

Rexque Futurus

by
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CAST

ARTHUR PENDRAGON (M)

The king of Logres who united the island of Britain, Arthur was sent to sleep after his final battle on the field of Camlann. He now wakes for one day each year to see if the time has come for his return.

SIR BEDIVERE

One of Arthur's knights, Bedivere is charged with returning Excalibur so that Arthur may be brought to Avalon and healed.

SIR LUCAN

Brother to Bedivere, Lucan dies while helping bring Arthur off the battlefield.

SIR MORDRED

Son of Arthur and a traitor, he leads the army against Arthur at Camlann.

MORGANA LEFAY (F)

Arthur's half-sister who, while previously his enemy, reconciles with Arthur and brings him to be healed in Avalon after the battle at Camlann.

SIR GALAHAD

The pure knight who achieved the quest for the Holy Grail, Galahad now brings the Grail to Arthur in Avalon.

VOICE (M)

The voice of God who speaks to Arthur in Avalon.

LADY OF THE LIGHT (F)

A figure of light who guides Arthur on the path of justice and righteousness.

LADY OF THE DARK (F)

A figure of darkness who tries to tempt Arthur down the path of evil. Later she appears in the world to similarly test Arthur's new knights.

DOUBTFUL

Crushed by disappointment and ridiculed by the world, Doubtful abandons all he once believed and when presented with his greatest desire rejects it utterly.

WARRIOR

Warrior is the first to join Arthur and the last to fall away. Though without faith, Warrior knows plainly what he does not possess and thus is closer than all save Faithful to true faith.

GOOD WORKS

Good Works has put all faith in deeds, believing they alone shall lead to heaven. Good Works joins Arthur in the hope of securing his place in paradise.

INTELLECT

A devoted scholar, Intellect's faith is placed entirely in the hands of reason. Intellect treats Arthur's claim with skepticism, but still joins him out of intellectual curiosity.

INDEPENDENCE

Independence rejects all outside authorities, placing his faith in himself alone, and refuses to become one of Arthur's knights.

IDOLATRY

Idolatry has made Arthur his object of worship and willingly becomes one of his knights. Idolatry puts his faith in solely in Arthur, his idol.

GREED

Greed places his faith in the wealth of the world and sees in Arthur the potential to gain both great riches and worldly power.

FAITHFUL

The symbol of true faith, Faithful alone of Arthur's knights succeeds in the quest for Excalibur.

LADY OF THE LAKE (F)

She who once gave Arthur the sword Excalibur and helped him to Avalon, now brings the quest for Excalibur to Arthur and his new knights.

TOTAL ROLES: 18 (4 female, 2 male, 12 male or female)

With the exception of ARTHUR, the LADY OF THE LIGHT, and the LADY OF THE DARK, roles may be double-cast as desired

Synopsis

After fighting his final battle, King Arthur was taken by Morgana LeFay to be healed in the Isle of Avalon. He is the "Once and Future King," some say, destined to return...

Nearly fifteen centuries later Arthur still sleeps in Avalon, but one day each year he wakes to walk the earth again to see if the world is ready for his final return. He brings together a new company of knights, including the likes of Warrior, Good Works, and Intellect, who then set forth to seek the sword Excalibur. Their quest tests the faith of each knight, and in the end all but Faithful fall away, leaving Arthur to return to sleep for yet another year.

Rexque Futurus explores the nature of faith through a blend of myth and allegory. A morality play for modern times.

Technical Requirements

Set Description

The setting for Rexque Futurus is intended to be simple to allow for easy staging. There are, however, a few key set pieces which are needed. A simple tomb lies at upstage center, large enough for Arthur to lie on. A curtain, which can be lifted or pulled away to reveal the tomb, lies just downstage of the tomb. In the beginning of the play, shadows are also projected onto the curtain. Two stands or pillars, one located at the upstage right corner of the stage and the other at the upstage left corner, are also present. Each pillar should have enough room for a person to stand upon, as well as a way to easily ascend and descend as needed. A few acting blocks (optional) would also provide the actors with objects to stand or sit upon.

Prop List

The sword Excalibur

Swords (2)

Spear

Funeral brier (to carry Arthur)

Ancient cup (the Holy Grail)

Candle

Pouch filled with gold coins, jewels, etc.

ACT 1 – The Gathering

(An empty stage. A white curtain is stretched across the back of the stage, illuminated from behind. The shadow of a snake appears, preparing to strike. The shadow of a KNIGHT draws a sword, raises it high, and kills the snake. When this happens there is a great sound of trumpets, horses, swords being drawn, and armies rushing to attack. The shadow of KING ARTHUR enters behind the curtain carrying a drawn sword.)

ARTHUR

Alas this unhappy day!
That brings about this mortal fray.
No more doleful battle was there in Christian land,
Than this, brothers slain by brother's hand.
With this fearsome battle does my kingdom fall,
We have fought for much and now shall lose all.
Jesu mercy, where are all my noble knights become?

(Two knights, BEDIVERE and LUCAN, enter behind the curtain.)

BEDIVERE

There are none but we, lord king, each our father's son.

ARTHUR

Alas that ever I should see this dreadful day!
That villain Mordred shall with his life's blood pay!

(Another knight, MORDRED, appears opposite, leaning on his sword.)

There yonder is the traitor who all this woe has wrought.
Give me my spear! I shall make him pay as he well ought!

LUCAN

Sir, I beg you, let him be,
No more than us has he earned victory.
For on this field we four but stand among the slain.
You have vanquished him already, further strife is but in vain.
God of His great goodness has here preservèd you.
Therefore, my lord, leave off, let this day spare Mordred too.

BEDIVERE

Good lord, remember well of your night's dream, act not upon a whim,
If you pass this day you shall be revengèd upon him.

ARTHUR

Now that I see him yonder alone,
He shall ne'er, for I shall smite him to the bone.

BEDIVERE

Then I bid God's speed, my king,
And may bards long hence of your noble valor sing.

(ARTHUR sheathes his sword and takes a spear from one of the other knights. He rushes towards MORDRED and cries out.)

ARTHUR

Traitor! Now has your death-day come!

(MORDRED raises his sword. As ARTHUR pierces MORDRED with his spear, MORDRED strikes ARTHUR upon the head. MORDRED falls dead and ARTHUR falls wounded.)

BEDIVERE

Alas, good brother, I fear 'tis to his death our king has run!

(BEDIVERE and LUCAN lift the body of ARTHUR.)

LUCAN

He has, I fear, been wounded deep,
But not yet dead. That blow but put him into sleep.
Let us bring him off this thrice accursèd field,
Lest here among the slain he should his spirit yield.

(They exit with ARTHUR. The light on the curtain fades away. BEDIVERE enters onto the stage bearing the body of ARTHUR. He lays ARTHUR down and rests. ARTHUR wakes.)

ARTHUR

Now I shall have my death, it seems,
Whereof Gawain warned me in my dream.
But good Bedivere, where has your noble brother gone?

BEDIVERE

When we brought you forth, he fell from his wounds, no more to go on.

ARTHUR

Alas, to see this noble knight for my sake so die.
For he would have helpèd me, that had more need of help than I.
(BEDIVERE weeps for his brother.)

ARTHUR (Continued)

Such weeping shall not avail me, therefore this mourning leave.
If I might live, the death of Lucan would evermore me grieve,
Yet you can see my final moments come too fast.
I bid you, obey my last command, before they all do pass.

BEDIVERE

Whatever you bid me do, I shall,
To avenge the deeds of this day most foul.

ARTHUR

Take you Excalibur to yonder waterside.
There, I charge you, throw it in unto that watery tide.
Then come again anon.

BEDIVERE

My lord, it shall be done.

(ARTHUR gives the sword Excalibur to BEDIVERE who begins to exit. When he is out of ARTHUR's sight he stops and regards the sword.)

If this rich sword I into the water throw,
Never again its likeness shall the world know.
Therefore this noble sword shall I now hide,
And return with haste to my good king's side.

(BEDIVERE hides the sword and returns to ARTHUR.)

ARTHUR

Now, good knight, tell me what you saw.

BEDIVERE

Sir, just the wind and waves, and that is all.

ARTHUR

That is untruly said of you, therefore go once again.
And please, I beg, spare not, but throw it in.

(BEDIVERE returns to where he has hidden the sword and picks it up.)

BEDIVERE

To throw away this sword would be but sin and shame,
Therefore I still cannot, by Jesu's holy name.

(He returns the sword to its hiding place and again returns to ARTHUR.)

Sir, I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wane.

ARTHUR

Ah, false knight! Traitor untrue! Shall you be my bane?
Now have you betrayed me twice,
You that have been to me as dear as life.
You would for my fine sword soon see me dead,
And so I bid you one last time: Go and do as I have said.
Are you named a noble knight?
For you have put me in great jeopardy of life.

(BEDIVERE again removes the sword from its hiding place, but this time he exits behind the curtain with it. The curtain is again illuminated and we see the shadow of an arm raise the sword and brandish it three times. The arm and the sword then disappear and the lights on the curtain fade. BEDIVERE returns to ARTHUR.)

Good knight, you have my commandment now obeyed,
Yet I dread I have tarried over long and the price may yet be paid.

(Four FIGURES, including MORGANA LEFAY and the LADY OF THE LAKE, enter in black robes enter with a funeral brier and lift ARTHUR into it.)

BEDIVERE

My lord Arthur! What shall become of me?
Now that you go and leave me here, alone with just the enemy.

ARTHUR

To the vale of Avalon must I now go,
For there I must be healed, in body and in soul.

(The FIGURES exit with ARTHUR.)

BEDIVERE

My gracious lord and king, farewell.
What fate now yours I cannot tell.
Your way and mine forever now to part,
No more but sadness know I within mine heart.

(BEDIVERE exits. The curtain upon which the shadows appeared is raised to reveal a tomb upon which lies the sleeping ARTHUR. MORGANA LEFAY is also present.)

MORGANA LEFAY

Brother, you have almost come too late,
Thus for your return the world must long wait.
Here in Avalon, high in magic steeped,

MORGANA LEFAY (Continued)

Your wounds made whole in silent slumber deep.
Drink well of the water which never will run dry,
For it alone shall give you life, by all else you surely die.

(MORGANA LEFAY exits. GALAHAD enters, dressed all in white except for a large red cross emblazoned upon his chest. A beautiful light surrounds him and his face shines with a radiant light. He carries a cup, simple in appearance, but which too shines with a holy light.)

