

ALL

AND TAKE ME (YOU) TO THE FAIR!

Change of Scene

BOTH

A hallway in the castle.

(The lights change. ARTHUR and GUENEVERE appear on the upper scaffold, she holding a lantern. As they walk the "hallway" and descend the stairs :)

ARTHUR

Jenny, I would be grateful if you'd withdraw your permission from Sir Lionel to carry your kerchief.

GUENEVERE

At this late date, Arthur? It would be rather awkward.

ARTHUR

Then let Lancelot carry your kerchief against Sagamore.

GUENEVERE

I promised it to Sagamore.

ARTHUR

Then against Dinadan.

GUENEVERE

He asked so prettily, I couldn't refuse.

ARTHUR

(Angrily)

What? This is appalling! It will seem to the Court as if you're rooting for his downfall, championing his defeat.

(A REVELER enters with a bowl of apples. GUENEVERE peruses them)

GUENEVERE

We don't know he'll be defeated. Besides, he knocked you unconscious and you woke up his bosom friend. Perhaps he'll knock them out, too, and they'll all take a house by the sea together.

ARTHUR

(Exasperated)

Jenny, at the risk of disappointing the other knights, I ask you to withdraw your permission from all.

GUENEVERE

(Quietly and firmly)

Only if you command me - as King.

ARTHUR

(Gently)

And if I do, will you forgive me?

GUENEVERE

Never.

(SHE picks an apple and starts back to the upper levels)

ARTHUR

If I ask as your husband, will you, as a favor?

GUENEVERE

No. The Knights are against him and I quite agree with them. I find him just as overbearing and pretentious as they do. Haven't you heard his latest claim? He says he can perform miracles. Says his purity gives him miraculous powers.

ARTHUR

(At the peak of exasperation)

That is not the issue. The issue is your kerchief. Can we not stay on the subject?

GUENEVERE

There is nothing more to be said. If the King wishes me to withdraw permission, let him command me! And Yours Humbly will graciously obey.

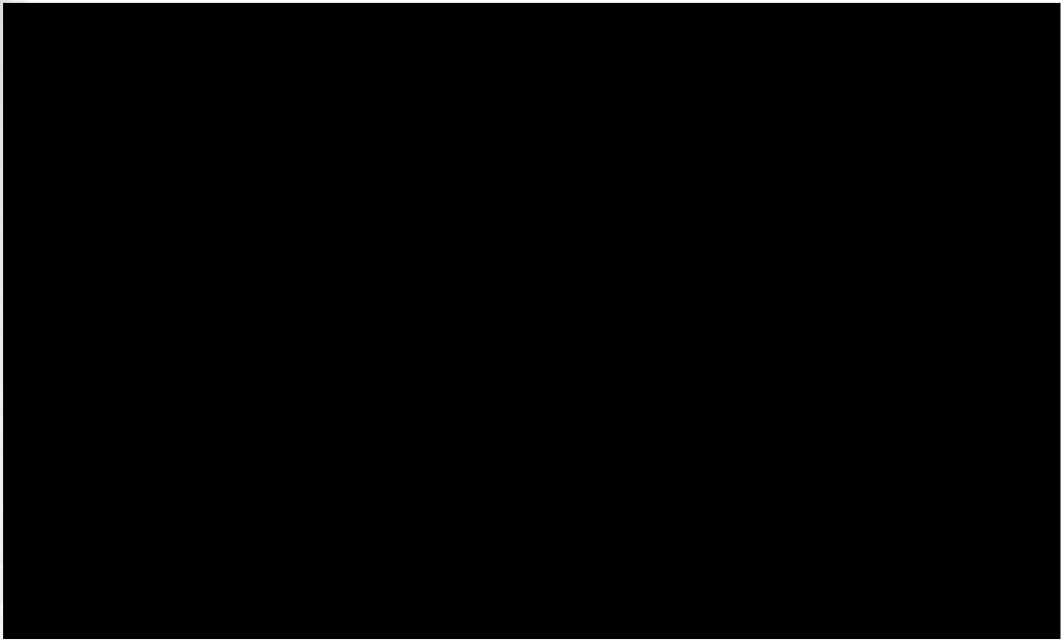
(SHE turns and exits up)

ARTHUR

Blast!

(HE paces, railing)

Blast you, Merlyn! This is all your fault!

**LANCELOT**

Jenny, come away with me. To Joyous Gard. Let us have it open and aboveboard at last.

GUENEVERE

Lance, I've told you I'll never leave Arthur. Ever. Now, let us say no more about it.

LANCELOT

But this agonizing torment...

GUENEVERE

(Turning fiercely on him)

You think you're the only one in torment. I'm just as tortured, just as anguished as you. But what would you have us do to this man we both love? Run away! Leave him! Make him publicly miserable! Force him to declare war on you, where either one of you, if not both, would be killed as well as hundreds of others. What sort of heartbreaking solution is that?

(For a moment THEY are silent)

LANCELOT

(With quiet resignation)

Forgive me, Jenny. I shall never mention it again. I swear. Nor shall I come to you again. I swear that, too.

(HE moves to leave)

GUENEVERE

Lance?

(GUENEVERE)

(HE stops)

Have we no more tender words to say to each other?

(There is a long telling silence. Then HE moves to her and kisses her chastely on the forehead)

AND AFTER ALL HAS BEEN SAID

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