THE FIRST ROUND TABLE

Inspired by the legends of King Arthur

Written by

Ben Gillman

Ben Gillman 213-500-8357 BenGillman@gmail.com FADE IN:

EXT. CASTLE TINTAGEL - NIGHT

The mighty Castle Tintagel is under siege.

The towers are aflame, rampaging SAXONS scale the stone walls, screams of anguish ring out in the night air.

And soaring through the skies-

A terrifying BLOOD-RED DRAGON.

BOWMEN fire arrows from the castle walls, but they bounce uselessly off of the Red Dragon's thick hide.

It swoops, opens its massive jaws, and belches fire upon the wall, engulfing the helpless Bowmen.

INT. UTHER'S THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

The noise from the outside battle is unmistakable. But the grand throne room is empty save for two young people holding hands before the throne-

YOUNG ARTHUR (15) - handsome, confident, but not yet a man.

YOUNG GUINEVERE (14) - beautiful, strong, but not yet a lady.

YOUNG ARTHUR This isn't how I imagined finally getting you alone.

YOUNG GUINEVERE At least there's a roaring fire.

Arthur leans in to kiss her when-

The door to the throne room swings open-

The good KING UTHER (50s) enters, dressed in shimmering armor flecked with gold and adorned with-

The symbol of a dragon surrounded in flames.

Following him are several servants, children, and a frail old man with silvery hair - LEODEGRANCE - Guinevere's father.

UTHER Arthur, my son, we must get Guinevere and her father to safety. Arthur opens his mouth to protest. But-

YOUNG GUINEVERE Arthur, it'll be alright. Sir Aggravaine has always protected me. My father and I will be safe.

She motions to SIR AGGRAVAINE - a massive, muscular, hulk of a warrior. Aggravaine nods and gives Guinevere a small smile.

Arthur steps up to Guinevere. He takes her hand.

YOUNG ARTHUR Through fire or storm, I will always come to your side.

Guinevere gives him a lovely embroidered handkerchief.

YOUNG GUINEVERE When you do, return this to me.

The young lovers touch hands one last time.

Old Leodegrance leads Guinevere as they follow Aggravaine.

Arthur watches them go. King Uther touches Arthur's shoulder.

UTHER You'll get her back. Just as you left her.

EXT. CASTLE TINTAGEL - COURTYARD - NIGHT

A small contingent of KNIGHTS face the main wooden gate.

Boom! Boom! BOOM!

The wooden gate cracks but doesn't give way.

But the Knights waver. All except one-

LANCELOT - still a young knight (25), but full of endless confidence, and possessed of a perfect body and handsome face. His sword is raised and prepared for battle.

Beside him stands PERCIVAL (30s), thinner and weaker than Lancelot. His sword wobbles as his courage fails.

PERCIVAL Lancelot, it's hopeless. Vortigern's men are pouring in from all sides. They've got a dragon! LANCELOT I know, I know, I want to slay the dragon too. But first things first, we do our duty to the King-(roaring) AND CUT DOWN EVERY MAN THAT COMES THROUGH THIS GATE!

For a moment, the pounding on the gate stops. Silence. But only for a moment. Boom! Boom! Boom!

> LANCELOT (CONT'D) You can't say we didn't warn them.

With a crash, the gate is ripped to splinters,

And Percival and the other Knights drop their swords and run.

PERCIVAL I'm sorry, Lancelot. I'm sorry...

Lancelot, alone, stands fast.

LANCELOT Right. Just me then.

He raises his sword and charges at the oncoming army.

HIGH ATOP THE BATTLEMENTS

King Uther leads Young Arthur and a small group of women and children toward safety.

Arthur surveys the madness of the battle.

YOUNG ARTHUR Father, we have to go back for Guinevere! I should be with her.

UTHER She and her father are well taken care of. Put them from your mind.

Arthur tries to head back, but Uther holds him still.

Uther nods towards YOUNG KAY - a 16 year old boy with a wild tangle of red hair.

UTHER (CONT'D) Arthur, you must go with Kay. Get to his father, Sir Hector, he'll raise you as his own son. YOUNG ARTHUR Father, I can help you! We can beat them! Raise the White Dragon.

UTHER The White Dragon hasn't been seen in a hundred years.

Uther looks intently into his son's eyes.

UTHER (CONT'D) But... There is another legend. Of a sword. Driven into a stone. It is meant only for the king. Only for you. Find it. It will guide you.

There's a loud pounding on the oak door on the other end of the battlement. It's going to shatter any moment.

UTHER (CONT'D) I'll hold them off. But if I fall, they must not take you. You must return. You must be King. Go. GO!

Kay pulls Arthur away as he reaches for the king.

Uther watches the boy sadly then turns as-

The large oak door bursts open.

VORTIGERN (40s), dressed in black armor, emerges followed by several scowling Saxons ready to charge at King Uther.

Vortigern raises a hand to halt them.

UTHER (CONT'D) Vortigern.

VORTIGERN I'd prefer to be called "King."

UTHER You're not a king yet.

Uther draws his broad sword. Vortigern does the same. They charge at each other, and-

Their swords clash with a rattle like thunder.

INT. CASTLE HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Young Guinevere and her father, Leodegrance, race down a hallway, close behind the massive form of Aggravaine.

Leodegrance stumbles, and clutches the wall as he gasps for air. Guinevere tries to prop him up under the shoulder.

> YOUNG GUINEVERE We're almost there, father. We'll soon be free of all this madness.

But Leodegrance puts a long golden dagger in her hands. Guinevere gasps. Just the feel of it shocks her.

> LEODEGRANCE I'm sorry, my dear. But in these dark times, only the strong survive.

Aggravaine doubles back to them.

SIR AGGRAVAINE I've promised to protect you both. I can't do it here.

Leodegrance takes a deep breath, and with Guinevere's help-The three of them take off running.

EXT. THE COURTYARD - NIGHT

Lancelot fights twenty men at once. He spins, blocks, attacks with unbelievable skill, and amazingly-

He seems to be winning.

LANCELOT Is this all you've got?!

Another spin. Another swing. Another kill.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) This is your conquering army?!

Spin. Swing. Death.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Long live the king!!

ON THE BATTLEMENTS

Uther and Vortigern continue to clash.

They seem to be evenly matched, and after a few powerful blows they find themselves circling at a standstill.

VORTIGERN Your castle has fallen, Uther. It's time for a new king.

UTHER I think not, Vortigern. I have allies that you could not-

Suddenly, A BOLT OF LIGHTNING STRIKES the battlements.

And standing in its place is an old, bearded man. MERLIN.

UTHER (CONT'D) Merlin...?

VORTIGERN Only one with immense power can control a dragon.

Merlin points his long wooden staff at the Red Dragon.

IN THE SKIES

The Red Dragon spins and dives toward one of the towers. With a roar of fire, it engulfs a dozen ARCHERS.

THE BATTLEMENTS

Vortigern sneers triumphantly at Uther.

VORTIGERN (CONT'D) Your wizard betrays you. Your knights abandon you. And I will find your son wherever he hides. You've lost.

But with a mighty roar, Uther strikes at Vortigern and the battle continues.

INT. CASTLE HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Aggravaine leads Young Guinevere and Leodegrance to an old wooden door. He reaches to open it, but-

YOUNG GUINEVERE Wait. This doesn't lead-

Aggravaine sneers as he wrenches open the door to reveal-

A room full of Saxon warriors.

Leodegrance pulls a sword, but he's grabbed from behind-

By Aggravaine, who puts a knife to Leodegrance's throat.

Guinevere draws her golden dagger and makes a stab for Aggravaine. But he easily bats it away, and, with his free hand, grabs her by the front of the dress.

YOUNG GUINEVERE (CONT'D) We trusted you!

SIR AGGRAVAINE My orders aren't to kill you. Yet. My advice, find a way to be useful.

EXT. THE COURTYARD - NIGHT

Lancelot continues to fight dozens of Saxons at once. He's covered in blood and sweat, but very little of it is his own.

LANCELOT Vortigern's army beaten by-Aaaahhh!!!

SLASH!

The Saxons halt for a moment, and Lancelot looks down to see-His right hand has been cut off at the forearm.

> LANCELOT (CONT'D) A... lucky... blow...

With a supreme effort, he snatches up his sword with his left arm and valiantly fights on.

THE BATTLEMENTS

A mighty clash ensues between Uther and Vortigern. And-

Vortigern comes out the better.

Uther is disarmed and falls to his knees. He turns to Merlin.

UTHER Merlin... You swore me an oath...

MERLIN The Mighty King, The King of All, For He Who Rose, It's Time to Fall.

Merlin points his staff at Uther.

The Red Dragon curves through the air and flies toward Uther.

THE COURTYARD

Lancelot is now completely surrounded by Saxons. He holds out his sword defensively with his left arm, but-

He's wounded terribly. Bloody. Beaten. And yet he snarls-

LANCELOT This is your last chance. Drop your swords. Or I, the mighty Lancelot, will slay every last one of you.

For a moment, the Saxons hesitate. Fear on their faces.

Then, all at once, they charge.

And Lancelot is overtaken.

THE BATTLEMENTS

The Red Dragon soars toward where King Uther awaits his doom.

UTHER My son will return...

The Red Dragon closes in.

UTHER (CONT'D) He will reclaim my throne...

It opens its monstrous jaws-

UTHER (CONT'D) HE. WILL. BE. KING!

Flames pour from The Red Dragon's mouth.

EXT. CASTLE TINTAGEL - NIGHT

At a distant, deserted corner of the castle, several rocks are pushed out of the wall.

A small stream of people pour out of the hole.

The Young Kay leads the Young Arthur, and as he looks back-

The burning castle is reflected in Arthur's eyes.

EXT. DESERTED GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

SUPER: 7 Years Later

A young man of 22 comes bursting out of a dark forest. He sprints, his hair tousled, and his handsome young face cut, bleeding and dirty. He wears little more than torn rags.

This is ARTHUR.

He emerges into a dark graveyard, thick with fog, cluttered with decrepit, moss-covered tombstones.

At his heels is a towering warrior, fully adorned in warbeaten armor, with a long broad sword at his side.

SIR AGGRAVAINE. As massive, muscular and hulking as ever.

Arthur trips and falls to the ground.

Sir Aggravaine sneers down upon the filthy man beneath him.

SIR AGGRAVAINE Well, well, well... The Boy King returns after all these years.

Arthur scuttles backward into a massive hunk of rock.

A sword protrudes from the stone.

ARTHUR Sir Aggravaine... Please...

SIR AGGRAVAINE King Vortigern will be so pleased to receive the gift of your head.

Arthur backs into the hunk of rock. He gropes hopelessly for something-anything to defend himself with.

His hand closes on the hilt of the sword in the stone.

SIR AGGRAVAINE (CONT'D) You gonna pull that sword from the stone? That how you're going to fight me? With the sword of legend-

And that's exactly what Arthur does.

With a mighty heave, the sword slides out of the stone.

Sir Aggravaine's jaw drops.

But Arthur grins. He'd been planning this all along.

ARTHUR Good trick, huh?

Sir Aggravaine rallies. He takes a mighty swing at Arthur, but Arthur parries with the Sword from the Stone, and-

Sir Aggravaine's sword shatters.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) I want you to take a message to Vortigern for me.

Arthur flourishes the sword-

ARTHUR (CONT'D) The look on your face will say it all.

With one powerful arcing blow, Arthur strikes.

Sir Aggravaine's head rolls off into the graveyard.

After a moment, Arthur turns back to the stone. Written on the rock in bold red letters is:

SIR AGGRAVAINE

Arthur slides his sword back into the massive hunk of rock. Sir Aggravaine's name blazes brightly then vanishes.

And after another moment, a new name burns red on the stone:

LADY GUINEVERE

His exhilaration gone, Arthur stares at the new name. Then he looks to his hip, where tucked into his belt is-

Guinevere's embroidered handkerchief.

EXT. A WOODED PATH - DAY

A carriage rolls through a dense woods along a dirt path.

Two white horses pull the adorned carriage, and are spurred on by an OLD DRIVER dressed in a richly decorated tunic.

INT. GUINEVERE'S CARRIAGE - DAY

GUINEVERE (21), beautifully dressed in a green and gold gown, sits in the carriage as it jostles and bumps along the road.

But she does her best to sit stock still. A look of serene beauty is determinedly pasted on her gorgeous, proper face.

The carriage goes over a particularly nasty bump!

GUINEVERE

Oh!

Guinevere quickly recomposes and smiles at her HAND MAIDEN.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) Lovely ride, isn't it?

The Hand Maiden forces a smile. When:

REBEL (O.S.) Seize the carriage!

EXT. A WOODED PATH - DAY

Suddenly four REBELS on horseback emerge from the trees. Their horses charge toward Lady Guinevere's carriage.

At the lead is KAY. Now a man, but still with wild red hair.

The Old Driver whips the horses and they break into a gallop.

INT. GUINEVERE'S CARRIAGE - DAY

The carriage bounces and jostles violently, as Guinevere and her Hand Maidens hold on for dear life.

EXT. A WOODED PATH - DAY

A short chase ensues, but-

The Rebels easily over take the carriage.

Kay leaps from his horse and onto the top of the carriage. He points a crossbow at the Old Driver.

KAY You've lived a long life, Old Man. Stop this carriage, and live a little longer.

EXT. A WOODED PATH - MOMENTS LATER The Carriage sits at a full stop. Three of the Rebels pull everyone out of the carriage.

Kay points his crossbow as-

Guinevere is the last to get out.

KAY I'm sorry to interrupt your pleasant afternoon, Lady Guinevere. But I think this gold would be better in the hands of the people.

Kay nods and his three rebel friends climb into the carriage and ransack it in search of gold.

Kay moves between Guinevere and the carriage.

KAY (CONT'D) Although I doubt we'll find anything more valuable than the King's favorite lady.

GUINEVERE Please. Leave the carriage. You'll find nothing but-

BOOM!!

The carriage explodes into a massive fireball.

The three rebels are engulfed in flames. Kay is knocked to the ground by the blast and loses his crossbow.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) -Nothing but Merlin's black powder.

Dazed, Kay crawls on the ground, reaching for his crossbow.

But Guinevere picks it up first.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) I'm sorry, Sir Kay. But in these dark times, only the strong survive.

And she shoots him in the head.

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

King Vortigern sits in a massive, garish throne surrounded by open boxes and chests. He rifles greedily through his treasure. Gifts from his frightened subjects. Merlin stands at his side. Watching.

A SERVANT approaches with a long, thin box.

VORTIGERN Let me see, let me see... What have you brought me?

