

## Camelot Synopsis

A nervous King Arthur tries to cajole Merlyn, his teacher, to tell him about Guenevere, the future queen. Merlyn knows the future, as he lives from the future into the present and grows younger instead of older. Upon her arrival, Guenevere dodges the awaiting crowds and hides, seeking “The Simple Joys of Maidenhood.” Arthur and Guenevere accidentally meet in the forest and are delighted to find they are charmed with each other. Together, they look forward to their glorious future in “Camelot.”

Merlyn is lured away by a spirit, and Arthur is left on his own. Five years pass and Arthur tries to follow the course of wisdom set for him by Merlyn. He creates a new philosophy, one that says might should be the weapon of right. He creates the Round Table, a new concept of chivalry whose advocates will be charged with improving rather than destroying, with redressing past wrongs and aiding the oppressed. The table at which these knights will meet will be round so that no one man can take precedence by sitting at the head.

Word of the Round Table spreads to France, where Lancelot heeds its call, setting off for Camelot. In “C’est Moi,” Lancelot proclaims that he is the most extraordinary mortal, an invincible knight dedicated to perfection in body and spirit. When Lancelot arrives in Camelot, the queen and her party are engaged in a May Day outing (“The Lusty Month of May”). Everyone but Arthur finds Lancelot pompous and disagreeable.

Pellinore, a comic old knight in rusty armor, delays his perpetual search for a rare beast to stop with his old friend Arthur. Lancelot is challenged by Sir Dinadan, Sir Sagramore, and Sir Lionel – the three strongest knights – in “The Jousts.” Lancelot defeats all three, and even miraculously brings Sir Lionel back to life after killing him.

Over time, Lancelot and Guenevere fall in love (“If Ever I Would Leave You”). Meanwhile, Mordred, Arthur’s evil son, arrives and tries to dishonor the king. He mocks Arthur’s high ideals and attempts to exploit Guenevere’s love for Lancelot. Arthur becomes despondent, and Guenevere cheers him (“What Do The Simple Folk Do?”). Gradually, the knights begin to grow restless for the battles of old, and Arthur’s leadership wanes.

Mordred has Guenevere arrested and sentenced to burn at the stake for her treasonous affair with Lancelot (“Guenevere”), but Guenevere and Lancelot escape to France. Arthur declares war against Lancelot, but just before the fighting begins, he relents and forgives them both. Sad and disillusioned, Arthur feels his dreams of love and chivalry are ruined.

Suddenly, Tom – a boy of about 14 – appears, wanting to join the Round Table. Realizing that this young, hopeful lad is the future of his kingdom, Arthur knights Tom and sends him out to tell the world of Camelot’s quest for right and honor and justice (“Camelot”).