GALAHAD

Good king, for but a time are all your trials past.
I pray you shall enjoy your peace, forever it shall not last.
Sent here am I to give you drink, as I have had before,
Drink deep the water from this holy cup, given from the Lord.

ARTHUR

(Speaking as if in a dream)

Galahad, do I meet you now in death?

GALAHAD

Nay, good king, your body still has breath.
Shall still be long before you earn your final rest,
Stay true and through your life all the world shall soon be blessed.

(GALAHAD gives ARTHUR a drink from the cup.)

With this drink your weary life renew,
Think of whence it came in all you say and do.

(GALAHAD lights a candle which stands behind ARTHUR.)

A flame burns true throughout the reigning night,
Long may you sleep, but always keep the light.

(GALAHAD exits. Only the candle lights the stage. Silence. An unseen male VOICE speaks.)

VOICE

Here lies the renowned King Arthur, of which many tales sing.
Here he lies in Avalon's isle, the Once and Future King.
Yet there are those who shall not believe,
For them in dreams does this king grieve.
His day does end!
And with it his fellowship we rend,
That noble knights with honor bound.
Here we break the table round!

(There is the sound of a table cracking, like a tremendous clap of thunder.)

VOICE (Continued)

Broken the ring that made them one,
And with that this day is done,
Though long his memory shall endure.

Hic iacet, Rex Logrea, quondam resurrexitur.

[Translation: Here he lies, King of Logres, one day to wake again.]

(Silence. ARTHUR sleeps. Slowly, after a time, a light fades up from upstage as the dawn begins to break. It reaches its peak and then begins to slowly fade again, turning a deep red.)

VOICE

Behold! The death of the year!
The dusk which wakes the king sleeping here.
One day each year to walk the earth,
On the eve of holy birth.
A day to judge the hearts of men,
And see if time to come again.
So has been done for centuries long,
The king chooses well, the world wrong.

(The lights come up on two figures each standing on a stand or pillar. The first, on stage right and dressed entirely in white, is the LADY OF THE LIGHT. The second, on stage left and dressed entirely in black, is the LADY OF THE DARK.)

LADY OF THE DARK

Darkness was the world's choice,
And so I charge you, hear their voice!
Let not the sleeper with light align,
But to the night his soul resign.

LADY OF THE LIGHT

Such a choice not ours to make,
His will alone must one side take.
If, perchance, to yours he sides,
Then to that choice we shall abide.

VOICE

When he awakes then make your claim,
Upon this king so long since slain.
Now rise again, O sleeper gray!
And choose between the night and day!
Then on the earth walk in that power,
And decide if yet the appointed hour.

(ARTHUR wakes.)

ARTHUR

So many things I see in dreams,
And yet I know not what it means.
In twilight still it seems I sleep,
And all mine dreams are dark and deep.

(He kneels at the tomb and bows in prayer.)

Your will, good Lord, is always mine,
And let your face upon me shine.
You call me from my silent rest,
And through me may your name be blessed.

VOICE

Each year I bid you walk and rise,
And see the world with your own eyes.
Once again my will be so,
That through the world you shall now go.
And whilst that day on earth reside,
One of these shall be your guide.

DARK

Listen, king, who the world does shun!
In all these years has ever light won?
Or does the world in darkness reign?
Every year is it not the same?
In day, I tell you, never shall you return!
For now, as always, hate in men's hearts burns!
The world has nearly all your days forgot,
Only in war may your kingdom now be bought.
The light does your sleeping mind deceive.
What they promise, do you now receive?
Or have you not in sleep been kept,
What have you gained whilst you slept?
Naught, I tell you! And naught shall it be!
Until you submit your sleeping will to me!

LIGHT

His gain be great with you, that I shant deny,
But what good for the world if his soul should die?
Though hate may long burn within the hearts of men,
Does it follow that love may never take root again?
Love only grows from light's true seed,
And of such the world has greatest need.
But for all this king's great and willing toil,
Naught can grow in the rocky soil,

LIGHT (Continued)

Of which many hearts are made.
Through free will alone can they be saved.
To them as well the highest choice is given,
Between your hell and holy heaven.
This king's task not to sway men's hearts by force,
But to come in peace and let time run its destined course.

DARK

Then the more fool he be! For all men's hearts are blind,
The mettle of noble knights shall nevermore he find.
This king could all the armies of the world defeat,
At the head of mine he would the night soon make complete.
Then, king, would dominion forever hence be yours,
And this enforced sleep would never claim you more.

LIGHT

You lie as you have always done,
Do you think you can forever quench the sun?
All in darkness shall find defeat at the final end,
When all the deeds of nighttime we shall break down and rend.
And on that day when comes eternal dawn,
You and all who follow shall be banished and gone.
This the fate you ask asks all men to share,
How with love and hope and joy shall your bitter fruits compare?

DARK

He shall taste them if he wishes, if your promises be true,
Let him taste, then see, if he chooses me or you.

LIGHT

Deceiver, that taste alone his choice would make,
And methinks 'tis not so easily this valued soul you take.

DARK

Then in silence bide and let his choice be heard,
And you shall see that dark this time his sword shall gird.

VOICE

Silence both and let the king his choice declare.
Which armor, king, shall you this year wear?

ARTHUR

Each year for fifteen hundred have I followed but one path,
The dark knows not the price it does now ask.

ARTHUR (Continued)

Whatever waits upon the earth, I shall have no fear,
For your good words alone, my Lord, are always in mine ear.
War and blood enough have I seen to fill ten lives,
The time has come for peace and not dominion to strive.
I ask you not, and never have, for a crown to weigh mine head,
For in the end that cursèd crown all my knights to death has led.
Yet if that crown I still must wear,
I shall, and put it in my good Lord's care.

VOICE

Well spoken, king of light!
You have once again well answered night,
And this year once more renewed your vow,
For your knee to dark has never bowed.

DARK

It shall, one year, whence I shall prove,
'Tis dark, not light, the world moves.
For now, this king shall mine armies keep at bay,
But when to night he turns, then I shall win the day!

LIGHT

'Tis not this king, but the peace he seeks to bring,
That leads us to all the victories we sing.
Peace shall live, even if you do conquer all,
And by its sword shall all in darkness fall.

DARK

You shall hear my voice again, king fool,
This cycle ne'er to end until you submit to my one rule.

(The lights on the LADY OF THE DARK go out.)

LIGHT

My voice you shall also hear,
But far more welcome to your listening ear.

VOICE

Listen well to this voice, with all my words therein,
It shall not always be so clear amidst the world's din.
Wake, and to the world go,
And through you may my light they know.

ARTHUR

Grant me strength for all the tasks ahead,
And by your will alone shall be my tired spirit fed.
O, my knights, all my sacred brothers lost,
How highly for my failure have you paid the cost!
Yet through all these centuries here I still remain,
I alone to bear all our suffered pain.
Forgive me, O my brothers, what atonement can I make?
How to heal our circle that so long ago did break?
And you, dear one, how I betrayed you, O my queen!
Can I ask your departed soul to now forgive me?
I thank God you are now from all hurts beyond,
For I know now you did never do me wrong.

LIGHT

Now, king, does your presence the world await,
Go forward now and fulfill your heavenly fate.

*(ARTHUR comes forward and the curtain descends again
behind him.)*

ARTHUR

Then here shall I tarry no more,
And thus begin my yearly chore.

*(The lights fade up on a figure sitting alone in the center of the
stage. The figure is DOUBTFUL, who has the look of one who
has lost something. The lights suggest an air of sadness and
despair.)*

Good friend, I see great signs of trouble on your face,
What brings you all alone to this cold and dismal place?

DOUBTFUL

Stranger, your concern I'm sure you offer quite sincere,
But I bid you let me be and dwell alone in sadness here.
Forgive me for the courtesies that I show you not,
But past is the day when another's company I sought.

ARTHUR

I have no wish on your privacy to intrude,
But I cannot pass one by who does so deep in anguish brood.
I prithee, tell me all that troubles deep your soul,
And I shall do all in mine power to make your wounds be whole.

DOUBTFUL

Kind stranger, forgive me for all my thoughtless words,
Your voice carries a compassion that never have I heard.

DOUBTFUL (Continued)

If my despair you wish of me to tell,
Then I shall to your ears unfold how to these depths I fell.

(ARTHUR *sits next to* DOUBTFUL.)

ARTHUR

Then speak, good friend, and every word shall I well heed,
I thank God that I could come to you in this, your hour of need.

DOUBTFUL

You have done so, and for that I'm in your debt,
And I hope that of your company I shall be glad I met.
Ever since the days when I was but a child,
And life with all its hopefulness still my mind beguiled,
Tales was I told of when legends walked the earth,
And all the world was filled with deeds of noble worth.
Days when the sun did shine its face on man,
And the codes of highest chivalry still reigned across the land.

ARTHUR

Such tales well I know, and all the glory of,
'Twas great indeed those glorious days when all served God in love.

DOUBTFUL

So have I thought for most my life, would it but were true!
For once I held such dreams were as real as I see you.
Those tales in the depths of mine heart I did believe,
And the passing of those days did I mourn and deeply grieve.
For above all the noble knights of whom are many stories told,
Reigned the king of Logres, the highest king of old.
And to this foolish hope did my blinded spirit cling,
That one bright and dawning day would return this king.
Each day my face I turned towards the rising sun,
Watching and waiting until each day was done.
Day upon day did this vigil I repeat,
And day after day did this faith the world cheat.

ARTHUR

Have faith, good friend, for that day is soon to rise,
Stand strong within the one true light and see through doubtless eyes.

DOUBTFUL

Such talk have I too often heard and there my ruin dwelt!
The world's cold and brutal mocks have I most painfully felt.
The day did come when nevermore I for kings would wait,

DOUBTFUL (Continued)

The sun turned dark within mine eyes, now despair mine only fate.
The world spoke true, I fear, when they called me a fool,
'Tis folly to believe that hope and love this world could rule.

ARTHUR

Such a saddened tale, methinks, I never hence shall hear,
That all your pure and noble faith could be slain by fear!
Why care you for what the ignorant may say?
What words can ever stop the sun or hold back the day?

DOUBTFUL

Your words but fall like arrows on the remnants of my faith,
My life with once the angels dwelt, now haunted by cruel wraiths.
Doubtful are my every waking thoughts, and by that name known I,
My soul now filled with emptiness, no more until I die.
So say no more of hopeful days that men shall never see,
That sleeping king, if ever he was, has most wrongly betrayèd me.

