**Arthur and Guinevere Meet – Act 1, Scene 1**

**Speakers:**

ARTHUR (largest part)

GUINEVERE

DINADIN

MERLYN

NARRATOR

*You need to know….*

*Neither Arthur nor Guinevere wanted to marry the other, but they were being forced into it so their countries wouldn’t go to war. Guinevere tries to run away, but runs into Arthur, not knowing who he is. Arthur introduces himself as Wart, and after they talk for a while, they both decide they like each other. Then, the king’s guards arrive, and Guinevere discovers that the man she was talking with is in fact King Arthur, the man she is meant to marry.*

**NARRATOR:** There she is!

**GUINEVERE:** (Running to ARTHUR for protection) Wart, please. . .

**DINADAN:** (To ARTHUR) Your Majesty, forgive me. I did not see you for a moment.

**NARRATOR:** ARTHUR bows. GUINEVERE looks at ARTHUR in amazement. ARTHUR avoids her gaze and steps aside, as the Court parades on in stately fashion. The men bow first to the King, and then to the Queen. The Ladies give flowers to GUINEVERE. The formality over, the Court departs. GUINEVERE stares at the King, at a loss for words.

**ARTHUR:** (Turning away) When I was a lad of eighteen, our King died in London and left no one to succeed him; only a sword stuck through an anvil which stood on a stone. Written on it in letters of gold it said: "Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil is rightwise King bom of all England." Many chaps tried to dislodge it, and none could. Finally a great tournament was proclaimed for New Year's Day, so that all the mightiest knights in England would be assembled at one time to have a go at the sword.

I went to London as squire to my cousin, Sir Kay. The morning of the tournament, Kay discovered he'd left his sword at home and gave me a shilling to ride back to fetch it. On my way through London, I passed a square and saw there a sword rising from a stone. Not thinking very quickly, I thought it was a war memorial. The square was deserted, so I decided to save myself a journey and borrow it. I tried to pull it out. I failed. I tried again. I failed again. Then I closed my eyes and with all my force tried one last time. Lo, it moved in my hand. Then slowly it slid out of the stone. I heard a great roar. When I opened my eyes, the square was filled with people shouting: "Long live the King! Long live the King!" Then I looked at the sword and saw the blade gleaming with letters of gold.

That's how I became King. I never knew I would be. I never wanted to be. And since I am, I have been ill at ease in my crown. Until I dropped from the tree and my eye beheld you. Then suddenly, for the first time, I felt I was King. I was glad to be King. And most astonishing of all, I wanted to be the wisest, most heroic, most splendid King who ever sat on any throne.

**GUINEVERE:** I'm afraid, Your Majesty.

**ARTHUR:** Afraid?

**GUINEVERE:** Marriage is rather frightening, isn't it?

**ARTHUR:** (Placing her hand on his offered arm) I must confess, Your Ladyship, it did occur to me. But now not marrying seems infinitely more terrifying. (They take a step or two, then stop)

**GUINEVERE:** What would have happened if we hadn't? To the treaty?

**ARTHUR:** It would have been broken. War would have been declared.

**GUINEVERE:** War? Over me? How simply marvelous!

**NARRATOR:** Arthur and Guinevere laugh.

**MERLYN:** At last! At last! He's ambitious at last! How foolish of me not to have realized sooner. He didn't need a lecture. He needed a queen