTHUR**

(breathless)

Your sword was stolen, Kay, but here  
is Excalibur. Is it too late? I  
hurried--

his  
only

Kay takes it. He cannot believe what he's holding in  
hands. He starts to talk but he is so agitated he can  
stutter.

**EXT. JOUSTING GROUND - DAY**

him  
Kay, with Arthur in tow, rushes to Sir Ector and shows  
the sword; he trembles with excitement.

**SIR KAY**

Look, Father. Excalibur. Does that  
mean that I am to be king?

Sir Ector is dumbstruck.

**SIR ECTOR**

Did you free the sword, boy?

**SIR KAY**

I... did, Father.

not  
Ector looks at his son amazed, wanting to believe but  
able to.

**SIR ECTOR**

We must go to the stone at once.

stone,  
excitement  
happening.  
With Excalibur in hand Ector of Morven heads for the  
Kay following, and Arthur too, the boy flushed with  
but a little worried, not understanding what is

overheard.  
spreads  
like wildfire.  
The exchange between Sir Ector and Sir Kay has been  
Some have seen the sword in Sir Ector's hand. Rumor

**EXT. THE SWORD IN THE STONE - DAY**

jousting  
and  
peasants too, press around.  
As Sir Ector ascends the stone, from all parts of the  
ground knights and squires, the Bishop and the clerics,

Excalibur  
Ector lowers the blade into the tight cleft and  
sinks to its original position.

**SIR ECTOR**

Draw it, son!

and the Sir Kay grabs the hilt and pulls without conviction,  
sword doesn't give. Eyes downcast, he lets go.

**SIR KAY**

Sir, I didn't draw the sword. Arthur gave it to me.

**SIR ECTOR**

Arthur ?!  
(spinning around to  
face him)  
How did you get the sword, child?

**ARTHUR**

(frightened)  
Sir... Kay needed a sword. His was stolen. I saw Excalibur, and... I took it.

**SIR ECTOR**

You freed it, son?

**ARTHUR**

I did, Father. I beg your forgiveness.

He starts to kneel but Ector pulls him up.

**SIR ECTOR**

Try the sword, Arthur.

and Arthur is about to grasp the hilt when Uryens and Lot,  
Caradoc other nobles, Leondegrance of Camelyarde, and Sir  
and Sir Turquine among the younger, stride up.

**URYENS**

Stand back, Sir Ector, and take your children.

**LOT**

We will try again.

turn Uryens, Lot, Leondegrance, Caradoc, Turquine - each in  
with grapples with the sword, only to be defeated by its  
immobility. The crowd around the stone is thickening  
common folk.

**SIR ECTOR**

Let the boy try the sword.

**BISHOP**

Let the boy try...

knights  
pushes

The demand is echoed by peasants and serfs. The great  
remain silent and bitter in their defeat. Sir Ector  
Arthur to the sword.

**SIR ECTOR**

Go ahead, boy. Don't be afraid.

Excalibur  
following  
afraid,

The boy hesitates shyly, and then takes the hilt of  
and pulls out the sword with a great sweep.

The throng is stunned. Silence falls. Some kneel,  
the example of Sir Ector and Sir Kay, of the Bishop and  
Leondegrance. The other nobles stay back, confused,  
angered.

shining  
confidence  
head.

Arthur stands there, little more than a boy, his cheeks  
flushed, his soft hair ruffled by the wind, his eyes  
with exultation, awe, and fear. Then, as if gaining  
from the sword itself, he turns it in arcs above his

**BISHOP**

We have our King, thanks be to God.

roaring  
and

The commoners and some of the knights react with  
enthusiasm. The others draw closer to Uryens and Lot  
their supporters, closing ranks around them.

**ARTHUR**

Please, Father, rise up. I was your  
son before I became your King... if  
I am King.

Sir Ector rises, tears streaming down his cheeks.

**SIR ECTOR**

My Lord, you are King, all the more

because you are not my son, and I am  
not your father.

This is quite a shock to the boy king, and to the  
onlookers.

**ARTHUR**

Who is, then?

**SIR ECTOR**

I don't know. Merlin brought you to  
me when you were newly born and  
charged me to raise you as my own.  
At first, I did so because I feared  
Merlin, later because I loved you.

Merlin's name is on the lips of all those close by.

**ARTHUR**

Who is Merlin?

**MERLIN**

Speak of the devil!...

From out of the forest strides Merlin, dramatic, cape  
flowing,  
eyes crazed as ever, laughing at his own entrance. A  
crow is  
perched on his shoulder, and it squawks loudly. Annoyed  
with  
it, Merlin swooshes it away.

**MERLIN**

I am Merlin. Counselor to kings.  
Wizard and beggar. Prophet and...

(he drops it)

I have feasted on thunderbolts, I  
savored my death before I got myself  
born. I--

Merlin interrupts himself when his eyes fall on the  
boy, who  
is taking in his performance raptly, half awestruck,  
half  
amused.

**ARTHUR**

Whose son am I?

**MERLIN**

You are the son of King Uther, and  
the fair Igrayne... you are King

Arthur.

The suspicion and confusion and envy of the lords erupts.

**LOT**

Merlin, we haven't forgotten you.  
This is more of your trickery.

**URYENS**

You're trying to foist a boy of  
dubious birth upon us. You want to  
shame us?

**LOT**

Lord Leondegrance, join us against  
the boy. Surely you can see he is  
only Merlin's tool.

**LEONDEGRANCE**

No. I, Leondegrance, Lord of  
Camelyarde, saw the drawing of Uther's  
sword, and witnessed no trickery. If  
a boy has been chosen, a boy shall  
be king.

The crowd of serfs and peasants cheer wildly, and their  
long suppressed anger against the nobles comes to the fore.  
They dare to press up against them, fists hammering on their  
and shields as the chant Arthur King over and over. Dark  
Leondegrance scowling, full of rebellion, all the lords except  
begin to withdraw their iron men surrounding them.

**EXT. CHAPEL, JOUSTING GROUND - DAY**

Bells toll the good news. People stream by to see the  
new king and join the celebration.

**EXT. SITE OF THE SWORD IN THE STONE - DAY**

Uryens and Lot, and Caradoc, Turquine, and the other  
lords have mounted, and are moving out, when from the rear  
guard a bowman in Lot's service draws upon the unarmored figure  
of

arrow  
Arthur across the cheering crowd. The bowman lets the  
fly.

It flies over the heads of the crowd, unseen.  
Except by Merlin at Arthur's side. He extends his arms  
halfway  
on the  
flaps  
up, his fists clenched tightly as if drawing urgently  
power within himself. The sound of wings is heard as he  
his arms.

The arrow flies toward Arthur.  
Arthur sees the arrow coming right at him, when a  
swooping  
crow plucks it out of the air.

Arthur watches the crow flapping its wings, climbing  
swiftly,  
the arrow in its beak, disappearing over the forest.  
Only he  
has noticed.

When he turns Merlin is no longer at his side; to the  
puzzlement of all. And Arthur is all of a sudden  
terribly  
his  
alone and afraid, as people from all sides clamor for  
attention and guidance.

**EXT. FOREST - DAY**

Arthur charges through the shadowy forest. He is in  
armor,  
sheathed  
calls  
but it is only a light tunic of mail. Excalibur is  
in a leather scabbard by his side. He is frantic and he  
urgently.

**ARTHUR**

...Merlin... Merlin...

His face shines with sweat, the horse is lathered. He  
dismounts and continues on foot into denser, more  
tangled  
undergrowth.

**ARTHUR**

Merlin!

to  
head.  
A huge eye opens in the foreground of what had appeared  
be shadow, bark and tufts of weeds is really Merlin's

**MERLIN**

You called, sir?

exhausted  
roots  
his  
His voice is thin as he is awakening from a deep,  
sleep. Arthur finds him lying within the large gnarled  
of a great tree. The boy kneels before Merlin and lifts  
hands and kisses them.

**ARTHUR**

You saved me from the arrow...

**MERLIN**

(a flicker of mischief)  
But not from your destiny.

**ARTHUR**

I want to thank you.

**MERLIN**

That's not why you came.

Arthur blurts it out:

**ARTHUR**

Merlin, help me. I need your help. I  
don't know how--

**MERLIN**

(irritated)  
'Help me, Help me.' Help me get up.

unsteadily.  
Arthur helps Merlin up and the wizard stands

**MERLIN**

I'm tired. Doing magic takes its  
toll, you know. My arms ache  
terribly...  
(he makes flying  
movements with his  
arms and grimaces)  
Once--or is it yet to happen--I stood

exposed to the Dragon's breath so that a man could lie one night with a woman. It took me ten moons to recover. I'm sure that story would interest you, since... Well, we'll have to talk about it another time. You're too busy now.

shrill

The forest groans and creaks, alive with murmurs and calls.

**MERLIN**

It is whispered in the forest that...  
(he cups his ear with  
exaggeration)  
...Leondegrance's castle is under  
siege by Lot and Uryens.

**ARTHUR**

(pressing)  
Yes, yes, I know that. Everybody  
does. Lord Leondegrance is my only  
ally among the barons and the great  
knights. I can't lose him.

**MERLIN**

Well there. You don't need me half  
as much as you think you do. You  
already know what must not happen.

**ARTHUR**

(exasperated)  
I must find the means to save him,  
then. I was hoping I could ask you  
for a little magic help, but if it  
makes you so tired...

**MERLIN**

Thank you.

Silence. Arthur tries again.

**ARTHUR**

It's just that I have no experience,  
and no men to speak of. How can I--

**MERLIN**

(suddenly fierce)  
Because you must! You and only you.  
Have you forgotten that it was you  
who freed Excalibur?

Just as suddenly, he is his amused, ironic self again.

**MERLIN**

Besides, it will be a good lesson.  
(giggling)  
The best, if it's not the last.

Merlin

Arthur bows his head, confused and almost defeated.  
steals a look at him, and puts his arm around the boy.

**MERLIN**

Maybe you'd like to meet the power  
that gave you the sword?

He enjoys being cryptic.

**ARTHUR**

How? Where?

**MERLIN**

In the great book.

**ARTHUR**

What book is that?

**MERLIN**

(melodramatic)  
The book without pages. Open before  
you, all around us. You can see it  
in bits and pieces, for if mortal  
men were to see it whole and all  
complete in a single glance, why, it  
would burn him to cinders.

**ARTHUR**

What?!

**EXT. FOREST AND ELSEWHERE - DAY AND NIGHT**

**MERLIN**

The dragon! There...

lava  
cloud,

A deep cleft at the edge of the forest, where far below  
boils with a phosphorescence that lights up a great  
billowing upward.

**MERLIN**

Coiled in the unfathomed depths, it

emerges...

Merlin points to the sky where roiling clouds appear to  
be unfurling of immeasurable wings.

**MERLIN**

...It unfolds itself in the storm  
clouds...

A terrific wave batters a coastline, spray shooting up,  
and as the wave recedes it exposes dark rocks and deep  
crevices.

**MERLIN**

...it washes its mane sparkling white  
in the blackness of seething  
whirlpools...

Merlin spins Arthur around, and they are transported  
into a storm swept forest. Lightning strikes.

**MERLIN**

...its claws are the forks of  
lightning... its scales glisten in  
the bark of trees...

The trees shine with wetness, as a great wind tosses  
their crowns, the branches groaning against each other.

**MERLIN**

...its voice is heard in the  
hurricane...

Arthur is awestruck.

**EXT. FOREST - DAY**

Arthur and Merlin are back in the same spot, having in  
fact never moved at all, but traveled on the spell of  
Merlin's words alone.

**MERLIN**

...it is so much more than a scaly  
monster. It is Everything!

Arthur's eyes shine with the brilliance of the vision.

**ARTHUR**

And if I am to be King of everything,  
lord and commoner, beast, leaf and  
rock, I must use its voice, its claws,  
its power.

**EXT. BATTLEMENTS, CASTLE OF CAMELYARDE - NIGHT**

sees  
girl of  
surviving  
walls  
Leondegrance, Lord of Camelyarde, is shocked by what he  
in the distance. His daughter Guenevere, a beautiful  
sixteen, draws close to him, terrified. With his  
knights, Leondegrance is making his last stand. The  
have been breached, parts of the castle are burning.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE - NIGHT**

gleam  
A bellowing dragon advances. Its eyes burn, its scales  
from light shining from within. It snorts fire from its  
nostrils.

in  
away  
unprepared war  
in  
Uryens and Lot, Caradoc and Turquine, the great knights  
command of the siege of Leondegrance's castle, back  
speechless as the monster descends upon their  
camp. All around them, squires and lesser knights flee  
panic and confusion.

backs  
waiting  
Only a dozen or so remain with their leaders. The group  
up against the swampy moat that surrounds the castle,  
with swords drawn.

that it  
Their  
scales,  
its  
The dragon moves closer, and now it becomes apparent  
is nothing more than a force of knights and footmen.  
shields glinting in the moonlight are the dragon's  
torches its burning eyes. And the snorting flames from  
nostrils are only Merlin doing a fire-eater's trick.

the  
and Kay

The dragon form dissolves, and a banner rises bearing  
emblem of the Dragon, and under it, Arthur and Ector  
lead a charge of twenty knights.

upon

In Arthur's hands, Excalibur leaves an electric glow  
the air.

**EXT. BATTLEMENTS, CAMELYARDE CASTLE - NIGHT**

**GUENEVERE**

Father, it's the boy King.

**LEONDEGRANCE**

It is. I will fight my way to his  
side.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE - NIGHT**

and  
water  
armor,  
Arthur's  
Bleeding  
back

Arthur and his men charge into the enemy ranks. Lot's  
Uryens' people are pushed into the moat. Although the  
is only waist-deep, the fallen, weighed down by their  
armor, drown. The horses of the attackers are brought down,  
among them. He pulls out from under it, limping.  
form wounds, cutting, slashing, thrusting, he falls  
from the havoc of the charge.

respite.  
their

A small distance exists now between the foes, a brief  
Uryens and Lot, exhausted, bleeding, and fierce in  
rage:

**URYENS**

War-wise fighters, grown gray in  
battle, checkmated by a boy.

**LOT**

It's Merlin's trickery, nothing more.  
I won't swear faith to that wizard's  
brat.

his

Arthur and his men have been joined by Leondegrance and

knights, few in number.

**ARTHUR**

Let's finish this with a show of force. We have no more tricks and no more advantages.

his  
die.  
He rushes alone at the enemy, shouting at the top of lungs, Excalibur flashing over his head, prepared to

**EXT. BATTLEMENTS, CAMELYARDE CASTLE - NIGHT**

Guenevere watches...

**GUENEVERE**

No...

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE - NIGHT**

**SIR ECTOR**

No... Arthur--

defend  
from  
The old knight rushes after the boy, sword drawn, to his flank, and the others follow, a battle cry issuing from them that is terrifying in its fierceness.

**EXT. BATTLEMENTS AND BATTLEFIELD BELOW - NIGHT**

face  
...and when she can't watch any longer, she buries her face in her hands.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE - NIGHT**

savage  
fall  
Arthur fights like a wounded lion at the center of the melee of sword and shield, and once again the two sides fall apart.

bodies of  
wounded,  
Arthur  
Uryens and Lot are standing in the moat among the bodies of their men, are reduced to eleven knights, all wounded. Arthur is flanked by twenty men at arms, most of them wounded, and trembling now beyond exhaustion with blood lust.

steps forward alone, and addresses his opponents.

**ARTHUR**

You are in my hands, to slay or spare.  
I need battle lords such as you.  
Swear faith to me and you shall have  
mercy.

**URYENS**

Noble knights swear faith to a mere  
squire?

watching  
implacable,  
going

Arthur turns, searching for Merlin. He spots him  
from a distance. They stare at each other, Merlin  
Arthur's eyes pleading. It's obvious that Merlin isn't  
to help.

