A moderately honorable tale of

Sir Lancelot d'Etang

or: The Knight of the Forklift

or: The Hitchhiker's Guide to Camelot

by Garrett Mitchener

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1 The Stupidity of Sir Kay

Gawain looked at the king with a dazed expression as the mysterious knight knocked Sir Kay off his horse again and again.

"Uncle Arthur," he said, "loaning the Queen to Sir Kay was just about the stupidest thing you've ever done."

"I know," the king moaned, "but I couldn't help it. I promised him I'd do anything if he'd stay, so I didn't have any choice."

"You realize that he's going to lose soon. Then that other knight will have all those other knights *and* Queen Guinevere in prison."

Arthur nodded glumly. "I'm in deep doo-doo."

The mysterious challenger quickly beat Kay to a light, fluffy pulp, and motioned to his men to shackle him and Queen Guinevere. With that, his party took off through the woods.

Arthur rested his forehead in his hands and moaned again.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a knight came galloping out of the woods riding a dead horse. He dismounted, ran up to Sir Gawain and asked, "Excuse me, but are those Bugle Boy horses you're riding?"

Gawain nodded.

"Mind if I borrow one? Believe me, it's urgent." He motioned to the ribbon sticking out of his backpack.

Gawain looked for a moment at the stranger's dead horse, then at his beautiful, but unfamiliar, leather and blue steel armor, his rather fashionable helmet, and the really big box that was tied to the ribbon that protruded from his backpack. He decided that asking a question would be more trouble that it's worth, so he just said, "Yes. Go ahead."

The mysterious knight mounted one of Gawain's horses, shouted, "Thank you, Sir Gawain!" and rode off through the woods.

After a moment or two, there was a lot of noise, clanging and bashing and shouting and smashing. Gawain spurred his horse and rode toward the commotion, and was astonished to see the loaned horse beaten to death and the mysterious knight running on foot down the trail. Gawain followed him.

The mysterious knight stopped suddenly, as a bright neon green machine burst out of the forest. The dwarf driving it leaned over and said, "Hey buddy, need a lift?"

"In *that?*"

"Sure, hop in!"

The knight frowned.

After a moment, the drawf added, "Look, I know you're lookin' for Guinevere. They took 'er this way. You wanna follow or not?"

The knight hesitated for a moment, then hopped on. The dwarf kicked the forklift into high gear and drove off.

> *The* Hithhiker's Guide to Camelot *has this to say about forklifts:*
>
> *Never ride in one. They are uncomfortable, ugly, and generally a major faux-pas. What's more, in most parts of the land, they are used to carry criminals to trial. Anyone who sees you riding a forklift is likely to think you very naughty and never speak to you again.*
>
> *The obnoxious color of the forklift usually indicates the severity of the crime, with the intention of further embarrassing the accused. Indeed, in the museum in the basement of the Tower of London, one can view the exhibit of an albino bronco which was carried the entire length of Camelot on a rainbow paisley forklift because its owner refused to dismount and stand trial properly.*[1]
>
> *It is therefore safe to conclude that this poor knight is going to have no end of social difficulties in the following pages.*

2 Searching For the Queen

Gawain rode along beside the forklift. Every so often, he would raise his finger as if he were going to ask a question, but then decided against it.

Finally, he said, "I take it you're looking for the queen?"

The mysterious knight nodded. "It's very important. You see . . . "

At that moment, the forklift stopped abruptly, and the knight fell off and crashed into a wall. The dwarf quickly put his machine into reverse, and was gone.

After a moment or two, a beautiful maiden emerged from the door in the wall. The knights looked up and realized that it was indeed the wall of a rather small castle. It was so small, they hadn't noticed it until they had run into it.

The maiden said, "Welcome Sir Gawain." She looked at the other knight as he stood up and brushed the dirt off his pants. "I suppose you can come

[1] This is an O.J. joke, in case you didn't get it.

in, too." He frowned, but bowed politely anyway. They followed her into the castle. "Sir Gawain, you may sleep here, on the futon. You, Knight of the Forklift, oh, let's see, I guess you can have the sleeping bag."