ARTHUR

Good brother, your tale does greatly grieve my soul!
But perchance my words shall yet help make you whole!

DOUBTFUL

Blessèd would I call you if you that task could do!
I would kneel to you and call you lord and ever follow you!

ARTHUR

Then list me, for I tell you true, the king you seek is I.
The day for which you long did wait may well now be nigh.

DOUBTFUL

How could you do me such a villainous wrong?
To strike the final blow against a spirit no longer strong?
I know now, as to you I just have said,
That king and all my hopes therein are long and truly dead!
You mock me to come in Arthur's name,
And with this foolish ploy try my crushèd hopes to claim.
Have I not fallen deep enough into despair,
That you must add to the cloak of shame I do already wear?

ARTHUR

Do you not believe that I am truly who I say?
Come with me and follow light, and join the coming day.

DOUBTFUL

Such things no longer come to pass, if indeed they ever did,
From all the world's lies I wish that I were rid.
I know not, stranger, what I ever did to you,
For you to come and call me friend, then break my heart anew.
Fare you well, spread your tales of deceit elsewhere,
For all your myths and lofty words I do no longer care.

(DOUBTFUL stands and exits before ARTHUR can say another word.)

ARTHUR

Good friend, has the world done you such grievous wrong?
To spurn now the very thing that for once your soul did long?
Those who do lack faith against the light have always spoke,
But vile indeed to find a soul who foes his faith has broke!
Cursèd be those spiteful fiends who on the innocent prey!
Upon such no mercy shown in my forgotten day.
But I come not as a king to judge or enemies smite,
Nevertheless, I shall surrender not to those who conceal right.
Doubtful, for your shattered faith I promise you I grieve,
Shall I find even one who does still in light believe?

(ARTHUR bows in prayer.)

Knights I seek to fill the Table Round anew,
Each and every one, dear Lord, to serve and worship you.

(The figure of WARRIOR enters, dressed as such. A sword hangs at WARRIOR's side.)

WARRIOR

Noble sir, of such would I gladly be the first,
Knight have I always wished to be, for that desire my heart does burst.
Long have I searched through all this world wide,
To find a king and pledge myself forever to his side.

ARTHUR

Good friend, I beg you, tell me of your name,
And what through this endeavor you do hope to gain.

WARRIOR

Warrior am I called, for glory and honor do I seek,
I shall fear no foe, however strong, and always uphold the weak.

ARTHUR

Of chivalry and noble arts well it seems you've learned,
And perchance the name of knight you shall most truly earn.

ARTHUR (Continued)

None shall I turn back who wish to follow me.
I thank you, honored friend, for your welcome company.
But I must warn you, brother, my path is never one of ease,
I do not bind you to my service, you may depart when you do please.

WARRIOR

I thank you for your honest words which I know are most sincere,
But for an easy path I never asked, in battle I have no fear.

ARTHUR

You lack not in bravery, that I can surely tell,
But how do you fare in peace? Do you bear that just as well?

WARRIOR

For peace, I shall confess, I have never longèd much,
I find no glory ever in it, no thrill of death's close touch.
But knights were never bred for peace, that you cannot deny,
Peace I bear but for the time I may next look in mine enemy's eye.

ARTHUR

War. Why some seek it so never shall I grasp.
Our hands not meant for wielding swords, but for our brother's hand to clasp.
If you follow me, then glory I promise not,
For such too many knights have with their life's blood dearly bought.
No wrong shall come, believe me friend, from what chivalry can teach,
But the only gift that war can bring is the gift of future peace.
I have fought long and hard, and of every stroke repent,
That God's good gift of human life must be so poorly spent.
Fight not for the battle's sake, or seek war as its own end,
But fight your enemy with the hope you shall one day be his friend.
War, 'tis sure, shall ever of this world form a part,
I shall yet see more, I deem, and that does wound me to the heart.

(WARRIOR draws his sword and, kneeling before ARTHUR, presents the sword to him.)

WARRIOR

And when you do, at your side I'll stand, and never you forswear,
My unyielding oath I give to you, whatever trials we may bear.

(ARTHUR stands and takes the sword from WARRIOR. He touches WARRIOR with it on each shoulder.)

ARTHUR

Rise, good knight, for that title now I give,
And do all you can for God and man so long as you do live.

(ARTHUR gives the sword back to WARRIOR who then rises.)

WARRIOR

To yourself and lordship alone my allegiance I bestow,
What God above you serve in turn I have no wish to know.
I shall serve you in this world as my one and only lord,
But any faith in powers above is more than I can afford.
The world I see is filled with but great sufferings and strife,
What signs are there that point to any greater good or life?
The greatest goal to strive for, at least that I can see,
Is to earn what glory that one can ere death claims victory.

ARTHUR

Do you fight for naught but the glory to be thine?
And not to see the Lord's true light upon the world shine?
And yet as I have promised, none I turn away.
May God reveal himself to you ere your final day.
If you still wish, then follow me and may this truth you know,
The good Lord is in turn my king, and the keeper of my soul.
The path I walk is one of light, shown from heaven above.
A true knight knows more than worldly arms, but hope and faith and love.

WARRIOR

Forgive me, king, that the faith you hold is one I cannot share,
To trust in powers yet unseen is more than I do dare.
Yet a light that I have never seen surely walks with you,
I can see you care for fellow men more than most kings do.
If there is a God above, may I see with mine own eyes,
Until that time the world alone my one and only prize.

ARTHUR

I pray your eyes be opened ere our ways must rend,
May God to your immortal soul his grace and mercy tend.
All willing souls from sinfulness has he promised to deliver,
Of blessings, joy, eternal life has he proclaimed himself the giver.

WARRIOR

Wondrous words, I grant you that,
But as for faith, that I lack.

ARTHUR

"Ask, it shall be given, seek and you shall find."
If you wish to meet the Lord, you shall do so in time.

WARRIOR

You are indeed a caring friend, as well as goodly king.
Perchance one day this faith you hold the Fates to me shall bring.
But for the present moment, what errand ours to take?
Shall we seek yet some other knights our fellowship to make?

ARTHUR

Indeed we shall, for such purpose am I here,
To call forth knights in Jesu's name, and let come all those who hear.

WARRIOR

Good king, might I ask the name of whom I serve?

ARTHUR

My knight, such an answer would I ne'er from you reserve.
I am Arthur, king of Logres, who long has been asleep,
Sent into the world to see if the harvest time to reap.

(The figure of GOOD WORKS enters, dressed as a medieval priest.)

GOOD WORKS

The good and holy book does tell us true,
"The harvest plenty, the workers few."
Gentle sirs, most humbly do you I greet,
And grant me pardon if my presence an intrusion now may be.

ARTHUR

Good sir I bid you welcome, sit yourself and rest,
You are indeed most welcome here, a dear and honored guest.
What brings you this way to meet my goodly knight and I?
How is it that upon we two you haped to now pass by?

GOOD WORKS

No chance, forsooth, that by your way I came,
And as I passed I could not help but overhear your name.
If Arthur you truly are, then let rejoice my soul!
Of your glory have I heard, of your works have I been told.

ARTHUR

Rest assured good friends, I am who I have said.

GOOD WORKS

And to think that all the tales I've heard long since proclaimed you dead!
Truly 'tis good fortune to come across your way,
And if you now are willing, by your side I wish to stay.

ARTHUR

Few things could please me more! For I have a fellowship to fill.

WARRIOR

I myself have made this pledge: By this king to stay through good and ill.

GOOD WORKS

Then indeed in good company I myself have found,
The gathering of a second, noble Table Round.
This is most certainly the very thing that I have sought,
A chance to do the holy deeds the good Lord knows I ought.

ARTHUR

We shall do whatever the Lord may ask of us,
But all those deeds mean nothing without the faith which have we must.
For what good are works if they are done not in Jesu's name?

GOOD WORKS

But through good works may we our share in heaven claim.
And though my tasks of righteousness are surely far from done,
I take comfort still in knowing God has counted every one.

ARTHUR

Good friend, by what name shall we call you?

GOOD WORKS

Good Works is my name, and such I hope to do.

ARTHUR

Methinks you too are aptly named, for I will confess,
The motives for your actions may not be the best.
If your works are a trade for heaven, then what master do you serve?
We should all be thankful God gives more than we deserve.
Judgment shall not fall on sinful merits of our own,
But on the mercy and the grace of our Lord Jesu's throne.
By faith we are sanctified, by faith we are saved,
Through nothing of our own shall we be rescued from the grave.

GOOD WORKS

Good king, you do surprise me with your shocking words!
I should think that you would quake with fear if the good Lord heard.

GOOD WORKS (Continued)

How could one poor mortal hope to stand before God's face,
If nothing he has done to earn our holy God's good grace?

WARRIOR

I know little of your God, still less about your faith,
But seems folly that on one's mortal works should paradise be based.
Much have I seen of mankind and his ways,
And most of what I've seen fills me with dismay.
How could any corrupted man heaven hope to buy?
A better chance would all men have to climb beyond the sky!

GOOD WORKS

Do you truly think God would His grace just simply give?
What then would be the purpose of this earthly life we live?

ARTHUR

To do for others, and not for your own gain.
To serve our God for His glory's sake, and not for our own fame.
"Faith without works is dead,"
This you have surely read,
But what good are works if faith cannot be found?
They would ring indeed with a false and hollow sound.
The smallest act done in the name of God above,
Is worth ten thousand goodly acts that have no ounce of love.

GOOD WORKS

Do you presume to judge another's heart?
That belongs to God alone and not, methinks, your part.

ARTHUR

You do speak true, pray forgive me friend,
God indeed will judge your heart come your final end.
What lies within our hearts He does surely know,
I pray before you reach your death faith in you shall grow.

GOOD WORKS

God shall receive me when I come before His throne,
My works shall journey with me, I shall not stand alone.

ARTHUR

Do you still wish to join my cause and take what quests we may receive?

GOOD WORKS

Good king, from your service I shall ask no reprieve.

ARTHUR

You may in time, for the path I walk is long,
To follow 'til the end you shall need faith that God makes strong.

WARRIOR

Yours indeed must still be strong to follow all these years,
To see so little of pure joy and plenty much of tears.

ARTHUR

My life you well divine,
I would have left it long ago if strength in God I did not find.

GOOD WORKS

Then where shall we three begin?
What works shall we accomplish to wash away our sin?

ARTHUR

Have patience, for our numbers yet are few,
I hope to have my knights number more than two.