**ARTHUR**

You are right. I'm not yet a knight.  
(gaining strength)  
You, Uryens, will knight me.

before

He unsheathes Excalibur and goes forward, kneeling  
Uryens and offering him the sword.

**ARTHUR**

Then as knight to knight I can offer  
you mercy.

**MERLIN**

(to himself)  
What's this, what's this?!

him,  
mad

Arthur, kneeling, bows his head and Uryens steps up to  
his features set. He accepts the sword. Lot watches, a  
hope dancing in his eyes.

**EXT. BATTLEMENTS, CAMELYARDE CASTLE - NIGHT**

Guenevere watches, frightened for Arthur, not daring to  
breathe.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE - NIGHT**

enigmatically.

Uryens stands towering above the boy. He smiles

He lifts Excalibur.

Merlin is attempting to push through the crowded ranks  
to get to Arthur.

He's frantic and worried for once.

**MERLIN**

I never saw this...

Uryens swiftly lowers the sword on Arthur's neck; with  
the flat of the blade he gives Arthur the three strokes.

**URYENS**

In the name of God, of Saint Michael  
and Saint George, I give you the  
right to bear arms, the power to  
mete justice.

Arthur looks up.

**ARTHUR**

That duty I will solemnly obey as  
knight and King.

Uryens is deeply moved.

**URYENS**

Rise, my King. I am your humble  
knight, and I swear allegiance to  
the courage in your veins, for so  
strong it is, it's source must be  
Uther. I doubt you no more.

Sir Arthur rises and Uryens kneels and kisses his hands.

Ector turns away to hide brimming tears. Merlin pushes  
through finally, out of breath. Uryens embraces Leondegrance  
while

Lot and the other enemy knights kneel in turn and kiss  
Arthur's hands.

**EXT. WOOD BY CAMELYARDE CASTLE - DAY**

The castle can be glimpsed through the trees. A clear  
spring bubbles from the ground, and the sun splashes leaf,  
bird,

Guenevere

squirrel, and bee with golden light, and Arthur and  
too. Guenevere is serious and intent on her work.

**ARTHUR**

Owww...

on  
arms,  
sewing.  
cloth.

With water from the spring, she is bathing a large cut  
his chest that has been stitched closed. Wounds on his  
and one on a calf also show evidence of her neat  
She's just finishing, and she dabs his chest with a dry

**GUENEVERE**

It didn't hurt too much, did it?

**ARTHUR**

Ye...

**GUENEVERE**

--I'm pretty good at stitchery. I've  
sewn my father's wounds more than  
once.

He starts to get up.

**GUENEVERE**

Careful! You'll have to stay still  
for a few days or you'll tear them  
open.

Arthur shivers at the thought.

**ARTHUR**

But I have to leave tomorrow. The  
forests are thick with rebels,  
invaders plunder our shores...

**GUENEVERE**

--And damsels in besieged castles  
are waiting to be rescued?

**ARTHUR**

I didn't know Leondegrance had a  
daughter.

**GUENEVERE**

Well, then, I shall tell you which  
knights have maiden daughters, so

you can avoid their castles.

irritates  
Arthur smiles at her, enjoying her jealousy, and it  
her a little.

**GUENEVERE**

No, I think it's better if you just  
stay here to heal. At least a week.

**ARTHUR**

I'm going.

**GUENEVERE**

Quiet, or I'll sew up your mouth  
too.

shut.  
She touches his lips with hers, her eyelids fluttering  
He stares at her young beauty, and draws her into a  
long,  
slow kiss.

away.  
A shrill almost human squeal pierces the air not far  
Arthur pulls away startled, half-rising. Guenevere  
giggles.

**GUENEVERE**

Would you rescue me from a fiery  
dragon, sir?

She puts her arms around him, drawing him close again,  
speaking in a half-whisper.

**GUENEVERE**

It's just a furry little rabbit that  
took the bait and sprung the trap.

closer:  
They smile at each other, about to kiss. As they come

**GUENEVERE**

You'll find him served up to you  
tonight, cooked in a most excellent  
sauce...

**INT. BANQUET HALL, CAMELYARDE CASTLE - EVENING**

The soft beat of psaltery and the liquid flow of lute.

position is  
table  
it  
and it  
gliding,  
right.  
into  
another  
his

serving platter bearing roast rabbit in rampant  
carried across the hall. It is laid on the long raised  
before Arthur, who presides in the middle. He looks at  
suspiciously and blushes, remembering the afternoon;  
looks back at him accusingly with its cherry eye.  
Guenevere is dancing around her father, lovely,  
sensual. She sees Arthur and the rabbit and laughs out-  
He twists off a leg of the rabbit and sinks his teeth  
it to hide his embarrassment. Guenevere passes to  
partner, smiling at him, radiant. Arthur watches her,  
heart breaking. He is in love.  
Merlin leans close.

**MERLIN**

A king must marry, after all.

**ARTHUR**

...of course...

Only then does he realize that Merlin has understood everything. He is annoyed at being so transparent.

**ARTHUR**

I love her. If she would be my queen,  
my dreams would be answered.

**MERLIN**

(mischievous)

There are maidens as fair, and fairer  
than Guenevere. If I put my mind to  
it, I could see them now, many of  
them, weeping for love of you,  
watching the hills for you coming  
from the high towers of their castles.  
Offering you their every favor. Rich,  
clever--but if it is to be Guenevere,  
so be it.

A shadow of doubt crosses Arthur's brow.

**ARTHUR**

Who will it be? Put your mind to it,  
then.

**MERLIN**

Guenevere. And a beloved friend who  
will betray you.

**ARTHUR**

(smiling)  
Guenevere...

**MERLIN**

You're not listening. Your heart is  
not. Love is deaf as well as blind.

her  
before  
Guenevere approaches, smiling and coquettish. She slaps  
hands, and a servant sets down a tray of pastries  
Arthur.

**GUENEVERE**

They are only for you, for in them I  
mixed things that heal, but not too  
quickly; and things that make limbs  
sleepy, preventing escape, but keep  
one's mind sharp.

She smiles at Arthur's embarrassment and confusion.

**ARTHUR**

What's in them?

She takes a cake and bites into it.

**GUENEVERE**

It is an ancient mixture, containing  
only soft, unborn grains, and flavored  
with roses. The rest is secret.

looking at  
it.  
Guenevere offers one to Arthur, and he hesitates,

**MERLIN**

Looking at the cake is like looking  
at the future. Until you have savored  
its bitterness and its sweetness,  
its texture and its perfume, what do  
you really know? And then, of course,  
it will be too late.

into Arthur bites into the cake, and Guenevere looks deep  
his eyes.

**MERLIN**

Too late...

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**A LEGEND APPEARS:**

"...but for years war kept Arthur from thoughts of  
marriage."

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. OAK FOREST - DAY**

Near War tents have been pitched beneath the majestic trees.  
in the banner of the Dragon a doe grazes. Arthur is older,  
watched battle-scarred plate armor, pacing and angry. He is  
the by his wounded and bruised knights--Kay, Uryens, Lot,  
Leondegrance, Caradoc, and some new young faces among  
ranks. No one talks.

arrival The harsh clank of its battle trappings announces the  
knight of a horse. All eyes watch it walk into the camp. A  
is slouched in the saddle.

some Arthur runs to meet the horse, followed by squires and  
of the knights.

It is He eases the rider to the ground, unlaces his helmet.  
in Sir Ector, and his hauberk is badly dented. Tears burn  
Arthur's eyes.

**SIR ECTOR**

He is the mightiest and fairest of  
knights.

**ARTHUR**

We fought and won battles, and now

one man defeats all my knights? I  
will go.

steps He pushes past the knights and goes to his horse. Kay  
in front of him.

**SIR KAY**

A king must not engage in single  
contest. I'll go again.

from Arthur rises into the saddle and takes a jousting spear  
the rack.

**ARTHUR**

Where is Merlin?

The squires are silent.

from. His Arthur gallops off in the direction Sir Ector came  
knights are afraid for him.

**EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY**

bordering His countenance grim, Arthur gallops along a trail  
to a plowed field when in it a scarecrow moves. It starts  
Arthur run as stick-wielding farmers pursue it. It is Merlin.  
armored turns off into the field, and at the sight of an  
Merlin knight on a war horse, the farmers turn and flee.  
stops to catch his breath.

**ARTHUR**

(angry)

I should have left you to fend for  
yourself.

**MERLIN**

I had to weave a little enchantment  
on the bees so I could get some honey,  
and I didn't feel up to using any  
more magic just yet. Anyway, I was  
in less danger than you'll be in  
today.

Arthur's hand is clenched tight around Excalibur's  
hilt.

**ARTHUR**

So you were stealing their honey.  
They should have killed you.

**MERLIN**

Come now. So much anger for such a  
little crime? Are you sure there is  
nothing else troubling you?

**ARTHUR**

You know full well there is, and I  
go to meet it now. Come witness my  
revenge.

He offers his arm and Merlin hoists himself up behind  
the  
King.

**EXT. GORGE THROUGH THE HILLS - DAY**

A waterfall cascades into a pool. The spray casts a  
rainbow.  
Beneath it is a colorful confusion of flowers and  
budding  
trees, a place dreamlike in its beauty.

Arthur, with Merlin behind, gallops along the edge of  
the  
pool. The trail widens into a field of grass. Arthur  
reins  
beside a pile of broken lances and twisted shields.

Across  
the field, pitched upon the trail is a war tent made of  
diaphanous white silk, a sky blue banner above it.

Merlin  
slides off and Arthur continues.

From the tent, a knight with jousting lance rides  
forward to  
meet him. His armor is so shiny it is a mirror. His  
eyes,  
seen through the open visor, seem to laugh. His speech  
is  
foreign, from across the sea. He is Lancelot of the  
Lake.

**LANCELOT**

Good day to you, sir.

**ARTHUR**

Move aside. This is the King's road,  
and the knights you joined arms  
against were his very own.

**LANCELOT**

I await the King himself. His knights  
are in need of training.

**ARTHUR**

I am King, and this is Excalibur,  
sword of kings from the dawn of time.  
Who are you, and why do you block  
the way?

**LANCELOT**

I am Sir Lancelot of the Lake, from  
across the sea. I am the best knight  
in the whole of Christiandom, and I  
look for the king who is worthy of  
my sword's service.

**ARTHUR**

--That is a wild boast. You lack a  
knight's humility.

**LANCELOT**

Not a boast, sir, but a curse.  
(a cloud passes over  
his innocent face)  
Never have I met my match in joust  
or duel.

**ARTHUR**

Move aside!

**LANCELOT**

I will not. You must retreat or prove  
your kingship in the test of arms,  
under the eyes of God.

He crosses himself.

**ARTHUR**

Then may He give me the strength to  
unhorse you and send you with one  
blow back across the sea.

Arthur wheels away, trembling with anger, and gallops  
to his edge of the field. He sees that Lancelot has already  
positioned himself and is waiting, lance down.

other.  
Arthur  
is  
Merlin watches, a spectator, as the two charge at each  
They collide with great force, their spears shattering.  
is jolted but stays in the saddle. Lancelot's jousting  
is impeccable. Arthur draws Excalibur.

**LANCELOT**

Hold! I offer you another lance.

Lancelot.  
Pages come forward with new lances for Arthur and

**LANCELOT**

You joust well, sir. Battle learnt,  
but tournament fancy. You should  
ride more forward in the saddle,  
though.

circles  
Lancelot  
He  
Excalibur.  
Arthur grabs the spear from the page's hands, and  
back to work the horse up into an all-out gallop.  
spurs forward to meet him. Arthur is neatly unhorsed.  
picks himself up from the ground in a rage, drawing  
Lancelot on his horse weaves circles around him.

**LANCELOT**

Yield. I have the advantage.

**ARTHUR**

I will not.

slashes  
Arthur charges Lancelot, a raging bull, but cuts and  
only at the air as Lancelot stays clear of him.

**ARTHUR**

Fight me from your horse or on foot,  
but fight me. Your avoidance mocks  
me.

**LANCELOT**

I sought only not to harm you, sir.

Shield and  
He dismounts and draws his sword, and they clash.  
sword and armor against shield and sword and armor. The

hacking,  
Arthur  
lifts his

swordplay is furious, Arthur attacking, slashing,  
Lancelot parrying effortlessly, elegantly defensive.  
breaks the onslaught to catch his breath. Lancelot  
visor. His eyes are calm, laughing.

**LANCELOT**

Sir, your rage has unbalanced you.  
It seems you would fight to the death  
against a knight who is not your  
enemy, for a length of road you can  
ride around.

**ARTHUR**

So be it, to the death.

**LANCELOT**

It is you, sir, who knows not the  
virtue of humility, as a true king  
must.

shield  
own  
both  
his  
cutting  
snaps  
sword.  
stunned  
Arthur

Arthur goes forward attacking with terrible blows upon  
Lancelot's shield, and Lancelot holds his ground,  
high. And in its mirror-like metal Arthur can see his  
reflection, a face distorted by uncontrolled passion.  
Arthur discards his own shield, grabs Excalibur with  
hands, and with a frightening shout that speaks of all  
rage, he swings a terrific blow upon the shield,  
cutting through his own reflection and the metal. And Excalibur  
snaps in two.  
A blinding blue-green light explodes from the broken  
Lancelot, knocked back by the force of the blow, is  
stunned by the blast and falls to the ground unconscious.  
Arthur backs away, horrified, half of Excalibur in his hand.

**ARTHUR**

What horror is this?  
(calling)  
Merlin!

Merlin approaches, pale, gripped by dread.

**MERLIN**

The sword is broken. Hope is broken...

Arthur picks up the broken blade, utterly undone.

**ARTHUR**

My pride broke it, my rage broke it... Humiliation and defeat lie in ambush even for a king.

(looking at Lancelot)

This excellent knight who fought with fairness and grace was meant to win. With Excalibur, I tried to change that verdict.

Merlin stands there, drawn, defeated, his hopes dead.

**ARTHUR**

I have lost for all time the ancient sword of my fathers whose power was meant to unite all men, to serve the vanity of a single man.

the  
Despairing, he flings the two parts of Excalibur into  
pool. He kneels at the waters edge, and he cries.

**ARTHUR**

I am nothing.

the  
dancing  
Then Arthur sees something that startles him. Beneath  
surface, suspended in the blue-green water amid the  
weeds, he sees Excalibur, intact.

water,  
It is held by a maiden in flowing gown the color of  
her long hair rippling across her face, obscuring it.

**ARTHUR**

Excalibur! Is it true?

**MERLIN**

The Lady of the Lake. Take it. Take it, quickly!

hilt and  
Arthur dips his hand under the water and grasps the

fades.  
before

the moment he does the vision in the blue-green water  
He rises with Excalibur in hand, and Merlin speaks  
Arthur can ask the question.

**MERLIN**

There are infinite worlds within the  
infinite coils of the Dragon. In one  
of them, which I have not traveled,  
the sword was forged. I only know  
that the King is returned to us  
through the instrument of his power.  
The game continues!

And he laughs.

curls.  
once

Just then Lancelot stirs. Arthur rushes to his side. He  
loosens his helmet and removes it, uncovering damp  
The young knight's eyes open, and his laughing charm  
more animates his face.

**ARTHUR**

Thanks to God, you are alive.

**LANCELOT**

(sitting up)  
I, the best knight in the world,  
bested! This is a great day, for my  
search is over. I love you, my King.

He embraces Arthur, who is overwhelmed by his childlike  
directness. The King helps him to his feet.

**ARTHUR**

You are still the best knight in  
Christiandom. You gained a hundred  
advantages over me. It is I who must  
love you, for through your courage  
and patience you taught me a bitter  
lesson.