The Knight of the Forklift said, "I take it you saw me ride in the forklift? Well, I can explain that, you see ..."

"I don't want to hear it! Just be glad I didn't throw fruit at you. Now come to dinner." She showed them to her dining room, and promptly served Gawain a beautiful feast. A crew of chefs emerged from the next room with roast duck and exotic fruit and a three foot high cheesecake, all for him. To the Knight of the Forklift, she gave two tiny pancakes and a glass of diluted skim milk and whispered, "Knights who ride in forklifts deserve nothing better than the Waffle House."

The knight gave her a twisted smile, ate his pancakes, and went out to the parlor. Gawain snuck him a piece of cheesecake on the way out, but he was so disgusted with the maiden that he'd lost his appetite. So, he wrapped it in a napkin and put it in his pocket[2] and just sat there.

By then, it was late, so the two knights went to bed. Gawain whispered to him, "I'm sorry, but you did ride in a forklift, you know ..."

The Knight of the Forklift just mumbled, "Yeah, I know. I'm just glad no one else saw me."

He tossed and turned on the floor in the skimpy sleeping bag for several hours, dreaming of neon green forklifts and mean maidens and cheesecake. Finally, he couldn't sleep any more. He got up and started wandering around the castle.

He soon found a dark room in which he could make out the outline of a bed. In the moonlight, he could see that no one was sleeping on it, so he decided to sleep there. He stumbled across the room, and managed to trip on a number of orange cones and barrels that were laid out around the bed. He bumped into a "Danger!" sign, but it was dark, so he didn't know what it said, and he was too tired to care, anyway. He lay down, and was soon asleep.

A few hours later, he woke up to a whizzing noise. He rolled over and just missed being hit by a sharp object that flew from some unknown corner of the room. Thinking nothing more of it, he went back to sleep.

[2]Remember this.

3 The Naughty Maiden

At dawn, he woke up and stretched. He was astonished to see a spoon embedded in the pillow next to him. He picked it up and went back to the other room to get dressed. He showed the spoon to Gawain, who had no explanation for it, either. The knight hurled the spoon out the window and began to put on his armor.

Gawain said, "Wow! You're good with a spoon! You threw that thing clear into the next kingdom!"[3]

"Just takes practice."

The maiden came in and showed them to breakfast. To Gawain, she gave pancakes and sausage and eggs and Belgian waffles and dough-nuts. To the other knight, she gave spoonful of honey.

"Guess I'm not even worth Waffle House this morning," he thought to himself. Gawain rolled him some boiled eggs when no one was looking, which he promptly ate.

As soon as Gawain finished eating, the Maiden sat abruptly in his lap. "So, tell me big boy, what brings you out here?"

"We're (gulp) looking for the queen. She was kidnapped, and we think they went this way."

"Oh yes, I know where they took her. There are two ways to get into that kingdom: There is an Underwater Bridge, which is terribly dangerous, and a Sword Bridge, which is also impossibly dangerous. And then, once you get to the entrance to the kingdom by either of those two routes, there is a one-way turnstile that you have to go through, so you can't return."

The Knight of the Forklift said to Gawain, "What do you say we split up?"

"Okay, I'll take the Underwater Bridge."

"I guess I'll take the Sword Bridge." They prepared to depart.

The maiden said to Gawain, "Take I-40 East for ten miles, then take exit five, turn right, go down three castles, and it's in the river there. You can't miss it."

He thanked her, nodded to the other knight, and started off.

"You," the maiden said to the other knight, "need a horse. I tell you what, I'll give you one and show you where the Sword Bridge is, but only if you'll sleep with me tonight."

[3] Remember this.

He gave her a hard stare, "After the way you treated me yesterday, you want me to sleep with you? You're kidding. Tell me you're kidding."

