

#0 PRELUDE

#1 OVERTURE

ACT I

(A mighty Portcullis occupies the stage which may be used for projections. The Proscenium has two medieval towers either side with an arched doorway and a practical window above.)

SCENE ONE

[The Mighty Portcullis]

(A very sober looking bow-tied HISTORIAN with horn rimmed glasses enters. A map of England appears on the Portcullis with skulls in various places, like a Medieval weather map. If projection is used, this may be animated.)

#1A INTRODUCTION

HISTORIAN

England 932 A.D. A Kingdom divided. To the West, the Anglo-Saxons; to the East, the French. Above, nothing but Celts and some people from Scotland. In Gwynned, Powys, and Dyfed - Plague. In the kingdoms of Wessex, Sussex, and Essex and Kent - Plague. In Mercia and the two Anglias - Plague: with a 50% chance of pestilence and famine coming out of the Northeast at twelve miles per hour. Legend tells of an extraordinary leader who arose from the chaos to unite a troubled kingdom...

(A Terry Gilliam-like cartoon picture of KING ARTHUR projected or revealed)

...A man with a vision who gathered Knights together in a Holy Quest. This man was Arthur, King of the Britons. For this was England!

#2 FISCH SCHLAPPING SONG

(The Portcullis flies away to reveal...)

ROBIN

It's not a question of where he grips it! It's a simple question of weight ratios! A five ounce bird could not carry a one pound coconut.

ARTHUR

Well, it doesn't matter. Will you tell your master that Arthur from the Court of Camelot is here?

ROBIN

Listen, in order to maintain air-speed velocity, a swallow needs to beat its wings 43 times every second, right?

ARTHUR

Please!

ROBIN

Am I right?

ARTHUR

I'm not interested!

(LANCE appears at the opposite window)

LANCE

It could be carried by an African swallow!

ROBIN

Oh, yeah, an African swallow, maybe, but not a European swallow. That's my point.

LANCE

Oh, yeah, I agree with that... Beautiful bird, the African swallow. Lovely plumage.

ROBIN

The plumage don't enter into it. And besides, African swallows are non-migratory.

LANCE

Oh, yeah...

ROBIN

So they couldn't bring a coconut back anyway...

ARTHUR

Will you ask your master if he wants to join my court at Camelot?

LANCE

Wait a minute, supposing two swallows carried it together?

ROBIN

No, they'd have to have it on a line.

LANCE

Well, simple! They'd just use a strand of creeper!

ROBIN

What, held under the dorsal guiding feathers?

(ARTHUR, despairing of any further sensible conversation, gallops off left with PATSY.)

LANCE

Well, why not? Hey! Who was that then?

ROBIN

That's a king.

LANCE

How can you tell?

ROBIN

He hasn't got shit all over him.

SCENE FIVE

[Mud Village]

(ARTHUR rides in with PATSY. DENNIS GALAHAD enters behind a small traveling mound of mud. He has a trowel and is mining for mud.)

ARTHUR

Over! Old woman!

DENNIS

Man!

ARTHUR

Man, sorry. What knight lives in that castle over there?

DENNIS

I'm twenty seven.

ARTHUR

What?

DENNIS

I'm not old!

ARTHUR

Well, I can't just call you 'Man.'

DENNIS

Well, you could say 'Dennis.'

ARTHUR

Well, I didn't know you were called 'Dennis.'

DENNIS

Well, you didn't bother to find out, did you?

ARTHUR

Look...I did say I was sorry about the 'old woman' thing, but really, from behind you do look like...

DENNIS

What I object to is that you automatically treat me like an inferior!

ARTHUR

Well, I *am* king...

DENNIS

Oh, king, eh, very nice. And how'd you get that, eh? By exploiting the workers. By hanging on to outdated imperialist dogma which perpetuates the economic and social differences in our society! If there's ever going to be any progress...

MOTHER

Dennis, there's a lot of good mud over there. Oh how d'you do?

ARTHUR

How do you do, good lady.

MOTHER

How d'you do. I'm Mrs. Galahad, widowed mother of Dennis, married to Nobby the Cretin, dropped dead last Tuesday, which does leave me sadly available.

ARTHUR

I am Arthur, King of the Britons.

MOTHER

King of the who?

ARTHUR

The Britons.

MOTHER

Who are the Britons?

ARTHUR

Well, we all are. We are all Britons and I am your king.

MOTHER

I didn't know we had a king. I thought we were an autonomous collective.

DENNIS

You're fooling yourself. We're living in a dictatorship. A self-perpetuating autocracy in which the working classes...

MOTHER

Oh, there you go, bringing class into it again.

DENNIS

That's what it's all about. If only people would...

ARTHUR

Please, please good people. I am in haste. Who is your lord?