**LANCELOT**

Then make me your champion and I  
will always fight in your place.

**ARTHUR**

But your life and lands are far from  
here.

**LANCELOT**

I gave up my castles and my lands!

He thumps his breastplate.

**LANCELOT**

My domain is here, inside this metal skin. And I would pledge to you all that I still own: muscle, bone, blood and the heart that pumps it.

**ARTHUR**

And a great heart it is. Sir Lancelot, you will be my champion.

Lancelot draws his sword, holding it by the blade, a crucifix.

**LANCELOT**

In the name of Jesus Christ and His holy blood, I swear eternal faith to Arthur, King.

They embrace, and Merlin watches.

**EXT. ARTHUR'S WAR CAMP - NIGHT**

Converging from different directions parties of mounted knights enter the war camp. Lancelot among them. They dismount, battle-weary and burning with the excitement of victory. They quench their huge thirst from buckets carried by squires. They rip off hunks of meat from carcasses sizzling on spits over a roaring fire. And they join the throng of knights, where stories of deeds of arms of the day are enthusiastically exchanged.

A great number of knights are packed tightly around King Arthur, each man anxious to tell of his victories. One of them has the King's attention.

**KNIGHT**

...We killed every one of them. Burnt their ship...

Arthur sees Lancelot in the throng and moves toward him.

in  
the

Merlin follows Arthur and is pushed and knocked around  
the crush of spikes and iron. The only unarmored man in  
crowd, he glares at the excited knights irritably.

**ARTHUR**

Lancelot, how did you fare in the  
North?

**LANCELOT**

We spared the lives of a few, so  
they could sail home and tell their  
fellows what fate they met at the  
hands of King Arthur's knights...

Arthur turns toward Uryens.

**ARTHUR**

And you, Uryens?

**URYENS**

Victory!

**ARTHUR**

Lot, and you?

**LOT**

We drove the invaders into the sea.

**ARTHUR**

You, Gawain, the East?

**GAWAIN**

The East is ours again.

Cheers greet each declaration.

**ARTHUR**

The war is over. One land, one King.  
Peace.

pushing  
with

Amidst the celebration, a fracas is heard. A knight  
forward to talk to Arthur has entered a shoving match  
those in front of him.

**KNIGHT**

Let me through. I fought the King's  
battle too. He must know my story.

Merlin is brutally jostled. He draws a fistful of powder from his cape and he tosses it into the air above him. He raises his staff into the cloud, cracking it like a whip. The tip of the staff catches fire, and the fire spreads through the powder in the air, stunning all into silence. Merlin shouts and snarls.

**MERLIN**

Chaos... confusion... brutes... savages... troglodytes... Stand back... make space.

Merlin swings his burning staff into a wide arc. The knights back away, amused at first, then a bit afraid.

**MERLIN**

The moon... the sun... the stars... they spin... they turn... they circle... around us... us...

The knights have fallen back. Merlin stalks past each man, and Arthur too, holding the flaming tip of his staff before each pair of eyes, and staring into them with his gimlet gaze.

**MERLIN**

You, and you, and you, take up your place. Be wedded to the world. Respect its perfection. All of you, together, be one.

The knights have formed a circle. They realize this. Awestruck, they whisper in astonishment, looking up at the sky burning with stars. Merlin brims with pride as he waits for Arthur to recognize his handiwork.

**ARTHUR**

Your ancient wisdom and infinite sight have forged this circle, Merlin. Hereafter we shall come together in a circle, to tell and hear of deeds good and brave. I will build a table

where this fellowship shall meet.  
And a hall around the table. And a  
castle about the hall.

A cheer rises. Arthur strides into the ring of knights.

**ARTHUR**

And I will marry.

Another bout of cheers goes up, and Arthur stops before  
Leondegrance, resting his hand on the old knight's  
shoulder.

**ARTHUR**

And the land will have an heir to  
wield Excalibur.

Leondegrance's eyes fill with tears of joy. A roar of  
cheers.  
Arthur draws the sword of power.

**ARTHUR**

Knights of the Round Table, good  
friends, brothers in arms. I send  
you on a quest harder by far than  
the battles we have fought together,  
a quest to uphold always, and  
everywhere, justice, honor, and truth.  
Each day shall bring forth a cause,  
and may each cause bring forth a  
knight.

Lancelot is drawn in by the King's enthusiasm. He  
unsheathes  
his sword and swoops it low in salute.

**LANCELOT**

I swear never to rest twice on the  
same pillow till all men live at  
peace.

In quick succession all knights draw their swords,  
following  
Lancelot's example.

Merlin struggles to put out the flame on his staff. He  
finally  
does it by smothering it with earth. When he looks up  
again,  
he sees the knights galloping off in all directions.

**INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY**

or  
are  
they  
A

Terrified women, a screaming child, cowering men, old  
made old by the hard labor of the fields. Armored men  
ransacking a farm, looking for grain, and gold which  
find among the votive objects of a little house altar.  
A woman is dragged away to be raped.

emerging  
sudden  
crying

Through a window, a knight in shining armor is seen  
from the adjoining woods. The plunderers are all of a  
apprehensive, and fall silent. One of them grabs the  
child and covers her mouth with his iron hand.

**EXT. FARMYARD - DAY**

rides  
farm.  
loaded  
farmers are

The knight is Lancelot, in his mirror-like armor. He  
into the cluster of houses and barns that make up the  
There are other armored men there, around a cart half-  
with loot. They smile nervously at Lancelot. The  
blank with fear.

among the

Lancelot stops in the middle of the yard. A knight  
armored men comes forward.

**KNIGHT**

Good day, sir.

**LANCELOT**

Good day to you.

patriarch

And he also acknowledges with a nod the ashen-faced  
of the community.

relief.

Lancelot spurs his horse on, and the knight sighs with  
But then he reins his horse to a stop. He has sensed  
something. He turns his head, his hooded eyes on the  
knight  
and his men, and they squirm inwardly.

**INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY**

The child, her mouth covered by the armored hand.

**EXT. FARMYARD - DAY**

Lancelot, listening, watching.

**INT. BARN - DAY**

The woman, a blade flashing next to her eye.

**EXT. FARMYARD - DAY**

shiny  
slowly

Lancelot, immobile. Behind him, the knight, his face with sweat. His minions inch forward, hands moving toward sword hilts.

Lancelot wheels his horse around.

**LANCELOT**

I hear the stifled cry for help, I  
smell the reek of fear...

and  
rear and  
with  
of

With a shout the knight and his men draw their swords rush Lancelot. He reins in his horse, causing it to break their attack. He slides off, falling on his feet sword drawn, already fighting. In an extraordinary show of sword play he cuts down six men.

**INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY**

hands  
Lancelot  
down  
mid-  
The

Hearing Lancelot storm in, the man holding the child her to a woman and kneels before the altar, just as bursts into the room, sword high and already swooping on the man's neck. Lancelot brings the sword to a halt air, his fury held in check. The repent man is spared. The woman kneels to kiss Lancelot's hand.

**EXT. SITE OF THE SWORD IN THE STONE - DAY**

decked for  
Guenevere, a  
around  
the  
among  
altar.

The field is pitched with war tents and pavilions  
holiday. Nobles and knights flank the King and  
beautiful vision in white samite, a wreath of flowers  
her head. Lancelot leads a long file of prisoners to  
King. They fall to their knees, begging forgiveness;  
them is the man whom Lancelot had spared before the

**LANCELOT**

These men repented before God for  
their evil deeds. Those who would  
not, met their fate at the end of my  
sword.

(he kneels)

Accept the fruit of my first quest  
as my wedding gift.

**ARTHUR**

I do. Rise, Lancelot, come with me.

central  
inside.

He rises and follows Arthur and Guenevere into the  
pavilion. Pages draw its curtains closed as they pass

**INT. PAVILION - DAY**

who  
knight

Guenevere is surrounded by a group of ladies and maids  
fuss over her dress and her hair. They eye the great  
and whisper about him, Guenevere laughing with them.  
Arthur sits, excited and happy.

**ARTHUR**

Sit beside me, Lancelot.

Lancelot sits, stiff and upright.

**ARTHUR**

Your deeds set an example for all  
other knights. For your gift, ask a  
gift of me.

**LANCELOT**

Only give me leave to ride out again,

to do what I am most able to do, and  
happiest doing.

to Guenevere overhears. She approaches and Lancelot jumps  
his feet.

**GUENEVERE**

(to Arthur)

He must stay for the feasting days  
of our wedding, and tell his deeds  
himself.

**ARTHUR**

(to Lancelot, smiling)

I grant you your wish if you grant  
Lady Guenevere hers.

**LANCELOT**

I will stay Madame.

Merlin leans close to Arthur.

**MERLIN**

The knights of Galys approach the  
camp. It would be politic...

**ARTHUR**

...to ride out and meet them.

straightens. He rises. Lancelot, who was about to sit again,

**ARTHUR**

I will ride with Sir Kay. Lancelot,  
rest here.

**GUENEVERE**

Don't start a war on my wedding day!

**ARTHUR**

Without Lancelot?!

She Arthur and Merlin exit, leaving Guenevere and Lancelot.  
smiling. looks at him, lively and amused, and he can't help

**GUENEVERE**

Look Lancelot. The maids and ladies  
whisper about you. They all dream of  
winning you, young and old, fair and

ugly.

Lancelot blushes.

**GUENEVERE**

But surely that's no secret to you, dear Lancelot. You're the bravest and strongest knight they've ever seen, and beauty has kissed your brow.

He can't look at her.

**GUENEVERE**

The well-kept secret is whether any of them has won your heart.

**LANCELOT**

No.

**GUENEVERE**

Why?

**LANCELOT**

I am a fighting man and I am married to the quest. That is enough.

**GUENEVERE**

And there is no maiden in the whole world who inspires you?

**LANCELOT**

There is one.

**GUENEVERE**

Who?!

**LANCELOT**

You.

**GUENEVERE**

Me?

**LANCELOT**

Yes. I would swear my love to you.

**GUENEVERE**

To me? But why?

**LANCELOT**

I cannot love as a woman the lady who will be wife to my King and my

friend. And, in pledging my love to  
you, I cannot love any other woman.

Guenevere smiles, moved by his blunt innocence.

**LANCELOT**

I will see you in all women, and I  
will defend them as I would defend  
you.

He kneels, kisses her thigh, rises and leaves.

**INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

altar  
with  
glows  
satisfied.

A chorus of children sings. The Bishop waits at the  
with his friars and altar boys. Cornucopias overflowing  
vegetables and wildflowers adorn the church, which  
with the light of a thousand candles. Sir Kay is  
He comes back up the petal-strewn aisle.

**EXT. CHAPEL, SITE OF THE SWORD IN THE STONE - DAY**

flanked  
follow,  
the

Arthur and Guenevere are ushered in by Kay. They are  
by Leondegrance and Sir Ector. Lancelot and Merlin  
leading the cortege of knights and ladies.  
Merlin is incapable of entering the chapel, as if at  
threshold there is an unseen force that repels him.

**LANCELOT**

Lord Merlin, are you ill?

**MERLIN**

No, no, I need air.

Uryens  
and  
off

Strangling a laugh he wrenches himself away. Just then  
and a small party of knights rides up through the tents  
dismounts in front of the church. Uryens helps a lady  
her horse and joins the cortege on foot.

**URYENS**

Merlin, don't you join the

celebration?

Merlin, who was slinking away through the throng of  
bystanders, looks up. What he sees sends a chill  
through his  
body.

At Uryens' side stands a young woman of sinister  
beauty,  
with bewitching eyes of ice. Merlin just stares at her,  
and  
she smiles back at him faintly.

**URYENS**

My wife, Merlin. Lady Morgana of  
Cornwall.

**MORGANA**

I remember you, Merlin. I was a child.  
You took my brother away.

Merlin laughs. Uryens shrugs and continues into the  
chapel  
with Morgana. As she enters she glances back, and just  
then  
Merlin steals a look, their eyes meet.

**INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

Uryens and Morgana take their places near the altar.  
Arthur  
and Guenevere kneel before the Bishop, and Arthur takes  
her  
hand. The clatter of armor mingles with the  
enthusiastic,  
happy singing of the children, and seems to strengthen  
their  
song.

**EXT. SITE OF THE SWORD IN THE STONE - EVENING**

The chorus carries across the field to the dark wall of  
trees  
from which issues another chorus, of hoots and squawks  
and  
howls. Merlin advances along the edge of the forest. He  
stops  
by the stone that once held the sword, his eyes wild.  
He  
forgets his inner torment when he sees a plant at the  
base

admires

of the stone. He kneels beside it and plucks it. He  
its strange flowers; he smells them.

face

Two feet appear at his side. He rises to be face to  
with Morgana. They look deep into each other. Then  
Merlin  
breaks the silence.

**MERLIN**

You left your husband's side? You  
left your brother's wedding?

**MORGANA**

Is that Mandrake, Lord Merlin?

**MERLIN**

It is.

**MORGANA**

Can it truly be used for magic?

piercing,

Merlin smiles at last, and Morgana does, her eyes  
cruel and lovely.

**MERLIN**

Yes... sometimes...

His gaze drifts toward the chapel.

**MERLIN**

...There are many powers in this  
world.

**INT. CHAPEL - EVENING**

behind

armor; and

Bishop

him,

Arthur and Guenevere are radiant with joy, and Lancelot  
them mirrors the ceremony of their joining in his  
the sweet voices of the children fill the chapel as the  
pours the wine into the chalice, and lifts it up before  
blessing it.

He turns to the royal couple.

**BISHOP**

Drink this the blood of Jesus Christ

our Lord.

the  
The chalice seems to burn with a mystical light; and as  
chorus soars:

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**A LEGEND APPEARS:**

the  
"And Arthur built his castle, Camelot. And one day, in  
far reaches of the Kingdom..."

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. FOREST, STREAM - DAY**

animals  
forward,  
-  
with  
It is shadowy and dark; ancient trees creak, unseen  
cry out. A rabbit hops into view and a boy leaps  
grabbing the animal by the ears before it can move. He-  
Perceval--is a wild boy of seventeen, dressed in skins  
an endearing and childlike smile.

**PERCEVAL**

(to the rabbit)

Sorry. Hungry.

glances  
upon  
armor  
A din is heard to the forest, and it grows. Perceval  
around, panicked. The sound is the rubbing of leather  
leather, of metal on metal, for now a mounted figure in  
hovers over the terrified boy.

**PERCEVAL**

(stuttering)

Have I taken too much?

dismounts.  
stream and  
He lets the rabbit go free. The threatening figure  
And Perceval, cartwheels backward, landing in the  
scooping a fish out.

**PERCEVAL**

(desperately trying  
to ingratiate)  
I had rabbit yesterday. Today I'll  
eat fish... No?

a  
armor.  
He returns the fish to the water. The figure steps into  
pool of sunlight and a glorious halo streaks from the  
It is Lancelot.

**LANCELOT**

Don't be afraid.

Perceval is overcome with astonishment, and he kneels.

**PERCEVAL**

You're an angel! Not a devil...

Lancelot laughs and pulls the boy to his feet.

**LANCELOT**

Just a man. A knight in the King's  
service.

**PERCEVAL**

You're a man?!  
(he reaches out to  
touch Lancelot)  
...with metal skin!

Perceval is beside himself with enthusiasm.

**PERCEVAL**

Can I grow metal skin?

Lancelot rolls his eyes, amused.

**LANCELOT**

You've got a lot to learn.

**EXT. SPARSE FOREST - DAY**

alongside,  
Lancelot is cantering and Perceval is running  
shouting in gasps.

**PERCEVAL**

I'll learn... take me... to the  
King... What's a... King?

gallop.  
reins

Lancelot shakes his head and spurs the horse into a  
Perceval lengthens his stride, and keeps up! Lancelot  
to a halt.

