



THE KING ARTHUR PANTOMIME

by David Edkins

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THE KING ARTHUR PANTOMIME

A Pantomime

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CHARACTERS

King Arthur: a semi-retired middle-aged King

Nimsie: The Lady of the Lake, a good sorceress, if played by a female
Or

Merlin: a good wizard, if played by a male. (The role is written as Nimsie in the script. See Production Notes.)

Morgana le Fay: an evil sorceress, if played by a female
Or

Mordred: an evil wizard, if played by a male. (The role is written as Morgana in the script. See Production Notes.)

Tortolina: daughter of Morgana

Queen Guinevere, or Gwinny: Arthur's wife, and the Pantomime Dame

Gawain: a disgraced ex-knight and eventual fiancé of Tortolina

Henry the Horse: person in single person horse costume

The Questing Beast: a terrible monster with the head of a snake and the body of a leopard potentially played by same actor as Morgana / Mordred

A recorded customer service voice

THE KING ARTHUR PANTOMIME

PROLOGUE

A Secret Valley in Camelot, the Year 600AD-ish.

The curtains open. In the centre of the stage is a stone in which a sword is about to be placed. This setting will be used again at the end of the show.

SFX: Fanfare.

Enter Arthur and Nimsie Upstage Right. Arthur is carrying a sword.

ARTHUR: Right then. Time to put the sword back in the stone.

Arthur puts the sword in the stone.

NIMSIE: Time to make sure my magic keeps it there.

Nimsie taps the sword with her wand. She gives the sword a tug.

NIMSIE: Excellent, just right. I'd like to see anyone pulling that sword out of this stone if they're not the true King or Queen.

ARTHUR: Good show, Nimsie. Things are so peaceful in Camelot now that I don't need this sword so I'll just leave it on display in the stone for the tourists. Now, I'd best get going because it's time for **[popular television show]**. The Queen doesn't like it if I miss the beginning.

Exit Arthur Upstage Right.

NIMSIE: Goodbye, Your Majesty.

Nimsie steps forward. The curtains close behind her.

PROLOGUE, CONTINUED

NIMSIE: Hmmm, what's this I sense? Can it be they're here? ***She notices the Audience.*** Ah, yes, they are. Hello there, I hope you're all well. My name is Nimue, known as the Lady of the Lake, but you can all call me Nimsie. I've known King Arthur ever since he was a boy. Yes, I've helped him out of many scrapes. Arthur pulled the sword from the stone many years ago, and thanks to ancient magic, only the worthy can do that – so that's how he became King of Camelot. Since then, he's had lots of adventures. He's rescued many princesses. Come on, sound a bit impressed, why don't you? King Arthur has rescued many princesses. ***Pause.*** He's slain many dragons. ***Pause.*** He's never missed an episode of **[same popular television show Arthur mentioned previously]**. ***Pause.*** Well, you're all easily impressed, aren't you? Anyway, all that was a long time ago and no-one's tried to invade Camelot for many years. We are in a time of peace thanks to the wonderful wise King Arthur and his wife the good Queen Guinevere.

MORGANA: ***From Offstage.*** Talking to yourself, 'Oh Wonderful Lady of the Lake'?

NIMSIE: Hmm?

Enter Morgana Stage Left.

MORGANA: 'Tis I, Morgana le Fay! Back to take King Arthur's throne away from him so I can seize the Kingdom for myself! Ha, ha, haaaa! **To Audience.** And you can all shut up as well before I turn you all into rats. Nimsie, take that!

Morgana points her wand at Nimsie.

SFX: Lightning.

NIMSIE: Ooh, get you. Well, all I can say is, take this!

Nimsie points her wand at Morgana.

SFX: Comic boing.

NIMSIE: What? I don't understand. I-I'll try again...

Nimsie points her wand at Morgana.

SFX: Comic boing.

NIMSIE: No, this cannot be! I-I've lost my magic! I must tell King Arthur...

MORGANA: Ha, ha, haaaa! It worked. Take this too!

Morgana points her wand at Nimsie.

SFX: Lightning.

NIMSIE: What's happening? Who am I? Where am I?

MORGANA: Just as I planned! Good old Nimsie is losing her memory. Thanks to my dark magic, she won't remember who she is, and I've fixed it so that no-one will recognise her again, not even King Arthur. Be off with you, don't you dare go anywhere near King Arthur ever again.

NIMSIE: Er... best get going then.

Exit Nimsie Stage Right.

MORGANA: Now, with Nimsie out of the way, King Arthur will be a pushover. I'll worm my way into the castle and get him to trust me then he'll tell me the secrets of the Kingdom.