Vortigern eagerly opens the box, but his face drops as-

He draws out an old, rusty sword. He tosses it aside.

VORTIGERN (CONT'D) Go back. See that they do better with their next gift. Or see that their home is burnt to the ground.

The Servant hurries away.

The doors to the throne room are thrown open, and Guinevere strides confidently down the aisle toward Vortigern.

Vortigern claps gleefully as she approaches.

VORTIGERN (CONT'D) Well done, my dear, well done! And I have just the reward for you.

Vortigern digs into a box and pulls out a beautiful gown.

VORTIGERN (CONT'D) From a young woman to the north. She was saving it for her wedding. But I think you've earned it.

Guinevere grimaces but accepts the dress.

GUINEVERE I live to serve, my king.

VORTIGERN With your help there may never be a need for my Red Dragon to reawaken from the great lake. Eh, Merlin?

Merlin just smiles and shrugs.

GUINEVERE Your wizard's getting old, King Vortigern. Maybe he can't get his dragon to rise anymore. MERLIN (in rhyme) A woman's wit, Her sharpest lash, But watch your tongue, Or burn to ash.

He snaps his fingers and all of the torches flare ominously.

VORTIGERN Now, now, you two, there's enough bloodlust to go around. Here.

And Vortigern gives Guinevere a necklace. And Merlin a book.

GUINEVERE Apologies, my king. Merlin was instrumental in winning you the throne. But it is I who have helped you keep it.

She glares at Merlin. Merlin raises an eyebrow.

VORTIGERN I must say, Guinevere, I am most impressed by your initiative in killing those who vex me.

GUINEVERE I would do anything for you, my lord. Anything.

Vortigern laughs gleefully, as Guinevere turns to leave.

But Merlin narrows his eyes. Unsatisfied.

INT. GUINEVERE'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Lady Guinevere enters her lavish bed chambers. In revulsion, she tosses aside the gown and necklace. Then she sees-

Waiting on her bed is an adorable BLACK PUPPY.

It playfully bounds off the bed and tramps over to Guinevere.

GUINEVERE It's done. Kay is dead. Now, what have you got for me?

The puppy scampers to the bed and returns with a small bag. Guinevere finds it full of gold coins. She tosses it aside.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) What news? Any word of my father?

The puppy only spins and jumps.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) Please. Anything. Where is he?

And suddenly-

The puppy transforms into a large BLACK CROW.

It caws at Guinevere causing her to lurch back.

It leaps up onto the windowsill, and extends its leg.

Guinevere unties a small roll of parchment from the bird's leg. Then it spreads its wings and soars away.

She unrolls the parchment and reads-

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) Lancelot? But he's already dead.

EXT. FIELD AT THE EDGE OF A FOREST - SUNRISE

As the sun crests, Arthur swiftly darts across a wide open field heading for the tree line of a dense forest.

As he reaches the tree line, though, he stops.

There's a rustle, and in a flash, Arthur draws his sword as-

GAWAIN (40s - Arthur's most trusted advisor, with armor and a beard adorned with trinkets and decorations from his many journeys) steps out of the trees. His sword is at the ready.

ARTHUR Gawain, I might've killed you. I'm on a roll.

They both sheath their swords.

GAWAIN You were supposed to be back yesterday. I thought-

ARTHUR You mustn't worry so much. Especially on your night off. I thought Kay-

GAWAIN

Kay's dead.

All of Arthur's cockiness is gone. A punch to the gut.

ARTHUR

Who?

GAWAIN

We're not sure. I ordered the camp to be moved again. I thought maybe they'd gotten you too.

ARTHUR You needn't worry about me. Sir Aggravaine, on the other hand-

GAWAIN

You killed Aggravaine?! His death won't go unnoticed! Arthur, I can't keep you hidden if-

ARTHUR The time for hiding is past. Vortigern demands his gifts. So I've sent him one.

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Vortigern sits in his garish throne as he happily digs through more of his treasures.

A terrified-looking SERVANT approaches holding a medium-sized round box. It's filthy and stained and looks like-

VORTIGERN Ah! What have you brought me?

Without raising his eyes, the Servant opens the box.

Vortigern gazes inside and his smile vanishes.

Just seeing the top of Aggravaine's head is enough.

Vortigern looks at the lid of the box where written in red is-

THE TRUE KING RETURNS

Vortigern's eyes go wide with shock and fury.

Arthur and Gawain stride quickly into the forest.

GAWAIN You should've have discussed this with me. With the men. You have to trust our council.

ARTHUR The sword and the stone gave me Aggravaine's name. It meant for me to finally reveal myself.

Gawain grits his jaw, but stays composed-

GAWAIN

And now you have a new name?

Arthur nods again. Solemnly. Absentmindedly, he touches the handkerchief in his belt.

ARTHUR

It's not your concern, but I may be done with the names on the stone.

GAWAIN I can't say I'm displeased.

ARTHUR

The sword and the stone have helped us. To increase our number. And to decrease Vortigern's.

GAWAIN

And yet you still refuse to share its... wisdom.

ARTHUR

That sword and those names are meant for me alone, Gawain.

GAWAIN

I served your father for many years. I traveled to far, distant lands, and saw many remarkable things. I don't trust any power that refuses to show itself.

ARTHUR

Vortigern murdered my father. He terrorizes my people. If killing the names that appear on that stone helps me stop him, then so be it. Once again, Arthur touches the handkerchief.

ARTHUR

I'm not sure.

GAWAIN

The throne belongs to you. Just make sure you'll still be a good king once you've taken it.

Suddenly, an arrow flies out of nowhere, striking Gawain in the chest, embedding itself in his armor.

Gawain sinks to the ground. Arthur rushes to his side.

GAWAIN (CONT'D) I'm fine. Fine! I've had worse.

Arthur nods, then sprints off-

DEEPER INTO THE WOODS

Gawain calls from behind-

GAWAIN (O.S.) (CONT'D) Arthur! WAIT!

But Arthur is already deep into the woods tracking Gawain's attacker. He runs for several moments, when:

VOICE (0.S.)

KING!

Arthur spins, and sees-

Lancelot charging at him.

Arthur tries to raise his sword, but Lancelot already has his blade out, and easily bats Arthur's sword away.

With vicious power, Lancelot slams Arthur into a tree.

But this isn't the handsome Lancelot from ten years ago.

His face is scarred and thin, his hair is stringy and long.

As Lancelot presses his sword to Arthur's neck it's clear-

Lancelot's sword is strapped to his stump of a forearm. It's as if he had a sword for an arm.

LANCELOT Nothing personal, King, but if I kill you, I get my arm back.

Lancelot pulls back his sword arm, readying his deathblow-

When Gawain appears. He grabs Lancelot and spins him around.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Gawain! It's been a lifetime!

Suddenly Lancelot slashes at Gawain's throat. Gawain barely jumps back as he registers-

GAWAIN

Lancelot...?

ARTHUR This is Lance-?

Bam! Arthur gets elbowed in the face by Lancelot. Arthur stumbles, but quickly snatches up his dropped sword.

He, Lancelot, and Gawain circle with swords raised.

Lancelot may look worse than he did ten years ago but he seems just as formidable. Maybe more so.

LANCELOT

You think this is wise? Challenging the kingdom's greatest warrior?

GAWAIN

You were never the kingdom's greatest warrior.

LANCELOT I will be, once I've slain both of you!

And Lancelot strikes. With amazing skill, Lancelot manages to fight both Arthur and Gawain. But they're no slouches either.

It's one helluva fight.

As they cross swords-

ARTHUR I don't want to fight you, Lancelot. Join me.

LANCELOT What makes you so special? GAWAIN Show some respect. He's the rightful King.

LANCELOT Because his father was? Why should you be King?

Arthur has no answer.

Lancelot viciously kicks Arthur in the chest. Arthur sprawls backward, and gasps for air.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Not impressed.

GAWAIN

Traitor!

Gawain takes the fight to Lancelot. The two experienced knights square up.

LANCELOT

I'm amazed to see you, Gawain. Say, where were you ten years ago? When we needed you.

GAWAIN I was crusading for Uther.

LANCELOT

Lucky you. In a distant land while the rest of us lost limb <u>and</u> life.

GAWAIN I won't apologize to you.

LANCELOT Gawain, you used to respect me.

GAWAIN You used to have honor.

 $\begin{array}{c} \mbox{LANCELOT} \\ \mbox{I used to have two arms.} \end{array}$

And Lancelot punches Gawain with his good left hand.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Though you'd need three arms to best me.

Suddenly, Lancelot is punched in the face. Arthur returns.

ARTHUR We have four. Drop your sword.

Lancelot waves his stump of a sword arm. Are you serious?!

GAWAIN How'd you like to lose your other arm? And your legs besides?

Both Arthur and Gawain now advance. Lancelot retreats.

LANCELOT I admit... I would not like that. Well, you win some-

Lancelot turns and sprints away.

Arthur takes off after him, with Gawain in the rear.

GAWAIN Arthur, stop! He's too dangerous.

ARTHUR That's why we can't let him get away.

The three of them race further into the woods until-

Lancelot stops suddenly.

Arthur and Gawain have caught up in seconds. But-

GAWAIN You're not one to run away, Lancelot.

LANCELOT It's not running away. It's retreating to favorable ground.

And Lancelot slashes at a previously unseen rope.

A MASSIVE LOG swings in seemingly out of nowhere.

It hits Gawain square in the chest, sending him reeling away.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) I've been planning this for a long time, King.

Lancelot slashes another nearby rope.

Several crossbow arrows come zipping out of the trees.

Suddenly, an ax flies out of a hollowed tree trunk.

Arthur swings his sword and bats the ax away. But he looks around, and- there's ropes and traps everywhere!

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Gawain's trained you well!

And Arthur attacks. He's good. Lancelot is immediately on the defensive as Arthur forces Lancelot to back up.

ARTHUR I'm raising an army to overthrow Vortigern. I could use you.

LANCELOT You've got a few dozen men. Constantly on the move. Hunted nearly to extinction. I've already been on the losing side.

ARTHUR You were loyal to my father.

LANCELOT And your father's dead. Loyalty to kings hasn't treated me well.

Lancelot lunges forward causing Arthur to sidestep into-

A trip wire. It closes around Arthur's foot, and yanks him upside down into the air.

But Arthur continues to duel Lancelot even upside down.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Can't you see? You've lost!

ARTHUR My people are hungry, poor, and dying. I will never stop fighting!

And Arthur stretches out and cuts another nearby rope.

A large boulder swings in. Lancelot turns too late, and the boulder smacks him in the head.

He stumbles onto what appears to be a pile of leaves but-

The leaves give way, and Lancelot falls into a hidden pit.

Arthur reaches up and cuts the rope at his foot. He falls with an OOOF!

Gawain hobbles up. He clutches his chest.

They step up to the edge of the pit, and gaze down to see Lancelot laying unconscious.

GAWAIN

He was a good man once.

ARTHUR

Let us see if we can bring that good man back. Bind him in the caves.

GAWAIN It's too close to the new campsite.

ARTHUR We must learn who he's working for.

An unease flickers in Gawain. But he doesn't speak it. Instead-

GAWAIN

How did you know to cut that rope?

ARTHUR

I didn't. (off Gawain's look) I had to try something. He was the greatest knight in the kingdom.

GAWAIN I was the greatest knight in the kingdom!

Arthur laughs and pats Gawain on the shoulder.

INT. CAVE PRISON - DAY

Gawain trudges through a dark, damp cave illuminated by several torches. He has Lancelot slung over his shoulder.

Gawain reaches a room in the cave where sets of chains have been bolted into the rock wall creating a make-shift prison.

He throws Lancelot down, and latches a cuff onto Lancelot's left wrist. But when he goes to latch Lancelot's right wrist-

Oh yeah, he's only got a stump.

So Gawain latches it to Lancelot's right biceps.

After a moment, Lancelot groggily wakes up.

LANCELOT Gawain...? It's not possible you got the better of me...

GAWAIN You were hit by your own boulder.

LANCELOT You set traps, and sometimes you just set one too many.

GAWAIN You also fell in your own hole.

LANCELOT Sometimes you set two too many.

Gawain sits down next to Lancelot. Lancelot eyes him warily.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Are we going to be friends now?

GAWAIN You were always too cocky for my tastes.

LANCELOT You were always too cowardly for my tastes.

Gawain clenches his jaw. Damn, he'd like to hit this guy.

Gawain stares Lancelot down. Raises his hand.

But grabs a bottle of mead instead.

GAWAIN I killed the Black Giant of Broceliade.

Gawain takes a deep swig of mead. Then tosses the bottle to Lancelot. Beat that.

LANCELOT I hunted with the Forest Men of Arden.

Lancelot drinks. And tosses the bottle back. Back and forth. Gawain motions to a small vial of liquid on his belt. GAWAIN

I rescued the Lady of the Fountain.

LANCELOT I defeated the Copper Knight by the Lake.

GAWAIN

I freed the entire country of Brittany from venomous snakes. I wrestled tigers. And ripped beasts apart with my bare hands.

LANCELOT You're a lot older than me.

GAWAIN I'm a better knight than you ever would have been.

Lancelot lets this settle in. Then-

He takes the bottle, and defiantly drinks the whole thing.

LANCELOT I fought an army single-handedly. Lost my arm. Then literally fought them single-handedly. I slew over fifty men before they brought me down. Lost nearly every drop of blood I had. And still I lived. And if you think a little drink is going to break me, then you're a bigger fool than I thought.

Lancelot smashes the bottle.

Glass shards scatter. A large piece settles near Lancelot.

Gawain shrugs and takes out another bottle.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Oh good! More mead.

GAWAIN I'll find out what I want to know. From you, or someone you trust.

LANCELOT Good luck. There's not a man who knows I'm alive. Along the walls of the mighty castle, Guinevere is wrapped in a cloak, waiting in a dark, deserted corner.

At her feet, there is the soft lapping of water. She stands at the edge of a massive black lake. It comes right up to the castle walls and extends out into darkness.

After a moment, a twinkling light appears in the distance.

A torch is held by CLAUDAS, a master-spy with dirty, yellow teeth, and gnarled features. He quickly approaches.

CLAUDAS This is truly a strange place to meet, Lady Guinevere.

GUINEVERE Have you ever seen another soul here?

He licks his lips and makes a movement toward her.

Guinevere grabs the same long, golden dagger that her father gave her years ago. She draws it from its sheath.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) I have learned to use this well.

Claudas pulls back, but grins. He knows he has power here.

Guinevere gazes out at the lake. Claudas looks too.

CLAUDAS Do you believe the stories? That the Red Dragon lies sleeping beneath the black waters?