**LANCELOT**

Very well. Climb up.

**PERCEVAL**

I will run.

**LANCELOT**

Listen, boy, it's more than twenty  
days from here.

**PERCEVAL**

Twenty days!? The world is that big?

**EXT. OUTSIDE CAMELOT, FOREST - DAY**

talk  
never  
he

Perceval cannot believe his eyes. As Lancelot and Kay  
about him out of earshot, he sees things that he's  
seen before; and he gapes like the country bumpkin that  
is.

a  
lance  
Camelot  
walls,

Dragon-like kites sweep low, maneuvered by children. In  
meadow among the trees, knights hone their skills with  
and sword, and ladies watch and their "bright eyes rain  
influence and judge the prize." And then, there is  
itself; the great gate and the drawbridge; the massive  
and the soaring towers and spires above.

Perceval rushes up to Lancelot and Kay.

**PERCEVAL**

Who will give me my sword?

by  
the

Kay is not at all pleased; nonetheless he takes the boy  
the ear and leads him across the drawbridge and into  
castle.

**KAY**

Kitchen knives and greasy spits will  
be your weapons, boy.

before the Lancelot smiles to himself, hesitation, lingering  
great gate of Camelot.

also There is a walkway suspended in the trees above, that  
of leads to the castle, and promenading on it is a group  
sees women, Guenevere and her ladies-in-waiting. The Queen  
Lancelot and hastens toward him.

into Lancelot sees her, and mounts his horse and heads back  
and the forest. She stops, somewhat ahead of the ladies,  
watches wistfully.

down Lancelot turns back and seeing her one last time, draws  
his visor and spurs his horse into a canter.

one He passes two commoners who are heading for the castle,  
dispute. fat and the other thin, and they are locked in hot  
children Their wives keep them from coming to blows and their  
spur them on, enjoying the excitement.

Lancelot is swallowed by the forest.

**INT. HALL OF THE ROUND TABLE, CAMELOT - DAY**

Merlin at Guenevere, bearing a bowl of perfect, deep red apples,  
Quite a approaches the Round Table, where Arthur sits and  
each his side, attending to the affairs of the kingdom.  
pages. few of the knights occupy their seats, talking with  
and other, drinking and laughing, attended by ladies and  
takes her seat next to Arthur.

wait, In the archways that lead into the hall, petitioners

no  
man  
is the

eating, drinking, talking among themselves. In the din,  
one pays attention to the vehement arguing of the fat  
and the thin man, which continues even here. The hall  
burgeoning, happy center of the kingdom.

like  
over  
Gahalt,,  
notices

But Merlin is oblivious to the lively clamor. He gazes  
a lovesick puppy across the table at Morgana, who bends  
whispering to a knight at the table, the young Sir  
while his older brother Sir Gawain listens. Morgana  
Merlin's stare and smiles at him, and then resumes her  
flirtation with Sir Gahalt, much to Merlin's annoyance.

open  
with the  
and

Sir Kay ushers the thin man and the fat man into the  
space at the center of the table for their audience  
king. They quarrel even as Kay tries to present them,  
the attention of the hall gradually focuses on them.  
The two men talk at once, interrupting, overlapping.

**FAT MAN**

I brew ale, sir--from  
old shoes--I am an  
honest tradesman sir.  
I must sell what I  
produce. He won't buy  
ale and he won't pay.  
Pay up! He leans over  
the barrel and sucks  
in the vapors. The  
vapors are mine.

sir,  
  
in  
for

**THIN MAN**

How would you know I,  
  
have the misfortune to  
live next to this  
criminal... What loss  
  
that? Not to me! Pay  
  
what? Why?! They are  
floating on the wind.

Arthur is both amused and exasperated.

**ARTHUR**

Enough!... What is a fair price for the smell of your ale?

**FAT MAN**

That's why we have come to you, sir. There's no one else who can tell us.

**ARTHUR**

What does it cost to get drunk on your ale?

**FAT MAN**

At least three shillings, sir.

Arthur addresses the Thin Man.

**ARTHUR**

Give me three shillings.

face.  
to  
fall on  
is

The Thin Man is crestfallen, the smile gone from his face. He reluctantly hands the coins to Kay, who gives them to Arthur. Arthur tosses them in the air and lets them fall on a metal plate. He hands them back to the Thin Man, who is totally confused now, as is everybody else.

**ARTHUR**

For the smell of your ale, the jingle of his coins.

Thin  
out a  
from

The knights roar with laughter and the Fat Man and the Thin Man look at each other in astonishment. Perceval lets out a raucous laugh that wins him a glance of disapproval from Kay.

**INT. HALL OF THE ROUND TABLE - NIGHT**

the  
except

The din of the petitioners is replaced by music. It is the hour of the evening feast, and all knights are present, except

fireplace, and  
fro  
Lancelot. Whole tree trunks burn in the great  
lambs roast on spits in the flames. Pages run to and  
with trays of food and wine, Perceval among them.  
Morgana stops beside Merlin.

**MORGANA**

What did I see today in the wizard's  
eyes? Censure, because I enjoy a few  
words with a young handsome knight?

Merlin is in agony, a bug stuck on a pin.

**MERLIN**

No, no, of course not. You are  
young...

**MERLIN**

I'm not jealous!

**MORGANA**

It's clear you are, and it irks me.

**MERLIN**

No. Yes, I am. I am jealous. I want  
to write poems about you with  
moonbeams, make the sea sing your  
name...

**MORGANA**

A lovestruck page!

**MERLIN**

Shh... yes, yes. Sit with me,  
please... Morgana.

holds  
She does, laughing and in complete control. His hand  
immediately slides onto her thigh. She removes it, but  
it in her hand, toying with his fingers.

**MORGANA**

A steamy, panting, lovestruck page.  
But what good are songs and poems to  
me? They are the barter of ordinary  
love. A gift that reflected your  
greatness is the only one worthy of  
your love.

Merlin looks at her, knowing already, sad yet eager.

**MERLIN**

I showed you all my conjuring  
tricks...

**MORGANA**

The deepest secrets, the forbidden  
formulas...

**MERLIN**

Maybe... maybe...

realizes

Merlin's thoughts have carried him far away, when he  
that Arthur is addressing him.

**ARTHUR**

Merlin, are you counselor to the  
King, or to my sister?

Some knights laugh.

**MERLIN**

At your service, sir.

**ARTHUR**

Then answer me this. For years peace  
has reigned in the land. Crops grow  
in abundance, there is no want. Every  
one of my subjects enjoys his portion  
of happiness and justice, even those  
whose tiresome misunderstandings we  
must resolve here each day. Tell me,  
Merlin: have we defeated evil, as it  
seems?

**MERLIN**

Good and evil; there is never one  
without the other.

Arthur is taken aback.

**ARTHUR**

Where hides evil, then, in my kingdom?

**MERLIN**

Never where you expect it, that's  
all I know.

speaks

He chuckles softly and Arthur is puzzled. A knight

His

out, the young knight with whom Morgana was flirting.  
manner is sarcastic.

**SIR GAHALT**

If we have peace and justice, why is Lancelot never with us? Why is he always riding out on his quests? He must know where this evil is.

**SIR GAWAIN**

Could there be evil within Lancelot himself? To live above human folly, as is his aim, is to be overly proud.

**SIR GAHALT**

He pays no heed even to the Queens longing for his company.

The hall falls silent, all eyes upon the Queen.

**GUENEVERE**

(lashing out)

What is it you would have your words mean, Sir Gahalt?

to

Frightened, Gahalt doesn't answer. Morgana has slipped  
Guenevere's side.

**MORGANA**

Don't listen to him. You are the Queen.

has

Arthur, ashen-faced, turns to Merlin for help, but he  
escaped into sleep...

**ARTHUR**

Sir Gahalt, answer the Queen.

**GUENEVERE**

No. I meant not to be angry with you, Sir Gahalt. In the idleness that comes with peace gossip has bred its own evil. You merely repeat it. Please, sir, have one of those apples that Lancelot loves, and in that gesture partake of its goodness.

any

Morgana picks the bowl up and as she does so, unseen by

fingernails  
Guenevere,  
sits,  
feet.

and with a magician's dexterity, she thrusts her  
deep into the top apple. She gives the bowl to  
who takes it and sweeps around to where Sir Gahalt  
followed by Morgana. The young knight jumps to his

**GUENEVERE**

Take one, Sir Gahalt.

**SIR GAHALT**

I am most honored, my lady.

apple on  
looks  
eating

He is too shy to take the shiniest, most beautiful  
top, and goes for another one. Morgana giggles, and he  
at her. She looks at the apple on top and then smiles  
encouragingly at him. Sir Gahalt takes it and starts  
as the Queen returns to her seat.

goes  
and  
far

With the third bite his is unable to breathe. His face  
red and he rises to his feet, attempting to call out.  
He falls, dying immediately. All leap to their feet,  
Arthur rushes to the young knight. Merlin is asleep and  
from human affairs.

knight.  
Guenevere,

Arthur and Sir Gawain rise from the body of the young  
Sir Gawain backs away from Arthur and points at  
trembling with cold rage.

**SIR GAWAIN**

Hear me, Lord Arthur, and knights  
and chieftains: I charge Guenevere  
with the murder of my brother.

Arthur.

Guenevere, white and with a broken voice, turns to

**GUENEVERE**

I didn't... I am innocent.

feet.  
before  
She begins to swoon and Morgana keeps her steady on her  
Arthur slumps into his seat and Sir Gawain kneels  
him.

**SIR GAWAIN**

I champion this truth: That Queen  
Guenevere murdered Sir Gahalt with  
the aid of sorcery.

he  
Enraged, Arthur reaches for Excalibur. But with effort  
checks his impulse.

**ARTHUR**

The Queen will be in my charge till  
a champion steps forward to fight on  
her behalf.

**GUENEVERE**

Not you, my husband?

Arthur cannot look at her.

**SIR GAWAIN**

She must be burnt at the stake. That  
is the sentence for murder done with  
magic.

**ARTHUR**

It is. Lords and knights of the Round  
Table, as her husband I say that  
this deed was not done by Guenevere.  
Who among you will champion this  
truth?

No one responds. Guenevere falls into her seat. Arthur  
searches the eyes of his knights and they evade him.

**ARTHUR**

Sir Caradoc! You!

The knight looks up.

**CARADOC**

I am torn.

speaks  
voice  
Sir Ector, old and feeble, weeps for Arthur. Someone  
up. It is Perceval, who kneels before the Queen. His

tears;  
is unnaturally loud, and his eyes shine with held-back  
he stutters.

**PERCEVAL**

I will champion you, my lady.

All  
He is overwhelmed by his own boldness. He looks around.  
eyes are upon him. Guenevere smiles at him, sadly.

**GUENEVERE**

I thank you, but you are not yet a  
knight.

**PERCEVAL**

I will find Lancelot! He will come!

ashamed,  
his  
Perceval hurries from the hall. Arthur looks away,  
and his eyes fall on Merlin, twitching and mumbling in  
sleep.

**MERLIN**

Boys!... boys will be boys...

**EXT. HOVEL - COUNTRYSIDE - DAY**

a  
mother  
very  
lathered  
In full armor but for his helmet, Lancelot is seated at  
small table in the shadow of a tree, eating an apple.  
A young girl is turning a chicken on a spit, and her  
is removing freshly-baked bread from an oven. It is  
peaceful and silent until, galloping all out, Perceval  
arrives. Frantic, out of breath, he leaps from his  
horse.

**PERCEVAL**

I have found you. The Queen. An apple.  
Tomorrow. Sir Gawain...

**LANCELOT**

--It must wait, child. These good  
ladies, for whom I intervened once,  
will honor me with a meal. I am  
beholden to them now as I was when  
they begged my protection.

great  
The two women set the chicken and the bread before the  
knight, and stand back to watch him eat, flushed with  
excitement. Perceval falls silent, in awe of Lancelot.

**INT. BEDCHAMBER, CAMELOT - NIGHT**

the  
Arthur stands hunched over the fireplace, staring into  
flames. Guenevere paces back and forth to a window.

**GUENEVERE**

Why can't you be my champion?

**ARTHUR**

If I am your judge, I cannot be your  
champion. When I act as your King, I  
cannot be your husband.

**GUENEVERE**

And you cannot love me...

**ARTHUR**

The laws, my laws, must bind everyone,  
high and low, or they are not laws  
at all. Lancelot will come...

**GUENEVERE**

And if he cannot be found, no other  
knight will champion me, though you  
beseeched each and every one of them.  
Why be king if there is no one you  
can call loyal subject but an eager  
boy?

to a  
there  
still  
He hides his anguish from her. Numb with hurt, she goes  
tall curtained window, and draws it open, and stands  
looking out upon the surrounding forest, silent and  
beneath the moon.

**EXT. WINDOW - NIGHT**

great  
She cries softly, and she whispers the name of the  
knight.

**EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST, WALLS OF CAMELOT - NIGHT.**

forest,  
His  
Guenevere.  
draws

A mounted knight stands motionless at the edge of the  
his armor gleaming with dark lustre. It is Lancelot.  
eyes are raised to the high window, where he sees  
He watches her in silence. In the high window Guenevere  
the curtain and Lancelot reins back into the forest.

**EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

small  
removes  
cross. He  
and

Lancelot has unsaddled and tethered his horse in a  
clearing. He sits, resting back against a tree. He  
his helmet; he plants his sword before him, like a  
loosens the ties of his breastplate. He waits for day,  
yawning, tired. But his eyes burn, and he closes them  
nods off to sleep.

looks  
above  
sword,  
draws  
knight's  
attempts  
image, is  
and  
joint in  
out. On  
paralyzed by  
to  
the

A knight appears silently hovering over him. Lancelot  
up, and his eyes go wide with fear. The knight towering  
him wears armor identical to his, and he raises his  
and the blade is descending upon Lancelot. Lancelot  
his sword from the ground and rolls away, but the  
sword slices through his shoulder joint. Lancelot  
to rise but already the knight, Lancelot's mirror  
upon him. From the ground, Lancelot parries the blow  
slashes at the opponent's knee, cutting through the  
the armor and severing the leg.

The knight doesn't fall, doesn't bleed, doesn't cry  
one leg he comes forward, a horror. Lancelot is  
fear. As the knight leaps upon Lancelot, Lancelot rises  
meet him, impaling himself on the knight's sword below

down  
The  
awakening  
stomach,  
other

hauberk. He throws the knight to the ground, and comes upon him. He rips off the helmet and the breastplate. armor is empty and Lancelot rolls over on his back, from the nightmare with his own sword deep in his stomach, and in his hand his own helmet and breastplate, while parts of his armor lie strewn around him.

and  
and  
clutching a

Only then does he become conscious of the terrible pain the shock of the truth. He grabs the hilt of his sword draws it from his stomach. He curls up in agony, fistful of leaves to the wound.

**LANCELOT**

Guenevere, I fight against myself...

He loses consciousness.

**EXT. JOUSTING GROUND OUTSIDE CAMELOT - DAWN**

from a  
knights  
stealing  
to  
and  
mangy

The Bishop blesses the field. Guenevere, numb and disbelieving, is being led to the stake, which rises bed of straw and wood. Arthur watches, in shock. Other and ladies keep their distance, watching darkly, glances at Arthur, mumbling disapproval of his refusing defend Guenevere. In battle dress, Sir Gawain rides up down the jousting run on a snorting and powerful horse, practicing. Perceval, in a mail doublet, waits beside a roan, his face burning with anxiety.

Guenevere is tied to the stake. All eyes watch for the approach of her champion. Arthur goes to Perceval.

**ARTHUR**

Is he coming?