MOTHER

We don't have a lord.

DENNIS

We're an anarcho-syndicalist commune. We take it in turns to act as a sort of an executive officer for the week...

ARTHUR

Yes.

DENNIS

...but each decision of that officer has to be ratified at a special biweekly meeting...

ARTHUR

Yes, I see.

DENNIS

...by a simple majority in the case of purely internal affairs...

ARTHUR

Be quiet!

DENNIS

...but by a two-thirds majority in the case of more...

ARTHUR

Be quiet! I order you to be quiet!

MOTHER

Oh! Order, eh? Who does he think he is?

ARTHUR

I am your king!

MOTHER

Well, I didn't vote for you.

ARTHUR

You don't vote for kings.

#6 THE LADY OF THE LAKE

SCENE ELEVEN

[The French Castle]

(KING ARTHUR and his KNIGHTS arrive at the foot of the castle, and dismount.)

ARTHUR

Halt! Hello! Hello!

(The TAUNTER, a silly mustachioed Frenchman, appears in the battlements of the castle.)

TAUNTER

'Allo! Who is it?

ARTHUR

It is King Arthur, and these are my Knights of the Round Table. Whose castle is this?

TAUNTER

This is the castle of my master, Guy de Loimbard! The French bastard.

ARTHUR

Go and tell your master that we have been charged by God with a sacred quest. If he will give us food and shelter for the night he may join us on our quest for the Holy Grail.

TAUNTER

Well, I'll ask him, but I don't think he'll be very keen. He's already got one, you see?

ARTHUR

What?

GALAHAD

He says they've already got one!

ARTHUR

Are you sure he's got one?

TAUNTER

Oh, yes, it's very nice.

(Aside)

Hey! I told him we already got one!

(The FRENCH GUARDS titter in mirth. We see only their helmets nodding in glee.)

GUARDS

Tee hee.

ARTHUR

Well, can we come in and have a look?

TAUNTER

Of course not! You are English bed-wetting types!

ARTHUR

Well, what are you then?

TAUNTER

I'm French! Why do you think I have this outrageous accent, you silly king?

ARTHUR

If you will not show us the Grail, we shall take this castle by force!

TAUNTER

You don't frighten us, English pig-dogs! Go and boil your bottoms, sons of a silly person. I blow my nose at you, so-called Arthur-king, you and all your silly English knnnniggets.

ARTHUR

Now look here my good man!

TAUNTER

I don't want to talk to you no more you empty-headed, animal-food-trough wipers!... I fart in your general direction! Your mother was a hamster and your father smelt of elderberries! Now go away or I shall taunt you a second time.

GALAHAD

Is there someone else we could talk to?

TAUNTER

Hey, no chance, son of a window-dresser! I wave my private parts at your aunties, you tiny-brained wipers of other people's bottoms!

SCENE EIGHT

[Prince Herbert's Chamber in Swamp Castle]

(The Prince's Chamber is on the bridge above the Gateway, with a large window with rather gay curtains. A very pasty-faced PRINCE HERBERT, holding a bow from whence he has just fired the arrow into CONCORDE, sings earnestly.)

#22 WHERE ARE YOU?

HERBERT

WHERE ARE YOU?
WHERE ARE YOU?
WHERE ARE YOU, MY HEART'S DESIRE?
MY HEART IS TRUE
BUT WHERE ARE YOU?
ONLY YOU CAN QUENCH THE FIRE
WHERE ARE YOU?
WHERE ARE YOU?

(FATHER enters through the Gateway in haste and stops the orchestra playing.)

FATHER

Stop that! Stop all that singing.

(Mounts the stairs at high speed)

Listen, lad, one day all this will be yours!

HERBERT

What, the curtains?

FATHER

No, not the curtains! All that you can see! Stretched out over the hills and valleys of this land! This will be your kingdom!

HERBERT

But, Mother..

FATHER

Father.

#22A WHERE ARE YOU? #2

HERBERT

Father, I don't want any of that. I'd rather...

FATHER

Rather what?!

HERBERT

I'd rather... just.....sing!

(Sings)

WHERE ARE YOU?

WHERE ARE YOU...

FATHER

Stop that! You're not going to do a song while I'm here. In twenty minutes you're getting married to a girl whose father owns the biggest tracts of open land in Britain.

HERBERT

But I don't want land.

FATHER

Listen, Alice...

HERBERT

Herbert.

FATHER

Herbert. We live in a bloody swamp. We need land.

HERBERT

But I don't like her.

#22B WHERE ARE YOU? #3

FATHER

Don't like her?! What's wrong with her? She's beautiful, she's rich, she's got huge... tracts of land.

HERBERT

I know, but I want the person I marry to have... a certain... special... something...

(Sings)