GUINEVERE

Whether it does or not, the lake now defends half the castle. Making it virtually unassailable.

CLAUDAS

Praise to the power of Merlin.

GUINEVERE What news do you have for me?

CLAUDAS Lancelot is dead. My men found the grave. And defiled it. GUINEVERE I have reason to believe he survived the Battle of Tintagel.

CLAUDAS He was a great warrior. People will always whisper. Legends never truly die.

Guinevere nods, then takes out a small leather pouch.

Claudas reaches for it, but Guinevere pulls it away.

GUINEVERE Nothing can be traced back to me?

CLAUDAS

Of course not.

Guinevere hands over the small leather pouch.

Claudas snatches it and greedily plunges his hand in, and-

He gasps and quickly pulls his hand out. There's now two dripping black holes on his skin.

A massive spider crawls out of the bag of coins.

CLAUDAS (CONT'D) You- you- betrayed!

GUINEVERE I said I would pay you to find Lancelot. I don't pay for failure.

Claudas collapses to the ground as he gasps and chokes.

Guinevere casually brushes away the spider, picks up the bag of gold pieces, and walks off as-

Claudas's mouth begins to foam.

INT. CAVE PRISON - NIGHT

Gawain and Lancelot are still swigging on the bottle of mead. They've become more than a little drunk.

> LANCELOT & GAWAIN (Singing the last lines of "The Baffled Knight") These words she had no sooner spoke But strait he came tripping over: (MORE)

LANCELOT & GAWAIN (CONT'D) A plank was saw'd it snapping broke And sous'd the unhappy lover!

The two men roar with laughter as they finish singing.

LANCELOT Speak the truth, Sir Gawain. You've

served many kings in this land and beyond. Is Arthur a king?

GAWAIN

He can be.

LANCELOT

Not impressed.

Lancelot goes to drink. But Gawain pulls the bottle away.

GAWAIN If you tell anyone I said this, I'll kill you but- I envy you.

Lancelot stares at Gawain. How drunk is he?

GAWAIN (CONT'D) You were here. You fought. You laid down your life. I would have done anything to be here.

LANCELOT Looking back, I would have done anything to be somewhere else.

GAWAIN You're as bad as Merlin. Traitor.

Gawain drains the last of the bottle.

GAWAIN (CONT'D) Why do you want Arthur dead? Who are you working for?

LANCELOT A great man who fell even deeper into darkness than I. He'll get me my arm back. Can you offer more?

GAWAIN I can offer you your life.

LANCELOT I think you'll find it's near impossible to kill me. (MORE) LANCELOT (CONT'D) And not a force in this world will stop me from killing Arthur. Not even you.

Suddenly, Lancelot moves like lightning. His stump of an arm straightens, and the chain slips free. He hooks Gawain with his elbow and pulls him in close.

Then Lancelot's chained left hand snatches a piece of the broken glass bottle and presses it to Gawain's throat.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Poor Arthur. First, his brother, Kay. Now, his closest advisor.

GAWAIN You- You killed Kay?

LANCELOT No. Even better. It was Guinevere. Do Arthur's losses never cease?

ARTHUR (O.S.)

ENOUGH!

Arthur emerges from a darkened corner of the cave.

LANCELOT Arthur! Come to watch me slash-

But Arthur doesn't hesitate as he raises a crossbow and fires. The arrow strikes Lancelot in the arm.

Lancelot cries out, drops the glass, and releases Gawain.

GAWAIN I had it under control.

But Arthur ignores Gawain and slams Lancelot into the wall.

ARTHUR IS IT TRUE? Did Guinevere kill Kay?

LANCELOT I swear by my life. She's as coldblooded as we are.

Arthur draws a knife and presses it to Lancelot's throat. He could do it. He wants to do it...

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Three killers. It's like we're made for each other. But Arthur stops. He storms out of the cave. Gawain follows.

EXT. CAVE PRISON - NIGHT

Arthur emerges from the cave into the shrouded dark forest.

He takes out the old handkerchief given to him by Guinevere.

A few moments later, Gawain joins him.

GAWAIN

He must've known you were listening. He's toying with you.

ARTHUR Guinevere's name is next on the stone. He couldn't have known that.

GAWAIN And now you're planning to kill her? Because a rock told you to?

ARTHUR It is not a rock. It is the sword of legend!

GAWAIN

I don't believe in swords. I believe in the men behind them. Who controls that sword?

ARTHUR

I control it! Because I am destined to be king. And every name it has given me has brought me that much closer to the throne.

GAWAIN So now you'll kill your friend?

ARTHUR No. Now I'll kill a killer.

Arthur tosses the handkerchief down and storms away.

After a moment, Gawain stoops and picks it up.

INT. CASTLE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Guinevere strides down a torch-lit hallway. Her dress and cloak billow as she comes to a massive ornate door.

31.

She takes a deep breath. Pull it together. Be strong.

Then she raises her head and throws the door open.

INT. FEASTING HALL - NIGHT

The grand feasting hall is massive. With a wide, finely finished floor, and extravagant statues and fixtures.

And every inch of it is wrecked.

The impressive oak table is flipped on its side. Dozens of chairs are knocked over or reduced to rubble.

And, on the ground, sitting amongst the mess is Vortigern. Chewing on a mostly stripped turkey leg.

Upon Guinevere's entrance, he lifts his eyes and-

VORTIGERN Arthur is back.

Is that the flicker of a smile on Guinevere's face?

GUINEVERE So you took it out on the table?

He throws the turkey leg at her. It misses by a mile - not like Guinevere was flinching anyway.

VORTIGERN He killed Aggravaine. And probably Balin. And Catigern. And WHO KNOWS HOW MANY OTHERS!

GUINEVERE So it hasn't merely been Gawain leading the rebels.

VORTIGERN

The finest meats, cheeses, and wine from all over the land and I can't even enjoy it.

GUINEVERE You have nothing to worry about. Arthur runs away. He hides. He never comes back.

VORTIGERN

No. He's more dangerous than that. Just his name brings hope. Hope of rebellion. Hope of war. (MORE)

VORTIGERN (CONT'D)

Hope to overturn the beautiful country I've worked so hard to build.

Guinevere sits down in the mess next to Vortigern.

GUINEVERE

The people would never turn against you. Look at all they've given you. They love you.

Vortigern crawls over to her and puts his head in her lap.

VORTIGERN What would I do without you?

Guinevere eyes a small dinner knife nearby. Hell, they're scattered all over the place. It'd be so easy. But-

GUINEVERE Where is my father?

VORTIGERN How can you ask me that now?! With everything that's happening?!

GUINEVERE

You promised me-

VORTIGERN

A father! I promised you a father! And haven't I been that to you? I've given you so much. And it'd be so easy to take it all away.

Vortigern's threat hangs in the air.

And Guinevere looks away from the knife.

GUINEVERE Leave Arthur to me.

VORTIGERN

I recently received the most perfect candelabra. Silver. Shimmering. Beautiful. But as soon as it was out of its box, it became stained. Smudged. No matter what I did, I could not get it back to its former perfection.

GUINEVERE So what did you do?

VORTIGERN

What I had to. I put it into the fire until there was nothing left. You have two days. And after that, there won't be enough people left for Arthur to turn against me.

GUINEVERE I'll find him. But the usual spies won't be enough.

VORTIGERN I know just the man.

EXT. MERLIN'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Guinevere trudges through a thick woods covered with overgrowing vines and heavy overhanging trees.

She approaches a rickety old cottage made of loosely piled stones and a thatched roof with copious holes.

As she raises her hand to knock-

The door creaks open of its own accord.

INT. MERLIN'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Guinevere warily steps into the cottage.

It's dark, but a few rays of moonlight waft in through holes in the roof. Archaic artifacts are strewn about. Models of flying machines hang from the ceiling.

And in one darkened corner, Merlin reads a book as he lounges in... thin air. And he looks quite comfortable.

Guinevere crosses the room and glances at a table of books-

GUINEVERE "Human Regeneration." "The Art of Dragoneering." "Conversing with Owls." It's so dark in here, Merlin. How do you read all of-

MERLIN The moon, the stars, the dark black night. Must now give way to sun-less light. Suddenly the room glows. Light seems to seep in from the cracks as if the cottage is illuminating itself.

Merlin walks over to her. He closes his book and as he does - all of the books on the table close too.

MERLIN (CONT'D) It's impossible to find this house, except by those who've already found it.

GUINEVERE Your voice? I thought-

MERLIN That I only speak in rhyme? Could you imagine? It'd be dreadful.

GUINEVERE So then, why-?

MERLIN It's only for spells, Guinevere. And sometimes dramatic effect. Now, how did you find me?

Guinevere pulls out a scroll from her cloak.

Merlin snaps his fingers and the scroll vanishes.

MERLIN (CONT'D) I don't need to read the decree.

GUINEVERE King Vortigern's most powerful knights have been-

MERLIN

I am aware.

GUINEVERE I need your help. To find-

MERLIN

Arthur?

GUINEVERE

Lancelot.

MERLIN The King wants you to find a dead man?

GUINEVERE The King has given you orders to assist me however I see fit.

Merlin reaches his hand toward Guinevere's forehead.

MERLIN Though deaf and dumb and weak and blind. Awake to me, to read your-

In a flash, Guinevere has out her dagger and holds it to Merlin's heart.

GUINEVERE

As a woman, I am used to men trying to violate my body. But try and violate my mind, and it will be the last thing you ever do.

Merlin pulls back his hand.

Guinevere does not pull back her dagger.

MERLIN So- Lancelot?

GUINEVERE

Lancelot.

EXT. DESERTED GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Gawain enters the misty graveyard, and finds the massive stone. But Arthur's sword has been drawn from it.

Gawain examines the stone, but-

It's blank. No names are visible.

So he reaches into his belt. He draws out the small vial of water that he motioned to when one-upping Lancelot.

He uncorks it and pours it over the stone.

GAWAIN By the power of the Lady of the Fountain. Wash away these enchantments. Reveal your magics.

Behind Gawain, one of the largest graves rumbles and breaks. Gawain grumbles and draws his sword. And from the grave emerges an enormous, glowing GREEN KNIGHT. It takes a lot to scare Gawain. This does it.

> GAWAIN (CONT'D) My god... You... I-I killed you.

THE GREEN KNIGHT And while you were killing me, who was killing Uther?

The Green Knight takes a huge double headed ax off his back.

THE GREEN KNIGHT (CONT'D) You were not here for your king.

The Green Knight swings his ax, and Gawain barely ducks it.

GAWAIN I would've died for him.

THE GREEN KNIGHT And yet he is the one who lies rotting in the ground.

Gawain stabs the Green Knight, but his sword doesn't enter the Knight's body. The Green Knight casually knocks it away.

> GAWAIN I still serve him... by serving his son.

The Green Knight swings with his ax. It strikes Gawain straight to the armor, and hurls Gawain backward.

He slams into a tombstone and breaks it in half.

THE GREEN KNIGHT You will fail Arthur, just as you failed his father.

The Green Knight, with ax raised, closes in on Gawain.

GAWAIN Who controls you?! Who leaves the messages on the stone?!

THE GREEN KNIGHT Uther. He sends me from the grave to punish your failures.

GAWAIN So be it. If you won't stay in the grave.

37.

Gawain picks up the broken headstone. He dodges another swing from the ax, as the Green Knight buries the ax in the dirt.

Using all his strength, Gawain bashes the Green Knight in the face with the headstone.

GAWAIN (CONT'D) I'll bring the grave to you.

The Green Knight stumbles and loses his grip on the ax.

Gawain grabs it.

GAWAIN (CONT'D) Stay there this time.

Gawain brings down the ax with a mighty thud.

The Green Knight collapses as his head and body separate.

Gawain heaves from the effort as he examines the body of the Green Knight. He sees between the shoulder blades-

A dragon surrounded in flames. Uther's symbol.

Gawain reaches for it, but-

The Green Knight (body and head) dissolves into a green mist.

GAWAIN (CONT'D) Uther...? I need answers. I need the wizard.

EXT. DESOLATE VILLAGE - DAY

The village is terribly poor. All of the homes are in disrepair. Stray animals run about in the streets.

The people are dressed in rags, and beg as-

Guinevere rides down the dirt path that runs through the village. The POOR PEASANTS crowd around her horse.

BEGGAR Please, M'Lady. Mercy.

BEGGAR #2 Anything. My family. Help us.

BEGGAR #3 Haven't eaten in days. Please.

Guinevere tries to maintain her steely demeanor, but-

She softens and throws a few handfuls of coins.

The beggars scramble and fight over them.

EXT. SMALL DECREPIT HUT - DAY

Guinevere reaches a tiny hut at the edge of the village. It can't be more than one room. With crumbling walls, and a tiny chimney puffing smoke into the air.

She raises a hand to knock, but stops. She's looks off and-

Out in the distance, she catches a glimpse of a powerful gray horse. But she can't make out the rider.

Guinevere shakes it off, and knocks. No answer.

GUINEVERE Woman. I need to speak to you.

Finally, the door opens.

An OLD WOMAN (hunched, gnarled, and toothless) answers. She squints at Guinevere with milky, nearly white eyes and gasps.

OLD WOMAN Begging your pardon, M'Lady. I didn't know. Please. Mercy.

GUINEVERE

May I enter?

The Old Woman pauses in shock, but finally-

She moves aside to allow Guinevere to enter.

INT. SMALL DECREPIT HUT - DAY

Guinevere takes in her strange surroundings. The floor is dirt. The meager furniture is cobbled together with uneven wood. The walls look like they could go at any moment.

A small fire burns in the corner with a cauldron bubbling over top it. The cauldron seems to glow an unnatural orange.

> GUINEVERE You are a healer, are you not?

OLD WOMAN Of limited skill, M'Lady. I haven't much to work with. I could offer M'Lady a simple beauty potion but-

GUINEVERE

No, I don't- What's wrong with my-? That's not what I'm here for.

OLD WOMAN I am at your command, M'Lady.

GUINEVERE

You once lived in the castle, did you not? You saved a wounded man at the Battle of Tintagel.

OLD WOMAN

I saved many, M'Lady. But I lost many, many more. Forgive me, M'Lady, I'm but a meager healer.

GUINEVERE

I am only interested in one man. He was a knight. Said to be the greatest knight in the kingdom.

A smile flickers upon the Old Woman's lips.

OLD WOMAN

I should've thought M'Lady could have any man for her pleasure. But she chooses well.

GUINEVERE No! I seek him for other purposes.

OLD WOMAN

Beggin' your pardon, M'Lady. You wouldn't be the first to yearn for him. Yet I warn you, no woman has yet been able to tame him.

