

星期日英语

1985·2

ENGLISH ON SUNDAY

中央电视台电视教育节目用书

中央电视台电视教育部编

中国广播电视出版社出版



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星 期 十

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85—2 (总21)

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(总第21期)

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中国广播电视出版社出版

外文印刷厂印刷

新华书店北京发行所发行

1985年6月第1版 1985年6月第1次印刷

787×1092毫米 16开 印张 3.75 字数896(千)字 印数1—16,000册

统一书号: 9236·050 定价: 0.66元

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PART I

This part of the magazine contains the scripts to some of our English on Sunday programmes, including drama serials, documentaries, feature films and also Forum, our monthly interview show.

The scripts are annotated, but instead of giving literal translations of difficult phrases and sentences, only a general explanation of the concepts underlying them will be rendered so that viewers can work out for themselves the actual meaning of words concerned. The scripts are followed by questions to test how well you have understood the content of the programmes; answers to these will be provided in each subsequent issue.

THE LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR

Episode One

(In Gorlois' Court)

BARD: Then the young king spoke, a novice in battle:

This light is not the light of dawn; no fiery dragon flies overhead.

The gables of this hall are not lit up with licking flames;

But men draw near with shining weapons. The birds of battle screech.

The grey wolf howls, the spear rattles.

Shield answers shaft. The pale moon wanders on her way below the clouds, gleaming;

Evil deeds will now be done, provoking pitched battle.

Wake up now, my warriors! 'Step forward and be brave!'

UTHER: Corlois of Cornwall!

GORLOIS: My Lord.

UTHER: Are you my loyal duke?

GORLOIS: Indeed, my Lord, I hope I am.

UTHER: Indeed I know you are. No man has fought more bravely to drive the Saxons from my lands. He gives me cattle; he gives me men; he gives me his strong arm in the fight. He entertains me at his table; nothing's too much for him. And yet, I think he keeps from me something that I would have!

GORLOIS: Indeed, my Lord, I do not.

UTHER: Indeed, my Lord, you do! I want a Queen, Gorlois. I want a queen to bear my sons.

GORLOIS: That would be a great joy and honour for any lady.

UTHER: Yes, it would. I want your wife, Gorlois. The Lady Igrayne shall be my queen.

GORLOIS: You shall not have her, Uther.

UTHER: Shall not! Am I not King of Britain? What does the lady say?

IGRAYNE: My Lord, I love my husband. What you ask . . . it cannot be right. I beg you . . . take some other lady and let us live in peace.

UTHER: A good woman. She has moved my heart. Live with her in peace . . . for one month. Then send her to me, for I will have her; if you do not, however strong you make this castle, I will have you out of it and roast you like a badger.

*

*

*

(In Igragne's chamber)

MORGAN: I want my father. When will he come?

IGRAYNE: Tomorrow, please God.²

MORGAN: When he's killed Uther?

MIDWIFE: Ssh. Be quiet, child.

MORGAN: You think Uther will beat father, don't you . . . You think father's going to die? You think he's going to die, and you just sit here! You just sit here and sew!

IGRAYNE: Well, what would you have me do? I am a woman. They do what they like with us.

MORGAN: Father will kill Uther Pendragon! He will kill him and make you feel shame for what you're thinking!

IGRAYNE: Morgan!

* * *

(In the Hall)

MORGAN: Thunder, kill Uther. Open the ground under his horse. Lightning, strike him. Split him and smash him up. Storm, kill Uther, keep my father safe. Storm, kill Uther, keep my father safe. Storm, kill Uther, keep my father safe.

MERLIN: The little pussycat. I should have known.

MORGAN: Who are you?

MERLIN: They call me Merlin. Don't you know me?

MORGAN: You're Uther's wizard. How did you get here?

MERLIN: I am my own man. I belong to no one, and I come and go as I please, little pussycat.

MORGAN: Don't call me that. I am Morgan, the Duke's daughter, and I can have you flogged and turned out of doors.

MERLIN: Now that would be unkind, since it was you who brought me here.

MORGAN: I did not.

MERLIN: You have the gift, but not the knowledge of the gift. You see a glimpse of the forbidden things, but only a glimpse. You put your little spell into the wind, and I plucked it out, but I didn't know who it was till I got here. We are two of a kind³, you and I.

