

(ARTHUR)



#13 – *Finale Act I*

ARTHUR

Proposition: If I could choose, from every woman who breathes on this earth, the face I would most love, the smile, the touch, the voice, the heart, the laugh, the soul itself, every detail and feature to the smallest strand of hair – they would all be Jenny's. Proposition: If I could choose from every man who breathes on this earth a man for my brother and a man for my son, a man for my friend, they would all be Lance.

(ARTHUR)

(His bitterness mounts)

Yes, I love them. I love them, and they answer me with pain and torment. Be it sin or not sin, they betray me in their hearts, and that's sin enough. I see it in their eyes and feel it when they speak, and they must pay for it and be punished. I shan't be wounded and not return it in kind. I'm done with feeble hoping. I demand a man's vengeance!

(HE moves violently, then controls himself)

Proposition: I'm a king, not a man. And a civilized king. Could it possibly be civilized to destroy what I love? Could it possibly be civilized to love myself above all? What of their pain and their torment? Did they ask for this calamity? Can passion be selected? Is there any doubt of their devotion... to me, or to our Table?

(ARTHUR raises high the sword in his hand)

By God, Excalibur, I shall be a King! This is the time of King Arthur, and we reach for the stars! This is the time of King Arthur, and violence is not strength and compassion is not weakness. We are civilized! Resolved: We shall live through this together, they and I! And God have mercy on us all.

(There is an enormous crash of drums. Banners above fall to the floor. On the catwalk above we see LANCELOT and GUENEVERE at opposite sides of the stage, facing one another. A slow drumroll begins, gaining speed and volume, as they walk slowly toward one another until they are face to face, ARTHUR still below. After a pause, a final deafening crash of drums and the scene blacks out. Another crash and the house lights come up revealing an empty stage)

END OF ACT ONE