Guinevere can't help but be taken in by the Old Woman's strangely seductive words, but-

GUINEVERE So you did save him?

OLD WOMAN

I kept him alive, M'Lady. I'm not sure anyone could save him.

GUINEVERE You mean he's weak?

OLD WOMAN No. He's strong. Unnaturally strong. (MORE)

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

I found him piled amongst the dead. But breath he still had. It took all my meager skill, and many times I was sure he had passed on. But he clung to life.

GUINEVERE What happened to this man?

OLD WOMAN Over many years he rebuilt himself. But never satisfied. Never finished. Never able to rest.

GUINEVERE He must have a weakness.

The Old Woman has a flicker of a smile again.

OLD WOMAN I am an old woman, M'Lady. <u>You</u> may be able to put his soul to rest.

GUINEVERE You said no woman-

OLD WOMAN No woman yet. M'Lady.

A shadow passes by the window.

Guinevere sees it, then nods to the Old Woman.

GUINEVERE Thank you for your help.

Guinevere heads for the door and leaves coins on the table.

OLD WOMAN M'Lady? If you find him, will you bring him back? He was my greatest-I'd like to see him again.

Guinevere pauses, and without looking at the Old Woman.

GUINEVERE No. You will never see him again.

EXT. SMALL DECREPIT HUT - DAY

Guinevere exits the hut and walks over to her fine white horse. But as she's about to mount, she stops-

Tied up in the back of the hut is the powerful gray horse. She walks over to it, and examines the bridle when-

Suddenly, she ducks to the ground, just as-

A blade slashes the air, and hits the small hut's wall.

Guinevere draws her own small dagger, and turns to face-

GUINEVERE

Arthur...?

Arthur wrenches his sword from the wall of the hut.

ARTHUR

Guinevere-

GUINEVERE

You came!

She throws her arms around his neck. She hugs him tightly. This shakes Arthur more than anything she could have done.

> GUINEVERE (CONT'D) I knew it. I knew you'd come! I knew! You'll take me with you.

ARTHUR Guinevere. Stop. I'm not here to-

He pulls her off of him. She stares at him in confusion.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Do you really think I could take you back? After what you did to Kay? After what you've become?

Guinevere tries to blink back tears. Put on a strong face. Hold it together. But-

> GUINEVERE You think I want to be like this?!

Arthur pauses.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) Do you have any idea what I've had to do to survive since you left me that night? Daggers and crossbows and fire and lies have become my life. ARTHUR And this is more lies.

GUINEVERE No! Put me in chains. But give me a chance. You can still save me.

But Arthur grits his jaw grasps his sword more tightly. Guinevere looks to her small dagger. She'll lose this fight. Slowly she creeps closer to Arthur's horse as she pleads-

> GUINEVERE (CONT'D) Vortigern's planning something. I can help. I know his weaknesses.

Arthur raises his sword.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) I know how to raise the White Dragon!

Whatever Arthur expected her to say it wasn't this.

ARTHUR The white dragon hasn't been seen in a hundred years.

GUINEVERE And we can bring it back. Together.

ARTHUR I don't know you anymore.

He tightens his grip on his sword. Raises it.

GUINEVERE Arthur, please! What you don't understand is that through all those murders. All those killings-

And suddenly she grabs the reins of his gray horse. She tosses them over Arthur's head. Around his neck.

Guinevere ducks Arthur's arms and slaps the rump of his horse, and the horse takes off.

Arthur is dragged away by the charging horse.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) -I got really good at it.

Guinevere fights back her tears. Stop being so weak.

With renewed coldness, she rushes over to her own horse, quickly mounts and rides off in the opposite direction.

THE FIELDS

Arthur is dragged by the neck alongside his racing horse.

He tosses his sword aside, and it sticks in the ground.

Then Arthur uses one hand to grab the hilt of his horse's saddle. He pulls to get some slack from the reins around his neck. He ducks his head and pulls free of the rope.

And with amazing skill, he uses the hilt for leverage, leaps, and spins. He lands coolly in the saddle of his horse.

THE OTHER END OF THE FIELDS

Guinevere is bearing down on her horse. Trying to gain as much distance as possible. She looks over her shoulder to see-

Arthur in the distance. Turning his horse in pursuit.

ARTHUR

Gains quickly. He leans over in his saddle, and-

Snatches his sword out of the ground. Right where he left it.

GUINEVERE

Turns again to see Arthur coming on fast. He's close enough to hear her shout-

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) Is this the kind of king you want to be? Gaining power by murder?

ARTHUR No worse than you and your master, Vortigern.

GUINEVERE So now you're aspiring to be like Vortigern?

Arthur has finally ridden up alongside of her. And he leaps off his horse, and knocks Guinevere off hers. Their two horses charge away. And Arthur and Guinevere fall in a heap to the ground.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) I don't know you anymore either.

Arthur is on his feet in a flash. He looks down on Guinevere. She's sprawled out in the field. Arthur raises his sword.

> GUINEVERE (CONT'D) You're better than this. Please, Arthur. Through fire or storm...

She closes her eyes and braces herself for the hit.

And Arthur brings down the sword.

Guinevere opens her eyes.

Arthur has thrown the sword into the ground.

ARTHUR I'm so sorry. You're right. A king should be better. You deserve better.

He puts out his hand for Guinevere.

Guinevere takes it.

And as she does, A BURST OF FLAME explodes behind them.

They both spin on each other.

GUINEVERE ARTHUR (CONT'D) YOU! Me? You! YOU! Me? You!

The Burst of Flame shoots high into the sky and comes crashing down right for them.

Arthur and Guinevere barely dive out of the way.

GUINEVERE Flames don't usually aim for you.

The Flames rise back up, ten feet tall, and take the form of a Serpent. It bares its fangs and seems poised to strike.

ARTHUR They don't usually do that either.

GUINEVERE Who wanted you to kill me?

Arthur looks to the blade in his hand.

ARTHUR The stone. The sword.

Suddenly, the Fire Serpent lunges at them.

And Arthur swings his sword.

The Fire Serpent bursts apart into several smaller fires.

GUINEVERE That's some sword.

ARTHUR Standard sword of legend.

But Arthur and Guinevere watch as the smaller fires come together and reform into the Fire Serpent.

It begins to swirl around them in vast, threatening circles.

Arthur points across the field to a STONE FARMHOUSE situated on a small river with a large spinning water mill.

It's at least 100 yards away. But they have to try.

GUINEVERE You want to run away?

ARTHUR

It's not running away. It's retreating to favorable ground.

Guinevere nods. They charge at the spitting Fire Serpent. It strikes at them, but Arthur swings his sword.

The Fire Serpent scatters again. But it's quickly reforming.

Arthur and Guinevere sprint toward the farmhouse.

GUINEVERE

So the legend was true? Only you were able to pull the sword from the stone?

ARTHUR

I found it in my darkest hour. It's guided me.

GUINEVERE And now you want to kill me because a rock told you too? ARTHUR It's not a rock! It's the sword of legend!

They reach the-

STONE FARMHOUSE

It's old and seemingly abandoned. The place is crumbling, and there's overgrowth sticking all throughout it.

Ten feet up is a gap in the wall, leading to a platform.

Arthur links his hands together, Guinevere steps onto his hands, and he boosts her up. She scrambles onto the platform-

And disappears from view.

Arthur waits for her to return. But she doesn't.

He looks back to see the Fire Serpent baring down on him. It slithers quickly. Coming closer. Closer. Closer.

It rears back to strike. Arthur grips his sword, when-

SPLASH! A burst of water hits the Fire Serpent, causing it to retreat a moment.

Arthur looks up to see Guinevere clutching a wooden bucket. She tosses it aside and reaches her hand down to Arthur.

He takes it and she pulls him up into the-

INT. STONE FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The entire farmhouse has fallen into disrepair and neglect. The floor is worn and dusty wood. The stone walls are crumbling and overgrown with creeping moss.

The far wall is completely collapsed, and shows-

An old wooden water wheel.

Guinevere rushes back to the water wheel and uses it to refill her bucket.

Arthur follows and looks out of the collapsed wall. There's a fast moving river some 25 feet down behind them.

BAM! The Fire Serpent slams into the stone wall of the Farmhouse. The whole place rumbles.

GUINEVERE You really trust a sword that tries to kill you with a Serpent of Fire whenever you don't do what it says?

ARTHUR The Serpent of Fire's new. But, it's true, whenever I didn't follow it, my people died.

He slashes at the Fire Serpent again when it gets too close. Guinevere tosses another bucket of water on a small fire.

> ARTHUR (CONT'D) And when I did follow it, my forces became stronger. I struck blows against Vortigern's fiercest men.

GUINEVERE But will you follow it now?

The entire farmhouse is now in flames, crumbling around them. Arthur looks to Guinevere. Then to his sword. He sheaths it.

ARTHUR

Not this time.

CRASH! The Fire Serpent comes slamming into the farmhouse. It lands on the raised platform near them.

Arthur turns and looks to the raging river behind them.

They leap from the crumbling farmhouse into the water. The Fire Serpent follows and dives.

It hits the water and sizzles.

Arthur and Guinevere swim away.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

The river rages on.

Guinevere fights the currents and pulls herself up on shore.

Arthur is drawn further down, though. He finally pulls himself to shallower water, but as he's about to get up-

Guinevere. Standing over him. In a position of strength.

Exhausted and sopping wet, they collapse on the bank.

ARTHUR For a long time, I've felt lost. Trying to stay one step ahead of Vortigern. Unable to make a stand.

He looks to the sword at his side.

him to his feet and out of the river.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Maybe I've been following the wrong thing.

Now he looks to Guinevere. The girl he once loved.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) I don't know if I can trust you.

She holds up her wrists to him. Cuff me.

GUINEVERE Where do you want me?

INT. CAVE PRISON - NIGHT

Arthur leads Guinevere into the torch lit cave prison.

Lancelot is still chained to the wall, but he sits up as he eyes the beautiful Guinevere.

LANCELOT King, I thought you didn't like me.

ARTHUR Touch her and lose your other arm.

Guinevere glances at Lancelot. She almost keeps from smiling.

Arthur and Lancelot don't notice.

Arthur chains Guinevere to the wall nearby Lancelot.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) I'm sorry to leave you like this. I'll be back as quickly as I can.

And without a hint of emotion on his face-Arthur traces a loving finger along Guinevere's cheek. A short silence until-

LANCELOT So, Lady Guinevere, is it? I've been watching you, while I was tracking the King there. I'm Lance-

GUINEVERE

I know who you are.

EXT. THE REBEL CAMP - DAY

Arthur returns to camp.

It's an impressive operation. Cloaked in heavy trees. A dozen or so tents are made up to camouflage into the foliage.

And high up in the trees are elaborate forts and bases. Rope swings, ladders and pulleys transport people up to the forts.

A group of a dozen men take hold of ropes and pull. Another fort rises up high into the trees. The men pound stakes into the ground and the new fort latches onto a tree trunk.

There's at least a hundred people moving around from tent to tent. Thin, dirty children. Tired, ragged women. And old men dressed in torn clothes. Refugees from Vortigern's cruelty.

A small band of strong middle-aged men - Arthur's Knights - move around and help out the people as they build the camp.

Arthur finds Percival (the cowardly knight from the opening).

PERCIVAL Arthur! The new camp is nearly set. A new best. Less than ten hours.

ARTHUR That's wonderful, Percival. Where's Gawain? I need his council.

PERCIVAL He's not with you? He left at sunrise when you did.

Arthur looks at Percival with confusion. Where's Gawain?

EXT. MERLIN'S COTTAGE - DAY

Gawain trudges through the overgrown forest, and sees Merlin's cottage about 50 yards away.

He starts toward it, when-

A vine slowly wraps around his leg.

Gawain grumbles and draws his sword.

With a grimace, he slashes the vine around his leg. Then he cuts and battles his way through the strangling forest like a man cutting through the jungle with a machete.

INT. CAVE PRISON - DAY

In the flickering torchlight of the cave, Lancelot is regaling Guinevere with stories of his greatness.

GUINEVERE

You didn't?!

LANCELOT I did! Won the tournament. With a wooden sword. Beat ten grown men!

GUINEVERE You were only fourteen!

LANCELOT Thirteen! They'd have been fools not to take me on as a knight's apprentice. Youngest in a century.

GUINEVERE All that without a scratch.

LANCELOT Well... Not without a scratch.

He points to a scar on his brow. And another on his collar.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) I've always thought it wasn't a good fight unless you've got some scars to remember it by.

And he rips his shirt. Exposing his massive, muscular chest. It's covered with scars. LANCELOT (CONT'D) I've had many good fights.

Guinevere stares. Amazed by his tapestry of wounds.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) I'd say you could touch them, if we weren't chained up.

After a moment, Guinevere sheepishly tosses her cuffs aside.

GUINEVERE They were hurting my wrists.

LANCELOT Impressed. I must keep my word.

He rips his shirt further. Daring her to touch him.

Guinevere slowly reaches out. But stops. And pulls back.

GUINEVERE I shouldn't. I'm trying to get Arthur to trust me.

LANCELOT I don't know what a woman like you sees in him.

GUINEVERE I am a lady.

LANCELOT Maybe once. But now you're like me. A wild beast yearning to run free.

GUINEVERE I'm free of my chains.

LANCELOT I didn't mean the chains of this cave.

Guinevere slowly creeps toward Lancelot. She cautiously, tentatively touches a scar. Lancelot exhales softly.

She touches another scar. A soft caress from her. A gentle moan from him.

Another touch. Another moan. Until-

She reaches for his stump of a right arm.

And Lancelot pulls away. The one scar I'm not proud of.

Now he won't even look at her.

After a moment, Guinevere reaches for Lancelot's chain.

GUINEVERE I learned to pick locks a year ago. A year before that, it was a crossbow. And a year before that, I killed my first man. It's all come so easy. I hate it.

She works at Lancelot's cuff.

LANCELOT You could escape all of this.

GUINEVERE I could never leave my father. But... I'm afraid, Lancelot...

Lancelot's cuff falls away.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) In freeing my father, am I losing myself?

Guinevere looks away suddenly. Blinking back tears.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) I'm being silly... You wouldn't understand. You've never been weak. Never been scared.

Lancelot reaches for her face with his newly freed hand.

But she pushes it away. Another moment passes until-

LANCELOT I thought I was going to die. Any moment. Any breath could've been my last.

He reaches for her again. She pushes it away again.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) I forced myself to live. I forced my lungs to breath. Forced my heart to beat.

He reaches again, but this time-

With his missing arm.