MORGAN: You're none of my kin.⁴ Storm, kill Uther. Storm, kill Merlin, too.

MERLIN: One day, Morgan, you will be great, perhaps even greater than I, but not yet . . . not yet. As to your father, he is on the wheel of fate.⁵ Nothing can stop it turning now. Your little spell flutters against it like a sparrow. Not even I, Merlin, can stop it now!

MORGAN: Storm, kill Uther, Kill him! Kill him!

* * *

(In Igrayne's chamber)

MORGAN: Wake up . . . wake up.

IGRAYNE: Well, what is it?

MORGAN: It's father! He's come back! He's killed Uther!

IGRAYNE: Wait!

MORGAN: Father! Father!

UTHER: Sad news, Igrayne. Your man is dead.

You need feel no shame. He was a brave knight; he fought well. He slew Garans and Gwynas de Bloye, before it was his fate to meet me. Why do you weep? Gorlois will sit on a high bench among the dead heroes, and no one will speak a word against him at Uther's court. My minstrels will make a new song: your man shall be remembered as a great and gallant knight and you shall be a queen, and your daughters will marry kings. Yes, even that little bundle there with a face like a kitchen cat! Would you like to be a queen and marry a king like your mother? Eh . . . what . . . !

MORGAN: You killed my father! I'll kill you!

UTHER: What little wild beasts you breed here in Cornwall? . . . Eh . . . what?

MORGAN: Dirty cruel murderer! Kill you!

UTHER: Peace, little wildcat! . . . Peace . . . Now, madam. I have come for you. Will you be my queen and bear my sons?

IGRAYNE: And what if I refuse? I have no choice; you've killed my husband; you can take me whether I will or not.

UTHER: But I would have you love me, Igrayne.

IGRAYNE: Love you? How could I love you? You can't demand that of me.

UTHER: Then you shall learn it, through obedience, as my mare and bitches love me. And through my love of you.

IGRAYNE: No.

UTHER: It was for love of you I fought my friend. I would not have had it so. It was for love of you, Igrayne.

IGRAYNE: You call that love?

UTHER: Four hundred men died for it. That's a great love, lady. Now, will you take my hand, or will you bite it to the bone, like that little bundle there? . . . Come lady. I'm waiting to show my followers what they've fought for. Come.

IGRAYNE: Will you leave me no time to mourn?

UTHER: Mourn? You are a queen! Come!

IGRAYNE: But I'm not dressed, my lord.

UTHER: I came for a woman, not a bundle of clothes. Now come.

MORGAN: Death to King Uther!¹⁶

* * *

(Some time has passed; Igrayne is now married to Uther. In the castle)

MORGAN: Berries be Uther's body.

MERLIN: Morgan le Fay. Not with your playmates?

MORGAN: I haven't any playmates. I played with my father.

MERLIN: But times have changed, the wheel has turned.⁷ Your mother is now a queen; your sister married to King Lot of Orkney. Now what are we to do with little Morgan? Who shall she wed?

MORGAN: I'll never wed. I want to be a wise woman.

MERLIN: Would you be a nun, then?

MORGAN: No. Like you.

MERLIN: The study is long, and brings little happiness. Few have the gift or the desire. But you, perhaps . . . I have never had a pupil.

MORGAN: Are these things of your knowledge?

MERLIN: Yes.

MORGAN: Show me. Teach me. Teach me to read them.

MERLIN: Those who deal in the secret knowledge must use it only for good. Do you understand, then? Those who use it for evil . . . evil shall befall them too. This knowledge is not a game. It is a great power. You must promise me. Always for good.

MORGAN: I promise. Always for good.

MERLIN: Then come, little Morgan.

* * *

(In Igrayne's chamber)

MORGAN: Mother! What are you doing with my mother?

WOMAN: No, child, you cannot see your mother now.

MORGAN: Why not, what's the matter?

WOMAN: Run away and play, child, your mother, . . . your mother has work to do.

MORGAN: Work? What work? Is she ill?

WOMAN: Aye, but it is a happy illness. Run along now, this is no business for little girls.

MORGAN: It's . . . It's not me. I didn't make my mother ill.

WOMAN: No, child, I know that well enough. It was King Uther who brought this on her. Run along now . . . run along and don't fret yourself, child, she'll be well enough by night.

UTHER: Ah! The little Morgan! Come here, come nearer. See, I have no company. Here. Eat that. Keep your father company.