"Nope. You need one of my horses, else you'll never find the queen. I need something else. Deal?"

He thought for a moment. "Deal. I'll sleep with you, but only so I can find Guinevere."

He spent most of the day in the garden, meditating, and trying to prepare himself for the evening ahead. He didn't love this woman. He didn't know why she wanted him, especially after the way she had treated him. He hoped no one else had seen him on that stupid forklift. Only Guinevere could ever own his heart, so he promised himself that he would do this horrible thing, and that he wouldn't enjoy it, but only because there was no other way to find her.

That evening, he trudged into the castle again, and found her bedroom. He knocked softly, and when there was no answer, he opened the door, and was astonished to see a knight holding the maiden down on the bed, desperately trying to get his armor unzipped, and a number of other knights positioned near the door with all kinds of weapons pointed right at him.

The maiden screamed, "Help! He's trying to ..."

The knight jumped through the door, fought the closest guard bare handed and got his sword, which he used to take out the man with the battle ax. He then wrestled the machine gun from the next closest guard, and used it to blow away the anti-aircraft missile launcher across the room. He grabbed the phaser[4] from the next guard, and shot the light sabre out of the remaining guard's hand.

He reached out for another weapon, and a page handed him an eggbeater. He started turning the crank and approached the remaining knight who screamed, "No! Not the eggbeater! Have mercy upon me!"

A voice from the back of the room yelled, "Cut! That was perfect! thank you mister knight, that was indeed the best performance of anyone I've ever seen." The lights came on, and he noticed the various cameras and lighting equipment, the makeup artists, and the crew of technicians. The other knights got up, shook his hand, and made their way to their dressing rooms.

The maiden got up and said, "Well, now that that little bit of business is taken care of ... You see, the tourism's been a little slow lately ..."

"Ah."

[4]Star Trek was popular, even in the sixth century.

"Now, my real bedroom is this way ..."

The knight silently got undressed, climbed into bed next to her, and promptly went to sleep. The maiden hopped in next to him. She tried to wake him up, but he remained stubbornly asleep.

"Oh well," she thought, "He just promised to *sleep* with me ..."

> *The* Guide *has this to say about pages:*
>
> *No one knows where pages come from, or where they live, or really much of anything about them. They are virtually invisible, numerous, and seem to be everywhere. The currently accepted theory is that they are related to mosquitoes, which have similar behavior. During these times, there is such a proliferation of pages in Britain, that if a knight should ever be in need of a weapon, all he must do is hold out his opened hand, and the nearest page will immediately place something useful in it. Many of the battles fought in Britain would have been dismally unsuccessful without the ambient population of pages to re-supply the knights with spears and eggbeaters.*

4 The Battle with Sir Borcus

The next morning, the maiden served the knight a rather nice breakfast, obviously from the Waffle House. It took them a few minutes to get dressed. The knight gathered his things in his chamber. On the way out, he noticed that one of his pockets was sort of greasy. He reached in, and pulled out a rather melted and curdled piece of cheesecake. He frowned, then tossed it over his shoulder, and went to meet the maiden at the stable.

The two set off in a direction slightly away from where Gawain had gone the day before. After several hours of riding, they came to a rather narrow path and began to wind their way upwards. At the top of the hill, they came to an open field. There were people all over the lawn, playing gwyddbwyll[5] and chess and naughts-and-crosses.[6] Suddenly, a bunch of children ran up to the knight and started singing –

> Knights who in forklifts ride

[5]This is some kind of board game mentioned in the Mabinogion.

[6]That's English for "tic-tac-toe."

marry up with wenches wide
with big fat feet and scrungy hair
and really ugly underwear...

The knight wondered for a moment how they knew he had ridden in a forklift. He frowned at their song and said, "Don't quit your day job."

Suddenly, a huge knight rode up to him and said, "You! You who have ridden in a forklift! How dare you insult my nieces and nephews so! I challenge you to a joust!"