**PERCEVAL**

He heard Lady Guenevere's request and he said nothing. That is all.

Arthur hides his pain behind a rigid mask.

**EXT. JOUSTING GROUND - DAY**

eyes; the  
King

The sun has risen shining cruelly into Guenevere's queen is alone at the stake. Sir Gawain rides up to Arthur, who waits alone, separated from the others.

**SIR GAWAIN**

My Lord, the sun is upon the field.  
The Queen has no champion. I demand  
justice, as is my right.

**ARTHUR**

So it is.

Perceval leaps onto his horse.

**PERCEVAL**

Let me champion the Queen!

Sir Gawain looks at the squire with contempt.

**SIR GAWAIN**

(to Arthur)

Since no knight comes forward, I  
demand justice--

sign  
his own  
through

Arthur is in anguish. He searches the tree line for a of Lancelot. He looks from Guenevere at the stake to knights watching him. He draws Excalibur. A gasp goes the crowd of onlookers.

**ARTHUR**

Boy, kneel.

the  
shoulder,

Perceval leaps from his horse and bends his knee before King. Arthur brings the sword down on the boy's giving him the three strokes.

**ARTHUR**

In the name of God, of St. Michael,  
and St. George, I make you a knight.  
Rise, Sir...

**PERCEVAL**

...Perceval!

back  
field.  
senses  
rides up  
friend,  
Guenevere and

Gawain shakes his head disdainfully as Perceval mounts into the saddle, his eyes burning with fervor. Sir Gawain and Perceval ride to opposite ends of the field. The spectators fall silent, all staring blankly, their senses dulled by the tragedy, at the uneven combatants. A cry goes up. Lancelot rides out of the forest. He rides up to the King and salutes him. Arthur smiles at his old friend, tears of joy in his eyes. Lancelot bows toward Guenevere and rides on to where Perceval waits. Lancelot reaches out to touch Perceval's cheek.

**LANCELOT**

It's my task to prove the Queen's innocence.

that  
lance  
spear  
violent  
getting  
inflicted  
falling  
stomach

Perceval cannot reply, his eyes affixed on the blood trickles from Lancelot's hauberk. Lancelot raises his lance in salute to Gawain across the field. Gawain salutes in answer. The two huge knights charge at each other, each man's spear tip making contact with the other's armor, and in the violent collision both are unhorsed. Lancelot is slower at getting to his feet and drawing his sword. He is bleeding below the hauberk from his self-inflicted wound. In the first onslaught Lancelot fights defensively, falling back. He has to toss aside his shield and hold his stomach with his shield hand.

sword on  
is

Morgana watches with Merlin. Every terrible blow of sword reverberates through her body pleasurable. Merlin captivated by her cruel sensuality.

**EXT. JOUSTING GROUND - LATE DAY**

bone-  
Lancelot's  
with a  
sword  
shield,

They swing and thrust at each other with slower but crushing force, both unsteady now. Blood seeps from feet, leaving awful footprints on the earth. Finally, daring thrust, Lancelot lifts Gawain's visor and the tip is before his eyes. Gawain drops his sword and kneels and speaks in a voice hoarse with weariness.

**SIR GAWAIN**

The Queen is innocent. I yield to your mercy, Sir Lancelot.

Lancelot collapses in a dead faint.

**INT. CELL, CAMELOT - EVENING**

cloth  
and  
working the  
the  
Lancelot,

Eyes closed, Lancelot lies on a bed, naked but for a across his loins. His minor wounds have been dressed, Merlin is kneading the huge gash in his stomach, severed flesh together. Guenevere stands on one side of bed, Arthur on the other, both looking down upon relieved and not daring to look at each other.

**MERLIN**

Flesh on flesh. You must press on the wound, Guenevere, hold it, and it will begin to bind.

flicker

Guenevere kneels, and at her touch Lancelot's eyes open. Merlin exits, and draws Arthur away with him. Arthur is deeply tormented.

**ARTHUR**

Merlin, tell me. Now that Guenevere  
is returned to me...

**MERLIN**

What is it my child?

Merlin appears moved by the predicaments that Arthur  
has to face.

**ARTHUR**

Will I have a son?

Merlin stares off into the evening sky, where a lark  
sings high up.

**MERLIN**

Yes.

**ARTHUR**

Just yes? No mad laughter, no riddles,  
nothing but a simple yes? That  
frightens me.

**MERLIN**

A king should be afraid, always. The  
enemy is everywhere. Waiting in ambush  
in the dark corridors of his castle,  
on the deer paths of his forest, or  
in the gray and winding paths of a  
more tangled forest, in here.

He taps his skull and smiles.

**INT. CELL - EVENING**

Lancelot is staring into Guenevere's eyes. She opens  
her shift, baring a breast with the innocence of a mother  
preparing to suckle a child. She presses her breast to  
his wound, her face to his chest, her arms enfolding him.  
She whispers.

**GUENEVERE**

Flesh on flesh. I will heal you.

His body trembles and his eyes brim with tears. He is  
lost.

**INT. HALL OF THE ROUND TABLE, CAMELOT - NIGHT**

music  
the  
the  
they

The court is assembled, for the evening feast. There is and heavy drinking. Some knights are slouched across table. Lancelot, still weak, takes his seat, looking at drunken and frivolous knights. Arthur catches it, and smile at each other.

**ARTHUR**

They miss the battlefield. I think we do too.

**LANCELOT**

But one can still keep a sword sharp riding out in the name of the King's law.

her  
speaks  
directness.

Guenevere cannot tear her eyes from Lancelot. He avoids look. Arthur looks from Guenevere to Lancelot, and softly to him, across her, and with stabbing

**ARTHUR**

It is not easy for the young ones to learn knightly virtues without the hard teaching of war and quest. It is only your example, Lancelot, that binds them now.

Then, addressing the hall:

**ARTHUR**

Which is the greatest quality of knighthood? Courage? Compassion? Loyalty? Humility? What do you say, Merlin?

hall

He is bent close to Morgana, whispering. Only when the rings with laughter does he look up.

**MERLIN**

What?  
(then seeing he has an audience)

The greatest? They blend together like the metals we mix to make a good sword.

**ARTHUR**

I didn't ask for poetry. Which is it?

Merlin looks from Arthur to Guenevere to Lancelot to Arthur.

**MERLIN**

All right. Truth. It must be truth, above all. When a man lies he murders some part of the world.

An uneasy silence falls upon the feast. Guenevere and Lancelot cannot look at each other, and Arthur feels it. Lancelot jumps to his feet.

**LANCELOT**

Conversation and court life don't suit me. I must take my rest in the forest.

Guenevere stifles her dismay.

**ARTHUR**

Hasn't Merlin mended your wound?

**LANCELOT**

It is deep...

Arthur is about to rise to embrace him, but checks himself.

**ARTHUR**

You will be sorely missed. Heal yourself and come back.

The exchange has become closely intimate, even though they stand apart and speak before everyone in the large hall. Lancelot leaves. Only Guenevere cannot watch.

**EXT. FOREST GLADE -DAY**

Water gurgles from a rock that is captive in the roots of an

trunk,  
life

ancient oak. Lancelot, in armor, reclines against its  
the roots cradling him. He is perfectly still, drawing  
from the vibrant, all-enfolding forest.

rabbit,  
the

Flower petals drift on the breeze. Trees sigh. Fox and  
sparrow and hawk, at peace with each other, watch over  
knight.

**EXT. FOREST -DAY**

It is  
toward

A horse and rider tear through the thick undergrowth.  
Guenevere. The forest races past her as she gallops  
the glade, brambles tearing at her flesh and clothes.

**EXT. FOREST GLADE - DAY**

and  
race.  
beside

Lancelot gets to his feet, tense. Guenevere dismounts  
approaches. She is flushed and breathless from the wild  
Her horse, left free, wanders over to his and grazes  
it.

**LANCELOT**

Why? You will destroy Arthur, and  
us...

keep  
soft

She moves closer and he thrusts out his mailed fist to  
her away. She clutches it and presses the metal to her  
tear-streaked cheek.

**LANCELOT**

The law forbids it.

**GUENEVERE**

Love demands it.

armor,

Hungry with passion, she embraces the cold unmoving  
kissing it.

**LANCELOT**

There are things about love--

**GUENEVERE**

--Nothing!

blade He steps back, drawing his sword. He holds it up by the  
between them.

**LANCELOT**

By my knight's sword, I swore faith--

aside. And before he can finish she grabs the blade to push it  
cannot He holds it fast. Blood streams from her bare hands. He  
sword, prevail without cutting them deeply. He lets go of the  
and she lets it fall to the ground.

the She embraces his still and defeated hulk. She kisses  
metal, and sensation shoots through him, dizzying him.

**LANCELOT**

Guenevere...

as He folds her in his arm, and their bodies lock together  
devouring though a trap had sprung. Their mouths meet, each  
the other...

**EXT. BATTLEMENTS, CAMELOT - DUSK**

overwhelmed Arthur and Merlin, the King desperate, the Wizard  
by compassion:

**ARTHUR**

I am alone and betrayed. By my wife,  
by my beloved friend, by my knights.  
And by you. Perhaps most of all by  
you. For you made me, you forged  
this wretched life. And like a child  
tired of a toy, you toss me aside, a  
babbling lecher trotting after my  
sister...

**MERLIN**

That is my destiny. I have a destiny,  
too...

**ARTHUR**

With all your powers, you are content to be ridiculed, laughed at...

**MERLIN**

My powers fade, Arthur. I resort to cheap tricks...

(with sudden enthusiasm)

Yes! I enjoy every moment of my foolishness, I join in the making of it, so no one can betray me. But you! You betray yourself.

**ARTHUR**

Me? I have lived by the oath of king and knight.

**MERLIN**

You betray the boy who drew the sword, the boy who saw the Dragon... the Dragon who moves close by, coiling and uncoiling, restless, looking down, waiting for the King to be a king...

Arthur looks up and in the rolling clouds maybe, just  
maybe,  
Excalibur,  
the form of a dragon is taking shape. Arthur draws  
intensity animating his dead features.

**ARTHUR**

I must do it myself. I must kill them both. Lancelot and Guenevere. Will you ride with me, Merlin?

**MERLIN**

I cannot. I must not. Here I must stay.

They embrace. Merlin is on the verge of tears, his face immediately sad and finally ancient. Arthur exits.

Morgana, who has been watching from the shadows,  
watching  
from the shadows, slinks up to Merlin's side.

**MORGANA**

Crazy old fool. You think yourself a kingmaker. Ha! A meddler, more likely. Look what a mess you've made of things.

Merlin smiles knowingly at her.

**MERLIN**

I? Perhaps, perhaps. I'm losing interest, Morgana... I have helped men--or meddled in their affairs, if you would have it that way--since the dawn of time. Now let them live by their own laws. Let them stand on their own feet. The gods of once are gone forever, it is time for men... Morgana, make a man out of me. Kiss me.

hers  
knuckles

He reaches to touch her lips. She cradles his hand in and doesn't allow Merlin to kiss her. She kisses his and stares into his eyes, stoking his desire.

**MORGANA**

You know what I want. I want the secret of true magic, how to thicken the stuff of dreams and wishes with the flesh of the world.

**MERLIN**

That I cannot.

She breaks away, provocative, alluring.

**MORGANA**

Then I will not.

**EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

It  
horses

Arthur and Sir Kay gallop through the forest, silently. is not a dream. Their armor and the hooves of their are muffled with pieces of cloth.

**EXT. FOREST GLADE - NIGHT**

the  
it in  
and

Only Nature will ever see their love; the creatures of air, tree and ground witness the final reality of their passion and sense its unfathomable depths, singing of a hundred languages. Lancelot and Guenevere are naked

the eye interlocked, one being, suspended in the darkness in  
of the forest.

**EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

the Arthur walks soundlessly through the trees, approaching  
glade. The forest falls suddenly silent.

**EXT. FOREST GLADE - NIGHT**

Lancelot and All passion spent, locked in each other's arms,  
Guenevere drift off into sleep.

head. Arthur comes upon them. He stands over them. He draws  
Excalibur. Checking all emotion, he holds it above his

The ancient steel glows darkly.

He The lovers faces are serene and innocently beautiful.

letting hesitates, tormented. His mask of anguish gives way to  
determination and calm. He strikes the sword home,  
go of it.

He backs away, turns and disappears into the forest.

**EXT. FOREST GLADE - DAWN**

awakens The sky is red; so is the steel of Excalibur. Lancelot  
They and starts at what he sees. His cry stirs Guenevere.  
between are horrified to see Excalibur impaled in the ground  
without their entwined bodies. It has pierced their union  
to grazing their flesh. They leap up and back away, unable  
speak at first.

**LANCELOT**

Why didn't he kill us?

**GUENEVERE**

He has given up.

breast. She kneels before the sword, embracing the hilt to her

**LANCELOT**

The King without his sword, the land  
without a king...

**GUENEVERE**

We are to blame.

He  
roots  
symbol

Lancelot stumbles into the forest, berserk with guilt.  
rages against a small tree, crying out, and he rips its  
from the ground, the terrible tearing and renting the  
of his own inner torment.

armor

Guenevere sinks to the ground next to Lancelot's empty  
and his abandoned sword.

**INT. DUNGEONS OF CAMELOT**

rock.

Merlin and Morgana descend winding steps cut out of  
The only light comes from the glow of Merlin's staff.

**MERLIN**

When Arthur built the castle, I carved  
out a place for myself, where I could  
laugh or sleep, and no one would  
bother me.

**MORGANA**

People make you laugh?

He laughs.

**MERLIN**

They do.

**MORGANA**

Why?

He leans close to her ear, whispering into it.

**MERLIN**

They don't know how close they live  
to the edge of delight or disas...

He is about to kiss her when he slips. He laughs.

**MERLIN**

Happiness or horror.

**INT. CAVE BENEATH CAMELOT**

Merlin  
up  
crystals.  
quartz,  
suddenly

They pass through jaws of stalactites and stalagmites.  
cracks his staff whip-like and a ball of fire billows  
from the tip and illuminates a cave wildly veined and  
filigreed with minerals and crusted with growths of  
The light goes out but the malachite and the gold, the  
diamond and beryllium burn dully. He turns to her,  
tall and unstooped, younger, sleek and evil.

**MERLIN**

In the folds of the earth where the  
forces that hold the world together  
are more alive, my power is strongest.  
Here I will possess you, as a man  
possesses a woman. And the god, the  
eunuch, the mule that I was, will be  
no more.

He sweeps her up into his arms.

**MORGANA**

You are truly magnificent!

**MERLIN**

Flattery! Do you think I am ignorant  
of your stupid little games? Preying  
on you weakness of others. That's  
your power, a petty evil. Mine is  
great. Great plans. Impossible dreams.  
Laughable endings...

him

He deposits her on bare rock. He kisses her. She pushes  
away.

**MORGANA**

Merlin, the powers of Summoning, the  
true Name of the charms of Doing and  
Undoing. Show me!

**MERLIN**

I won't. You would misuse such power.  
I have paid enough for you, and I  
will have you.

She leans forward and kisses his ear and whispers.

**MORGANA**

Make magic, my foolish wizard. For our love. Weave a marvelous room around us, a room worthy of our coupling.

She draws closer, kissing him deeply. He breathes heavily.

**MERLIN**

What do you want? You must desire it for me to weave it.

**MORGANA**

Walls of shining crystals, burning with red fire, furnishings of metals and jewels never seen by man...

Morgana falls silent as Merlin raises a hand, majestically intoning a harsh repetitive charm. The mineral veins of the cave begin to glow and fog seeps out from them enveloping the couple.

**MERLIN**

Desire it and it will be as you desire.