MORGAN: Why can't I see my mother?

UTHER: Woman's doings; children and men must stay away. Even kings! Even kings! They shoo us out like little dogs. We must howl here together until they let us in nothing else for it.

MORGAN: You made my mother ill.

UTHER: Who says I made her ill?

MORGAN: Her woman says it.

UTHER: Huh . . . I only did for her what any man would do for his lady.

MORGAN: Did you beat her?

UTHER: (*laughing*) Beat her! . . . No, she bears my child.

(*Uther chokes over a bird's bone and dies*)

MERLIN: Now that Uther Pendragon is dead, no one is safe in this castle.

IGRAYNE: Not even you, Merlin?

MERLIN: My safety depends on no man's favour or friendship. But Uther died before his time. The greatest warrior in the land to die choking over a bird's bone . . . Now who could have expected that? Mm . . .? He was king in a bad time, but a worse will follow.⁸ They'll tear his kingdom apart like wolves. None of his kin is safe.

MORGAN: I'm not his kin.

MERLIN: Quiet, little witch. You lived in the shelter of his sword: He loved you like a daughter.

MORGAN: He killed my father.

MERLIN: Now many would like to kill you. Queen Igrayne, you must go at once to your daughter Margawse. You will be safe from Uther's enemies in Orkney.

IGRAYNE: And my children? Will they go too?

MERLIN: No. You must go alone, and the girl will go with these good sisters, to their convent. The boy stays with me.

MORGAN: Why him? Why do you take him and not me?

MERLIN: Madam, you must hurry, there is little time. Morgan, Morgan, come and look at your little brother. The next time you see him, he'll be the king of all Britain. Greater than ever Uther Pendragon was. Now, you see why I must take him to a safe place where he may grow up in peace. Kiss him goodbye.

MORGAN: I killed your father, and one day, little Arthur . . . one day, I'll kill you.

MERLIN: Now kiss your mother, and go with these good sisters to their convent.

* * *

(*Arthur, now a grown boy, plays with his father and brother*)

SIR ECTOR: Now Arthur, go to it . . .

KAY: Ha, ha, . . . Let me rise . . .

SIR ECTOR: You should give Arthur your spurs,⁹ Kay . . .

KAY: I lost my footing.¹⁰

SIR ECTOR: Oh . . . The knight that lost his footing.

ARTHUE: No, Father, he's right; he did . . .

KAY: Now give me best.¹¹

ARTHUE: I do, I do . . .

SIR ECTOR: Embrace your brother, Kay. Aye, you're a pair of fine lads, and I wouldn't chose between the two of you. The Master will be well pleased.

ARTHUE: What master do you mean, Father? What master do you mean?

SIR ECTOR: I cannot name him to you now. But I think the time is coming near . . .
I think it is. Now, Kay, I have in mind to take you to the great Congregation of Knights¹² that's called in Canterbury. D'you think you're ready to take your place with the best in the land?¹³

KAY: I think so, Father.

SIR ECTOR: And you too . . . you too, Arthur. Will you ride with him as his squire?

ARTHUR: Gladly, sir.

(On the way to Canterbury)

SIR ECTOR: Defend another's life before your own. Honour's hardly won but swiftly lost.¹⁴ Be cheerful in discourse, modest in argument and never—mark me, Kay—never stand between a knight and his lady. And be courteous to those who would provoke you.

KAY: Yes, father.

SIR ECTOR: Remember that you are young and all yet to prove yourself.

KAY: I will. Father, my sword!

SIR ECTOR: What's that?

KAY: I left it in our tent.

ARTHUR: I'll run back and get it for you.

SIR ECTOR: You won't have time—we're late as it is. You must go without, Kay. I'll lend you mine when the time comes. We'll pay our respects to God and then join the others at the tournament.

KAY: But I won't have a sword to be blessed at the ceremony!

* * *

(On arrival at the Cathedral, they enter the grounds. Arthur sees a large stone with a sword in it. He draws the sword out)

ARTHUR: Father! Kay! Will this one serve?

SIR ECTOR: Put the sword back.

ARTHUR: What is it? Have I done wrong?

SIR ECTOR: Put the sword back in the stone. Draw it out, Kay. *(Kay cannot draw it out)* Then it is true.

KAY: What trick is this?