The knight said, "Maybe some other time. I'm on a very important mission, and I don't have time..."

"Have at you!" the other knight replied, and charged at him. The Knight of the Forklift quickly put down his backpack and held out his hand. A random page gave him a dustmop and dustpan. He quickly charged at the other knight, and smote him dead center of the chest with his dust mop, thereby unhorsing him.[7] In the cloud of dust that emerged from the dustmop, the other knight coughed, drew his sword, and started thrashing around blindly. The Knight of the Forklift dismounted and drew his sword. Then, he smote him with his sword, and then he smote him with his sword and knocked him over his knee. Then, he smote him with his fist and the other smote him with his sword. Then, he smote him a passing grievous smite to the shoulders and he fell down. And he tripped the other, and then he got back up and smote him with his sword again. Then, he smote him another passing grievous blow.[8]

After several minutes of this, they realized that between the two of them they somehow had only one sword, but it didn't matter, since the dustmop had created such a dust cloud that no one knew who was smiting whom anyway. Finally, the Knight of the Cart just punched the guy, took the sword, and prepared to cut his head off.

Just then, a maiden rode up.

"Grant me what I will ask," she said.

The Knight of the Forklift gave her a funny look. "Okay ..."

"I want you to cut off this man's *gwellodcwy* and give it to me on a plate."

> *The* Hitchhiker's Guide *functions well as a dictionary of the many archaic, outdated languages currently in use in the lands surrounding Camelot. The entry for* gwellodcwy *says this:*

[7] A little Malory humor, too.

[8] A little more Malory.

We have no idea what the word gwellodcwy *means, or which language it comes from, despite the fact that it appears in numerous manuscripts of our time. Some scholars have suggested that it means "mouse" or "sock drawer" based on certain passages. However, the most likely theory is that the word is from Hippopotamus Gælic, a sophisticated language similar to Pig Latin or Turkey Irish, in which one forms a word from its Old English equivalent by moving the first letter to the end of the word, prepending "gw" and appending "wy." This would make the word* gwellodcwy *equivalent to "cellod," but nobody knows what that means, either.*

The bested knight screamed, "No! Not my *gwellodcwy*! Anything but that! Please sir knight, grant me mercy!"

"You promised to give me whatever I asked."

"A knight always has to grant mercy when asked! Please, not my *gwellodcwy*!"

"This miserable creature is Sir Borcus of Trent. He has done me many wrongs and repented of nothing! Give me his *gwellodcwy* right here on this plate..."

"...realize what happens to a man when he loses his *gwellodcwy*..."

"...or I'll tell everyone in Arthur's court that you're a coward..."

"...you can even spank my nieces and nephews if you want..."

"...besides, you rode in a forklift..."

The Knight of the Forklift cried out finally, "Okay! Here, I've got a solution to this! We'll fight again, and if you lose, I give the lady your *gwellodcwy*, and if you win, you go free. I'll even fight blindfolded with my right hand tied to my left big toe."

So, a page handed them a rope and a blindfold, and the knight was all tied up. Another page handed him a rolling pin, fully floured.[9]

And he smote him up side the head, and he bashed his head in the ground, and a great cloud of flour dust arose from the battle. And he smote and was smitten, and before long, the two of them were in the same position they were in several moments before. The other knight moaned, "Oh no!" as the woman took his *gwellodcwy* and put it on her plate.

[9]You can tell by the domestic flavor in this story that I liked to help momma make cookies when I was a little boy.

"Thank you," she said. "For this you will be most well rewarded." And she took off into the woods.

The Knight of the Cart shrugged, got back on his horse, and the maiden followed him once more down the other side of the hill.

5 The Big Blank Spot

Several pages of the manuscript are missing at this point, so we have no idea what happens. It is suspected that at some time, a rather desperate American tourist made use of them in the lavatory, but that is mere speculation.