He uses his stump to lift her chin. She raises her eyes.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) For weeks. For months. I was sure that if I let myself sleep, even for a moment, I'd never wake again. (beat) Plus I really want to slay that Red Dragon.

She smiles. He brings his face in close to her.

GUINEVERE You must be so tired.

Their lips are inches apart now. Centimeters. Millimeters.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) Be with me. You can finally-

Their eyes close.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D)

-rest.

Their lips touch, when-

Lancelot loses it.

LANCELOT REST? No! No rest! No sleep. Rest is sleep. Sleep is death.

He roughly grabs Guinevere's face.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) YOU WILL NOT KILL ME!

He shoves Guinevere away. And as she tumbles backward, a small white ball pops out of her mouth.

Lancelot has a wild look in his eye as he picks up the ball. He crushes it with his fingers and black liquid oozes out.

Guinevere tenses in frustration. Almost had him.

GUINEVERE A wax capsule. Filled with poison.

LANCELOT You've been holding this in your mouth for what? Hours?

GUINEVERE

It took a lot of doing to get into this cave with you. I couldn't count on bringing my dagger.

LANCELOT That was all a lie?

GUINEVERE Sometimes the truth is a more dangerous weapon than a lie.

LANCELOT You're very good.

Guinevere smiles. Damn right, I'm good.

She snatches up a large rock off of the ground.

GUINEVERE

I wanted to send you off pleasurably. But I guess we'll do this the hard way.

But Lancelot just breaks into a broad smile.

LANCELOT We should be working together.

Guinevere lowers her rock just a bit. Intrigued.

INT. MERLIN'S COTTAGE - DAY

Merlin comfortably reads a book.

BAM!

The door crashes open. Gawain stomps in as he cuts through a few strangling vines.

A final vine reaches for him, and Gawain slams the door shut.

The vine falls to the ground.

GAWAIN I think you were expecting me.

Suddenly, Gawain heaves his sword like a spear at Merlin.

MERLIN (a rapid-fire recitation) You strike at me, I will not yield. (MORE) MERLIN (CONT'D) My will is strong, my pow'r my shield.

Gawain's sword freezes in mid-air.

Inches from Merlin's heart. Merlin actually seems flustered.

MERLIN (CONT'D) You remembered to aim at my heart.

GAWAIN It used to have love and honor.

Merlin flicks his hand, and Gawain's sword flies away, burying itself deep into the wall.

> MERLIN Even years ago, I never should've invited you here.

GAWAIN We used to be friends.

MERLIN Now my friend's come to kill me?

GAWAIN No. I just wanted to see how tough you still were. I've come to ask for your help.

A laugh escapes Merlin's lips. Then he snaps his fingers.

New vines fly in from beneath the door and windows. They wrap themselves around Gawain's arms and torso, binding him tight.

And another vine whips over the ceiling beam and wraps around Gawain's neck in a taut noose. But his feet stay planted.

MERLIN I'm listening.

EXT. THE REBEL CAMP - DAY

Arthur holds onto a rope and swings down from one of the 50 foot high tree forts. He lands smoothly. Without looking at anyone he heads out of camp, but-

Percival quickly jogs up to him.

ARTHUR I'm going to find Gawain. Arthur shakes his head and turns to leave.

ARTHUR

No. Stay here. Some of the towers aren't fully secured. Make sure-

PERCIVAL

Arthur! Stop! We can do more than this. The men want to get out there. They want to take the fight to Vortigern.

ARTHUR That's how Kay got himself killed.

PERCIVAL He got himself killed because he was tired of being left behind while you went on your secret

missions.

ARTHUR That's not what I'm doing.

PERCIVAL

Then what are you doing? Arthur, we're your men. We'll follow where you lead. But you have to lead us. And you have to trust us.

Arthur is struck silent. He's trying to find a response when-

BOOM! There's a huge explosion about 100 yards away.

ARTHUR The explosives wagon.

PERCIVAL If someone blew all the explosives it should've been much bigger-

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Several more explosions ring out throughout the camp.

Arthur barks orders to nearby Knights.

ARTHUR Clear out the women and children! Get them all to safety. Arthur turns to Percival.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) We have to secure the armory.

Arthur sprints across the camp, with Percival on his heels.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) I never should have left them together.

Arthur and Percival arrive at-

THE ARMORY

A larger tent that's been reinforced with large wooden beams. Two knights lie unconscious on the ground.

Arthur approaches warily, when the tent flap is tossed open.

Lancelot emerges, bare-chested and strapping on his sword arm. And loaded with an assortment of other weapons.

LANCELOT I do love the feeling of cold steel on my hot flesh.

PERCIVAL

Oh, god-

Lancelot looks up and sees Percival for the first time since Percival abandoned him to die ten years ago.

He's pissed.

LANCELOT Percival... I've dreamed of seeing you again. I can't wait to bathe in your blood.

ARTHUR Percival, get everyone out of camp.

Percival nods and takes off running.

Arthur draws his sword to face Lancelot.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) This is between you and me.

GUINEVERE

And me.

Guinevere approaches with a torch in her hand. She smiles at Arthur as she tosses the torch aside.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) I've gotten good with explosives.

Lancelot gives her the long golden dagger back. She tucks it away.

Then Lancelot tosses her two crossbows. One for each hand.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) And other things.

Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot circle.

Arthur looks to Guinevere.

ARTHUR You knew I was following you in the village. You wanted me to bring you back here.

GUINEVERE To bury me with a dead man? Yes.

LANCELOT But me and the lady have come to an understanding. I'm sorry to say, King, but your reign ends today.

Suddenly, Guinevere points her crossbow at Lancelot's head.

GUINEVERE Thanks for the weapon.

He barely clears his head as she pulls the trigger.

The arrow whizzes past. She quickly points her second crossbow at his leg. And fires.

Lancelot falls backward with an arrow in his thigh.

In a flash, Guinevere has her dagger drawn and slashes at Arthur. He sidesteps and avoids her attacks.

ARTHUR So you're not working with him? GUINEVERE I've been promised my father back. But only if Lancelot stops breathing.

ARTHUR

And me?

GUINEVERE I'll happily drop my blade, if you drop yours. Then, I swear, I will help you reclaim the throne.

ARTHUR You've destroyed my camp. Put my people in danger.

And Arthur shoves her with his free hand.

Guinevere slams into a tree trunk. She goes down.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) You don't inspire much trust.

Arthur raises his sword to deal his killing blow.

But before he can bring his sword down-

Guinevere flashes her dagger and points it at Arthur's belly.

GUINEVERE Only the strong survive.

LANCELOT (0.S.)

KING!

Guinevere lurches back as-

Lancelot charges back in. He tackles Arthur. The two roll over and over. But quickly regain their feet.

With a sword in his left, and his right sword arm, Lancelot attacks Arthur. A fury of blades.

Arthur defends well with his single-sword.

As they fight, they dodge wreckage from the burning camp.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) King, I'm having a thought... We men stand together. To conquer the fairer sex. ARTHUR How does that get your arm back?

LANCELOT It's not much good having an arm if I lose my head.

ARTHUR Does it bother you that she hasn't rejoined the fight?

Lancelot frowns. They both pause their battle and turn to see-

Guinevere (some 20 yards away) is aiming two reloaded crossbows. One for each of them. Twang!

The arrows fly. And both Arthur and Lancelot dive away from each other as Guinevere's arrows narrowly miss each of them.

LANCELOT I offer them a chance to live, but no. So I'll take the high ground.

He looks up and surveys-

A burning tree fort some fifty feet up. And the tree's trunk is roaring with flames.

Lancelot grabs hold of a suspended rope with his left hand, and slashes it with his sword arm.

He's pulled up in a matter of seconds, and lands in the burning tree fort. He rears back and-

Slams into the central trunk that suspends the fort.

The entire tree creaks, and the burning trunk cracks.

The burning fort comes crashing down.

And Lancelot leaps away to another nearby tree fort.

DOWN BELOW-

Arthur and Guinevere dive and roll. They just narrowly miss being flattened by the cascading fort.

ARTHUR I guess it's every man for himself.

GUINEVERE And woman. When I'm finished with him, I'd watch your back. Guinevere races up the nearly 30 degree angle of trunk. She rises at least 30 feet to where the tree trunk broke.

Standing on the broken crook of the tree, she takes aim at Lancelot in his nearby fort.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) You could have died pleasurably.

She fires at Lancelot.

But he bats away the arrow with his sword arm, and-

Lancelot leaps from his fort at Guinevere.

He knocks her off her perch, and takes the broken crook for himself. But he grabs her hand, and holds her suspended over the flaming wreckage below.

> LANCELOT I was really starting to like you.

GUINEVERE So much that you want to kill me?

LANCELOT So much that I have to kill you.

And Lancelot lets go. Guinevere drops toward the flames below. But before she gets far-

Arthur swings in on another rope.

He snatches Guinevere out of the air, and they both careen towards another fort. Arthur lets go at the end of the arc-

And he and Guinevere crash down onto the fort.

GUINEVERE Thanks. But...?

She draws her dagger and slashes at Arthur.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) I thought you were done holding me in your arms?

ARTHUR I've been rethinking things. LANCELOT (0.S.)

Ahhhhh!!!

Lancelot comes leaping in. His sword arm raised, Lancelot comes slashing down at Arthur's head.

But Arthur deflects the blade, and bats away Lancelot.

ARTHUR Lancelot, you were the greatest knight in the kingdom once.

LANCELOT

Still am!

Lancelot takes another swing at Arthur. Arthur dodges.

Guinevere strikes at Lancelot with her dagger. Lancelot catches her by the wrist and tosses her aside.

ARTHUR And, Guinevere, you can get close to Vortigern.

GUINEVERE I'd worry more about how close I can get to Lancelot.

Guinevere stabs at Lancelot's heart.

But Arthur grabs her from behind, and tosses her backward. She hits the trunk of the fort. The whole thing creaks.

> LANCELOT Who said I needed your help?!

ARTHUR I need your help. Both of you. Together we can defeat Vortigern.

GUINEVERE To make you King?

LANCELOT Not interested.

Lancelot swings again, but Arthur ducks it. And Arthur slams his shoulder into the trunk of the tree. The entire fort shudders and begins to tip. ARTHUR Once I'm king, I can free your father, Guinevere. And I'll use my power to find a way to restore you, Lancelot. Or-

Arthur hits the trunk again, and-

The tree trunk cracks. The fort is going down.

Arthur slashes at Lancelot's sword arm, and cuts the bindings of the weapon. The blade flies up into the air.

As the fort lurches forward and falls-

Lancelot and Guinevere are pitched off the side.

But Arthur stays composed. He leaps forward, snatches Lancelot's blade out of the air and flips into the void.

Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot and the burning fort fall 50 feet toward the ground, and-

Lancelot and Guinevere slam down hard.

But with amazing skill, Arthur sticks the landing, and strikes forward with his own sword and Lancelot's blade.

He holds a weapon to both Guinevere and Lancelot's throat.

He's got 'em.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) -I can kill you both now.

The burning fort crashes down some 20 feet from them.

Arthur digs his swords into each of Guinevere and Lancelot's necks. They both wince and grimace.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Now... Can we talk?

There's only a brief pause before-

GUINEVERE LANCELOT Yeah, sure. Alright, yeah.

EXT. THE REBEL CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot stumble through the camp. It's in ruins, but it's quiet.

A few smoldering fires burn themselves out on the ground.

The three of them approach and enter a large tent-

INT. THE MESS HALL - CONTINUOUS

They enter the large tent and Arthur walks over to the longest, rectangular table.

Arthur moves towards the head of the table.

ARTHUR

Sit.

LANCELOT Are you out of your mind?! I'm not letting you sit in my blind spot.

GUINEVERE You could kill either of us at any moment. We'd never see it coming.

ARTHUR

Alright. You choose.

Guinevere points to a small square table.

GUINEVERE

There.

LANCELOT So she can use the corners to stab me under the table?!

ARTHUR She's not going to do that!

GUINEVERE Actually- That was my plan...

Arthur goes and picks up a small round table that's been flipped over. He sets it up.

ARTHUR The Round Table. No head. No sides. No advantages. No weaknesses. We all sit as equals.

After a long moment, both Guinevere and Lancelot nod.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) You two make Vortigern look trusting. INT. VORTIGERN'S DUNGEON - DAY

Deep beneath the castle, a dank, nightmare-ish dungeon is dimly lit with a few torches.

In a center room, a massive SAXON WARRIOR is stripped to the waist and chained to a wall.

Vortigern takes hold of a red-hot iron, and jabs it into the side of the Warrior.

The Warrior roars in pain. Vortigern steps up close to him.

VORTIGERN Make me a gift of your anger. Make me a gift of your cruelty. And I will reward you with all the miserable, cowering, pathetic prey you could hope for. Do you love your king?

The ugly, vicious Saxon Warrior nods. Vortigern smiles.

VORTIGERN (CONT'D) Who's next?

INT. THE REBEL CAMP - MESS HALL - DAY

Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot sit at the round table.

GUINEVERE Vortigern's been training his army to be more vicious and merciless than ever. Aggravaine was to lead them.

ARTHUR He's no longer a threat.

GUINEVERE

And thank you for that. But, nonetheless, tomorrow Vortigern plans to send out every single one of his warriors to ravage the country. He'll wipe out a quarter of the people by supper.

LANCELOT

My god...

GUINEVERE He hopes to crush any last hope of rebellion before it can start. ARTHUR

He really thinks he'll succeed?

GUINEVERE You've been to the villages. Who's going to mount a defense? The starving throngs of beggars? Or your old blind woman?

Lancelot bows his head.

ARTHUR

We will.

GUINEVERE Your small group of men can't be everywhere all at once.

ARTHUR So we take the fight to him.

Guinevere and Lancelot look to Arthur.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) I will attack the castle. I will protect the people at all costs. I will stop Vortigern.

He looks both Guinevere and Lancelot in the eyes. And they can finally see it - He looks like a king.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Will you two stand with me?

INT. MERLIN'S COTTAGE - DAY

Gawain is still tightly bound in the center of Merlin's cottage. Ropes hold his arms and hands tight.

And a noose is still around his neck.

But his feet stay on the floor as he speaks to Merlin.

GAWAIN Arthur has the ability to inspire.

MERLIN His army is a few dozen men. Hardly an inspiration.

Merlin tenses his hand and the rope around Gawain's neck also tenses. Gawain gasps.

GAWAIN His numbers are growing. More and more people put their faith in him.

MERLIN Yet Kay died waiting for Arthur to lead. And you're not far behind. Do. Better.

Merlin tenses his hand again.

Gawain is pulled up onto his toes. He can barely breathe.