Enter Tortolina Stage Left, carrying a handbag.

TORTOLINA: Mummy! Where are you? There you are! We should be living in a castle by now. You said I'd be a princess. I want to be a princess. Why are you so useless?

MORGANA: Do not fret, Tortolina. Soon, I'll be Queen, you'll be a princess, and together we will rule the world and that includes these people here.

TORTOLINA: What people where? **She notices the Audience.** Ugh! They're horrible! I'm scared.

Tortolina clings to Morgana.

MORGANA: Fear not, they will soon be as mere putty in our hands.

TORTOLINA: How are you even going to get inside Camelot Castle anyway? They'll just recognise you straight away. This is so stupid.

MORGANA: Ah, but I've thought of everything. Now, hand me the item I requested.

TORTOLINA: Hmph.

Tortolina throws the handbag at Morgana.

MORGANA: It is now necessary for me to slip into the bushes for a moment.

TORTOLINA: I did not wish to know that.

MORGANA: Patience, my dear. I shall return.

Exit Morgana Stage Right.

TORTOLINA: Mummy! How dare you leave me alone with all these ruffians? **To Audience.** Well, what are you all staring at? No common person will be allowed to even glance at me when I'm a princess. **Pause.** Why are you all still looking? Have you never seen class before? No, I don't suppose you have!

Enter Morgana Stage Right wearing a ridiculous false nose and glasses.

MORGANA: There! They won't suspect for one moment that it's me. **To Audience.** What do you all think of my disguise? **Pause.** No matter, because we don't care what you think so **Morgana blows a raspberry!** Ha, ha, haaa! Ha, ha, haaa!

TORTOLINA: Mummy, must you laugh like that? It's embarrassing.

MORGANA: Apologies, Tortolina. I won't do it again.

TORTOLINA: I should think not.

MORGANA: Er... Tortolina.

TORTOLINA: What?

MORGANA: I lied. Once I take over Camelot, I fully intend to laugh like that again, and I'm going to do it now. Ha, ha, haa! Ha, ha, haa!

TORTOLINA: So embarrassing. Mummy, let's just go. Now.

Exit Morgana and Tortolina Stage Right, Tortolina guiding an over-excited Morgana who is still laughing maniacally.

ACT ONE / SCENE ONE

The curtains open. Upstage Right is a large parcel large enough for an actor dressed in a single-person horse costume to sit in. Enter Gwinny Front Stage Left.

Song 1.

At an appropriate point in the speech below, Henry the Horse pops out of the parcel and sneaks up on Gwinny.

GWINNY: *To Audience.* Hello everybody. **Pause.** Er, am I alone in the room? Did I hear a mouse just then? I said, hello everybody. **Pause.** All-right, no need to overdo it. I'm Queen Guinevere, wife of King Arthur, but you can all call me Gwinny. Let me tell you a little bit about the Kingdom of Camelot. Arthur's been King for a while and thanks to him and his knights nobody ever attacks us any more. Everything's ever so peaceful at the moment. Oh my goodness.

Henry has reached Gwinny and is trying to hug her.

GWINNY: Henry, get back in there until the King's birthday. Go on.

Gwinny bustles Henry back into the parcel.

GWINNY: *To Audience.* Now, don't you lot go thinking I'm keeping a horse in a tiny box. There's a whole world, no, a whole universe in there for him to run around in, I got it from this bloke in an old police-box thing, or maybe it was a woman. Anyway, Henry is going to be a great birthday present for King Arthur, and I need you to help me look after that parcel until his birthday. Are you all up for that? **Pause.** That's great. Now, if anybody goes near the parcel, you all need to shout 'Gwinny'. Is that OK? **Pause.** You sure? **Pause.** What are you going to shout if anybody goes near the parcel? **Pause.** That's great. See you in a bit.

Exit Gwinny Front Stage Left. Enter Arthur Front Stage Right. He is wearing a tracksuit and is very out of breath. He carries a stopwatch.

ARTHUR: Oh, that was exhausting. *He puffs and pants.* Now, how did I do? *He looks at the stopwatch.* Hmm. A whole mile in eleven-and-a-half hours. It's an improvement on yesterday, I suppose. *He spots the parcel.* Ooh, what's this? *He approaches the parcel.*

Gwinny runs on Front Stage Left.

GWINNY: *To Audience.* Thanks everybody.

She dives in front of Arthur and falls over.

ARTHUR: What the... Gwinny?

GWINNY: See what you've made me do, trying to sneak a look at your birthday present? Now I can't get up 'cause I've done me back in. You'll have to help me.

Arthur helps Gwinny to her feet.

SFX: Creaking and cranking.