6 The Sword Bridge

At last they came to the infamous Sword Bridge. Sure enough, it was a rather large, but rickety looking steel sword stretched across a deep gorge. The Knight looked down into the vicious rapids below and thought for a moment of just how awful it would be if he should happen to fall in. "I'll get Guinevere's clothes all muddy when I hug her," he thought.

He said to the maiden, "It's going to be difficult for me to get across this. I have no idea how to bring you, too."

"I understand," she said. "After you get safely across, I'll return to my castle."

He examined the bridge for a moment and thought, "If I try to crawl over that, I'm likely to cut myself up pretty badly. That wouldn't do, because then I'd get Guinevere all bloody when I hug her. Gotta think of something else." He took off his backpack and started rummaging through it. Finally, he took out the box to which the ribbon was attached, and untied the ribbon. He opened the box, and produced an enormous white bra. The maiden just stared at him.

"It's a gift," he explained. "Victoria's Secret. The Absolutely Indestructible Supercomfortable Wonder-bra. Impervious to mischievous hands and daggers. In fact, only the hand of the man who truly loves its owner can untie it." He tied it around his waist and hooked it over the Sword Bridge. He let himself hang down under the bridge, and easily slid across.

Once on the other side, he realized that the bra was indeed impervious to most hands, and try as he might he couldn't get it off. A chorus of children appeared on the side of the bridge near the maiden and started chanting –

> Look at the Knight!
> His bra's too tight!
> The forklift was green!
> What a sight!

The knight groaned, continued groping with the magical clasp, and finally managed to get the bra unhooked. (After all, it was his gift, and he, of all people, should be able to unhook this particular bra.) As he scrambled up on the side, he dropped it, and it plummeted down into the rapids below. He stared after it, and moaned. "Now I don't have a present for Guinevere."

He waved goodbye to the maiden, and continued walking on his way. It was not long before he came to the one-way turnstile that led into the kingdom. Without hesitating, he stepped through.

7 Millicent

The Knight of the Forklift made his way to the castle that loomed in the distance. About noon, he arrived, and knocked on the door.

A man answered and said grumpily, "What do you want?"

"I am searching for Queen Guinevere. Do you know where she might have been taken?"

"She's here, but you'll never get her! He he! Not until you defeat the knight that owns this castle!"

"Then I want to see him at once!"

The grumpy old man led him into the courtyard where lots of people were sitting around playing gwyddbwyll. The Knight looked up, and saw Guinevere watching him from her window. He saluted her with a smile. She walked away from the window, out of sight.

Then, a knight burst out of the door in front of him.

"You dare to challenge me, Sir Millicent the Great!"

The Knight of the Forklift stared at him. "Sir Millicent?"

"Let's just say," he grumbled, "that the priest who christened me was neither as sharp of sight, nor as intelligent as one might have hoped. My poor sister Garfield got off hardly any better."

The knight looked at him strangely. "Now, I've seen a lot of battle scars, but that one between your eyes really takes the cake. How did you manage to get a blue, crescent shaped bruise right over your nose?"[10]

"Oh, that. A spoon flew out of the sky yesterday morning and hit me right there. I don't have any idea where it came from, or how it managed to hit me while I was in bed. I was so mad, I hurled it into the next kingdom."[11] The knight's mouth dropped open. Sir Millicent continued, "But enough of that! You are that miserable knight that rode in a forklift, and you have no honor." The knight stared at him, astonished to find yet another person who somehow knew he rode in the forklift. Sir Millicent continued, "You deserve whatever you get this day in combat! Defend yourself!" Sir Millicent pulled a grapefruit from his belt, and cut it in half. He pulled a spoon from the other side of his belt, and aimed for the other knight's eye.

The knight held out his hand, and a page put a large umbrella in it, which he opened and used to deflect the exquisitely aimed stream of grapefruit juice out of harm's way.