Morgana burns with intensity. Merlin utters a formula and the fog coalesces around them into the shimmering presence of crystal walls, fountains raining jewels, flowers made of scented air, a bed of glass shot with light and covered with skins of animals dead before the time of man, goblets of ruby, tapestries woven of golden hair. She reaches out to touch the wall and her hand plunges through the unmaterialized illusion.

**MORGANA**

It's only a semblance. You disappoint me.

She begins lacing up her loosened gown.

**MERLIN**

Don't touch the walls. Come close to me.

She does, a mad hope in her eyes. She kisses his chest.

**MORGANA**

Do it, Merlin, the deepest secret. Fix it with the charm of Making, for our endless pleasure.

He utters the ancient charm, Morgana listening closely, memorizing it. The illusion is all of a sudden solid.

**MERLIN**

For you...

eyes  
She runs her hand across the hard crystal surface, her gleaming.

embrace.  
to  
light.  
From outside the wondrous room they can be seen to He carries her to the magical bed where he makes love her, as they disappear from view in its effulgent

evil  
She comes out through the crystal door, burning with intent. She turns to watch him asleep in the bed.

and  
Merlin  
She utters the charm of Summoning learnt from Merlin, the room melts into an eddying carmine fog. Within it, struggles to awaken from the torpor of love, alarmed.

gaseous  
mass begins to crystallize.

fog,  
opening in  
a scream of horror.  
Inside, Merlin is rising to his feet, breathing the red his movements slowing to a standstill, his mouth

of  
she  
gaping  
She

The cloud has metamorphosed into a magnificent cluster  
red crystals. Morgana peers into its facets and there  
sees, in fragments, Merlin's terror... an eye, the  
mouth, a clawing hand--as he is entombed in the stone.  
laughs in triumph.

**EXT. FOREST - CAMELOT - DAY**

Camelot  
to

Surrounded by forest, the spires and battlements of  
rise under black storm clouds. Arthur and Kay ride back  
the castle.

**INT. HALL OF THE ROUND TABLE - DAY**

attendance at  
haggard,

The great hall is in gloom. Few knights are in  
the table.  
Some sleep off last night's wine. Arthur approaches,  
searching.

**ARTHUR**

Has no one seen Merlin?

shake

Knights look up; those who meet Arthur's reddened eyes  
their heads.

Arthur leaves. A knight whispers to another.

**KNIGHT**

Did you see? The King was without  
Excalibur...

**INT. PASSAGEWAYS, CAMELOT - DAY**

follow  
upon  
door,

Echoing in the vaulted corridors outside the hall, the  
knight's whisper stabs Arthur.  
The words now seem borne on the whistling wind and  
the King wherever he goes in search of Merlin. He comes  
a knight seducing a lady in a dark corner by the chapel

his hand under her gown. Arthur notes the sacrilege in silence, and continues on his way.

**INT. BEDCHAMBER - DAY**

his  
man.  
looks

The wind keens. Thunder rolls overhead. Arthur enters bedchamber. He sits by the empty fireplace, a broken Feminine hands light on his shoulders. He starts. He up. It is Morgana. He smiles and grasps her hand.

**MORGANA**

I'll weep for you, brother, for a King must not weep.

he

She comes around and she kneels in front of him. Before can talk she silences him with a tender caress.

**MORGANA**

Do you know what Guenevere's maids have whispered?

He shakes his head.

**MORGANA**

That when the King returned from battle...

shin

She begins untying the laces of his metal thigh and guards.

**MORGANA**

...Guenevere would unlace his armor and massage the burns where metal rubbed on flesh...

flesh

She is stripping his legs naked, gently touching the with her fingertips. He stares off, remembering.

**MORGANA**

...She would prepare a bath for you, mixing special ointment in the water...

his

Arthur's eyes brim with tears. Morgana weeps, embracing

with  
incants a

knees. He rests his hand gently upon her head, choked  
remembrance, soothing her. But as she weeps, she  
charm.

at  
made  
her

Arthur looks down upon her, and the woman who looks up  
him is Guenevere, a Guenevere with cold ice eyes. He is  
weak by desire and weakened further by magic. He holds  
face adoringly.

**ARTHUR**

Guenevere! You are--

**"GUENEVERE"**

--Don't speak. A thousand words, a  
hundred thousand words, would only  
be prologue to the truth that must  
be. That you, King, and I, your Queen,  
beget a son to bond our love and to  
strengthen our weak kingdom with a  
successor. Come, my lord...

him  
pathetic

She draws him to the floor and upon her body, holding  
tightly to himself. Arthur trembles with excitement,  
in his desperate passion.

charm,  
may not

As he takes her, she shudders, losing control of the  
and her features change till once again "Guenevere" is  
Morgana. She holds him in a tight embrace so that he  
see her. She whispers in his ear.

**MORGANA**

The moon flows in my blood to meet  
your seed. And already I bear him  
who will be King.

arms

Arthur wrenches himself away so he can see her, her  
still around his neck. He looks down upon her, aghast,  
incredulous.

**MORGANA**

I could easily kill you, brother.  
But I want you to live to see our

son be King. In me, the blood of  
Cornwall will have its revenge; in  
me, the blood of Uther will show its  
dark side.

She presses her thumbs into his neck and he faints.

**EXT. FOREST - CAMELOT - DAY**

Morgana, with a small party, rides away from the castle  
through the lashing storm, till they are taken from  
sight in  
the folds of the forest...

**INT. CHAPEL, TINTAGEL CASTLE - NIGHT**

Lightening forks across the sky, illuminating the  
interior.  
The chapel has been transformed into a place of satanic  
worship. Held up and surrounded by hooded figures,  
Morgana  
lies on the altar, her pregnant belly huge; and her  
features  
are fierce with passionate intensity. She writhes in  
the  
pangs of childbirth.

**MORGANA**

Stand back, all of you. Through my  
own body I have nurtured him with my  
potions. I made him. I alone can  
give him life.

**INT. CHAPEL, CAMELOT - NIGHT**

Arthur enters, pale and haunted. Mass is being  
celebrated,  
and some knights are present. Those not asleep whisper  
to  
each other about the King. The sound of an approaching  
storm  
is heard.

As the priest raises the chalice to consecrate the  
wine.  
Arthur comes down the aisle and steps onto the altar.  
He  
reaches out to grasp the chalice from the priest's  
hands.

**INT. CHAPEL, TINTAGEL CASTLE - NIGHT**

body

Morgana holds aloft her beautiful newborn baby, his glistening in a flash of lightening. She is triumphant.

**INT. CHAPEL, CAMELOT - NIGHT.**

chapel,

A bolt of lightening strikes the chalice, rocking the and Arthur is knocked back violently.

terrified

Rain lashes in through the shattered window upon the knights. They and the priest back away. Arthur is left

alone.

He rises and goes to the chalice, which is bent and

cracked.

He kneels before it. Steam hisses up as rain falls on

it.

**INT. HALL OF THE ROUND TABLE - DAY**

in

Sun streams in. Many of the knights are in attendance, full armor.

addresses

Ladies and pages watch from dark corners. Arthur the fellowship.

with a

He holds the cracked chalice in his hands. He burns new-found fervor.

**ARTHUR**

Who will ride the labyrinths of the forest, to the very root of his soul, to the very ends of the earth, to find the secret that will redeem us from the evil that has fallen upon us, and make this chalice, and ourselves, whole again?

Gawain rises and draws his sword in salute.

**SIR GAWAIN**

I will ride forth in the name of that quest, and commit my strength and my soul to it.

touch

Perceval, Kay and a few others draw their swords and

their lips to the blades in oath. Sunbeams splash off  
their armor.

**PERCEVAL**

I will go.

The rest of the fellowship draw their swords in  
imitation, but the resolution within them is not strong. Arthur  
comes forward to Gawain.

**ARTHUR**

Gawain, a dreadful fear is upon me,  
that we may never meet again, that  
the fellowship will be no more...

He embraces Gawain, tears in his eyes. He turns to  
Perceval, and Perceval kneels.

**PERCEVAL**

We will find the secret or die.

Arthur kisses the young knight's brow. Then he turns to  
Kay.

**ARTHUR**

Kay, I know your heart yearns to go,  
but I am prisoner to my duties, and  
you must be to yours, at my side.

Arthur and Kay watch the knights file out till the hall  
is empty, the harsh song of their armor growing distant.

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**A LEGEND APPEARS:**

"For nine years they searched. Morgana's power grew in  
the land."

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. SNOWSCAPE - DAY**

Under a leaden sky, Gawain drives his horse through  
swirling

his  
frozen  
way.

snow. He comes upon a mounted knight who is frozen in tracks. He brushes the snow from the man's face. The features belong to Caradoc. He slowly continues on his way.

**EXT. DEAD FOREST - DAY**

dead  
rotting  
out

Dangling from the branches of a dead tree are a dozen knights of the Round Table, crows pecking at the flesh in the chinks of armor. Perceval rides up, cries in horror, and spurs his horse away.

**EXT. MOORS - DAY**

distant

The rotting carcasses of sheep. The crops blackened and withered on the stalk. Hungry peasants head for a hill.

**EXT, HILLSIDE, MOORS - DAY**

its

A giant head has been carved out of an outcrop of rock, stone mouth gaping toward the sky.

farmers,  
throbbing

People are congregated around the mouth. Peasants and they are wild with excitement, responding to drums and bagpipes wailing.

dark  
cold  
in  
her

They watch Morgana, who is surrounded by knights in armor. At her side is an angelic boy of eight, his eyes as his mother's. Morgana is more beautiful than ever, flowing druidic robes, the gossamer silk clinging to sweat-drenched body.

giant's  
acting as  
Before

She is standing by the deep hole which forms the open mouth. It is covered by a tooth-like grating a drain for the blood of human sacrifices made there.

strong  
into  
the

her is Gawain, chained and struggling against five  
men who hold him. Morgana lifts a dagger and plunges it  
Gawain's chest. The fountain of blood that gushes from  
great knight's body drives the crowd into a frenzy.

**MORGANA**

(intoning)

The blood of this knight will feed  
the god in the earth, he is weak  
with hunger, and he will be made  
strong by this blood. Then he will  
plant his seed, and the land will be  
fertile once again.

mouth,

Gawain, his blood flowing from him and into the giant's  
looks up in anguish. His bellowing voice is echoed and  
amplified by the hollow beneath the drain.

**GAWAIN**

Arthur, forgive me. I die without  
the secret. I have failed.

**EXT. MOORS - DAY**

draws

Gawain's death cry and the din of the ritual carries to  
Perceval's ears as he wanders through the wasteland. He  
down his visor and spurs his horse forward.

**EXT. HILLSIDE, MOORS - DAY**

and

He gallops toward the giant's head. He checks his sword  
lowers his lance.

awesome  
strangely

The knight charging forward on his war horse is an  
sight, but the crowd around the giant's mouth is  
unfrightened. Morgana is excited; she turns to the boy.

**MORGANA**

Look, Mordred, a true prize for the  
giant. The lamb rides into our jaws.

way

Perceval is galloping toward them when the ground gives

pit.

beneath the horse, and he and the animal plunge into a

The cheering crowd rushes to the edge of the trap.

**MORGANA**

(to Mordred)

You must kill him, for this knight  
is dear to your father. You must do  
it and learn to enjoy your father's  
pain.

Her knights drag Perceval, unarmed, into Morgana's  
presence.

**MORGANA**

Have you found what you search for?  
Have you found what Arthur seeks?

Perceval doesn't answer, defiant and hiding his fear.

**MORGANA**

You haven't, or you would be smiling  
now in the face of death. Your quest  
is an impossible one.

**PERCEVAL**

That it might be impossible makes it  
all the more necessary.

**MORGANA**

Fool!

(to the men holding  
Perceval)

Uncover him. I'll show you the mystery  
of life. It's death...

(to Mordred)

Do it, Mordred!

him

Holding Perceval by his limbs and hair, the men force

exposing

down on the bloody grating, drawing back his head,

boy

his throat. Morgana kneels by his head, and draws the

Perceval's

beside her. She holds the tip of the dagger to

handle.

neck and takes Mordred's hand and wraps it around the

Perceval is choked with fear, his heart pounding in his  
throat.

**MORGANA**

Feel the life through the dagger,  
child. It belongs to you.

neck  
The boy looks up at his mother. The vein in Perceval's  
pushes against the dagger's point.

**MORDRED**

I feel it, Mother. I will give his  
blood to the giant.

Perceval  
the  
just  
dagger,  
The boy raises the dagger, and hesitates just a bit.  
resigns himself bravely. He looks the child calmly in  
eye. Mordred brings down the blade without strength,  
piercing the skin with the tip. He lets go of the  
afraid now of his mistake.

the  
against  
men  
The dagger clatters to the grating and slips away down  
drain, before Morgana can retrieve it. She rages  
Mordred. In the confusion, Perceval tears loose, the  
holding him slipping on the blood-wet stone.

lowered,  
catching  
it.  
Perceval runs through the crowd. Immediately, lance  
a knight is upon him. Perceval leaps toward him,  
the lance in his hand, and pulling down the rider with  
He jumps the rider and draws the knight's sword.

Whirling  
back  
his  
off  
rearing.  
hidden  
foot  
horse  
the lance and cutting the air with the sword, he keeps  
the other knights for a moment, giving him time to see  
chance. He leaps onto the riderless horse and charges  
through the crowd. He reins in abruptly, the horse  
He is wary of the ground before him; there could be a  
pit. But there is no time to think. Knights and men on  
are rushing him. He spurs forward into a gallop, the

the  
horse

striding mightily And its hind leg sinks into a pit,  
animal losing its gait. But the momentum carries the  
forward, and it recovers from the stumble.

Perceval gallops away.

Morgana is enraged. She shakes Mordred by the hair.

**MORGANA**

You didn't kill him! You didn't kill  
him!

But suddenly she begins kissing him tenderly.

**MORGANA**

My dear, sweet boy...

her

He just stands there emotionless, the dead center of  
turbulent passions.

**EXT. DEAD FOREST - DAY**

knights of

Perceval gallops down a trail. The black-armored  
Morgana chase him.

to

the

Perceval reins into deep cover alongside the trail. The  
pursuers thunder past and the sound of hooves recedes.  
Perceval checks his newly found sword, slashes the air  
feel the weapon's balance. He re-sheathes it. He pats  
horse.

**PERCEVAL**

We'll become good friends.

trees.

small

crashes to

has

He starts off again, into the patchless forest of dead  
He is suddenly set upon by a wildman who, swinging a  
uprooted tree, knocks him off his horse. Perceval  
the ground and before he can use his sword the wildman  
knocked it out of his hand.

blows  
Perceval  
addresses

It is Lancelot, demented, who furiously rains battering  
on Perceval's armor, bellowing with rage. All that  
can do is attempt to avoid the blows. Lancelot  
Perceval as if the young knight were Lancelot himself.

**LANCELOT**

Where are you going, Lancelot, in  
your iron tomb? Still trying to save  
the world?

(He hammers blows  
into Perceval's armor)

The best... the bravest... the  
greatest... fool that ever lived.  
Now the world rots. Death is king of  
the earth. And it is you who make it  
so, Lancelot.

into  
with the

Before Perceval can speak, Lancelot disappears again  
the forest, his eyes blank, as though his encounter  
young knight had never happened.

rise  
on

A knot of pain, Perceval pulls himself up. He tries to  
into the saddle. He is too hurt to do it. He starts off  
foot, slowly, leading the horse.