*(ARTHUR takes the sword again from WARRIOR and knights
GOOD WORKS.)*

And a knight you now shall be.
What with that title you shall do we shall in time soon see.

GOOD WORKS

I shall use it always for good and right.

ARTHUR

That indeed is the beginning of a knight.

(The figure of INTELLECT enters, dressed as a scholar.)

INTELLECT

Pardon me friends, I seem to have lost my way.
Would you mind if I did sit awhile and stay?

ARTHUR

We welcome all who may chance to pass us by.
These are Warrior and Good Works, and Arthur the king am I.

INTELLECT

Arthur, king of Logres? Is that what you have said?
Surely you must know that long has he been dead!
Those are tales handed down from ages dark and past,
Most amazed am I at how long such stories last.

WARRIOR

You do not believe in Arthur, so it seems.

INTELLECT

Stories, mere fancies, legends built on dreams.
They have no substance, no fact upon to rest,
From imagination was Arthur born, that you must confess.

ARTHUR

I may do no such thing, the truth not mine to change.
Why do such "tales," as you have said, seem to you so strange?

INTELLECT

How could such legends possibly be true?
Perhaps if there were solid facts of Arthur that we knew,
Then one could say that perchance he did exist,
But all we have is a shadowy man enshrouded in the mist.

ARTHUR

Few facts of me, I grant, shall you find within this age,
But 'tis the heart, and not the mind, that is the body's truest sage.
Wisdom comes not from facts alone, for they may oft deceive,
But 'tis the heart and spirit in God and king that must believe.

INTELLECT

(To WARRIOR and GOOD WORKS.)

And do you two follow this phony king?
Belief alone shall not legends into the real world bring.

WARRIOR

I know nothing of what history may say,
But I shall follow this king until the death of day.
One has only to look to see he is a king of worth,
One to follow unto the very ends of all the earth.
I believe what stands before my very eyes,
Lack of facts cannot the visible truth disguise.

INTELLECT

And you, Good Works, what may your reasons be,
That the fully obvious you apparently cannot see?

GOOD WORKS

I do not know why against this goodly king you rave,
But with him I hope to do the works my soul may save.

INTELLECT

I am amazed! Their minds to facts you have made blind,
Such a lack of reason did I never think to find!
Why, stranger, may I ask, do you these good folks fool?
I call such deceptions most heartless and cruel.

ARTHUR

It is not I who lacks a feeling heart,
As for Arthur, king of Logres, that is indeed my part.
To believe or not is the choice that all must make,
Do not try that choice from other men to take.
Why their choice in me do you seek strongly to dissuade?
Shall their belief your lack thereof threaten and cause to fade?

INTELLECT

I have no fear their fancies shall undermine what facts I know,
But I certainly have no desire to help them now to grow!
I seek here only to objectively view,
This case concerning Arthur's myth and you.
How could one man over fifteen centuries e'er survive?
It is clearly absurd to think today one could find Arthur still alive!
And history has shown us that it is most unlikely he ever did,
These persisting rumors I seek the world to rid.

ARTHUR

History is writ by men, who oft are known to lie.
Can you not at least trust the witness of thine eye?

INTELLECT

It may be enough for these gentle knights, whose positions I have heard,
To believe based on mere sight and your well spoken words,
But I must trust in Intellect, for such my given name.
The facts of history have before eyes and ears the prior claim.
I will not and cannot surrender them to the heart's idle notions,
Or abandon my mind to some blind devotion.

ARTHUR

Your choice you must make, willing and free,
Though I confess, yours does me grieve.
But let not your mind the rest of you blind,
Or naught shall you ever the impossible find.

INTELLECT

I shall admit my curiosity you inspire.
I wish to remain that I may further inquire.

GOOD WORKS

You would allow this heathen to be a knight?
Who does not even know the wrong from the right?

ARTHUR

Whosoever asks to come will do so unencumbered.
Whoever wants to be shall amongst the Table Round be numbered.
Intellect, come before me now and kneel.
Receive the honor of knighthood from this noble piece of steel.

INTELLECT

I shall take no such title, though your company I follow,
For I know it to be false and utterly hollow.

WARRIOR

You join halfheartedly if such an honor you can refuse,
Why can you not believe? What have you to lose?

INTELLECT

Nothing to lose, yet nothing to gain,
I follow from interest of this said "Arthur's" claim.

ARTHUR

If you will be no knight, then call yourself our brother,
Though I had hoped you would have taken the other.
Follow, and may you all be with me come the end,
On your faith alone shall that depend.

WARRIOR

Your side I shall never forsake,
Whatever trials we may undertake.

GOOD WORKS

Nor I, for the stakes are far too great,
I shall not endanger my eternal fate.

INTELLECT

I shall come for a time,
But only until the truth I do find.

ARTHUR

May you indeed find truth, that I pray.
But peace, friends, who is this who comes our way?

GOOD WORKS

I know not, but he seems not well,
Yet what may be wrong, I cannot tell.

*(The figure of INDEPENDENCE enters, dressed as a knight.
INDEPENDENCE looks very pale and has a wound in his side.
ARTHUR and WARRIOR help INDEPENDENCE to a place
to sit.)*

ARTHUR

Good friend, how came you to this dreadful state?
Rest, and if you have the strength, tell us of your fate.

INDEPENDENCE

Who are you? My friend or mine enemy?
Whoever you are, I beg you, do not hinder me.
I must be off, mine enemies to pursue.

*(INDEPENDENCE tries to get up, but is restrained by
ARTHUR and WARRIOR.)*

ARTHUR

Gentle sir! Sit, lest your wounds be the death of you.
Friends are we, of that you need have no doubt,
I implore you to remain and of your troubles tell about.

INDEPENDENCE

Your kindness shall do me precious little good,
If you will not allow me to go and do the tasks that I well should.
My enemies escape me, a deadly shame for any knight!
Let me go and pursue them, I shall put them all to flight.

ARTHUR

Good knight, where is your king?
Cannot your fellow knights the victory bring?

INDEPENDENCE

I am my own lord, all enemies I fight alone,
I follow my own path, the wide world to roam.

ARTHUR

What foolish pride brings you to this?
Is the glory in this act truly worth the risk?

WARRIOR

What glory can there be when you have no king to serve?
The title of knight I doubt you do deserve!

INDEPENDENCE

Glory is not the motive for my solitary stand,
'Tis only that I shall not submit to any over-lording hand.
My own will I serve, from none shall I orders take,
A willing follower I shall never make.
Now, I beg of you, let me pass,
I shall not yield so long as life does last.

ARTHUR

Let us first our help to you lend,
You may depart once your wounds we tend.

GOOD WORKS

You are indeed very ill,
Pardon us if we keep you here against your will.

*(ARTHUR, WARRIOR, and GOOD WORKS tend to
INDEPENDENCE's wounds.)*

INDEPENDENCE

You give me no choice but here to remain,
But blame me not if no thanks I give you for your pains.
Though as a friend you did me greet,
My staying here I count as defeat.
I ask help from no man alive,
By mine own strength, and nothing else, shall I survive.

ARTHUR

I understand we do this against your willing choice,
I do not expect for our services you shall rejoice.
But in all good conscience I could not let you pass on by.
Not when you were so like to die.

INDEPENDENCE

Then your rightful captive I shall be,
Until, O king, you set me free.

INTELLECT

Have they deluded you as well?
How many more shall be taken in I swear I cannot tell!
This man does spread his baseless lies again,
What makes you think he is a king of men?

INDEPENDENCE

I am not such a fool that I cannot see with mine own eyes.
If he is no king then the sun does not rise.
But that does no true difference make,
I submit to no king be he real or fake.

WARRIOR

Then for what purpose are all your deeds done?
For who or what has your journey begun?

INDEPENDENCE

For none, I tell you true, but for myself,
I am Independence, with faith in no one else.

GOOD WORKS

Of that I am appalled, have you no shame?
That you serve nothing but thine own sinful name?
May the Lord in heaven upon you rain fire!
If you do not do for Him the works He does require.

ARTHUR

We are not here, Good Works, to pass judgment on others.
Treat all men with kindly words as you would a brother.
Let holy love in all our actions show.
God will plant the seed of faith, and He shall make it grow.

INDEPENDENCE

Preach not, for such sayings I have too often heard,
And been given naught but judgment from the Holy Word.
Do not talk to me of love, for such I have not seen.
Though you think that this is some, or so I deem.
I ask for it not!
If you be men of honor, let me go as you well ought.

INTELLECT

Why against his will do you hold him?
What is it to you if he wishes to risk his life and limb?
I thought you did vow to let each their choice decide.

ARTHUR

So I did.

INTELLECT

And now it seems you lied.

GOOD WORKS

It is our task to help all those in need,
And by such works our souls from purgatory be freed.

ARTHUR

Would you rather I left him to die alone?
Where in that heartless act would any compassion yet be shown?

WARRIOR

I cannot in all good conscience leave a fellow knight for dead,
A knight must heal those in hurt, those in hunger shall be fed.

INTELLECT

Noble as this action may appear at one's first sight,
I still must ask if such forcèd help is well and truly right.
If he has his freedom, as you do say,
Then let this gentle knight alone, let him be upon his way.

ARTHUR

For your hurts, Independence, we can do no more.
Now I beg of you, for awhile, to abstain from arts of war.

INDEPENDENCE

You have here detained me far too long,
Now I shall speed myself to where the fighting still is strong.
Yonder methinks mine enemy I see,
And so I shall pursue him if you indeed do set me free.

ARTHUR

I do, having done what I could to sustain your very life.
I can do nothing to prevent you from returning to the strife.
You are not, and have never been, a prisoner of mine,
Your life is yours to lead, and your choices, they are thine.

(INDEPENDENCE stands and prepares to return to battle.)

INDEPENDENCE

Then of you all shall I take my leave,
And with this trusty sword may mine enemies be cleaved.

*(INDEPENDENCE rushes in the direction of battle and exits.
The others, except for ARTHUR, watch after him. Silence.)*

ARTHUR

Warrior, my friend, how does our rash knight fare?
Methinks that for his life he has not a single care.

WARRIOR

He fights well for one so injured deep.

(Pause)

And so he is sent unto his final sleep.

Fool that he was, he had a bravery hard to find.

ARTHUR

I would say not, only that he was blind.

What meaning had his death unto so willingly he ran?

What purpose in his futile, if glorious, last stand?

He is cut off forever from the almighty God above,

Never to know eternally of His everlasting love.

His death and life deserve our most ever heartfelt tears,

For what has he accomplished in all his many years?