Then, Sir Millicent held out his hands, and a page placed a large, industrial strength electric fan in it, and in the resulting hurricane, the knight's umbrella inverted itself and became useless.

Finally, the knight reached out, and a page placed a cow patty in his hand, which he hurled at the fan, thereby utterly destroying it.[12]

"Alas," Sir Millicent said, "You have beaten me! What do you ask of me as your prize?"

"Okay, first, you have to turn over Queen Guinevere to me so that I may return her to Camelot. Second, you must free all the prisoners you hold here. Third, you must unlock the turnstile thereby giving this country the freedom it deserves, and also so we can get out of this country and go home."

He hesitated, and said, "These things I will do since you have beaten me in a fair fight. But please, stay for the night, since it is very late."

"That I will do, but now, I would like to see the queen."

Sir Millicent showed the knight to the great hall, and called for the queen and all the prisoners to come there.

Sir Millicent announced, "To all I hold prisoner, I surrender you now to the care of this noble knight, Sir ... er, Sir ... come to think of it, what is

[10] A little "Mists" humor.

[11] Remember this.

[12] My roommates suggested that I work in the phrase "When the sh*t hits the fan," which they insist is a real expression.

your name?"

"I am Sir Lancelot," the Knight of the Forklift replied.

"Sir Lancelot? The world-famous French dermatologist?"

"No. That would be Saint Jean de Lance-a-lot, no relation."

"Oh. Then you must be the famous Lancelot du Lac!"

"Well, the lake sort of dried up, so I'm generally called Lancelot d'Etang[13] instead."

At this point, the queen and her ladies in waiting arrived. The queen gave Lancelot a smug look, and stormed out of the room.

Lancelot stood there for a moment, horrified. He had expected a much better welcome from the woman he had risked so much to rescue.

"Excuse me for a moment," he said.

Lancelot followed her to her chamber. He spoke to the guard outside her door, "We'd like a moment alone." He nodded and stepped away.

Guinevere was lying on the bed crying. "Oh, Lancelot! (sob) You didn't come to see me on my birthday!"

"I tried! I mean, you were kidnapped. I couldn't help it."

"And I'll bet (sob, sob) that you don't even have a present for me!"

"Well, I did, but I sort of lost it ... Oh Guinevere! Please forgive me!"

Guinevere looked at him and said stiffly, "It's the biggest scandal since O.J. It's all over CNN, here look." She picked up a remote control from her bedside table, and pointed it at her mirror. A picture formed, and a newsman was visible, in full armor of course.

He said, "And here is yet another re-run of Lancelot d'Etang mounting the now-famous, or perhaps I should say 'infamous' neon green forklift." The picture shifted to a video recording of Lancelot running away from his dead horse, speaking briefly with the dwarf, and then stepping up into the machine. In the corner could be seen the CNN logo: an outline of a small castle with the letters 'CNN' underneath. "As always, ladies and gentlemen, Camelot Network News is your most reliable source of twenty-four hour news, as our coverage of the Lancelot case continues."

Guinevere said, "It's the most awful scandal I've ever seen. Did you see that? What you did?"

"That I rode in a forklift?"

"No! I know you did that just for me, I could never be mad at you for that."

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[13] "Etang" is the French word for "pond."

"What then?" Lancelot asked, totally bewildered.

"You hesitated! You actually hesitated several seconds before getting onto the forklift! Do you have no regard for a woman's feelings!" She burst into tears. Lancelot stepped over to give her a hug. "No!" she said, "Get away from me."

"I'm sorry," he said, helplessly. "I didn't know if the dwarf was telling the truth or what. And it was an ugly forklift." She continued to cry and carry on. He sat down on the bed next to her, and gave her a big hug. She didn't resist this time. "Will you forgive me?" he asked.

"Oh," she sobbed, "I suppose so."

