

Camelot Synopsis

Act One

The young King Arthur nervously tries to persuade the wizard Merlyn to tell him of his future wife and queen, Lady Guenevere. ("I Wonder What the King is Doing Tonight"). Guenevere arrives, successfully avoiding the pestering crowds ("The Simple Joys of Maidenhood"). An accidental meeting occurs between Arthur and Guenevere, who are delighted to discover their mutual affection ("Camelot"). Merlyn, joyous at Arthur's marriage, is suddenly spirited away by a mystical force ("Follow Me"), disappearing forever.

Five years pass, and attempting to rule with the wisdom taught him by Merlyn, Arthur devises the Round Table, where no man shall take the head and all will be viewed equally. A haughty Knight from France, Sir Lancelot hears of the Round Table and sets off for Camelot to offer his allegiance ("C'est Moi"). Lancelot arrives during a May Day Celebration ("The Lusty Month of May"), and all but the King find him overbearing and disagreeable. Arthur is dismayed especially by Guenevere's dislike of Lancelot, but finds he cannot be angry with her ("How To Handle A Woman").

Goaded on by Guenevere, the kingdom's best knight challenges Lancelot ("The Jousts"). Lancelot defeats the knight, killing him, yet miraculously seems to bring him back to life. Guenevere, amongst the adoration of the crowd, discovers herself falling in love with Lancelot, but wishes him to leave in order to curtail her feelings for him ("Before I Gaze at You Again"). Lancelot, despite claiming immunity to amorous enticements, finds himself in love with Guenevere as well. Arthur is aware of their feelings, but hopes for the sake of the kingdom that they will keep them dormant and unrealized ("Finale").

Act Two

Some months later, Lancelot and Guenevere remain tormented by their unfulfilled love ("If Ever I Would Leave You"). Because of their devotion to Arthur, however, they maintain a chaste relationship. Mordred, Arthur's illegitimate son, arrives in Camelot with sinister plans to destroy the chivalry of the Round Table ("The Seven Deadly Virtues"). Meanwhile, a downtrodden Arthur tries to cheer the mood by detailing with Guenevere the simple pleasures in life ("What Do the Simple Folk Do?").

While Arthur is away on a hunt, Lancelot, unable to control his passion, visits Guenevere and kisses her ("I Loved You Once In Silence"). Mordred catches them in the act. Lancelot escapes, but Guenevere is caught and sentenced to burn at the stake for treason ("Guenevere"). On the day of execution, a conflicted King Arthur struggles with

what to do. At the last moment, Lancelot arrives, rescues Guenevere, and escapes. Arthur in turn must now wage war on Lancelot and the Round Table is dissolved.

Arthur secretly meets with Lancelot and Guenevere near the field of battle. They offer to give themselves up, but the King will not see his lady love burned at the stake nor Lancelot beheaded. He forgives them both, and they depart. A peasant boy stumbles onto the scene. Arthur is inspired by this eager young man who has come to fight for the Round Table. Arthur knights him and sends him away to perpetuate ideals of equality, preserve a sense of chivalry, and recount the sparkling legacy of Camelot.