Naught, without God to lead his way,

But to shed another's sacred blood upon this bloody day.

WARRIOR

Shall we not now avenge his death most wrong?

So he may be remembered in at least a victory song?

ARTHUR

His fight is not ours, it is but a battle of the world.

This is not to the time for our banner to be unfurled.

WARRIOR

It seems a shame that so alone he had to die,

In such a pointless death with no single reason why.

ARTHUR

While men live but for themselves it always shall be so,

Life has no meaning unless our God you know.

INTELLECT

More tales! More fancies! How many more shall you spread?

You would better know if you were but better read.

Of your kingly nature I still am not convinced,

But I shall stay to see what more may happen hence.

Now, unless by mine eye I am deceived,

Here comes another to in this company be received.

ARTHUR

May he also wish to join our holy quest.

(The figure of IDOLATRY enters, dressed as a medieval pilgrim.)

Welcome, gentle pilgrim, may the Lord on high you bless.

IDOLATRY

Welcome, goodly sirs, long miles have I come.

I wonder, could I lodge with you until the rising of the sun?

ARTHUR

With us you may remain as long as you have need.

Might I ask what quest thine own path does lead?

IDOLATRY

It is to find the resting place of Arthur that I strive,
And there, the tales say, he shall return one day alive.

ARTHUR

Then search no more, for your destination has been found.

I am Arthur, and these my fellows of the second Table Round.

(IDOLATRY falls to his knees before ARTHUR.)

Why so prostrate before me do you fall?

I am no one to be worshipped. I am mortal, as are we all.

IDOLATRY

You are the greatest king on earth!

All the nations should assemble to praise your noble worth!

You deserve no less than I to fall upon my knees,

Though I shall quickly stand if mine action does not please.

ARTHUR

You make too great a matter of what you think I like.

Stand, I humbly ask of you, this worship shown me is not right.

IDOLATRY

I shall do as you command.

(IDOLATRY stands.)

But I am not worthy to before you stand.

ARTHUR

You are, as are all men,

I implore you not to bow to me again.

INTELLECT

But if you are a king, should not subjects to you bow?

ARTHUR

So was it before, but such it is not now.
I am a king, but a kingdom I have not.
Now tell me, gentle pilgrim, why my person you have sought.

INTELLECT

Methinks by the stories he has been fooled,
Into thinking Arthur he would find with a mighty kingdom that he ruled.

ARTHUR

Peace, and let this fellow tell his tale.
Continue on, and leave out not one detail.

IDOLATRY

Your friend is right in that the stories I have heard,
But methinks that he could tell you so in less than scathing words.
My life and all I know I have been forced to leave,
To come and seek the one behind the stories I believe.
For you have always been and always yet shall be,
A king, and yea, a savior unto me!
I have searched long and hard to find you now at last,
To be your faithful subject is all that I do ask.

ARTHUR

Faithful subjects I shall never deny,
But do not think that a savior am I!
Blasphemy alone would be that claim,
For Christ alone is Jesu's name.
I am merely mortal man,
Though resting always in the good Lord's hand.

INTELLECT

A man he most certainly is, and little else.

WARRIOR

Keep your skeptic speech to yourself!
A man may Arthur be, but he is indeed one of noble worth,
None shall you find like him elsewhere upon the earth.

IDOLATRY

If you are but a man, then how do you live still?
Does not death even the greatest of men kill?
No mere man could live all these fifteen hundred years,
Unless you do as a ghost appear.

ARTHUR

No ghost am I, of that you may be sure,
But may not God above allow a man so long endure?
It is not natural, that I grant,
But do not say that no mortal shant.
The Lord preserves me for a purpose that He alone does know,
And until it comes to pass, in agèd years I shall not grow.

GOOD WORKS

It is the Lord, and not this king, we should serve first of all,
To serve a man before our God is to from glory fall.

IDOLATRY

But who else besides this king deserves our praise?
Who with all his mighty feats the peoples has amazed!
I know naught of gods that I have never seen,
You, O king, are more real than they, I deem.

ARTHUR

If you wish to my person well obey,
Then listen to what our God in His commandments does say:
"You shall have no other gods before me."
It is unto the Lord, not I, that you should bend your knee.

IDOLATRY

What have I done that this scorn I have earned?
To harshly away from your glory be turned?

ARTHUR

I welcome all who wish to join me on my quest,
But your faith should not alone in my sinful person rest.
Follow me, but follow first the Lord,
Then when your life is through, great be your reward.

IDOLATRY

I am not sure I can do what you do ask,
But let me come with you, whatever is your task!
I shall be your subject, you shall be my king,
And never a day shall pass when I shall not your praises sing!

GOOD WORKS

You need not tell us of your name,
Idolatry it is! And this the very same!
To worship a man before the Lord your God,
You follow the world on the deadly road most broad.

WARRIOR

Even I would say this behavior is not seeming for a knight.
To serve a king, yes, but to worship him? I do not think 'tis right.

INTELLECT

Methinks that you follow far too much your heart,
And do let not your intellect play its rightful part.

ARTHUR

You have asked to join this company, this fellowship of brothers,
And indeed I will accept you as I would any other.

(IDOLATRY kneels before ARTHUR and is knighted by him.)

But I charge you to remember who in turn I serve,
And who it is alone that your praises does deserve.
Welcome, all, this new-made knight unto our table,
Treat him with peace and friendliness as best as you are able.

IDOLATRY

I shall serve you all the very best I can,
But in esteem I hold this king above all mortal man.

WARRIOR

Indeed, we have here no two faiths of the same kin,
And though with yours I shant agree, I welcome you herein.

(WARRIOR offers a hand to IDOLATRY who accepts it.)

IDOLATRY

I thank you, and welcome you as friend,
And may we be always so, until the very end.

(GOOD WORKS and INTELLECT merely nod to IDOLATRY.)

ARTHUR

And now our noble company does number up to five,
Closer to the number where to which I strive.
But two more is all I ask,
Then may we begin our task.
Enter! You who watches from afar,
Come forth and tell us who you are.

(The figure of GREED enters, dressed as a rich merchant.)

GREED

Gentle sirs, rest assured I meant no wrong,
I was only wondering to who this company did belong.

ARTHUR

This is the second Table Round which my duty is to gather,
But it belongs to God above, our dear and heavenly father.
I am Arthur, king of Logres, and you I warmly greet.

GREED

It is indeed an honor to your noble person meet.
You are truly most worthy fellows all,
And I am glad that in your company I had good luck to fall.

ARTHUR

Where is it you were traveling to,
When paths did cross 'tween us and you?

GREED

I go to make my fortune in the world and wide,
Though perhaps would be mine benefit to with you abide.
What is the purpose that for which this company did form?
To gather riches?

ARTHUR

That is the worldly norm.
But it is not ours, we strive towards the cause of light,
Against evil and injustice shall always be our fight.
It means nothing to chase after worldly gain,
To do so profits no one, such a quest would be in vain.

GREED

Then on what do you your earthly life base?
Something as fleeting and invisible as some spiritual faith?
Such has no substance but passes like the breeze,
But in gold and silver can one trust with ease.

GOOD WORKS

If that is what does interest your soul,
Then what do you see in our spiritual goal?

GREED

I see great gain in joining with King Arthur here,
For another richly Camelot must surely now be near!
A piece of that fortune I do wish to stake,
If a part of your company you would here me make.

INTELLECT

Now his motive to follow you can I most understand,
Who would not believe in falsehoods to win riches grand?
But how in him you see a key to world's success,
In more than I with all my mind could ever hope to guess!

IDOLATRY

Why Arthur is indeed a king to rule all kings!
Soon the mountains once again shall with his praises ring.

ARTHUR

I would not that so quickly say,
I do not even know if this is to be my day.
Do not join me on the basis of what you hope to earn,
I cannot give the promise of any good return.

GREED

In any good endeavor there is an ounce of risk,
But this is far too good a chance for me to ever miss.
Whatever challenges we may march toward,
I am certain that riches shall be our reward.
For what else awaits the victorious side?
But the spoils and plunder of those who have died?
So great and renowned be your honor and fame,
That your enemies shall run at the sound of your name.

ARTHUR

Am I right in supposing you are namèd Greed?

(GREED nods.)

Then well would you do to my wasted words heed!
I promise no jewels, no silver or gold,
Nor anything worldly for your hands to take hold.
I know not myself of our quest or our road,
Or even a glimmer of what our future may bode.
It depends on this world and what therein we find,
And how close to the Lord our faith to Him will bind.
If you wish to follow me, then know of all that,
And if still you choose to follow, I shall not turn you back.

GREED

Then do not and with you I shall come,
To see if there shall be any worldly sum.
If you know not what soon shall be,
Can you say for certain no wealth we shall see?

ARTHUR

No, I cannot say if we shall be rich or poor,
I shall leave all such matters unto the Holy Lord.
Join us for as long as you may please,
If you wish to do so now, then bend upon your knees.

(GREED kneels before ARTHUR.)

GREED

I shall follow you unto the riches to be ours,
To Camelot, may it rise again with all its ivory towers.

(ARTHUR knights GREED.)

ARTHUR

Arise, O knight, and of that title make good use.
Defend the weak, uphold the good, those in need never refuse.

WARRIOR

I welcome you, though of riches I wish none,
Only to know the glory of the battles to be won

GOOD WORKS

Methinks, Sir Greed, you have the wrong desire.
I pray before our quest is through some faith you shall acquire.

ARTHUR

Of that may we all have more before our final days be through,
But of that no other man may help, 'tis 'tween the Lord and you.

IDOLATRY

Faith in you is all I seek,
And never may it grow weak.

ARTHUR

You all have faith in different things,
Does none still serve the King of Kings?

(The figure of FAITHFUL quietly enters.)

FAITHFUL

I do, gentle king, in the best way that I can,
Which, I fear, is seldom much for I am only mortal man.

ARTHUR

As are we all, which indeed may not be much,
But what we lack we can be given through the power of God's touch.
You look tired, friend, I beg you sit and rest,
And know that you are well indeed a truly welcome guest.

FAITHFUL

Who are all these gentle folk who in your company do dwell?
They seem to me a noble lot, I prithee you, do tell.

WARRIOR

Knights are we, fair friend,
Who to the king of Logres our services do tend.

INTELLECT

Knights are they, but not so I,
I watch with but a skeptic's eye.

FAITHFUL

King of Logres, did you say?
Does indeed he live unto this day?

INTELLECT

Indeed not! Let facts, not fancies, your simple mind guide.