She turned back towards the Magic Mirror, where the news program had started up again. The newscaster said, "Here is our camera crew at the turnstile into the mysterious kingdom. Again, recall that the turnstile is one-way, so that no one is able to leave the kingdom on the other side without the king's permission. We attempted to get some footage from the other side by hurling one of our better cameras over the turnstile and we managed to get this image of Sir Lancelot." The picture showed Lancelot disappearing over a hill. "And that's the last we've seen of him."

"You know," she said pensively, "I know a way you can redeem yourself ..."

Lancelot smiled, but only for a moment. "Oh no, we can't *do it* here and now. Someone might hear us."

"I know. But you can sneak into my bedroom tonight. See, there's a window that looks right onto the courtyard."

Lancelot smiled, and gave her a kiss.

8 Later that Night

Later that night, Lancelot snuck out of his bedroom and into the courtyard. He tip-toed over to Guinevere's window. He suddenly realized that he couldn't squeeze through the iron bars over it. Guinevere peered out at him, helplessly. But Lancelot knew what was waiting for him inside, so he gathered his strength, reached up, and grabbed the bars. With a great *umpf* he pulled out two of the bars and made a gap big enough to squeeze through.

Guinevere led him over to her bed, but motioned to the floor. He looked out and as far as he could see, the floor was covered with knights in sleeping bags. He gave her a helpless frown. She whispered, "What's-his-name made them all sleep in here. I think he's up to something." Lancelot nodded. "We'll have to *do it* quietly or someone will wake up and catch us."

He sat down on her bed, and whispered, "I cut my hand on the window." He took of one of his gloves and showed her the gash in his hand. She nodded, and wrapped it in one of her socks.

"So," he continued, "do you want to *do it* fast or slow?"

"Slow," she whispered.

"How about style? Classical or modern?"

"Oh, can we *do it* both ways? Like, the first part classical, and the second part modern?"

"Anything you want. But, we have to *do it* right." He reached into his coat pocket, and removed a small package. Guinevere smiled and nodded. He removed a small circular object from the package.

"Are you ready?"

She nodded.

He put the object to his lips and blew a perfect 'A'.[14] And then, he sang quietly, "Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you! Happy birthday, dear Guinevere, happy birthday to you!"

Sir Kay rolled over and started snoring. Lancelot frowned, but continued, "How old are you? How old are you? How old are you? How old are you?"

Guinevere joined him with her beautiful birdlike voice, "I'm *gwellodcwy* years old, I'm *gwellodcwy* years old, I'm *gwellodcwy* years old, I'm *gwellodcwy* years old!"

At this point, several of the knights asleep on the floor had rolled over and were snoring loud enough to raise the dead. Lancelot nodded good night, and made his way back through the window.

9 The Morning After

The morning after, there was a terrible amount of noise in the courtyard. Lancelot awoke, and stepped out to see what was happening.

Millicent stormed over to him. "I hope you're happy. We found blood in Guinevere's bed!"

Lancelot's heart jumped into his throat. "So, what are you suggesting?"

"It's obvious. She slept in a room full of wounded men last night! She must have had quite an orgy! Especially with this one!" He motioned at Sir

[14]It's a pitch pipe.

Kay, whom he had bound and gagged. "We're going to burn them both at the stake!"

"But wait, what evidence do you have?"

"This!" He held up a leather glove, covered with blood. "This was found in her bed!"

Lancelot gulped again. "But wait! Does it fit Sir Kay?"

Millicent strode over to Kay, kicked him to his feet, and untied his hands and mouth. "Put it on!" Kay reluctantly attempted to place his hand inside the glove. It was enormous compared to his fingers.

"It doesn't fit," he said.[15]

"See there," said Millicent, "It fits! Burn them both!" The crowd cheered and began building a large bonfire.

"Wait!" Lancelot cried, "I challenge you to trial by combat! If I win, you shall retract your insidious statement, and if you win, you get to burn them."

"Fair enough," grumbled Millicent contentedly.