**EXT. DEAD FOREST AND STREAM - NIGHT**

and  
heels,

It is very dark and Perceval has to feel his way.  
He comes to the edge of a stream. He kneels to drink,  
the horse drinks beside him. Then he rests back on his  
brooding, too tired to rise.

defeated,

He lowers his eyes, staring into the dark water,  
empty.

appears. He  
away.  
hand

Before him in the water a long thin bar of light  
looks at it amazed. Voices are heard singing very far  
He reaches out to touch the long strip of light but his

grows just disturbs the water. It is a reflection. The strip  
wider and the ethereal music is closer.  
Perceval looks up. The strip of light is before him,  
suspended, thirty feet above. It continues to grow  
wider. A  
light drawbridge is being slowly lowered, allowing a powerful  
to escape from within.  
Perceval is terrified. In pain, he slowly rises into  
the saddle, ready to gallop off; but fascinated, hypnotized  
by the sight, he cannot, and he stays and watches.  
The dim outline of a castle becomes visible as the  
drawbridge is lowered across the water to the ground at his feet.  
At the center of the blast of light coming from the  
castle, Perceval can make out a burning chalice. The music  
swells to a terrifying pitch, searing the forest.

**EXT. ENTRANCE TO CASTLE - NIGHT**

Bathed At the sight of the chalice, Perceval masters his fear.  
in light and music, he spurs the horse forward onto the  
drawbridge.  
Once he is on it, the bridge begins to rise. Unsure of  
its footing and blinded by the light, the horse becomes  
skittish, and Perceval has to struggle to control it. He  
dismounts to lead it, but the horse is terrified, rears up and jumps  
off the bridge, which continues to rise, drawn up by unseen  
hands.  
Perceval hesitates, then advances down the sloping  
drawbridge into the castle courtyard. All details are bleached out  
by the blinding light. The chalice appears suspended in  
space,

behind and now the figure of a man can be glimpsed standing  
it.

Enchanting music from unseen singers grows and weaves.  
closing, Perceval looks back to see the drawbridge slowly  
trapping him inside.

cupping He approaches the figure, his courage ebbing. Hands  
the chalice, it speaks to him.

**FIGURE**

What is the secret of the chalice?  
Who does it serve?

Perceval doesn't understand. He glances back again. The  
drawbridge is nearly closed. Terror seizes him.

up Panicked, puzzled, baffled, he backs away. He scrambles  
the drawbridge desperate to reach the top before it  
closes. He claws his way up till his hand grasps the top. He  
heaves himself through the narrow closing slit which is about  
to crush him. He screams, and with a final effort he  
wriggles free and topples over crashing into the water below.

**EXT. DEAD FOREST AND STREAM - NIGHT**

thin He looks up. The drawbridge thunders shut, the last  
only strip of light disappearing; and now he is surrounded  
by the silence of the forest.

Perceval Where there was a castle, now there is darkness.  
all wades through the water. He has crossed the stream and  
he can see and feel are tree trunks. The castle has  
disappeared. He is utterly defeated.

**PERCEVAL**

The chalice. The secret was in my  
grasp. I let it slip, afraid for  
myself. A question was asked. I didn't  
understand. I didn't try. I failed...

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**A LEGEND APPEARS:**

"Nine years passed."

**FADE IN:**

**INT. CAVE BENEATH CAMELOT.**

Dripping water is steadily encrusting the crystal with limestone.

**INT. HALL OF THE ROUND TABLE, CAMELOT - DAY**

power  
table.  
and

Dead knights lay on biers. The once glorious seat of  
is falling into decay. Few are in attendance around the  
Agitated, Kay enters and goes to Arthur, who is worn  
haggard, and aged.

**KAY**

Your son Mordred is at the gate.

Arthur comes alive.

**ARTHUR**

At last...

**KAY**

Don't recognize him. You were trapped  
by Morgana's sorcery.

**ARTHUR**

(staring off)

...Gawain and Perceval, Bors and  
Bohort, Caradoc and Ector, and all  
the others--lost to me. Only the  
echo of their voices remains in this  
empty hall. All I have left is the  
memory of their fellowship. Echoes  
and memories. I am a ghost of the  
King that once was...

(he turns to Kay and  
with sudden harshness)

...Mordred is real, alive, my own  
flesh and blood. I will see him, I  
must.

**EXT. GATE, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE CAMELOT - DAY**

from Kay

The drawbridge lowers slowly, and Arthur moves away and the other knights, and advances across it.

surrounds  
forest.

Rooks wheel over the dead trees of the forest that Camelot. A group of armed men waits at the edge of the

metal

One steps forward, a huge knight in black armor, the defining and exaggerating the powerful musculature of

his

body. He is Mordred, a young man of eighteen, and of extraordinary beauty. A page follows ten steps behind

him

bearing an enormous spear, its points hooded. Arthur

stops

at the edge of the drawbridge, the huge knight a few

steps

from him. Kay, ready for anything, moves halfway across

the

drawbridge.

Mordred kneels on one knee.

**MORDRED**

Father...

**ARTHUR**

Rise, Mordred.

**MORDRED**

I have come to claim what is mine,  
Father.

**ARTHUR**

I recognize you only as my son, no  
more.

**MORDRED**

(his tone is scathing)

And you are the great King? The lords  
have rebelled. Invaders attack the  
coasts. Crops don't grow. There is  
nothing but plague and hunger in the  
land. Only I am feared. I will be  
king. You may have lost Excalibur,  
but I have found my own weapon of  
power. There.

and the  
its  
He points to the huge lance. The page pulls a string  
hood drops, revealing a diabolically sharp spear tip,  
metal glinting menacingly.

**MORDRED**

The very spear that pierced the side  
of Christ as he died on the cross.

**ARTHUR**

Your mother told you that?

Arthur  
Mordred is thrown off by the doubt Arthur has cast.  
looks upon his son, desperately trying to read him.

**ARTHUR**

I cannot offer you the land, only my  
love...

**MORDRED**

And I offer only this, Father. To  
commit with passion and pleasure all  
the evils that you failed to commit,  
as man and king.

attempt.  
Arthur goes forward to embrace his son, a desperate  
Mordred recoils.

**MORDRED**

We will embrace only in battle.  
Father, and I will touch you only  
with the blade of my spear.

Arthur is on the verge of tears.

**MORDRED**

I will muster a great force of  
knights, and I will return to fight  
for what is mine.

**ARTHUR**

So be it.

pulled up  
He turns and re-enters the castle, the drawbridge  
immediately behind him. He is hunched over, broken.

**EXT. BARREN LAND - EVENING**

Asleep in the saddle, Perceval rides across burnt and smoldering fields. The horse walks aimlessly; it is the same animal, mangy and old. A hoard of children in filthy rags closes in on him, begging, pulling at the horse's trappings. He bolts awake and reins away. His eyes are red and feverish.

Wild hope grips him when he sees a glinting light by a farmhouse. He spurs the horse forward into a gallop.

**EXT. FARM - EVENING**

He leaps from the saddle and a terrified woman backs away. Perceval plunges his hand into the source of light. It is nothing but the reflection of the dying sun in a bucketful of water. Perceval covers his face.

**PERCEVAL**

Illusions. I will never find it again... I am sorry, woman, that I frightened you.

Peasants have emerged, surrounding him, and they hold axes and pitchforks.

**PERCEVAL**

Good woman, do you have any food? Some water?...

**PEASANT**

The little we had, we gave to Mordred's knights. He has taken this land. Tell the King that now we must look to Mordred.

**SECOND PEASANT**

But we will give you some water...

At least ten peasants encircle Perceval and he is too exhausted to put up a fight. They grab him and carry him away. Other peasants pull his horse to the ground, and one raises and ax to kill it.

**EXT. STREAM, BARREN LAND - EVENING**

into the  
out

They throw Perceval down an escarpment and he rolls  
fast-moving water. He is swept downstream and thrown  
ferociously against the rocks in the stream bed, crying  
in pain.

**EXT. RIVER AND UNDERWATER - EVENING**

the  
it,

The water is deeper and Perceval is dragged under by  
weight of his armor. He struggles desperately to shed  
half drowning.

beside a  
dies.

Exhausted, he pulls himself up onto the muddy shore  
rotting sheep carcass, and around him, the daylight

**EXT. RIVER - NIGHT**

Ragged and bruised, lifeless, he stares into space.

**PERCEVAL**

I have lost my horse, my armor, my  
sword. I have lost my way. I have  
lost my strength. I have lost  
everything... I will not lose hope.

Perceval

A light bursting through the trees shines on the mud,  
wordless, harmonies sound somewhere in the forest.

flinch.  
lowers.

sets off toward the source.

The burning light blasts into his face but he doesn't

The chorus builds in power. Before him, a drawbridge

details

**EXT. CASTLE GATE - NIGHT**

He steps onto the bridge and walks in. He crosses the  
courtyard as the drawbridge closes behind him. All

of the castle are bleached out by the searing light.

**EXT. CASTLE GATE - NIGHT**

details

He steps onto the bridge and walks in. He crosses the courtyard as the drawbridge closes behind him. All of the castle are bleached out by the searing light.

**INT. CASTLE, VARIOUS**

seem to  
stands  
swirls

Heading for the source of the light he ascends what be a staircase. He enters a hall where the chalice suspended, burning with light, and the mysterious music and grows.

Figure

Perceval approaches the diaphanous and featureless who stands over the chalice.

**FIGURE**

Who does it serve?

**PERCEVAL**

You, my lord.

**FIGURE**

I have waited long for you. Once you almost saw, but fear blinded you. Why am I served from the chalice?

**PERCEVAL**

Because you and the land are one.

**FIGURE**

I am wasting away and I cannot die. And I cannot live.

**PERCEVAL**

You and the land are one. Drink from the chalice. You will be reborn and the land with you.

But  
hands,  
hold

Perceval cups his hands around the chalice to lift it. they close on nothing, and he draws back. The Figure's although insubstantial, grasp Perceval's and appear to his hands around the cup.

**FIGURE**

But who am I?

Perceval begins to kneel.

**PERCEVAL**

You are my lord and King. You are  
Arthur.

The blinding light vanishes, the music drifts away.

**INT. HALL OF THE ROUND TABLE - NIGHT**

Perceval falls to his knees before Arthur and he holds  
the  
blood  
drinks.  
grow  
in strength.

**ARTHUR**

I didn't know how empty was my soul  
until it was filled.

Sir Kay stands by the vast fireplace where a small fire  
burns,  
and only now looks up and is aware of Perceval.

**KAY**

Perceval, you have returned!

**ARTHUR**

Ready my knights for battle; they  
will ride with their King once more.  
I have lived through others far too  
long! Lancelot carried my honor and  
Guenevere my guilt. My knights have  
fought my causes. Mordred carries my  
sins. Now, at last, I will rule.

**EXT. WOODS AND FIELDS - NIGHT**

Arthur at the head of a small force of knights, their  
armor  
Where  
and  
blossom,  
the power of Nature exploding into life.

**INT. CONVENT - DAWN**

An old nun approaches the doors, upon which someone is pounding loudly. She opens the peephole. It is Arthur.

**NUN**

Go away. No man is allowed beyond these doors.

**ARTHUR**

I am Arthur.

The old nun is amazed and starts pushing open the many bolts, mumbling and agitated.

**INT. CONVENT COURTYARD - DAWN**

She leads the King, his footsteps ringing in the silent cloister, past the doors to the cells. His armor is wet with dew and it shines with a dull and deep luster. Nuns whisper at his transit. She opens the door to a cell and Arthur steps inside.

**INT. CELL - DAWN**

Candles flicker on a small altar before which a nun is praying. She turns to see who has entered. It is Guenevere, older, thin with self-denial, all the more beautiful. She looks up at the majestic figure who stands before her. She nearly swoons. He helps her to her feet, and words rush from deep within him.

**ARTHUR**

Guenevere, accept my forgiveness, and put your heart to rest. We have suffered to long. I have always loved you, and I still love you.

She weeps.

**GUENEVERE**

I loved you much, as King, and sometimes as husband, but one cannot

gaze too long at the sun in the sky.

**ARTHUR**

Forgive me, my wife, if you can. I was not born to live a man's life, but to be the stuff of future memory. The fellowship was a brief beginning, a fair time that cannot be forgotten; and because it will not be forgotten, that fair time may come again. Now once more I must ride with my knights to defend what was, and the dream of what could be.

**GUENEVERE**

I have kept it.

barely  
She draws back the covers of her pallet, and there is Excalibur. Arthur is overwhelmed by emotion; he can speak

**ARTHUR**

I never dared to hope all these years that it was in your keeping.

off,  
off  
does.  
He kneels before her and kisses her thigh. She gazes remembering the life of long ago. He rises and looks into her eyes, unable to find the words; he finally

**ARTHUR**

I have often thought that in the hereafter of our lives, when I owe no more to the future and can be just a man, that we may meet, and you will come to me and claim me as yours, and know that I am your husband. It is a dream I have...

He takes Excalibur by the hilt and exits.

**INT. CONVENT COURTYARD - DAWN**

strides  
balance,  
The nuns scatter before him in awe and terror. He strides forward, Excalibur in hand. He stops and tests its balance, and he draws force from it.

**ARTHUR**

Guenevere...

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

at  
of the  
helmets,  
in the  
trees

Excalibur gleams in the sunlight. Arthur holds it high, the head of a small force of knights under the banner Dragons. Kay and Perceval ride at his side. Plumed shields blazing with armorial colors, pennants flying clean wind from their lances; it is a brave sight. The are in blossom and dandelion fluff billows up at their passage.

**EXT. PIT, MOORS - DAY**

squires  
the  
older

Arthur's group comes to a halt. Two knights and a few galloping from the opposite direction rein in before King. The knights draw their swords in homage, and the one addresses Arthur.

**KNIGHT**

It is only me and my son. All other knights of the dukedom have rallied to Mordred.

pit, a

Arthur smiles hiding the hurt. He points to an open huge devastation.

**ARTHUR**

What horror is that?

**KNIGHT**

Mordred, sir. He digs for precious metals, with which he buys the loyalty of men at arms, binding them to his side.

**EXT. THE MOORS - ARTHUR'S WAR CAMP - LATE EVENING**

crescent  
from

It is a clear night and the sky blazes with stars. A moon casts its silvery light upon Arthur, who wanders

his camp alone.

**EXT. STONEHENGE, THE MOORS - LATE EVENING**

He stops in the ancient circle of Druidic stones.

**ARTHUR**

I am outnumbered ten to one by Mordred's forces. Merlin, I need you at my side as you were once, my friend, to give me courage. There are no war tricks that will fool Mordred. He was weaned on blood.

He falls on his knees in front of the stone, tired, between thinking and dreaming, and he bangs his mailed fist against it.

**ARTHUR**

More than I ever did, I need you now. Where are you, Merlin? Is it true that Morgana has trapped you?

**INT. CAVE BELOW CAMELOT**

The veins of crystal glow darkly, and the hammering of Arthur's fist upon the stone is dimly echoed here. In the red crystal, fragments of Merlin can be glimpsed, trapped, frozen.

**EXT. STONEHENGE - LATE EVENING**

Arthur slips off into sleep. The stones around him distort. He speaks softly, but then though the words continue, his lips are closed.

**ARTHUR**

...If only you could be at my side, Merlin, to see me wield Excalibur once more...

**INT. CAVE BELOW CAMELOT**

The crystal is cracking, shards falling to the cave floor.

**EXT. STONEHENGE - NIGHT**

up.  
the  
Arthur is still on his knees, and he sits back, looking  
But the atmosphere is different, within a dream, and  
stones of the henge loom larger over him now.

**ARTHUR**

What is this place? It is rumored  
Merlin, that you drew your power  
from these circles...

to  
him  
were.  
rises.  
A hand ruffles the King's hair. He turns, and his face  
face with Merlin, standing over him. Arthur looks at  
without surprise, as though the intervening years never  
Merlin begins to laugh his hideous giggle. Arthur

**ARTHUR**

Quiet. You'll wake the men, and they  
must fight tomorrow for their very  
lives.

**MERLIN**

I know. I have heard noises and echoes  
through the stones...

