

(GUENEVERE)

WHERE ARE THE SIMPLE JOYS OF MAIDENHOOD?
WHERE ARE ALL THOSE ADORING, DARING BOYS?
WHERE'S THE KNIGHT PINING SO FOR ME
HE LEAPS TO DEATH IN WOE FOR ME?
OH, WHERE ARE A MAIDEN'S SIMPLE JOYS?

SHAN'T I HAVE THE NORMAL LIFE A MAIDEN SHOULD?
SHALL I NEVER BE RESCUED IN THE WOOD?
SHALL TWO KNIGHTS NEVER TILT FOR ME
AND LET THEIR BLOOD BE SPILT FOR ME?
OH, WHERE ARE THE SIMPLE JOYS OF MAIDENHOOD?

SHALL I NOT BE ON A PEDESTAL,
WORSHIPPED AND COMPETED FOR?
NOT BE CARRIED OFF, OR BETTER STILL
CAUSE A LITTLE WAR?

WHERE ARE THE SIMPLE JOYS OF MAIDENHOOD?
ARE THOSE SWEET, GENTLE PLEASURES GONE FOR GOOD?
SHALL A FEUD NOT BEGIN FOR ME?
SHALL KITH NOT KILL THEIR KIN FOR ME?
OH, WHERE ARE THE TRIVIAL JOYS...?
HARMLESS, CONVIVIAL JOYS...?
WHERE ARE THE SIMPLE JOYS OF MAIDENHOOD?

(ARTHUR drops to the floor. GUENEVERE, startled out of her wits, starts to run)

**Start
Here**

ARTHUR

A thousand pardons, Milady. Wait! Don't run.
(SHE stops in the corner of the stage and looks at him coweringly)
Please! I won't harm you.

GUENEVERE

You lie! You'll leap at me and throw me to the ground.

ARTHUR

(Amazed, protesting)
I won't do any such thing.
(HE takes a step toward her. SHE takes a step backwards. HE stops)

GUENEVERE

Then you'll twist my arm and tie me to a tree.

ARTHUR

But I won't.

GUENEVERE

Then you'll sling me over your shoulder and carry me off.

ARTHUR

No, no, no! I swear it! By the Sword Excalibur! I swear I won't touch you.

GUENEVERE

(Hurt)

Why not?

(Sudden rage)

How dare you insult me in this fashion. Do my looks repel you?

ARTHUR

No. You're beautiful.

GUENEVERE

Well, then? We're alone. I'm completely defenseless. What kind of a cad are you?
Apologize at once.

ARTHUR

(At once)

I apologize. I'm not certain what I've done, but from the depths of my heart, I
apologize.

GUENEVERE

(With sudden wisdom)

Ah! I think I know. You heard me praying.

ARTHUR

I couldn't help it, Milady. You prayed rather loudly.

GUENEVERE

And you know who I am.

ARTHUR

You're Guenevere.

GUENEVERE

Yes, of course. You're afraid because I may be your queen. That accounts for your
respectful, polite, despicable behavior.

End
Here

ARTHUR

Milady, I would never harm you for any reason. And as for what to do with you, I'm at a loss. I know you are to be queen and I should escort you back to your carriage. At the same time, you're a maiden in genuine distress. It's chivalry versus country. I can't quite determine which call to obey.

GUENEVERE

(Looking off toward the foot of the hill)

You'd better decide quickly. They'll soon reach the carriage and discover I'm gone. Then all of Camelot will be searching for me. At least that will be exciting. Unless of course everyone in Camelot is like you and they all go home to deliberate.

ARTHUR

(Thrown off balance, enamoured, captivated and overcome by a great sense of inadequacy)

Oh why isn't Merlyn here! He usually senses when I need him and appears. Why does he fail me now?

GUENEVERE

Who?

ARTHUR

Merlyn. My teacher. He would know immediately what to do. I'm not accomplished at thinking, so I have Merlyn do it for me. He's the wisest man alive. He lives backwards.