ARTHUR: Nimsie could magic your back better if she was here but she's been gone for weeks.

GWINNY: Probably at some sorceress' convention again.

ARTHUR: But if any of our old enemies realise that Nimsie's gone off gallivanting, they'll just try to take over the Kingdom. Someone like Morgana could easily trick her way into the castle and cause all sorts of trouble.

GWINNY: Oh yes, Morgana. I remember when she tried to take over before. Nimsie soon saw her off, though. Look, don't worry. We'll get a replacement in while she's gone. ***She glances off Frontstage Right.*** Oh, my goodness. Who's left the drawbridge open? Bet it's that Wayne. Now, where's the remote control?

Gwinny gets a remote control from underneath her crown, points it off Frontstage Right, and presses a button.

SFX: Button being pressed followed by drawbridge closing.

GWINNY: There, it's closed. Come on, Arthur, I recorded last night's **[same popular television show mentioned in the Prologue]**.

ARTHUR: Be with you in a tick. I'll just do some stretches.

GWINNY: Okey-dokey. Look after this for me, would you?

Gwinny pops the remote control in Arthur's pocket. Exit Gwinny Upstage Left. Arthur starts stretching. Enter Gawain Frontstage left, using a mop as a sword.

GAWAIN: En garde, allez, parry. Have at ye.

Arthur gets a faceful of Gawain's mop.

ARTHUR: Be careful!

GAWAIN: Sorry, Your Majesty.

ARTHUR: It's not a sword, it's a mop. Give me that!

Arthur grabs the mop and throws it off Frontstage Left. SFX: Smashing glass. Arthur and Gawain wince.

ARTHUR: Go somewhere else, Wayne.

GAWAIN: It's not Wayne, it's Ga-wain – with a Ga. How many times do I have to tell people? ***To Audience.*** If there's anybody here who's called Wayne, don't get me wrong. Wayne's a nice name - but it's not my name. I'm a famous knight and everybody forgets me name.

ARTHUR: Famous knights don't forget how to fight like you did. I'm afraid I wouldn't trust you with a bread-knife any more, let alone a sword. And you're not a knight any more. I had to make you a cleaner.

GAWAIN: But that bloke was trying to take over the Kingdom and he bashed me on the head and I just forgot all me skills. It's not my fault I'm a wimp. I used to be a hero. Think of all the times I've fought the Questing Beast, the terrible monster with the head of a snake...

SFX: Dramatic chord.

GAWAIN: ... and the body of a leopard.

SFX: Dramatic chord.

GAWAIN: And I fought him with one hand tied behind me back standing on one leg.

ARTHUR: Why do you always have to tell stories about your bravery? No-one ever believes you. One of these days, you'll try to tell us something really important and no-one will believe you.

GAWAIN: Er, Your Majesty, have you had a chance to look at my application to become a knight again?

ARTHUR: Oh, ask the Queen. I'm off to have a shower. Don't go near the parcel, and make sure the drawbridge stays closed.

Arthur hands Gawain the remote control and exits Upstage Left.

GAWAIN: Okey dokey, Your Majesty. Er... what parcel?

He looks around, spots the parcel and approaches it.

GAWAIN: Ooh, this looks interesting.

Enter Gwinny Frontstage Left.

GWINNY: *To Audience.* Thanks, everybody. You're doing a great job. *To Gawain.* What are you doing snooping at the King's birthday present? You should be cleaning, Wayne.

GAWAIN: It's Ga-wain. Anyway, I'm glad I've seen you. Have you had a chance to look at my application to become a knight again yet?

GWINNY: Oh, you should ask the King about that.

GAWAIN: But the King said to ask you!

GWINNY: Did he? Well, I can't talk about that now, I've got enough to do. I haven't even started the King's birthday cake yet.

GAWAIN: Oh yeah, I've got a bone to pick with you about that. Why you didn't ask me to bake it?

GWINNY: Baking? You?

GAWAIN: Ah, but did I never tell you about the time I prepared a feast so fabulous that I had three job offers – Managing Director of McDonalds, Head Taster at Burger King and Chief Microwave-Turner-Off-and-Onner at the Hungry Horse?

GWINNY: Chief Microwave-Turner-Off-and-Onner?

GAWAIN: Yeah, but they did say I had to work my way up to actually turning it off and on because I needed more experience opening and closing the oven door.

GWINNY: Oh, Wayne...

GAWAIN: It's Ga-wain.

GWINNY: Yes, yes, yes, but will you stop telling all these tall stories about yourself? One day you'll need to tell us something really important, like, for example, an evil sorceress has tricked her way into the castle and is trying to take over the Kingdom, and no-one will believe you.