(Kay tries again but fails)

SIR ECTOR: Pull out the sword again, Arthur.

(Arthur pulls it out)

ARTHUR: Father? What are you doing? Why do you kneel to me?

SIR ECTOR: Because, Arthur, I know from this that you are the trueborn king of this land.

ARTHUR: King? But why me? Why not my brother?

SIR ECTOR: Kay is not your brother, nor I your father. Merlin brought you to me as

a baby. He is the master I spoke of. He charged me to¹⁵ bring you up as my own son. Now my task is over.

ARTHUR: But . . . what am I to do now?

SIR ECTOR: My Lord, you are my king. It is not for me to tell you what to do.

ARTHUR: Then . . . rise, Sir Ector. Rise, Sir Kay. Good sir, you have been a father to me as long as I can remember. Stay with me now, and you, Kay. I . . . I don't know how to be a king. But I'll try.

SIR ECTOR: Come then, let us go to Merlin, for the Knights and Barons must see their King.

(They enter the Cathedral)

MERLIN: King Accolon of Gaul, my Lord of Orkney and Lothian of Gwynedd and Powis, and all you knights and barons here this day: I show you now your true and rightful king. No other man but he could draw this sacred sword from the stone. You know this, for you have all tried. Now therefore kneel and swear allegiance to King Arthur.

LOT: Wait, Merlin. We have won and held our lands in battle. Do you expect us now to kneel to a baseborn boy¹⁶ who does tricks with a sword?

MERLIN: He is no baseborn boy but higher born than any of you. The true and only son of Uther Pendragon himself! . . . I was present at his birth, and I have watched over his growing. He has been blessed by the dwellers in Avalon, and his kingdom shall be greater than any of you have ever known.

ACCOLON: Enough, Merlin. Can your great king speak for himself, or are we to kneel to a puppet?

MERLIN: Speak! The words will come.

ARTHUR: My lords, you have dreamed of a time when Britain will be strong again, a time of peace and plenty,¹⁷ when the weak will be protected from the strong, and the good from the evil. I pledge to you that I have come to you to make this dream into living truth. My kingdom shall be a blessed land; for a space of years this land shall be God's kingdom on earth, until the darkness falls again . . . Now kneel to your King!

LOT: Fools! You've been tricked by a child and a dream-reader! Boy! You want my land; come seek them with the sword!

MERLIN: You have done well.

ARTHUR: Merlin, I've done nothing yet. How am I to stand against the kings of Orkney and Gwynedd?

MERLIN: And Accolon of Gaul. He will oppose you too. Have courage, Arthur. When you needed to speak, didn't you find the words?

ARTHUR: Yes, I did.

MERLIN: And now it's time for you to take your own sword. It was forged for you in Avalon; its name is Excalibur, and no man can stand against its stroke. And when you wear its scabbard, you are protected from any mortal wound. It was made for you

alone, and you must use it always in a good cause.

ARTHUR: Where is it, Merlin? Can I see it?

MERLIN: It is many miles from here. Tomorrow morning, get up very early, and let no one see you. And go with me to seek it.

(The next morning, Merlin takes Arthur to a lake near Avalon)

MERLIN: Go down to the lake, King Arthur. Take your sword.

ARTHUR: But there's nothing there.

MERLIN: Take Excalibur and fear no man in battle... Go down to the lake.

* * *

Notes

1. he gives me his strong arm in the fight: 他为我而战
2. please God = I hope
3. We are two of a kind: 我们是一样的人(指都可以做巫师)。
4. You're none of my kin: 我们不一样(不是同一血统的人)。
5. on the wheel of fate: 气数尽了, 在劫难逃
6. Death to King Uther: 巫瑟王必死。
7. the wheel has turned: 时过境迁
8. a worse will follow = a worse time will follow
9. You should give Arthur your spurs: 你输给亚瑟了。
10. I lost my footing: 我滑了一下。
11. give me best: 认输了吧
12. the great Congregation of Knights: 骑士大会
13. to take your place with the best in the land: 和全国的英豪们为伍
14. Honour's hardly won but swiftly lost: 要珍惜荣誉(荣誉得之不易, 丢之却易)
15. He charged me to: 他委托我……
16. a baseborn boy: 出身卑微的孩子
17. a time of peace and plenty: 安居乐业的时期

(黄建华 注释)

Questions

1. Why does Morgan want to be Merlin's pupil?
2. How does Sir Ector come to realize that Arthur is the true-born king of the land? Why do Accolon and Lot refuse to acknowledge him as King at the Congregation of Knights?