GAWAIN I've trained him. He's accepted his destiny. He understands what it means to be king.

MERLIN

A short time ago, a sword telling him to kill broke him from his apathy.

Merlin tenses one more time.

Gawain is at the tip of his toes. They barely scrape the ground. Gawain can choke out a breath.

GAWAIN I believe he's being misled by the sword. But you and I could set him back on the path.

MERLIN What's in it for me?

GAWAIN Once Arthur is king... I'll give you an honorable death.

Gawain's in a helluva position to make a threat.

Merlin laughs. And loosens his hand.

Gawain's feet slip back down to the floor.

MERLIN A rope around his neck and he offers me my life. Alright, Gawain, start again. Why should I believe in Arthur? INT. THE REBEL CAMP - MESS HALL - DAY

Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot argue heatedly.

GUINEVERE Can we really trust you, Arthur?! Or will you turn on us again as soon as your stone tells you to?

LANCELOT Is that where he's been getting his orders? From a rock?

ARTHUR It's not a rock, it's the sword of-(to Guinevere) Who was giving you instructions?!

Guinevere freezes. She's on the spot, but admits-

GUINEVERE A large black crow.

Lancelot looks questioningly at Guinevere. Really?

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) Sometimes it's a puppy. (turning on Lancelot) Who told you you'd get your arm back if you killed, Arthur?

LANCELOT Someone very powerful.

GUINEVERE More powerful than his sword of legend? Or my shape-shifting crow?

LANCELOT A voice from beyond the grave.

ARTHUR

Tell us who. We need to know everything.

Lancelot gazes at Arthur. He tries to decide and-

LANCELOT

Your father.

ARTHUR

What?!

LANCELOT I barely escaped death. He seems to be doing the same.

GUINEVERE How did he contact you?

LANCELOT Magic. Powerful magic.

ARTHUR Why would my father want me killed?

LANCELOT He was a great king. Maybe he sees that you won't be.

ARTHUR

No.

LANCELOT That sword of yours? The sword of legend? Who else could leave messages on it but another legend?

Arthur sits silently for a long moment, then-

ARTHUR

The messages have always been cryptic. If it is him, I can't believe he wants me dead.

GUINEVERE

Just me?

LANCELOT

Just <u>us</u>?

ARTHUR No. I think he wanted to bring us together.

LANCELOT Why should we believe-?

Arthur pounds his fist on the table.

ARTHUR

Because I believe it! Someone or something has brought us together. Whether for good or for ill, we three now sit at this table as one. And I say we use our strength to take back this land.

LANCELOT

I'm in.

The two men look to Guinevere, and finally-

She nods.

ARTHUR We need to strike at Vortigern in a way that will truly hurt him. And that means Merlin.

Guinevere and Lancelot turn to Arthur.

Arthur holds their gaze. Is it a bad idea?

ARTHUR (CONT'D) It will take the most powerful man in the kingdom off the board.

GUINEVERE And neutralize Vortigern's greatest weapon. The Red Dragon.

LANCELOT I've been wanting to slay that dragon for years. But it might be more satisfying to slay the wizard.

Everyone nods.

ARTHUR If we're going to strike at Merlin, first we have to find his home.

LANCELOT Impossible. It's shrouded by impenetrable enchantments-

GUINEVERE I've been there.

LANCELOT You're <u>very</u> good.

Guinevere pops her eyebrows at him. Damn right.

ARTHUR

If we're going to pull this off, we have to all be together. Can we put aside our differences? Can we trust each other?

Guinevere and Lancelot shift uneasily. Can they?

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Vortigern stands in front of his mighty, garish throne. The massive throne room is filled with Saxons. Hundreds of the ugliest, blood-thirstiest warriors he's got.

VORTIGERN

I don't ask for much. Loyalty. Respect. Love. And in return, I provide an orderly, peaceful land. But now, all that I have worked for is in danger. Tomorrow, you shall ride out. Ask every man, woman, and child who they serve. Who they love. If they give even a moment's hesitation, strike them down.

Several of the Saxon warriors sneer with merciless pleasure.

VORTIGERN (CONT'D) The people will cry out my name with love. Or they will die with my name on their lips.

INT. THE REBEL CAMP - THE ARMORY - DAY

In the armory, Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot are grabbing weapons and dressing in armor.

ARTHUR

Straps his sword to his side. He also pulls some light armor on over his head. And-

Guinevere helps him secure it. As she straps his armor, they come face to face. And look deeply into each other's eyes.

LANCELOT

Wears light body armor over his chest. He's finally looking like the knight he was 10 years ago.

And he tightens the strap to his sword arm. Then he sheaths another sword on his belt.

GUINEVERE

Slings a crossbow over her shoulder. She secures a quiver of arrows to her waist, then-

Raises her dress to expose a garter/sheath on her bare thigh. She sheaths her long, golden dagger in it.

LANCELOT

Watches her. He can't take his eyes off her.

Guinevere catches him-

GUINEVERE If you don't wish this to be buried in your heart, I'd look away.

And she drops her dress back down.

Arthur steps up to them both.

ARTHUR Let's go.

INT. MERLIN'S COTTAGE - DAY

Gawain is at the tips of his toes. Merlin's rope is pulled tight, nearly raising Gawain up. Nearly hanging him.

MERLIN Your devotion to Arthur is touching, Gawain. But, you know, my magic binds me to the king.

GAWAIN You've changed allegiances before.

MERLIN Vortigern's rise was inevitable.

GAWAIN As is Arthur's.

The rope tightens again around Gawain's neck. He chokes out-

GAWAIN (CONT'D) I've lived too long, Merlin. An old knight in service of a dead king. But Arthur has made me believe again. He will be the greatest king this land has ever known.

MERLIN Well, I finally agree with something you've said, Gawain.

Merlin clenches his fist, and-

The rope pulls upward. Gawain is suspended several feet up.

MERLIN (CONT'D) You've lived too long.

Gawain struggles and slowly chokes, when-

BAM! The front door is kicked open.

A knife flies through the air, cutting Gawain down. He's still bound around the arms, but he's alive.

Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot storm in.

MERLIN (CONT'D) Well, well, well, Gawain's young king came for him after all.

Merlin smiles, and waves his hand.

Gawain's crumpled body is tossed across the room. He crashes into the wall, but lands near-

His sword. Still embedded in the wall.

ARTHUR Your voice? I thought-

MERLIN I don't just speak in rhyme!

GUINEVERE He mustn't speak at all.

Twang! Guinevere fires her crossbow.

With amazing reflexes... Merlin catches the arrow.

Guinevere begins reloading her crossbow.

Lancelot charges forward, but Merlin throws the arrow at him. Lancelot easily bats it away.

Merlin waves his hand lazily, and-

Lancelot flies backward and slams into the wall.

Arthur strikes at Merlin, but Merlin raises his hand and-

Arthur's sword freezes in mid-air.

MERLIN Why are you trying to kill me, Arthur? (MORE)

MERLIN (CONT'D)

I don't see my name on this sword. And I should know. I was the one leaving messages on the Stone.

Merlin swings his arm, and Arthur goes flying backward.

Guinevere rises to shoot again, but-

MERLIN (CONT'D) And, Guinevere, look familiar?

A black crow soars in through the roof. It caws at her, then-

Splits into a dozen more crows. They flock toward her, pecking and cawing furiously.

MERLIN (CONT'D) Lancelot, you were the easiest of all. I only had to write you a note with Uther's name on it.

Arthur and Guinevere look at Lancelot in disbelief.

GUINEVERE You said it was powerful magic!

LANCELOT I was supposed to be dead! He would've needed powerful magic to know I was alive!

MERLIN And I have powerful magic.

Merlin puts his hands out, almost immediately a low rumble is heard. The lights in the cottage unnaturally dim.

MERLIN (CONT'D) The darkest hex, And blackest spell-

Books are blowing open unnaturally. The fire is rising.

Statuettes of beasts and monsters are vibrating on the shelf.

This is going to be bad.

MERLIN (CONT'D) Now come to me! To unleash-(everything goes silent) -Hell.

And everything goes black.

FADE IN:

INT. ARTHUR'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Arthur opens his eyes and finds himself in a grand throne room. Columns of white stone. Sunshine pouring in from an open roof. And raised up higher than anything else-

A towering throne of shimmering white marble.

Arthur approaches the throne, and as he reaches to touch it-

UTHER You did it, my son.

Arthur spins and is shocked to find-

His father, King Uther, beaming at him.

Arthur looks down and sees-

He's now dressed in shimmering armor flecked in gold. Wearing a majestic golden crown. He looks ahead and-

The entire throne room is filled with people. In an instant, they all bow in respect to Arthur.

UTHER (CONT'D) You are truly a king.

INT. CASTLE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Guinevere is racing down a castle hallway. And at her side is-

Her father, Leodegrance. She props him up under the arm as they run together.

GUINEVERE Father, we're almost there. We're almost-

They come to an old door, which Guinevere throws open to find-

Aggravaine (as massive and hulking as ever) on the other side of the door. Waiting for them.

With a vicious growl, Aggravaine lunges for her.

But Guinevere doesn't cower. She ducks, draws her dagger and-

Buries it into Aggravaine's heart. He falls dead.

Guinevere spins to her father and wraps her arms around him.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) We're finally free!

EXT. AN ENDLESS FIELD - DAY

Lancelot stands in the middle of an endless field.

He's defenseless, stripped down nearly to nothing. But his body is perfect. Scarless. Without blemish.

He turns and stuck into the ground is a sword. He reaches-With his right hand.

In amazement, he draws the sword, and flourishes it expertly. But suddenly he realizes- He's completely surrounded. Impossible numbers. Hundreds. Thousands. Against just him. All at once, the entire massive army falls upon Lancelot. But he fights them flawlessly. Spinning. Blocking. Swinging. Every blow lands. Every strike a kill.

> LANCELOT Is this all you've got?!

INT. ARTHUR'S THRONE ROOM - DAY
Arthur stands before the throngs of adoring people.

UTHER My son, there's just one thing left to do. BRING THEM IN!

Guards lead in a group of handcuffed prisoners-

Percival. Arthur's other knights. And Kay.

Kay is forced to his knees in front of Arthur.

KAY He's not a king. I knew him as a boy. He's no greater than I.

UTHER Kill him. Kill them all. Prove your greatness. Prove that you are king.

Arthur wavers, but raises his sword.

INT. CASTLE HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Guinevere and Leodegrance are sprinting down a new hallway.

GUINEVERE It's just a little further. We're almost there.

They reach a large door. Guinevere throws it open, but-It leads to another long hallway. They sprint down it. She finds a new door. Throws it open. Another hallway. Another sprint. Another door.

> GUINEVERE (CONT'D) We're almost there... We're almost... I can get us out of here.

EXT. AN ENDLESS FIELD - DAY

Lancelot is still fighting an entire army. And he's still invincible. He kills every man who comes within his reach.

He's bathed in sweat, mud, and blood from his fallen rivals.

And, finally, he kills the last man. Silence.

Lancelot stands alone in a battlefield covered in the corpses of a thousand dead men. He laughs in triumph until-

He realizes he's not the only one laughing.

PERCIVAL Is this all you've got?

Smaller, unimpressive, weak Percival approaches.

Lancelot strikes at him.

And Percival blocks it.

PERCIVAL (CONT'D) Not impressed.

INT. ARTHUR'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Arthur has his sword raised, ready to execute Kay, but-

ARTHUR No. I won't do it. He lowers his sword, and turns-

Uther's smile is gone. He draws his mighty sword.

UTHER You're not worthy of the throne.

Uther strikes at Arthur.

Arthur defends, but the blow knocks him into the crowd.

He's grabbed from behind. He pulls the hand away, but he's immediately grabbed by another. And another. And another.

A clawing, ripping, tearing throng of people turns on him. Holding him. Pinning him in. They chant-

> THE THRONG OF PEOPLE No King! Not my King! Never a King!

INT. CASTLE HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Guinevere and Leodegrance are gasping with exhaustion as they reach one final door. Desperately, Guinevere reaches for it-

GUINEVERE It... has to be...

She throws open the door and they emerge out into-

EXT. A VAST PLAIN - CONTINUOUS

It's undeniably freedom. Bright sunshine. Green grass. Blue skies. The world in front of them.

GUINEVERE We made it. We're-

An arrow strikes Leodegrance in the heart.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D)

NO!!!

Another arrow comes out of nowhere, hitting him in the stomach. He goes to his knees.

Another arrow to the chest. He falls to his back.

Guinevere cradles him as she sobs uncontrollably.

With blood gurgling from his mouth, all he can manage is-

LEODEGRANCE Why... didn't you save me...?

EXT. AN ENDLESS FIELD - DAY

Lancelot is locked in combat with Percival. But he can't win. No matter how hard he swings, or how fast he attacks-Percival always blocks it. *Hell, Percival looks bored*.

> PERCIVAL We didn't leave you that day because we were scared.

Another attack from Lancelot. Another easy block by Percival.

PERCIVAL (CONT'D) We left you because you weren't good enough.

Another swing. Percival blocks, twists, and- SLASH! Lancelot screams. And his arm is gone. Cut off by Percival. Lancelot collapses as he cradles the stump of an arm.

> PERCIVAL (CONT'D) You will never be good enough.

INT. ARTHUR'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Arthur is pinned in by the throngs of blood-thirsty people. He can't fight. Can't break free. Can't escape.

Uther strides forward with sword drawn.

UTHER YOU ARE NO KING!

And Uther plunges his sword into Arthur's chest.

INT. MERLIN'S COTTAGE - DAY

Arthur screams in agony and clutches his chest, until-

He looks around and realizes he's back in Merlin's cottage. Gawain is still bound up against the wall.

But Arthur is gasping. Shaking. Terrified.

On the ground, cowering and clawing at his stump of an arm-Lancelot.

And sobbing and cradling a body that isn't there-

Guinevere.

Merlin looks on with a satisfied grin.

MERLIN

I offer you all a choice. Give in to your fears. Give in to your weaknesses. Turn on each other. And to whomever lives, I will give you your greatest desire. Or, stand together. And I offer no promises.

Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot lock eyes on each other.

Arthur grasps his sword.

Guinevere unsheathes her dagger.

Lancelot straps back on his sword arm.

Merlin watches with relish. But-

Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot turn to face him. United.

ARTHUR

It won't work, Merlin. We know, we must stand togeth- Aaahhhhh!!!

Arthur reels forward and falls to his knees-

Guinevere has stabbed him in the back. Her dagger is buried right into where she helped strap on his armor.

GUINEVERE It was only a matter of time, Arthur, until you turned on me.