**ARTHUR**

What is this place, Merlin?

**MERLIN**

It is like a tree. The roots of the  
stones spread out across the land  
and they draw on the thoughts and  
actions of men. Like sap those human  
matters course through the stones  
feeding the stars that are the leaves  
of the tree. And the stars whisper  
back to men the future course of  
events.

(becoming passionate)

But the earth is being torn apart,  
its metals stolen, and the balance  
is broken and the lines of power no  
longer converge. In fact, I nearly  
didn't make it in one piece.

pain. He limps affectedly and stretches with exaggerated

**MERLIN**

But, I'm here.

**ARTHUR**

Where have you been these many years?  
Is it true that Morgana--

**MERLIN**

--Stories... You brought me back.  
Your love brought me back. Back to  
where you are now, in the land of  
dreams...

**ARTHUR**

Is this a dream? Tell me, Merlin!

Merlin smiles, turns and leaves, heading for Arthur's  
camp,  
giggling. Arthur starts off after him and awakens from  
the  
dream when he walks into one of the stones. It takes  
him a  
moment to realize that Merlin has vanished.

**ARTHUR**

Merlin?!

He hurries away toward the camp.

**INT. KAY'S TENT, ARTHUR'S WAR CAMP - NIGHT**

Arthur shakes Kay awake, and as the faithful knight  
comes  
out of a deep sleep, he clutches Arthur's arm.

**KAY**

Merlin, will I live...?  
(he shakes away the  
dream)  
...I was dreaming...

**ARTHUR**

Of Merlin?

**KAY**

Yes. He spoke to me. He said I would  
fight bravely tomorrow. I have never  
dreamed of Merlin before.

**ARTHUR**

I dreamed of him too... Merlin lives!  
He lives in our dreams now, in that  
dark and shadowy place that is as  
strong and real as this more solid  
one. He speaks to us from there.

**EXT. MORDRED'S WAR CAMP - NIGHT**

tents, and  
a  
canvas,  
Cape flowing, Merlin sweeps between Mordred's war  
in the logic of dreams, unseen by the guards. He passes  
tent where the huge shadow of Mordred is thrown on the  
as he sharpens the blade of a fearsome spear.  
He enters a tent.

**INT. MORGANA'S TENT - NIGHT**

over  
waits  
She is stunningly beautiful in her sleep. Merlin leans  
her lovely body, kisses her softly on the lips, and  
for her to awaken.

**MERLIN**

I have returned, enchantress. You  
are beautiful, magnificent. Have you  
used up all the magic you stole from  
me to keep yourself young? Have you  
any magic left to do battle with  
Merlin?

**INT. TENT - MORGANA'S DREAM**

She rises from her sleeping body.

**MORGANA**

You provoke me, Merlin.

**MERLIN**

What's behind that beauty? A wizened,  
cold-hearted snake.

Merlin steps back, grandiose and melodramatic.

**MERLIN**

You are a snake about to strike!

He raises his staff.

**MERLIN**

And I am the staff that drives the  
snake back.

slinks

He lowers the staff with dreamlike slowness and she  
right up to him.

**MORGANA**

Burning with the fire of desire, I  
am the flames that consume the staff  
to ashes.

the

licking

She winds her fluttering hands around the staff, and  
shadows they cast upon the tent give the illusion of  
flames.

**MERLIN**

I am the cloudburst that quenches  
the flames.

**MORGANA**

I am the desert, where water  
disappears--

**MERLIN**

--I am the sea, which covers the  
desert forever under its weight.

**MORGANA**

--I am the fog and mists that rise  
up from the sea, escaping...

She laughs at her cleverness.

**MERLIN**

Fog and mist! You couldn't be that.  
You don't have enough magic.

**INT. MORGANA'S TENT - NIGHT**

Morgana tosses and mutters in her tormented dream.

**MORGANA**

...I have the desire and I have the  
magic...

**INT. TENT - MORGANA'S DREAM**

Merlin, huge, magnetic, enfolds Morgana in his cape.

**MERLIN**

You are mine at last. I am the sea  
and you will never escape me. Fog  
and Mist...!?

chanting

And he laughs at her, suffocating her. Morgana begins  
the charm of Making, desperate--

**INT. MORGANA'S TENT - NIGHT**

spring

--and she finishes uttering it in her sleep. Her eyes  
open, and vapors issue from her gaping mouth. She  
and the fog gushes out filling the tent.

screams

**EXT. MORGANA'S TENT, MORDRED'S WAR CAMP - NIGHT**

camp.

Fog billows out of the tent, spreading through the

**INT. MORGANA'S TENT - NIGHT**

**LIEUTENANT**

A fog is rising, sir.

**MORDRED**

That cannot be.

He rises and goes out with the lieutenant.

**EXT. MORDRED'S WAR CAMP - NIGHT**

It is fogbound, the campfires yellow smudges within it.

**MORDRED**

(to the lieutenant)

My mother has a sense for such things.  
She said there would be no fog.

Mordred enters his mother's tent.

**INT. MORGANA'S TENT - NIGHT**

Mordred enters.

**MORDRED**

...Mother?

smoke Morgana, withered, old, lies dead in the bed, wisps of  
rising from within her ruptured body.

**EXT. MOORS BY THE SEA - FOG - DAWN**

white Arthur, with Kay and Perceval, canters through the  
armor. fog. They are flanked by a phalanx of knights in silver

**ARTHUR**

Kay, you will lead the attack.  
Perceval, you will stay with me.

Kay draws his sword in salute, elated.

**ARTHUR**

Be cautious, my brother.

watching him He spurs forward, while Arthur reins to a halt,  
surround disappear. Perceval and a few knights stay behind and  
the King.

**ARTHUR**

In this battle there is one thing I  
must do, that no one else can. Find  
Mordred and kill him.

Ahead, the horrible din of joined battle.

arms. In the swirling fog, clash of arms follows clash of  
he There is confusion, for each knight is unable to see if  
other. is fighting friend or foe until they are upon each

in The battle becomes a series of vicious duels, a knight  
just silver armor against a knight in black-burnished armor,  
sword on glimpsed in the fog that is alive with the clang of  
shield, the pounding of hooves, the cries of the dying.  
faces Squires drag away their wounded knights, their young  
pale at the sight of the carnage.

riderless

Kay is unhorsed but picks himself up and mounts a horse, rejoining the combat although he is bleeding.

**EXT. MOORS BY THE SEA - FOG - DAY**

glare.

It is full day, and the fog blinds with its painful

King.

Arthur with Perceval at his side rides through the fog, searching. Perceval takes up a challenge against the

He

He unhorses this opponent, piercing him with his lance.

returns to the King's side.

**PERCEVAL**

There are too many on Mordred's side.  
We cannot hold out much longer.

his

Kay is glimpsed fighting on foot, hurt, barely holding own, but then the sight is hidden in the fog.

breath. He

Kay overcomes his opponent and stops to catch his

scarred

is amazed by what he sees. A knight, in old, battle-

in

armor whose pieces don't match, cuts down the knights

fight

black in foray after foray, wheeling and turning in a brilliant and ruthless spectacle of martial arts. He

his

without a shield, a lance in his left hand and sword in

right.

Kay moves away in search of Arthur.

death

Arthur and Perceval watch the lone knight meting out

fog.

with such terrible beauty, weaving in and out of the

**KAY**

He can be no other.

**ARTHUR**

Lancelot?... It is Lancelot!

quick

He spurs his horse forward to join him, but Perceval is

to stop him.

**PERCEVAL**

No, my lord. We seek Mordred.

**KAY**

I will join him.

Kay rises onto a fresh horse and gallops away.

**EXT. MOORS BY THE SEA - FOG - LATE DAY**

knights  
around  
Arthur  
and  
Arthur and Perceval ride alone, the accompanying  
gone, the dying and the dead and the crazed horses all  
them.

Squires are carrying Kay upon his shield. He is dead.  
leaps to the ground and reaches out to touch his face,  
closes his eyes. He stifles his tears.

**ARTHUR**

Has anyone seen Lancelot?

**SQUIRE**

He lies over there, sir.

abdomen,  
side.  
Arthur rushes off, Perceval following on horseback.  
Lancelot is mortally wounded, blood flowing from his  
his eyes open but his gaze dead. Arthur falls to his

**ARTHUR**

Squire! Here!

and  
drawn.  
Lancelot's  
But there is no one now except the dead and wounded,  
Perceval, who dismounts to watch over the King, sword  
Desperate, Arthur stops the wound with his hand.  
eyes are sightless, but tears spill from them.

**LANCELOT**

Arthur.

**ARTHUR**

Lancelot, I will save you... Don't

die.

wound  
He tears off a piece of his tunic and staunches the  
with it.

**LANCELOT**

My salvation is to die a Knight of  
the Round Table.

**ARTHUR**

You are that and much more. You are  
its greatest knight, you are what is  
best in men. Now we will be together--

**LANCELOT**

--It is the old wound, that has been  
opened. I have always known it would  
be the gateway to my death, for it  
has never healed. Let my heart do  
its job, my King, and pump me empty...

against  
Arthur takes Lancelot in his arms and rests his lips  
the knight's brow.

**LANCELOT**

(a death whisper)

Guenevere, has she come to you, is  
she Queen again?

He lies, closing his eyes, unable to look at Lancelot.

**ARTHUR**

She is, Lancelot.

face,  
shut  
A boyish smile settles over the features of Lancelot's  
and he dies. Arthur holds him to his breast, his eyes  
tight.

A strong wind rises. Perceval kneels beside Arthur.

**PERCEVAL**

The fog is lifting. Only we remain  
alive.

**EXT. MOORS BY THE SEA - EVENING**

across  
Arthur and Perceval rise, and as far as they can see

aftermath  
steaming  
dying

the green hills that roll down to the sea lies the  
of the massacre. Hacked bodies, abandoned armor,  
horse carcasses, everything still. The murmur of the  
is carried on the wind to the soft roar of the sea. The  
squires have fled the scene of horror.

**ARTHUR**

But for Mordred. Where is Mordred?

dead,  
bodies

Elsewhere on the battlefield, Mordred searches the  
accompanied only by his lieutenant, who turns over the  
of Arthur's knights.

**MORDRED**

Where is Arthur?

Mordred  
lance is

One of Arthur's knights reaches out blindly for help.  
crushes his skull underfoot. The shaft of his huge  
caked with blood, as are his hands.

the

Arthur and Perceval see Mordred and his lieutenant, and  
King restrains Perceval from going forward.

**ARTHUR**

No, Perceval. Now it is time for me  
to raise my sword.

(he bellows out)

Mordred, prepare to meet your death.

starts

Shield on his left arm, and Excalibur in his right, he  
toward Mordred.

**MORDRED**

I wait for you, Father.

and

Mordred advances forward, the huge spear in both hands  
parallel to the ground.

the

Arthur goes straight for him, shield ready to receive  
blow. Mordred keeps walking, his arms now tensed back

and

ready to strike.

Mordred  
Arthur's  
King's  
pierces

Once they are within weapon's reach of each other,  
dashes forward and thrusts the spear. It glances off  
shield, slides under his hauberk and penetrates the  
body, and so powerful was the blow that the blade  
him right through.

horrible  
strength  
presses  
Arthur  
the  
metal,

Mortally wounded, Arthur's scream of pain becomes a  
war cry, and he drives himself forward with all the  
he has along the spear shaft almost to Mordred's hands.  
Mordred is knocked back and to the ground and Arthur  
down on him, the butt of the spear pinning Mordred.  
lifts Excalibur. Mordred attempts to free himself, as  
blade of Excalibur descends upon him and cuts through  
flesh and bone.

side,  
Arthur

Mordred's head falls to the ground, rolling away.  
Mordred's lieutenant flees. Perceval races to Arthur's  
and supports the King who has fallen on his knees.  
speaks through the pain:

**ARTHUR**

Draw the spear from me. Do it.

while  
Arthur's  
remove  
slowly,

Perceval holds the King tight to himself with one arm,  
with the other he draws the shaft through and out of  
body. Arthur sags but doesn't fall. Perceval begins to  
his armor to get at the gaping wounds. The King speaks  
softly, from outside his own pain-wracked body.

**ARTHUR**

There is one thing left to do...  
Excalibur... And you must do it,  
Perceval. Leave my wounds, I command

you.

**PERCEVAL**

I cannot--

**ARTHUR**

--Take Excalibur. Find a pool of calm water and throw the sword into it.

Perceval, stunned by the command, doesn't move.

**ARTHUR**

Obey me, Perceval. You must act for me. It is my last order as your King. Do it, and be back!

pain,  
Perceval picks up the sword, mounts his horse and rides inland. Arthur watches him go, struggling with the still kneeling, and then his head falls to his chest.

**EXT. POOL, MOORS - EVENING**

pool. He  
He  
iridescence.  
Perceval steps through tall reeds to the edge of a cannot bring himself to throw Excalibur into the water. examines the blade, and it is haloed with a faint

**PERCEVAL**

It is too precious a thing. I can't...

reeds,  
He backs away from the water and hides the sword in the and starts back.

**EXT. MOORS BY THE SEA - EVENING**

side.  
Perceval dismounts, rushing to kneel at the King's Arthur looks up, calm and intense.

**ARTHUR**

When you threw it in, what did you see?

**PERCEVAL**

...I saw nothing.

blurts

The King looks at him with piercing power. Perceval  
it out.

**PERCEVAL**

My King, I couldn't do it. Excalibur  
cannot be lost. Other men--

**ARTHUR**

--By itself it is only a piece of  
steel. Its power comes from he who  
wields it. For now there is no one.  
Do as I have ordered!

sun

clouds.

Perceval leaves once more. The daylight is failing, the  
is near the horizon over the sea, bursting through

**EXT. POOL - EVENING**

middle

holds the

marvel.

He picks up the sword and looks at it for a long time.  
Finally, with great misgiving, he hurls it into the

of the pool. As Excalibur is about to touch the water a  
woman's hand reaches and grasps it by the hilt. It

sword aloft for a moment and then draws it under.

Perceval backs away from the pool stunned by the

**EXT. MOORS BY THE SEA - SUNSET**

shouting

Perceval returns to the King, terribly excited,  
from his horse:

**PERCEVAL**

Arthur!

doesn't

horse and

But Arthur isn't there. Perceval looks around him, he  
understand. He sees a trail of blood. He spurs his  
follows the trail down to the sea.

**EXT. BEACH - SUNSET THEN NIGHT**

by a

There is a trail of blood and prints upon the sand left  
man crawling.

Perceval follows them toward the sea. He looks around, searching, terribly distraught.

footprints  
out  
Where the blood and prints cease, there are many coming from and returning into the sea. Perceval looks across the waves.

deck he  
surrounded  
The sun  
further,  
He sees a sailing vessel rising on the swell. On its can make out the distant figure of Arthur, lying by women, their gossamer robes rippling in the wind. hovers on the horizon and the ship is heading for it. He gallops into the waves until his horse will go no calling out with all his strength, a futile attempt:

**PERCEVAL**

Arthur! Will you return?

the  
wades  
back.  
The sun slips below the horizon. Night is falling, and wind whips the wavecrests. He turns from the sea and

**PERCEVAL**

All the knights of the Round Table are dead. Excalibur is returned. Arthur is gone. Maybe he lives, maybe he will return...

light  
pouch  
He stops at the edge of the water. In the uncertain sky and sea become one. He draws the chalice out of a on his saddle, and he holds it up before him.

**PERCEVAL**

Only I remain, and this...

of  
taken  
The wind swirls and whistles mysteriously in the hollow the cup. Music grand and melancholic grows from it. The chalice, etched in starlight, is the last thing that is from sight in the enfolding darkness.

**OUT :**

**FADE**

**THE END**