(Answers to these questions will be given in the next issue.)

* * *

THE LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR

Episode Two

(Soldiers march triumphantly into Camelot)

VOICES: Arthur! Arthur! Arthur!

* * *

(At Morgan's lodge)

MERLIN: Morgan le Fay. Little Morgan. D'you remember me?

MORGAN: I think of you often, Merlin. My first teacher.

MERLIN: I sought you in the convent, Morgan. The sisters told me you had left them years ago. Where have you been?

MORGAN: Where should I be? Going to and fro in the world, walking up and down in it. It seems I have some gift for healing. And how goes it with you? ¹

MERLIN: Oh, I'm old, Morgan. Weary of the world. Gummy eyes, stiff joints, bad memory, troubled sleep. ² Strange. You know, once I could read your thoughts in your face. Not now. You would be welcome at court. The King often speaks of the holy sister he never met.

MORGAN: I wonder he has the time. So busy killing, like his father.

MERLIN: Ah, there was a glimpse of my little pussycat. No, Morgan; the wars are over. All the Lords of the Isles have submitted to King Arthur. The time I promised has come. All Britain at peace under one true king.

MORGAN: My brother. How proud I should be. Winning his battles with his invincible sword. ³

MERLIN: Truly, Morgan, he may have need of you when I am gone. Strange creatures like you and me, we have ways of knowing that are closed even to the greatest kings. ⁴

MORGAN: When I was a child, I had certain dreams. But now, you must know, I serve only God.

MERLIN: Oh, yes, quite, quite.

* * *

(In Arthur's Court)

LOT: I stand here, before all the knights assembled, to make my vows of allegiance to King Arthur. I do this with a free heart. Sir, my lands and men are yours to command. Our wars are over.

ARTHUR: Then I take you at your word, ⁵ and gladly, too. Hold your lands for me, Lot

of Orkney, as once you held them against me. King Bors of Gaunes, and Lancelot your kinsman. These two have proved themselves the noblest and bravest knights alive, and they shall be first among equals in my court.* Accolon of Gaul.

ACCOLON: What would you do with me, Arthur?

ARTHUR: Do with you? Why, just ask your allegiance, forget our quarrel, and welcome you to my court.

ACCOLON: Arthur, I will not kneel to you. You have stolen my lands and killed my brothers. My knights are either dead or forced into your service. How could I kneel to you after what you've done?

MERLIN: It seems that your hot head has little space for memory, Accolon. Those lands and knights belonged to Uther Pendragon. You stole them at his death; now his son takes back what is his by right.

ACCOLON: They were mine! They are mine! Am I to fawn upon a tyrant here?†

ARTHUR: Accolon, you fought a fair battle with me.

ACCOLON: Fair battle?

ARTHUR: And a brave one. I am deeply sorry that your brothers died. I don't ask you to fawn on me. I offer you my friendship and protection, and a high place at my table.

ACCOLON: The table of a man who goes to war with spells and magic swords? I have seen great kings today, grovelling before this conjurer's apprentice, yelping for seraphs‡ from his table.

LOT: Put him to the sword!§

VOICES: Aye!

(Lot looks at Arthur)

LOT: Your father would have done so long before now.

ARTHUR: But I am not my father. This is a holy day, and I shall not soil it with the blood of any man. Accolon, I spoke of mercy, and I mean to use it. You may leave this court, and no man here shall harm you. Go, live in my lands or another's. I hope you may change your heart and come to me again in friendship. You will be welcome — as you will be if you come again as foe, prepared for combat.

* * *

(In the antechamber)

ARTHUR: Did I do right, Merlin? From what you've told me of my father, he would have cut down Accolon where he stood, and thrown his body to the dogs.

MERLIN: Your father was a king for the dark times. Arthur, a new age needs a new king.

ARTHUR: But what kind of king? A conjuror's apprentice with a magic sword?

MERLIN: Britain could do worse.

ARTHUR: Merlin, I set Accolon free because I felt sorry for him. Did I do right?

MERLIN: You did a noble and a merciful thing with Accolon, Arthur, and you put your-

self in peril by it. Accolon will come again.