ARTHUR

No. I would've stayed true to you-

Guinevere twists the dagger. Arthur gasps. She pulls it out. And he collapses to the ground.

Then Guinevere spins, but-

She's roughly grabbed by Lancelot. He raises her by her shirt. He sticks his sword up to her chin.

With a madness in his eyes, Lancelot looks to Guinevere. To the collapsed Arthur. To Merlin. Then-

LANCELOT No! I won't be controlled!

In a rage, he tosses Guinevere backward.

Lancelot rushes over to the table. Snatches a book and sprints out the door.

Guinevere gets to her feet.

GUINEVERE Merlin, please, Arthur has fallen. Lancelot is broken. Gone. Please, where is my father?

MERLIN

Poor Guinevere, I fear that Vortigern won't be pleased when I tell him of your treachery.

Guinevere's eyes go wide with shock and betrayal.

She dashes out.

Arthur gasps again. Still alive. But in pain.

Merlin looks at him. Then waves a hand, and Arthur's sword floats upward. It points right at Arthur.

MERLIN (CONT'D) Only the true king was supposed to be able to draw this from the stone. I guess it made a mistake.

He pushes his hand through the air, urging the sword forward.

It flies straight for Arthur, but-

GAWAIN

NO!

Gawain, now freed of his bindings, throws himself in front of the sword. It pierces him in the stomach.

Gawain falls.

Arthur rushes to his side, and pulls the sword from Gawain's stomach.

ARTHUR Gawain... No... Hold on... Arthur holds Gawain's gasping body. It won't be long now.

GAWAIN I finally get to die for a King.

Gawain hands Guinevere's handkerchief back to Arthur.

Then with his last breath-

GAWAIN (CONT'D) Be a good king.

And the life disappears from Gawain's eyes.

Merlin steps forward.

MERLIN

Guinevere betrays you. Lancelot abandons you. And now the only one who believed in you lies dead.

Arthur stands and points his sword at Merlin.

ARTHUR Even alone. I will fight you with everything I have.

MERLIN No. I see your end coming. More terrible than you could imagine. To kill you would too kind.

Merlin picks up his wooden staff and-

MERLIN (CONT'D) Upon the wind, the rain's own shroud. Fly through the air, On darkest cloud.

Merlin dissolves and transforms into a storm cloud. It flies up and out of the cottage roof.

Leaving Arthur alone with Gawain's body.

EXT. FIELD AT THE EDGE OF A FOREST - NIGHT

Guinevere is running across the field.

Lancelot sprints in from another direction to intercept her.

LANCELOT Guinevere! Wait! He catches up to her, and grabs her by the arm. In a flash, she has her dagger out. She braces for a fight-But Lancelot strips off his sword arm and throws it down.

> LANCELOT (CONT'D) Can we stop trying to kill each other for one moment?!

GUINEVERE Give me a reason.

LANCELOT Leave here with me.

This catches Guinevere by surprise. Is he serious?

LANCELOT (CONT'D) You and I aren't meant for this world. After this, we can be done with Arthur. And maybe... we can finally rest.

GUINEVERE What about your lost arm?

Lancelot hooks Guinevere with his stump. He pulls her in.

He roughly kisses her.

She doesn't fight it.

LANCELOT There are other ways for a man to feel whole.

Guinevere gasps. She wants to want him. But she pulls away.

GUINEVERE You may be able to forget your arm. But I can't forget my father.

LANCELOT And so you'll just run away? Back to Vortigern.

GUINEVERE It's not running away. It's retreating to favorable territory.

Lancelot smiles. God, he wants her.

LANCELOT You get into trouble, I'm not sure I can save you.

GUINEVERE I'm not a child anymore. I don't wait for someone to save me.

And she kisses him once more. But softly this time.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) You feel whole to me.

She leaves. Lancelot doesn't chase her.

EXT. FUNERAL PYRE - DUSK

In a field at the edge of the woods, Arthur has placed Gawain's body on a large pile of wood.

ARTHUR I should have listened to you from the beginning. I should have questioned the sword. Maybe I wouldn't have had to trust Guinevere and Lancelot. Maybe then you'd still be with me.

With a torch, Arthur lights the pyre.

In moments, the flames tickle the skies.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) I swear, I will be the King you believed me to be.

IN THE DISTANCE

Lancelot watches.

He raises his sword to Gawain as a salute. And as a good-bye.

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Guinevere confidently strides into the throne room despite her filthy, tattered appearance.

Vortigern is slumped in his throne as he watches her enter. His arms are full of treasures. But it gives him no pleasure. VORTIGERN Guinevere. I expected you back hours ago.

Guinevere looks and sees-

Merlin standing to Vortigern's right.

She walks right up to Vortigern and goes down to one knee.

GUINEVERE My king, I come to report a brewing conspiracy. Arthur is planning an attack.

VORTIGERN With your help.

GUINEVERE No. I misled him. I-

VORTIGERN WITH YOUR HELP! I gave you so much! You were like my own daughter!

He raises a hand and two guards grab Guinevere by the arms.

GUINEVERE Please! I've stayed loyal. I turned on Arthur. Merlin, tell them!

But Merlin remains silent.

VORTIGERN Toss her in the dungeon. When the sun burns brightest, so will she.

Guinevere struggles but the guards are too strong. As she's dragged toward the doors, Guinevere shouts-

GUINEVERE My father! Where is he?!

VORTIGERN

Stop.

The guards do.

VORTIGERN (CONT'D) Very well, Guinevere. I'll release your father. He can burn with you.

GUINEVERE

No!

Vortigern waves a hand, and the guards drag Guinevere away. Vortigern turns to Merlin with actual tears in his eyes.

VORTIGERN It breaks my heart.

INT. SMALL DECREPIT HUT - NIGHT

The Old Woman is stirring her cauldron when-

The door opens and Lancelot enters. As he approaches, she turns to him and smiles.

OLD WOMAN I knew I'd see you again.

She tenderly places her wrinkled hand on his cheek.

LANCELOT You have to leave here. By tomorrow it won't be safe anymore.

OLD WOMAN I'm an old woman. I can't run. But you could stay. You can protect me.

Lancelot takes out the book that he stole from Merlin.

LANCELOT This could be the answer I'm looking for. This could finally make me what I was. But it'll be dangerous. I might not come back.

The Old Woman nods. But Lancelot shakes his head. And-

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Curse it all! Come with me! I'll take care of you. Like you took care of me.

She touches his stump of an arm.

OLD WOMAN You still haven't found what you're looking for. And until you do, I can't go where you lead.

LANCELOT If you stay here, you will die.

The Old Woman smiles sadly. But shakes her head.

OLD WOMAN My time is coming. I must wait here to meet it.

LANCELOT Thank you for everything-(pause) -Le Fey.

At the mention of her name, The Old Woman's eyes flicker unnaturally. She smiles.

EXT. THE REBEL CAMP - SUNRISE

Arthur limps into camp.

The place is a wreck after the battle with Guinevere and Lancelot. But the knights are all picking up the pieces.

Percival rushes to Arthur's side.

PERCIVAL Arthur! Are you alright? All of the explosives are gone. I can't believe she used them all.

ARTHUR Percival, I need you to gather the men. I need to talk to them.

PERCIVAL

Arthur... It seems hopeless. If Lancelot and a woman could nearly undo all of this. How can we stand against Vortigern's army?

Arthur nods in understanding.

He moves to the middle of camp, and climbs up onto the wreckage of a tent.

The knights and his people come close to hear his words.

ARTHUR

For a long time, I thought that because of who my father was, I knew who I was. But our lives aren't determined by our blood, they are determined by our hearts.

He takes out his sword and stares at it.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) I was sure that this sword was meant for me. But I was wrong.

The Knights shift uncomfortably.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) This sword is meant to protect those who cannot protect themselves. This sword is meant to strike down tyranny. This sword is meant to free this kingdom!

Arthur raises the sword high in the air.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) I will ride with you. Not as your king. But as your equal. As your friend. And together we will free this kingdom! My brothers, my sword is yours!

The men cheer and raise their swords in solidarity.

INT. THE MESS HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Arthur leads his knights over to the round table.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) We all will sit at the round table. I need to hear all of your voices.

But as they look to the round table... It looks pretty small. It was okay for three people, but there's a lot of them now.

> ARTHUR (CONT'D) Maybe we can all sit in a circle until we can get a larger round table.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD - DAY

Guinevere is tied to a post in the middle of the castle courtyard. Surrounding her is a large pile of firewood.

Next to her is a bare post.

The courtyard is mostly empty save for a few guards.

ON AN OVER-LOOKING BALCONY

Vortigern appears flanked by his bodyguards.

Guinevere nods to the bare post as she cries up to Vortigern.

GUINEVERE Have you at least chosen to spare my father?

VORTIGERN My dear, I wouldn't wish to deprive you of your last reward.

Vortigern nods to several guards down below.

The Guards march to a nearby door, open it, and drag out an old, thin, beaten man. Leodegrance.

He can barely walk, and they drag him toward his post.

GUINEVERE No! Father! Show some mercy!

VORTIGERN And what mercy did you show me when you BROKE MY HEART?!

Leodegrance is shoved against the bare post. The Guards chain him to it.

Guinevere looks around to the small crowd.

GUINEVERE A poor crowd for our execution. Have your people lost their taste for cruelty?

VORTIGERN I wouldn't say that.

Vortigern motions to-

Two Guards standing beside a massive gate. They open it, and-

Vortigern's entire Saxon Army marches in. They fill the courtyard. Hundreds of scowling, wretched, blood-thirsty men. Armed to the teeth. And ready for war.

Vortigern addresses them from his balcony.

VORTIGERN (CONT'D) This woman has been found guilty of the basest treason. The fire that burns her must also burn in you. Take it out into the country and use it to incinerate any and all treachery. Light her! An EXECUTIONER lights a torch. And walks toward Guinevere.

As weak and beaten as he is, Leodegrance smiles at Guinevere.

LEODEGRANCE My beautiful Guinevere. You found me. We'll be together at last.

GUINEVERE Don't worry, Father. We're going to be alright.

But from high on his balcony, Vortigern laughs.

VORTIGERN Guinevere, you really want your final words to your father to be a lie? Or do really you think your new friends can still save you?

GUINEVERE

No.

She raises her hands. The chains are gone.

GUINEVERE (CONT'D) I don't need saving.

She flips up her dress. Draws her dagger from her thigh garter. And stabs the Executioner in the heart.

She grabs his torch, and a crossbow from his hip. She rips a strip of fabric from her dress, and wraps it around the arrow. Then she lights the arrow, takes aim and fires.

It sails up and over the castle walls. It disappears.

Everyone looks at her in confusion. Nothing really happened.

VORTIGERN I had expected more.

GUINEVERE Just give it a second...

BOOM!!!

A massive explosion rocks the entire castle.

A full wall is demolished. Rubble is strewn all about. Saxon warriors are tossed in the air, or buried by rock.

A gaping hole is left in the castle, facing out toward the black lake.

Watches the devastation from his perched balcony.

VORTIGERN

HOW?!

GUINEVERE It took me hours to get back. Did you think I was idle?

ARTHUR (O.S.) Attack!!

Vortigern and Guinevere look back to-

THE LAKE

A small fleet of row boats are swiftly gliding across the lake toward the hole in the castle's wall.

At the front is Arthur. Sword raised and ready for battle.

THE COURTYARD

Is in utter chaos as the Saxon army reels from the explosion.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Cut them down, men! Today will be the day Vortigern falls!

Arthur and his men reach the hole in the wall, and come charging in. They draw their weapons and-

The battle begins.

Arthur, Percival, and dozens of knights clash swords with the hoards of angry Saxons.

VORTIGERN

Furiously shouts orders down to his men.

VORTIGERN Kill them! Slay the woman! Slay her father! Kill them all!

IN THE COURTYARD

A particularly vicious-looking Saxon turns and heads for Guinevere's father, who is still chained to his post.

The Saxon draws his weapon. He's about to strike when-

He's stabbed from behind. By Guinevere.

GUINEVERE No one will touch my father again.

The Saxon falls dead.

And Guinevere rushes to her father's cuffs.

LEODEGRANCE My god. Guinevere. You killed him.

GUINEVERE Only the strong survive.

His cuffs slip free. She picked them in seconds.

LEODEGRANCE I can help you. We can finally be free of this madness.

GUINEVERE Just finding you means I already am. Go.

But as they turn, three Saxons close in on them. The warriors are about to attack, when-

Arthur arrives.

He slashes through the three of them like they were nothing.

ARTHUR Sir, we better get you out of here.

LEODEGRANCE Yes. Yes, a good idea. (turning to Guinevere) I always liked this one.

Guinevere smiles.

One of Arthur's Knights appears, and takes Leodegrance's arm. The two of them disappear into the battle. Headed for safety.

Arthur and Guinevere reengage in the fight.

GUINEVERE You look good for a man who's been stabbed in the back.

ARTHUR Barely a scratch. Your aim was perfect. I'm sorry it didn't work. Guinevere ducks and bobs as she kills two more men.

ARTHUR

Still, I'd hoped this would cheer you up. I promised to return it.

Arthur holds out her handkerchief.

Guinevere tenses as she takes it. Is that a tear in her eye?

GUINEVERE

Thank you.

Arthur nods.

ARTHUR Is Merlin here yet?

They look to the skies and see dark storm clouds blowing in.

GUINEVERE Something tells me he's on his way.

ARTHUR We must get to Vortigern. Before they can raise the Red Dragon.

Arthur and Guinevere battle their way through the courtyard.

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Arthur and Guinevere burst into the Throne Room.

Several Guards try to attack them, but Arthur and Guinevere easily kill them all. And turn their attention to-

Vortigern gathering up arm loads of his gifts. He drops them and turns to face Arthur and Guinevere.

ARTHUR Your time is at an end, Vortigern.

VORTIGERN I'd prefer to be called "King."

ARTHUR You won't be a king much longer.

VORTIGERN We shall see. MERLIN!! Suddenly, the ceiling is blasted by a BOLT OF LIGHTNING. It destroys the roof, and strikes the center of the room. Arthur shoves Guinevere out of the way, and takes the brunt of the blast himself. The lightning slams Arthur into the wall. Guinevere rushes to his side. And Merlin stands in the room.

> VORTIGERN (CONT'D) Merlin, it's time to end a long slumber. Raise the dragon.

> MERLIN In cold, wet lake, your power mires. Now rise again, to breathe your fires!

Merlin rises his wooden staff into the air. And BOOM!

There's an unmistakable rumbling.