GOOD WORKS

Hush! And let him his own choice decide.

FAITHFUL

Can it truly be Arthur standing there?
A miracle, no doubt, and one most truly rare.
Welcome, king, back to the earth,
And may your coming foretell a day of mirth.

ARTHUR

I dearly hope so it shall be,
But such depends on all men's faith in He who has sent me.

FAITHFUL

You needs not tell me who that is,
For know that I am also His.
A perfect servant I cannot say I always am,
But such blemishes are covered by the sinless lamb.
Faith in Him to me He gave,
And that alone shall my spirit save.

ARTHUR

Of all I met today, I welcome you the most!
You know that in your sinful self you have no cause to boast.
But God above in goodly grace did His own son's blood shed,
Without it would all human souls eternally be dead.
May all here note the words that you have spoke,
Through them may a sleeping faith within their souls be woke.

FAITHFUL

You gives me greater praise than I know I do deserve.

ARTHUR

Most humbly do you your Lord and master serve.
Join us, in the cause of holy light.
Together shall we show the world the glory of God's might.

FAITHFUL

In me, I fear, you would no mighty knight acquire,
But perchance I could serve you as but a poor and lowly squire.

ARTHUR

Knights are what I need, fair friend, and I hope you shall be one,
I ask you in the name of heaven to with this company come.

FAITHFUL

If such may serve your cause, then I will not say no.

ARTHUR

I think that our good Lord above would truly wish it so.

(FAITHFUL kneels and is knighted by ARTHUR.)

Rise, Sir Faithful, for such you are,
And let your faith no evil mar.
To know you are not worthy is the start of a knight true,
The rest to let the Lord be seen in all you say and do.

FAITHFUL

I shall serve both Lord and king as best as I am able.

ARTHUR

Then such completes the new Round Table.
Our company does number seven,
The number complete, the mark of heaven.

GOOD WORKS

Then shall our journeys now begin?
I long to start the deeds that my salvation are to win.

ARTHUR

Now 'tis time to fast and rest,
Before we start our holy quest.
But remember: All we do is done unto the cross.
This the only road, all others lead to loss.
Keep vigil friends, and bow and pray,
That the Lord through us shall win the day.

*(The lights upon ARTHUR and the others dim as they begin
their vigil.)*

LIGHT

Gathered your table, the circle of men,
Whose faith shall decide if you may come again.
Those who believe in the good Lord above,
And look to their brothers with unceasing love,
They are the ones who the future do keep,
To one day awake the king lost in sleep.
Arthur did once warring kingdoms unite,
And brought the fair Logres into the true light.
Now shattered the world which started as one,
When so 'tis again, then Arthur may come.

(The lights fade to black.)

ACT 2 – The Quest

(The lights fade up to reveal ARTHUR at center stage, kneeling in prayer. Surrounding him are WARRIOR, INTELLECT, GOOD WORKS, IDOLATRY, GREED and FAITHFUL, all asleep.)

ARTHUR

Our Father, who art in heaven,
I thank you for these knights you have to me given,
They are yours, to them I make no claim,
Teach them, dear Lord, of the power of your name.
For fifteen hundred years have this quest of faith I followed,
Defeated in the end by the world's faith made hollow.
Keep them strong, and open up their hearts,
For your light to enter in and reveal who thou art.
In their eyes it is I who this quest shall lead,
But I know it is their faith alone that shall achieve each mighty deed.
I for the prize methinks they have mistook,
'Tis to the heavens, and thine glory, that their eyes should always look.

(The LADY OF THE LIGHT is revealed on her pillar.)

LIGHT

The Lord above has heard your prayer,
And gives you strength this load to bear.
But faith your knights must willingly choose,
If they do not, their challenge shall they lose.

ARTHUR

Open the eyes that now are blind,
So they the Lord may seek and find.
What challenge they face I do not know,
But a true faith they must soon show.
I pray God's voice each one has heard,
To walk in the footsteps of His word.

LIGHT

You have done all you can,
Leave all now in Jesu's hand.

(WARRIOR wakes and joins ARTHUR.)

WARRIOR

My lord, why do you mourn?
What sadness has your vigil borne?

ARTHUR

I tell you I am weary, friend,
And fear my journey has no end.
For all these long years have I sought,
But my return have they no closer brought.
Knights have come who have bravery shown,
But in the end their faith has flown.

WARRIOR

I tell you true, I shall not your company forsake,
My bond to you can no trial break.

ARTHUR

I know that you are most sincere,
And such words do me good to hear,
But listen when I tell you that your faith is at the test,
Loyalty alone shall not triumph in our quest.

WARRIOR

But how can I give what I do not own?
Why must it be faith and faith alone?
All that I have I freely give,
But faith in mine heart has never lived.

ARTHUR

He stands at the door of your heart and knocks.
Let Him in, and He shall always beside you walk.

WARRIOR

To believe what mine eyes cannot see, I know not how.

ARTHUR

Then that shall be the death of you now.

(Silence. The LADY OF THE DARK is revealed on her pillar.)

DARK

They are doomed to fail all,
For the world does not hear his peaceful call.
His sword the nations would all fear,
Its steel song alone they hear.

LIGHT

His sword a symbol of all that's good,
It works for peace, as all things should.

LIGHT (Continued)

Excalibur this quest's final goal,
And may this table then be whole.

DARK

It shall not, and he shall sleep once more,
And may next year be a year of war.

(The lights upon the LADY OF THE DARK go out.)

ARTHUR

Come, let us our brothers wake,
And then our task most willingly take.

(ARTHUR and WARRIOR wake the others.)

GOOD WORKS

Good king, what errand before us lies?

GREED

What is to be our wealthy prize?

ARTHUR

This our mission from the Lord:
Forth we go to seek my sword.
If then our company still be one,
My time of sleep is finally done.

IDOLATRY

Then let us start without hesitation,
And soon may be your coronation!

INTELLECT

What good does it do to seek but steel?
No more than Arthur is Excalibur real!
You wastes our time, O fraudulent king,
If on fool's errands you shall us bring.

GOOD WORKS

'Tis your own choice to follow he,
If you do not believe, why did you join this company?

ARTHUR

Stay with us, I prithee, until the very end,
And perchance Excalibur's sight shall your last doubts rend.

WARRIOR

If you follow Arthur, then follow where he leads.

INTELLECT

And waste my time with such pointless deeds?

(The LADY OF THE LAKE enters in a pool of light.)

FAITHFUL

Friends, here is a sight most wonderful to behold.

ARTHUR

This the lady who once gave to me my sword of gold.

LADY

Listen O knights who Excalibur do seek!
This quest for the faithful, the humble and meek.
Ask yourself what you truly desire,
And why this sword you seek to acquire.
For each shall meet themselves face to face,
And confront a challenge to their faith.
Let each take the road that suits them best,
And so be put unto the test!

WARRIOR

As for I, I shall not wait,
But do embrace my destined fate.

ARTHUR

Then I wish you God's speed,
And may all His words you wisely heed.

(WARRIOR exits upon his road.)

GOOD WORKS

I too am eager this quest to commence,
So my leave I take and hope to see you hence.

ARTHUR

Good Works, keep well to the path straight and narrow,
And let not your faith become too callow.

(GOOD WORKS exits upon his road.)

GREED

If 'tis a sword of gold we seek, then most willingly I go,
And through this quest I pray my wealth shall greatly grow!

LADY

All shall find what they seek most,
But this shall be no cause to boast,
For where your treasure is, there your heart shall be.
Seek God, else Excalibur never shall you see.

ARTHUR

Seek heaven's wealth eternal, Greed, that I do advise,
For death the riches of the world do disguise.

(GREED exits upon his road.)

IDOLATRY

Must I leave you most exalted lord?
Cannot with you I seek this heavenly sword?

LADY

Arthur has found Excalibur already in his heart,
To search for it again is not his part.

ARTHUR

We shall meet at the end if this quest you win.

IDOLATRY

Then in Arthur's name I shall begin.

(IDOLATRY exits upon his road.)

INTELLECT

No harm can be done if I search as well,
But I shall find nothing, that I can tell.
That you are false I do already know,
And through this "quest" may I prove it is so.

ARTHUR

The truth of who I am you shall never find,
So long as you choose to remain forever blind.

(INTELLECT exits upon his road.)

FAITHFUL

I shall do my best to you my service give,
And in all I do for our Lord live.
May God grant me this sword if it be His will,
And guard me through both good and ill.

ARTHUR

Go forth, Faithful, and live up to your name,
And let no defeat cause you any shame.
For the Lord in His glory turns even death to victory,
And wherever you go, He with you shall be.
(FAITHFUL exits upon his road.)
I fear, Lady, that my knights and I have forever parted ways,
Shall they be able to face what may come upon this day?

LADY

They shall, but only if in the Lord they choose to reside,
And follow the light of heaven which is the one and only guide.

ARTHUR

My hope in this world grows faint, I confess,
Every year it seems that people's faith grows less and less.
I sometimes wonder if first this world's end shall come,
Before my quest shall ever be won.

LIGHT

You are within God's two hands,
And your return is in His plans,
But for the proper time we first must wait,
Not too soon, yet nor too late.

LADY

Your knights have listened to your call,
And thus cannot be deaf to all,
The Lord may speak into their ear.
Have faith that they will choose to hear.

ARTHUR

Then I commend them all to God's good grace,
And pray they all shall see His face.

(ARTHUR exits with the LADY OF THE LAKE. The LADY OF THE DARK is revealed on her pillar.)

DARK

Now comes my time to speak,
And havoc in their minds to wreak.
They shall not withstand dark's voice,
My will shall now control their choice!
For I may them in the world meet,
And so seal this king's defeat!

(The LADY OF THE DARK descends from her pillar and exits.)

LIGHT

Go then, to where the mortals tread,
Walk among them and your poison spread.
Your right to do so light will not deny,
The choice must be offered: To live or else to die.
Dark's voice is oft by men more clearly heard.
But let all keep within their hearts the true and living word!

(INTELLECT enters and meets the LADY OF THE DARK who enters disguised as a scholar.)

INTELLECT

Fellow scholar, with pleasure you I greet,
'Tis always a joy to one of my many brethren meet.

DARK

You are Intellect, if I do not mistake,
'Tis an honor to your acquaintance make.
But what brings you this way to pass?
Some scholarly pursuit, if I may ask?

INTELLECT

I fear not, rather an errand meant for fools,
I am only here that my position I may prove.
I met a man who King Arthur claims to be,
And the truth of the matter his new knights refuse to see.