ARTHUR: Then I must be ready for him . . . Oh, Merlin, is this the kind of king I have to be? Always ready to fight?

MERLIN: Sometimes the only way to root out evil is with the sword.

ARTHUR: Is that the only way to settle disagreements? I know my knights, — loyal friends though they are — jostle and argue for a high place at my table. Is this the way things always have to be?

MERLIN: I've heard that in past ages, great kings sat on the floor, in a circle.

ARTHUR: A circle! Why yes, that's it, we shall have a round table! Then no man will be above his neighbour. Oh Merlin, you are wise and a good teacher. Now Merlin, teach me again, for I mean to take a wife.

MERLIN: A great king must shoulder heavy burdens for his country's sake.

ARTHUR: I think of this as a joy, not as a burden.

MERLIN: One might guess that you have already seen the lady of your choice.

ARTHUR: I think I have, though I have never spoken with her. But when I saw her, it was as if. She is the daughter of King Leodograunce of Camelarde. D'you know her, Merlin?

MERLIN: His eldest daughter. Her name is Guinevere.

ARTHUR: Guinevere. I find her very beautiful.

MERLIN: Very beautiful. Yes, alas, she is. Will you not let me pick out some fat Welsh ewe from the hill country,¹⁰ with a plain face and broad hips? Never a cross word and will bear you a dozen fine sons.¹¹

ARTHUR: Now I have seen Guinevere, I can think of no other lady.

MERLIN: Then, of course, you must have her; and all the joy and sorrow she brings with her.

ARTHUR: What sorrow? What sorrow, Merlin?

(In the antechamber)

ARTHUR: Lancelot! . . . Guinevere. Guinevere of Camelarde. Queen Guinevere . . .

LANCELOT: My lord.

ARTHUR: Lancelot. I have a task for you. A task I'd give to no one else.

LANCELOT: You ask and it's done. Whatever the danger.

ARTHUR: There's no danger! There's no danger! You'll enjoy it! Come, walk with me, I'll tell you what you are to do.

* * *

(In Leodograunce's Castle)

LEODOGRAUNCE: Guinevere.

GUINEVERE: Yes, father.

LEODOGRAUNCE: We have a visitor. Sir Lancelot. King Arthur's champion from the court at Camelot. What about that? Hm?

LANCELOT: My lady. My lady, I come from King Arthur.

GUINEVERE: What would King Arthur want with us, father?

LEODOGRAUNCE: Hear Sir Lancelot, girl.

LANCELOT: He would have you for his queen, my lady, if you would consent to it.

GUINEVERE: What does my father say?

LANCELOT: He gives your hand gladly. But my master would have your consent.

GUINEVERE: I do what my father says. But am I not too young to wed?

LEODOGRAUNCE: Bless you, child, your mother had had two children before she was your age.

GUINEVERE: Is he a man like you?

LANCELOT: He is a man, my lady. And a dear friend to me, but as far above me as I am above the beggar at the gate.¹²

GUINEVERE: Then perhaps he is too high for me.

LANCELOT: He loved you at first sight.

GUINEVERE: How strange!

LANCELOT: Not strange at all. You are very beautiful, my lady.

LEODOGRAUNCE: Come, Guinevere, we're waiting on your answer.

GUINEVERE: Then, father, I will go with this good knight to King Arthur's court as he commands. And if he likes me, I will be his wife.

* * *

(In the hall in Camelot)

ARTHUR: Kings, Lords, Knights, I show to you my bride . . . my Queen. Her beauty and her virtue shall serve as models to all womankind in this age and throughout all future time. I know you will all serve her as faithfully as you have all served me. My friends, feast and drink with me, for I'll have no man less than merry on this joyous day.

BORS: Our king seems well pleased with his young bride.

LANCELOT: You mean he should not be?

BORS: She's fair of face, cousin. How strange it must seem to her. A month ago, one of a thousand princesses, her father's little girl. Today, great kings kneel before her. What a burden for her, Lancelot! To be the pattern of beauty and virtue of all womankind.

LANCELOT: To me she is that pattern.

BORS: She's flesh and blood, man! Like my dear wife. Oh, I'll serve her as my queen. Lay down my life if need be . . .

LANCELOT: *(Lancelot goes to Arthur)* My Lord.

ARTHUR: Lancelot.