EXT. THE COURTYARD - DAY

The battle amongst Arthur's Knights and Vortigern's Saxons rages on. But the Knights are weakening. Out-numbered.

Nonetheless, Percival is kicking ass. He wields his sword and cuts down one Saxon after another.

PERCIVAL Hold strong men! Courage will win!

KNIGHT Percival, do you hear that?

There's the unnatural rumbling sound. And it's growing louder. They turn to look at the demolished wall, and see-

THE LAKE

The lake beside the castle is now bubbling and boiling.

The vicious Blood-Red Dragon's head emerges.

It opens its jaws and SHRIEKS.

IN THE COURTYARD

The Red Dragon's shriek rips through the air.

The battle comes to a halt as both the Knights and the Saxons watch the Red Dragon rising, and-

An unmistakable burst of flame shoots into the courtyard.

THE SKIES

The Red Dragon rises into the air above them. The beating of its massive wings fills the air, as it soars above them more terrifying and vicious than ever.

IN THE COURTYARD

Percival and the Knights stare in disbelief. How the hell are they going to slay this thing?

PERCIVAL Courage... will win...

But he doesn't really believe it. Especially, as he watches-The Red Dragon spin in the sky and dive toward the courtyard. It opens its jaws, and belches flames upon the knights. Percival shields himself as he retreats.

PERCIVAL (CONT'D) Find shelter!

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Arthur is collapsed against a wall. Guinevere cradles him. She touches his side. Her hand comes away covered in blood.

> GUINEVERE You took the blast for me. Why?

ARTHUR I remembered... Through fire or storm, I will always come to your side.

Guinevere kisses him tenderly.

Vortigern and Merlin advance.

VORTIGERN Poor, poor Guinevere. I could've made you the most powerful women in a century.

Guinevere looks to Arthur. His eyes flicker just a moment to his right. And Guinevere sees it-

The Sword still clutched in his hand.

VORTIGERN (CONT'D) My army. My dragon. My wizard. My kingdom. How could you hope to overcome all that I wield?

GUINEVERE You know... One thing at a time!

Suddenly, she spins with Arthur's sword in her hands.

And she buries it into Merlin's stomach.

It's hard to tell who's more shocked. Merlin or Vortigern.

MERLIN I feel like I should've seen that coming...

And Merlin, with the sword through him, falls to the ground.

Guinevere takes a menacing step toward Vortigern.

GUINEVERE

For years you've kept me in fear. Made me do terrible things. Haunted my nightmares. Today, we end it.

Vortigern stumbles backward, buries his hand into a box, and pulls out-

The old, rusty sword. Not nearly good enough.

So he drops it. And takes off running.

Guinevere is stunned. She looks to the fallen, wounded Arthur. He's struggling, but he nods to her.

And Guinevere sprints off after Vortigern.

EXT. THE COURTYARD - DAY

The skies have turned black, and the rain is pouring down.

Percival and the knights continue fighting valiantly, but more and more knights fall to the Saxons' swords.

PERCIVAL

Hold strong, men!

But Percival and his knights retreat a bit, and-

Find themselves up against a wall. Pinned in.

THE BATTLEMENTS

Guinevere emerges from the large oak door onto the battlements. There's nothing ahead of her, but-

In an instant, Vortigern springs at her from behind the door.

His strength is too much for her, and he slams her to the ground. His hands find her throat.

VORTIGERN You dare challenge me here? Where I became king! Where I killed Uther!

GUINEVERE This is where kings go to die.

She pulls her dagger and stabs at him.

But Vortigern catches her hand and forces it down. He's still completely in control.

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Arthur has forced himself to his feet. On weak legs, he moves toward the door, but-

MERLIN Is the King already abandoning his throne?

Arthur turns to see-

Merlin getting to his feet. He pulls the sword out of his belly and tosses it aside.

ARTHUR No. I think I have work to do here. You betrayed my father. I will fight you until my last breath.

MERLIN That may be sooner than you think. Merlin raises his staff toward the hole in the ceiling.

MERLIN (CONT'D) With wind and rain, the land deforms. No man is safe, from my dark storms.

There's a crash of thunder, and suddenly wind comes pouring in through the ceiling.

Arthur rolls, grabs his sword, and plunges it deep into the floor atop the king's seal, when-

A tornado touches down into the throne room.

Arthur grips the sword tightly as the winds whip around him.

MERLIN (CONT'D) How long do you think you can hold on, Arthur?!

ARTHUR A king must never give up!

Arthur's feet leave the ground, as the winds pull him upward.

But his sword keeps him anchored to the ground.

EXT. THE BATTLEMENTS - DAY

The storm rages. Black clouds crowd the skies. Wind whips. Rain pours. Thunder and lightning crack the skies.

And Vortigern has Guinevere pinned down.

VORTIGERN After everything I've given you. Showered you with gifts. You were my little girl!

IN THE COURTYARD

The torrential rain is turning everything to mud.

Percival and the other knights are backed up against a wall by an insurmountable number of Saxons.

> PERCIVAL We can still win. We can still win.

But when it couldn't seem to get any worse-

A gurgling growl escapes its jaws.

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

The tornado roars around Arthur, but with all of his might he gets his feet back to the ground. He crouches and braces against the winds.

Merlin urges the storm on as he waves his wooden staff.

Arthur draws his sword from the stone floor, and immediately stabs it down again. Two feet in front of him.

Two feet closer to Merlin.

MERLIN

You believe you can be king?! Kay died by your carelessness.

ARTHUR I failed to lead him. A king must listen to his people.

Another stab of the sword. Another two feet closer.

MERLIN You allied yourself with murderers.

ARTHUR Guinevere and Lancelot are good. A king can find the best in people.

Another stab. Another two feet.

MERLIN You let Gawain die for you.

ARTHUR

There will always be men willing to die for their king. But a truly great king must be willing to die for his people.

Arthur looks Merlin in the eyes. Still 10 feet away.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) But I won't die today. EXT. THE COURTYARD - DAY

The Red Dragon inhales, readying its terrible breath when-

A ROAR RINGS OUT IN THE AIR.

The Dragon and all the men raise their eyes to-

THE SKIES

Where a shimmering WHITE DRAGON (sleeker and more majestic than the Red Dragon) is soaring toward the castle.

And on its back-

Lancelot.

Screaming his head off in a jubilant battle cry!

IN THE COURTYARD

The Red Dragon spreads its wings and rises into-

THE SKIES

The Red Dragon flaps its wings, surging toward the White Dragon.

But The White Dragon isn't slowing either.

An epic joust is about to commence.

And Lancelot relishes every bit of it.

LANCELOT I've been wanting to slay that dragon for years!

The two dragons collide with a thundering crash. They rip, claw, and bite. Shrieks, flames, and roars erupt from them.

Lancelot clings to the White Dragon through it all.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Who's the greatest knight now, Gawain?!

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

The tornado howls, but Arthur stands strong. Mere feet from Merlin. But Merlin raises his staff, and-

The winds raise Vortigern's garish throne up into the air.

It careens toward Arthur.

MERLIN Do you truly think you're ready to take the throne?!

Arthur pulls his sword from the floor, and-

With a mighty swing, he cuts the throne in half. The two pieces fly away, and shatter against the walls.

ARTHUR

It's not about the throne!

And Arthur stabs his sword forward.

Into Merlin's heart.

The winds die immediately.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) It's about the people.

EXT. THE SKIES - DAY

The Red Dragon suddenly tips its head back and shrieks in obvious pain. An immense tongue of fire shoots into the sky.

Lancelot climbs the scales along the spine of the White Dragon. He gets to the White Dragon's head. Stands on its nose and leaps-

He grabs onto a horn on the head of the Red Dragon, and-

LANCELOT I couldn't have done this with two arms!

Lancelot plunges his sword arm all the way to his shoulder deep into the Red Dragon's eye.

The Red Dragon rears up, its back arching in misery, and it comes crashing down to earth.

ON THE BATTLEMENTS

Vortigern watches The Red Dragon falling lifelessly, demolishing the castle's walls as it comes down.

VORTIGERN

NO!!

Vortigern has Guinevere pinned down. Strangling her, but-

GUINEVERE Wizard. Dragon. Now it's your turn.

Guinevere reaches up and claws her fingernails down the side of his face.

Vortigern screams in pain, and-

Guinevere spits.

A small wax capsule flies out of her mouth and into his.

With the heel of her hand, Guinevere uppercuts Vortigern's jaw. He jolts backward, and pulls away. He puts his fingers to his mouth, and they come away coated in a black liquid.

VORTIGERN You-You... How?

GUINEVERE

I'm very good.

Vortigern collapses. With his last gurgling breath.

VORTIGERN You were... supposed to be... mine.

And he dies.

IN THE COURTYARD

The rain has stopped. The black clouds are turning to gray.

The Knights and the Saxons look on as the Red Dragon now lies dead at their feet.

Lancelot leaps off of the dead beast's head.

He stands in the midst of Percival and the other knights.

LANCELOT Percival? You stayed? You fought?

Percival nods uncertainly.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Impressed. But what say we live to fight another day? By killing them instead.

Percival nods again. Much more certainly.

But the Saxons just sneer and laugh.

PERCIVAL Lancelot. We're still hopelessly outnumbered.

LANCELOT But you've got the greatest knight in the kingdom. And this time-

Lancelot nods upward where-

The White Dragon lands and perches atop a nearby wall.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) -I've got the dragon.

The sneer is gone from the Saxons.

LANCELOT (CONT'D) Men, let's raise hell! CHARGE!!

As Lancelot roars, so too does the dragon.

Lancelot leads the charge at the Saxons. It's not even close.

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Merlin lies on the ground with Arthur's sword through his heart. Arthur stands over him, as Merlin gasps.

MERLIN You knew to go for my heart...

ARTHUR Yes. And I know how to kill you, once and for all.

Arthur draws his sword out of Merlin's heart.

Merlin cries out in pain. Then smiles.

MERLIN You are ready... to be King...

ARTHUR

I am.

MERLIN I swore an oath long ago to your father that I would prepare you. Today, I have fulfilled that oath.

Arthur wavers, but raises his sword over his head.

ARTHUR

You spoke to me through the sword and stone. You made me a killer.

MERLIN You had to act. Vortigern was becoming too powerful.

ARTHUR You sent me after Guinevere.

MERLIN

The one person who could heal you.

ARTHUR You threw her and Lancelot at me.

MERLIN

I had to bring you together. I put you through hell to test you. To strengthen you. It won't be easy being the greatest king in history.

ARTHUR

I can't trust you.

MERLIN I've understood what my role was for a long time. Do what you must.

ARTHUR You're too powerful to live.

MERLIN

But... Am I too powerful to die?

Then Merlin closes his eyes.

And Arthur strikes at Merlin's neck.

Merlin's body explodes with a burst of light. And is gone.

Then Arthur trudges over and picks up Merlin's wooden staff. He breaks it over his knee.

EXT. THE COURTYARD - DAY

The dark storm clouds are gone. The sun peaks through and-

The battle is over.

Percival and some of the other knights call out a battle cry as they chase off the last of the Saxons.

Guinevere stands alone. She holds the long, golden dagger. It fits so well in her hands now.

She tosses it to the ground. Forever.

Then she turns and sees-

Lancelot. Alone. Gazing at the fallen Red Dragon.

Guinevere limps over to him.

GUINEVERE You finally got to slay the dragon.

LANCELOT

Finally.

GUINEVERE Of course, you couldn't have done it without the book from Merlin's cottage, which I told you about. So really... I slayed the dragon.

Lancelot turns to her.

LANCELOT I would be lost without you.

Guinevere tenderly touches Lancelot's sword arm.

GUINEVERE This seems to suit you.

LANCELOT Maybe even better than my old arm.

GUINEVERE So... Will you be able to rest now?

LANCELOT

I don't know-

He moves in close to her. Really close.

LANCELOT (CONT'D)

Can we?

They are inches away from a kiss. When-

ARTHUR (O.S.) Well, we certainly know how to make a mess, don't we?

Guinevere turns to see-

Arthur stumbling into the courtyard. Clutching his wounds.

Without a backward glance at Lancelot, Guinevere rushes to Arthur's side. She props him up. She holds him.

Lancelot watches it all. She isn't his.

Guinevere helps Arthur walk through the rubble.

GUINEVERE So the wizard wasn't dead?

ARTHUR No. But you softened him up for me.

GUINEVERE The wizard. The dragon. The king. I deserve a medal.

ARTHUR The new king will see to it. For you and for Lancelot. Where is he?

But as she and Arthur look around-

Lancelot is gone.

GUINEVERE He was here.

ARTHUR I wish him well. He wants to be the greatest knight of all time. I believe he will be.

EXT. CASTLE STABLES - DAY

Lancelot unstraps his sword arm, and sheaths it at his side.

He approaches a stable full of horses. He chooses a towering white steed.

ARTHUR (V.O.) (continuous) But he has more dragons to fight. Damsels to save. Demons to wrestle.

Lancelot loosens the white horse's reins, but-Then he sees crouched by the lake, taking a drink-The White Dragon. Lancelot grins.

EXT. THE COURTYARD - DAY

Arthur and Guinevere stand side by side and watch as The White Dragon rises into the sky.

It beats its wings and soars quickly off into the distance.

ARTHUR I believe we'll see him again.

Guinevere nods. She looks around at the demolished castle.

GUINEVERE How will you rebuild all of this?

ARTHUR I won't. Let it lie in ruin.

He pulls out a drawing of a castle.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) I have a vision. Of a castle on a hill. The greatest kingdom the world has ever known.

GUINEVERE What will you call it?

ARTHUR I have no idea.

Guinevere looks at Arthur's drawing. She likes what she sees.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) So what do you think?

GUINEVERE About a new castle?

ARTHUR About a new beginning?

Arthur puts out his hand to her.

She takes it.

They turn toward each other. And kiss.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. KING VORTIGERN'S THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Vortigern's Throne Room is in ruins. Utterly destroyed.

The Throne is cut in half. Shattered. Stone and rubble lie everywhere. An enormous hole is blasted in the ceiling. But all is silent. Moonlight pours in and illuminates-

The two pieces of Merlin's wooden staff.

Suddenly, the silence is broken by shuffling footsteps and-A pair of old gnarled hands pick up the pieces of the staff.

> OLD WOMAN Push back the years, the days, the hours. Restore my strength with thy dark powers.

The ends of the staff glow blue, and as she raises them-Her old face softens and melts. Her wrinkles disappear. The milky-whites of her eyes gain color. Her hair becomes full. She is now decades younger, more beautiful and more terrible. MORGAN LE FEY's green eyes flash as she erupts in laughter. FADE TO BLACK-

THE END