DARK

King Arthur? Surely you jest!
If ever he was, then with the dead he must rest.
Do you mean to say with this pretender you have allied?
You said you were a scholar, but methinks perchance you lied.

INTELLECT

Do not think his false claims I did accept,
Only to observe have his company I kept.
I would not accept the title of "knight,"
But sought only to set the misguided to right.

DARK

Then why are you now alone?
Have you their deluded company flown?

INTELLECT

After this "Arthur" did his Round Table fill,
He concocted a quest even more foolish still.
To find Excalibur we have been sent,
And so into the world we went.

DARK

Indeed a most remarkable tale,
But on this quest you shall undoubtedly fail,
For there is no Excalibur, as we both know,
So why on this quest do I see you go?

INTELLECT

I will confess that my curiosity this "Arthur" did inspire,
And a poor scholar would I be if I did not at least inquire.

DARK

Such inquiry I would commend,
If your feelings did not with your reason now blend!
History has already shown Arthur to be untrue,
What need is there for these facts to again be proved by you?

INTELLECT

Perchance if I can disprove his claim before his followers own eyes,
Then they shall see through his most preposterous disguise.

DARK

Still, 'tis a most unworthy endeavor for a scholar of your renown,
And to participate in such a quest may bring your credibility down.

INTELLECT

'Tis true, that thought I had not weighed.

DARK

Your fruitless efforts will with ridicule be paid!
The observe alone I can most understand,

DARK (Continued)

But here you are on Arthur's quest as one of his own band!
Do you believe in him, or do you not?
I think you must, else why upon this quest have you been brought?

INTELLECT

His claim is fraudulent! That I state with firm resolution.

DARK

You must believe, I can come to no other conclusion.
As one of Arthur's knights you now play the part,
You follow not your mind, as scholars should, but follow with your heart!

INTELLECT

That I most protestingly deny!

DARK

I cannot believe that and so bid you good-bye.
If you wishes to be taken in by such a foolish sham,
Then I will have no part, for the truest scholar I am.

INTELLECT

Good scholar, beg my pardon, it seems that most unwisely have I behaved,
And I am glad you came my way, for my reputation you have saved.
Whither are you bound?
I think this is the time to forsake the Table Round.

DARK

Your reason does awake, and for that I am most glad.
Come and leave this quest, for there are better studies to be had.

(INTELLECT exits with the LADY OF THE DARK.)

LIGHT

Intellect has forsaken the company of light,
And gone evermore to the unfeeling depths of night.
(IDOLATRY enters.)

May you, Idolatry, better fare,
And for more than Arthur may your heart care.

(The LADY OF THE DARK enters disguised as Morgana LeFay.)

DARK

Hail, stranger, where is it you do go?
I tell you this is a road of naught but death and woe.

DARK (Continued)

Why do you come here?
If you were wise, you would no further draw near.

IDOLATRY

Whatever dangers upon this path may lie,
I must continue to its end, or strive on until I die.
My quest is one I shall not forsake,
Whatever trials and tribulations the future may make.

DARK

And who does send you upon this deadly quest?
It can be succeeded by only the bravest and the best.

IDOLATRY

In Arthur's name this quest I pursue,
And now, may I ask, who is it are you?

DARK

I am Queen Morgana LeFay, sister to your king.
What do you hope for this dangerous quest to bring?
Has he told you if it succeeds that he shall then return?

IDOLATRY

My quest is for Excalibur to earn.
If Morgana LeFay you truly be,
Methinks you come as my enemy.

DARK

Think not such things, for I come your self to save.
Follow Arthur and you shall join him in his grave.
Arthur's power each year does wane,
There shall never be a time when he shall come to rule again.
Your quest is filled with peril and danger,
Why risk your life for a long dead stranger?

IDOLATRY

Arthur is alive, so have my own eyes seen,
In his presence have I myself been.

DARK

Arthur is but a relic of the past,
He stands for all that cannot last.

IDOLATRY

And let he lives still,
For time cannot his person nor his memory kill.

DARK

Arthur lives because I myself his wounds did heal!

IDOLATRY

You who once did Excalibur steal!

DARK

Excalibur I claimed for he whose worth shall be most great,
And for that knight I still do wait.
In mine own power does Excalibur reside,
And from Arthur forever shall I that sword hide.
You cannot take it from me by strength or by might,
You shall meet your death if against my power you fight.

IDOLATRY

Return the sword! For to Arthur it does belong!
To keep it from his hands is most vile and wrong.
I bid you yield, as King Arthur I dearly serve,
Else I shall smite you as I know you do deserve.

DARK

You have a strong spirit, worthy of a greater lord.
Follow me instead of Arthur, and I shall give you the Excalibur sword.
For in power I am greater, you shall have kingdoms to rule.
Nothing shall you gain by following Arthur the fool.
Only a king may Excalibur wield,
And such you shall be if to me you will yield.
With Excalibur you would be a knight beyond compare,
To challenge your rule no mortal man would dare.

IDOLATRY

Shall I the king I worship now forsake?

DARK

Do and his glory you yourself shall then take.
Why worship Arthur when you yourself could be king?
Why give him praises when the nations could your glory sing?

IDOLATRY

The knight you await, could that be me?

DARK

The greatest of all kings on earth, if you do choose to be.
Why for Arthur should you complete this quest?
For in doing so you would surely meet your death.
Instead in my power and your glory believe,
And from my hands you shall Excalibur receive.
To show your allegiance bend your knee and kneel,
And with that your deserved fate seal.
Where I shall take you you shall never die.

IDOLATRY

Why serve another when a king could be I?
(IDOLATRY kneels before the LADY OF THE DARK.)
Allegiance to you I most willingly swear,
To be made a king beyond earthly compare!

DARK

All you deserves I shall to you give,
For you are bound to me for as long as you live.
Go and use Excalibur well.
(IDOLATRY exits.)
And in darkness forever shall your eternal soul dwell.

(The LADY OF THE DARK exits.)

LIGHT

Those who idolize power will find it their death,
And curse it with their dying breath.
(GREED enters.)
Silver and gold too shall quickly pass away,
Leaving your hands empty at the passing of the day.

GREED

This journey me wearies and no riches have I found,
Nothing but the stones that litter the ground.
But this sword I seek shall be the greatest worldly prize,
And bring me such wealth that I will not believe mine eyes.

*(The LADY OF THE DARK enters, disguised as a rich
gentlewoman.)*

DARK

If wealth you seek, then I am glad that we have met,
For if you comes with me great riches will you get.
I can tell by your manner that you are a goodly knight,
And perchance you could aid me and put mine enemies to flight.

GREED

Your offer does most certainly me entice,
But I have a quest to follow that shall gain a greater price.
For the king I follow is the greatest who has ever been,
And I wish to be by his side when the world he does win.

DARK

What riches does your goodly king command?
Whatever they may be, ever greater shall I put into your hand.

GREED

No riches yet, but I have faith that great shall be his gain,
And I shall be there to lay stake to mine own claim.

DARK

You would turn down riches ready to hold,
For the dream of hoards of promised gold?

GREED

Of the riches you offer I see not a pound,
What makes them more real than those to which I am bound?

DARK

If it is sight and touch that you do understand,
Then draw near and open up your hand.

*(GREED approaches the LADY OF THE DARK and holds out
one hand to her. She opens a pouch and pours out its contents
into GREED's hand: gold coins, jewels, pearls, etc.)*

This is but a fraction of my most precious stores,
Serve me and all I have shall also be yours.
Whose wealth now can be seen to be more real?
When shall your quest such riches reveal?

GREED

These you offer to me,
If your knight I will consent to be?

DARK

You are a knight and deserve for your services to be paid.

GREED

But shall I forsake the king who has a knight of me made?

DARK

And would this king still you attend,
If poverty was to be your end?
If you would, then by all means with your king gladly stay,
And think not of all the worldly goods I offered you this day.

GREED

A knight must keep his promises to be a knight most true,
My quest I shall complete and then gladly will serve you.

DARK

Your quest could take a lifetime and for that I will not wait,
If you do not like my offer, elsewhere I'll direct my gait.
I am certain there are knights to whom I could go,
Who would not, like you, find my payment too low.
Good day, fair knight, may your quest soon succeed.

*(The LADY OF THE DARK holds out her hand for her money
and jewels.)*

My wealth and I do take our leave, for of such you have no need.

GREED

I beg you stay, methinks your offer I did too hastily refuse,
I would not wish your wealthy company to so quickly lose.

DARK

A gallant knight I can see you are,
You would in my services surely go far.
The jewels in your hand with my blessings keep,
With the promise that greater wealth soon you will reap.

GREED

But my king, what should to him I say?
To leave him so quickly after I promised I'd stay?

DARK

Has your king no other knights through whom this quest may yet be won?
Would he not relinquish one to she who yet has none?

GREED

He has other knights indeed, why should not with you I go?
For both our benefit, surely it would be so.

DARK

I would great benefit most surely derive,
And you would never lack for riches for all your mortal life.

GREED

Then let my brother knights this honored quest complete.
Good lady, I count myself fortunate that we did chance to meet.
Lay on, and I will your every cause defend.

DARK

Humbly I thank you, most rich and valued friend.

(The LADY OF THE DARK exits, followed by GREED.)

LIGHT

Gentle king, I fear half your knights have flown,
Leaving you to bear your troubles on your own.
In worldly and transitory things they did place,
The cold and empty shell of their faith.

(GOOD WORKS enters.)

GOOD WORKS

Of all the good works I hoped to have done,
My works thus far do not number one!
So far in my quest I have met not a soul,
And seem no closer to my spiritual goal.

(The LADY OF THE DARK enters, disguised as a medieval bishop.)

Holy father, this is indeed a delight,
I have good news that may you excite.

DARK

My son, on what errand are you bound?
I did not think that any priest would on this road be found.

GOOD WORKS

Holy father, I have embarked upon a great quest,
One that I am certain the Lord above has blessed.
I have met the good King Arthur, who it seems did never die,
And a knight of his Round Table has he made of I.

DARK

You are a member of the church, not meant to fight with steel!
Or do your priestly robes a suit of armor now conceal?

GOOD WORKS

The quest for which we strive is not one of war,
It is the sword Excalibur that we are searching for.
Through the service of this king many good deeds I hope to do,

GOOD WORKS (Continued)

To send my soul to heaven when my earthly days be through.