GUENEVERE

I beg your pardon?

ARTHUR

He lives backwards. He doesn't age. He youthens. He can remember the future so he can tell you what you'll be doing in it. Do you understand?

(SHE comes towards him. HE never takes his eyes off her, as the wonder of her comes nearer)

GUENEVERE

(Now at ease)

Of course I don't understand. But if you mean he's some sort of fortune-teller, I'd give a year in Paradise to know mine. I can never return to my own castle, and I absolutely refuse to go on to that one.

ARTHUR

You refuse to go on—ever?

GUENEVERE

Ever. My only choice is... Don't stare. It's rude. Who are you?

(ARTHUR)

Who's there? Who's there? Come out, I say!

(A YOUNG BOY, about 14, appears from behind the tent)

TOM

(Coming forward)

Forgive me, Your Majesty. I was searching for the Sergeant of Arms and got lost. I didn't wish to disturb you.

ARTHUR

Who are you, boy? Where did you come from? You ought to be in bed. Are you a page?

TOM

I stowed away on one of the boats, Your Majesty. I came to fight for the Round Table. I'm very good with the bow.

ARTHUR

And do you think you will kill people with this bow of yours?

TOM

Oh, yes, Milord. A great many, I hope.

ARTHUR

Suppose they kill you?

TOM

Then I shall be dead, Milord. But I don't intend to be dead. I intend to be a knight.

ARTHUR

(Caught)

A knight

TOM

Yes, Milord. Of the Round Table.

ARTHUR

When did you decide upon this non-existent career of yours? Was your village protected by knights when you were a small boy? Was your mother saved by a knight? Did your father serve a knight?

TOM

Oh no, Milord. I had never seen a knight until I stowed away. I only know of them. The stories people tell.

ARTHUR

From the stories people tell you wish to be a knight?

(HE finds this hard to believe)

(ARTHUR)

What do you think you know of the knights and the Round Table?

TOM

I know everything, Milord. Might for right! Right for right! Justice for all! A Round Table where all Knights would sit. Everything.

(ARTHUR walks away in thought. Then turns to the BOY with a strange inner excitement)

ARTHUR

Come here, my boy. Tell me your name.

TOM

It is Tom, Milord.

ARTHUR

Where is your home?

TOM

In Warwick, Milord.

ARTHUR

Then listen to me, Tom of Warwick. You will not fight in the battle, do you hear?

TOM

Yes, Milord.

ARTHUR

You will run behind the lines and hide in a tent till it is over. Then you will return to your home in England. Active. To grow up and grow old. Do you understand?

TOM

(Disappointed)

Yes, Milord.

ARTHUR

And for as long as you live you will remember what I, the King, tell you; and you will do as I command.

TOM

(No longer disappointed)

Yes, Milord.

did he not give coun-sel and say... — What was it now? My mind's a

Fl.
Vc. *espr.*
Br. *pp*

wall. Oh, yes! By jove, now I re - call:

Vi. Solo

[57]

Moderato

Start
Here

How to han - dle a wom - an? There's a way, said the wise old

Str. *pp*
Harp., Hp.

man; A way known by ev - 'ry wom - an Since the

+Cls.

65

whole rig - 'ma - role be - gan. Do I flat - ter her? I begged him

+E.H., Gtr.

Hp.

an - swer. Do I threat - en or ca - jole or plead? Do I

+Hn.

brood or play the gay ro - manc - er? Said he, smil - ing: No in -

+Bs, Cl.

73

deed. How to han - dle a wom - an? Mark me

Str.

Fl.

Tbns.

pp Hns., Hp.

(Hn.1)

well, I will tell you, Sir: The way to han - dle a

Str.

79

wom - an Is to love her... simp - ly

E.H.

Cl. Lute Hp.

love her... Mere - ly love her...

(E.H.)

Br. Fl. Cls. Lute Hp.

pp

love her... love her.

He

Vl. Solo

ten.

End Here