DARK

You speak at least one word of sense!
For only good works shall send your soul to Providence.
But what goodly acts have you done in the service of this king?
Does knighthood any closer your soul to heaven bring?

GOOD WORKS

I will admit my deeds in this quest have not been great,
But I am certain that not much longer shall I need to wait,
To be given the chance to work great acts of good,
To do the righteous acts my salvation says I should.

DARK

Fie on you! You strays from the straight path!
I urge you to return with me, and perchance escape God's wrath.
Greater works can you do to cleanse your stained heart,
If you leave this heathen quest to play your priestly part.
For if you forsake the good deeds you must complete,
You shall feel the fires of hell's eternal heat.

GOOD WORKS

But if Arthur did return, the whole world would benefits reap,
And I would in turn a mountain of good works heap.

DARK

You forsake your God for this pagan earthly lord,
Not to do good deeds, but to seek a steel sword!
It is clear that you seek naught but worldly gain,
And serve not God above but merely thine own fame.

GOOD WORKS

Holy father, do not with such words chide!

DARK

You have been led astray into the world and wide.
If you do not come with me, then you shall I excommunicate,
And banish you forever into the realm of hate.
Your priestly status I shall from you strip,
And from eternal glory your soul forever rip.

GOOD WORKS

Holy father, I beg your pardon, please!
Chide me, but do not my soul from heaven release!

GOOD WORKS (Continued)

I will your commandments rightly obey,
And follow you upon your way.

DARK

You will King Arthur forsake?

GOOD WORKS

If that is the choice that I must make.
And this quest most willingly leave,
Though that I would deeply grieve.
Yet for such I would not endanger my soul,
When doing goodly deeds for heaven is my goal.

DARK

My son, you have chosen well.
Now let your works your every doubt quell.
For with them you may be content,
Knowing for eternity where your soul shall be sent.

GOOD WORKS

The knowledge of my works does give my heart peace.

DARK

Then put your faith in them and in doing never cease.
Follow me, and I shall guide your every step.

(The LADY OF THE DARK exits.)

GOOD WORKS

Forgive me, Arthur, that my promise I have not kept.
But what else could I do?
Not dwell on works but simply follow you?
You ask one to trust in faith alone,
And that merely in such God's grace shall be shown.
If only I could!
And not need to be so perfectly good!

(GOOD WORKS follows the LADY OF THE DARK and exits.)

LIGHT

To have faith and believe is all that God does ask,
To follow Him your one and only task.
So simple, yet so oft made hard,
By a world that has the faith of children marred.

LIGHT (Continued)

They wonder why the Lord they cannot find,
As they close their eyes, remaining blind.

(The LADY OF THE DARK enters, undisguised.)

DARK

The next shall be the easiest to forever send away,
For of faith he has none, and so did plainly say.

LIGHT

Yet he knows that he does believe not.
He has searched, and shall find, if God he has sought.

(WARRIOR enters.)

WARRIOR

In the name of Arthur, king of Logres, tell me who you are.
I pray you be a friend, for I am weary from travels far.

DARK

Rest, good knight, for the end is close at hand,
The sword you seek does wait within this land.

WARRIOR

Then lead me to it, wherever it may be!
I shall not rest until that sword my eyes plainly see.

DARK

I shall willingly grant your small request.

WARRIOR

Then soon shall end my glorious quest!

DARK

Your quest here does but begin,
You have the chance this sword to win.
But Excalibur cannot be had by simply any man,
He who walks in faith is the only one who can.

WARRIOR

So I have heard it said,
But faith in me, alas, is dead.

DARK

Then turn back, why bother but to try?
Without faith, surely shall you die.

WARRIOR

I have come this far and shall continue on,
Then we shall see if you are right or wrong.

DARK

Then prepare yourself for your greatest test of all.

LIGHT

And may you hear your heavenly call.

WARRIOR

Prepared I am, tell me what must I do,
To prove myself a knight most true.

(The curtain rises to reveal Excalibur resting upon ARTHUR's tomb.)

DARK

Witness and behold!
There lies the sword of gold!
But be forewarned, ere your hands upon the hilt you place,
It can only be had by he who has faith.
If without faith you seek to try,
Then you shall most certainly die.

WARRIOR

I know not how to make such a leap.

DARK

Then touch, and death shall you reap.

WARRIOR

How most cruelly unfair!
To die because this faith I cannot share!

DARK

You need not die, simply walk away,
And leave this quest for another day.

WARRIOR

I have sworn to follow this quest to its end,
Even unto death, if there it should me send.

DARK

Then tarry not, and take the sword,
With death to be your great reward.

WARRIOR

So may I die, but the quest shall succeed,
Of life I have no further need.
Excalibur shall to Arthur go,
And may his kingdom forever grow.

DARK

In vain for Excalibur do you strive,
For you must bring it to your king alive.
Else here it shall remain,
And naught but death shall you gain.

WARRIOR

Then what can be done?
How now shall this quest be won?

DARK

It cannot be accomplished by you.

WARRIOR

Then what is left for me to do?
I who did mine own glory hail,
Have come this far but to fail.
To sit at Arthur's table I have no right,
For I have made a most poor knight.

(WARRIOR kneels before the tomb and gazes upon the sword.)

I have come so close,
To all I have desired most.
And now, my king, I must you leave,
Until the day I can believe.
May some day again we meet,
So I may then our quest complete.

(WARRIOR stands and exits.)

LIGHT

If only you would have tried,
You would surely not have died!
Too soon to dark your spirit yielded,
When you could have Excalibur wielded.

DARK

And now the night grows ever near,
One more, then it shall be here.
His faith here shall soon be bent,
And Arthur shall to sleep be sent.

LIGHT

In victory you revel over much,
For this is one you cannot touch.
This sword shall be his to claim,
For the Lord's and not his gain.

(FAITHFUL enters and sees only Excalibur and the light. He crosses to the tomb and lifts Excalibur.)

FAITHFUL

To you, O Lord, this sword I raise,
And your name forever praise.

LIGHT

The night shall come, but shall not last,
For Arthur's return shall come to pass.

DARK

But so it shall not be today,
For all but one have gone astray.

(The LADY OF THE DARK exits. ARTHUR enters.)

ARTHUR

Well done, good knight, your faith prevailed,
Where all others have tried and failed.

(FAITHFUL kneels before ARTHUR and presents Excalibur to him.)

FAITHFUL

Your sword to you I do return,
By the grace of God did I it earn.

(ARTHUR takes Excalibur from FAITHFUL.)

ARTHUR

O Lord, this sword, what good does it do,
When all my knights have deserted you?
Except you, Faithful, who remain to the end,

ARTHUR (Continued)

May the Lord to you great blessings send.
But I cannot return with my numbers so few,
'Tis not enough for but one to stay true.
And so must I return to sleep,
And for this faithless world weep.

FAITHFUL

Good king, must you go,
And leave me to this world of woe?

ARTHUR

I am sorry, but my short time here is nearly done,
And where I go you may not come.
I must wait for yet another year,
And pray the world to God shall soon draw near.

FAITHFUL

And for that year I'll wait and pray,
A knight most true I vow to stay.

ARTHUR

Then take this sword and guard it well,
Show the world the light that among men dwells.
Yet use it always but to teach,
For force the world shall never reach.

(He offers Excalibur to FAITHFUL.)

FAITHFUL

My lord, this sword to you belongs,
For me to take it would be wrong.

ARTHUR

In my sleep from the world would I it hide,
Better with you on the earth reside.
I entrust to you this holy sword,
A gift to you from our heavenly Lord.

(FAITHFUL takes Excalibur.)

FAITHFUL

With this charge I shall do my best.

ARTHUR

Then you are indeed most truly blessed.
Take care the light to never forsake,
And a worthy guardian you shall make.

LIGHT

King of Logres, now 'tis time,
For sleep to take hold of your mind.
Next year again your choice be made,
May then the world come to thine aid.

ARTHUR

Faithful, to you must I bid good-bye,
Take heed your faith shall never die.

(ARTHUR lies down upon his tomb.)

FAITHFUL

Farewell, my king, and let rest your soul,
Someday the world shall again be whole.

(ARTHUR falls asleep.)

LIGHT

It shall when all are one in light,
And men uphold the just and right.

FAITHFUL

I look forward to that day,
When all shall walk in the one true way.
But that day shant come while ignorance and greed,
With strife and envy water dark's cold seed.
We ask for justice and for honor cry,
But from truth we turn an unseeing eye.
We pray for knights and virtuous kings,
But when these to us the good Lord brings,
We disbelieve and close our hearts,
And wonder why we are besieged with evil's countless darts.
With all its might this world resists God's rightful reign,
And thus we are our one true bane.

(FAITHFUL exits with Excalibur. The lights fade, except for those on ARTHUR and the LADY OF THE LIGHT.)

VOICE

Well done, good king, again this year,
'Tis not your fault so few do hear.
The day shall come to forever rise,
Seen by all the world's eyes.
'Til then this cycle must repeat,
Ere light shall dark forever defeat.
You have your drink this year earned,
To sustain you 'til you may return.

(GALAHAD enters with the cup and they are both surrounded by a holy light.)

GALAHAD

Good king, for but a time are all your trials past.
I pray you shall enjoy your peace, forever it shall not last.
Sent here am I to give you drink, as I have had before,
Drink deep the water from this holy cup, given from the Lord.

(He gives ARTHUR a sip from the cup.)

With this drink your weary life renew,
Think of whence it came in all you say and do.

(GALAHAD again lights the candle.)

A flame burns true throughout the reigning night,
Long may you sleep, but always keep the light.

(GALAHAD exits. The light upon ARTHUR fades so that the stage is lit only by the candle. The LADY OF THE LIGHT is no longer visible on her pillar. Silence.)

VOICE

Here lies the renowned King Arthur, of which many tales sing.
Here he lies in Avalon's isle, the Once and Future King.
Yet there are those who shall not believe,
For them in dreams does this king grieve.
His day does end!
And with it his fellowship we rend,
That noble knights with honor bound.
Here we break the table round!

(There is the sound of a table cracking, like a tremendous clap of thunder.)

Broken the ring that made them one,
And with that this day is done,
Though long his memory shall endure.

Hic iacet, Rex Logrea, quondam resurrexitur.

[Translation: Here he lies, King of Logres, one day to wake again.]

(Silence. ARTHUR sleeps. A light fades up slowly from upstage as the dawn begins to break. It reaches its peak and then begins to slowly fade again, turning a deep red.)

VOICE

Behold! The death of the year!

(The lights fade to black.)

FINIS