> *The* Guide *has this to say about trial by combat:*
>
> *The usual system, which involves a jury, is problematic at best. As the defendant, your fate is decided entirely by twelve people who were not intelligent enough to get out of jury duty. Thus, trial by combat is infinitely preferable.*

So, Sir Lancelot and Sir Millicent stepped to the center of the crowd, and Lancelot drew his sword and Millicent drew his sword. And he smote him with his sword, and he smote him with his sword. And he gave him a passing grievous blow to the thigh, and he hit him over the head with the butt end of his sword.

Suddenly, a man walked between them, dressed in a fine black wool business suit. "Pardon me," he said, "but would you happen to have any Grey Poupon?"

"But of course!" they replied. Lancelot held out his hand, and a page gave him a small jar of Grey Poupon, which he handed to the man in the fine black wool business suit.

Then he smote him with his sword and he smote him with his sword, and he gave him a passing grievous blow to the side. He smote him with his

[15] This is another O.J. joke.

sword and sent him running around the courtyard until he jumped up on the wall and gave the other a blow to the foot.

Suddenly, Lancelot stopped. "Whoa! Sir Millicent," he said, "maybe you'd better, you know, examine your zipper." Sir Millicent looked down, and frowned. He turned his back to the crowd, zipped up the fly of his armor, turned around, and smote Lancelot.

Finally, Lancelot got up close to him, and gave him a passing grievous smite on the fanny. Sir Millicent fell down to the ground, crying.

Lancelot said, "It's all you deserve, saying such nasty things about the queen. Now get up, go wash your face and get ready to go back to Camelot."

And in less than half an hour, all the knights that Sir Millicent had taken prisoner were brought together, and they set off for home. Sir Millicent was bound uncomfortably and walked beside the company, because he was now Lancelot's prisoner. Lancelot and Guinevere rode in the lead.

10 The Road To Camelot

It was not long before the company arrived at the one-way turnstile. Sir Millicent gave Lancelot a smug look, but pulled the key out of his pocket and opened it up.

They decided to go back by way of the Underwater Bridge, which they reached later that afternoon. Lancelot peered in and saw the form of Sir Gawain struggling as if he were caught on something.

Sir Kay jumped up and said, "I'll handle this!" He jumped in, disappeared under the water, and after struggling for a moment, became stuck to whatever it was as well.

Sir Aggravaine then jumped in a tried to save them, but he too because entangled.

After a moment's thought, Lancelot said, "No, it couldn't be ..." He jumped in, and after a moment of bubbling around, Sir Gawain came up gasping for air, followed by Sir Kay and Sir Aggravaine. Lancelot surfaced a moment later, and dragged a huge bundle of something behind him. He dumped several tuna out of it, a herd of porpoises, and a submarine, all back into the water. He set what was left on the ground to examine.

"My God!" Guinevere said, "It's a bra! In fact, it's a Victoria's Secret Absolutely Indestructible Supercomfortable Wonder-bra! No wonder you people got stuck. It can only be untied by one who truly loves its owner!"

Then she looked at Lancelot, who was smiling shyly.

"Oh!" she said, and gave him a big hug.

A man in a small wagon was watching all of this from the other side of the bridge.

"Hey, you!" he said. "Did you by chance ride in a forklift lately?"

"Yes I did," Lancelot replied, astonished to discover yet another person who knew about the forklift. "Let me guess: You saw me on CNN?"

"No, I don't get cable."

"Well, how did you know I rode in a cart?"

"Have you checked the seat of your armor lately?"

Lancelot turned his head around, and managed to catch a glimpse of the big splotch of neon green paint that had rubbed off on his armor.

"No, no!" he cried, and began furiously wiping it off.

11 Home at Last

It took them most of the rest of the day to return to Camelot. When they arrived, King Arthur had prepared a huge feast for all of them, even Lancelot. Sir Millicent was escorted off to the king to explain what happened. Sir Kay followed to make sure he was embarrassed as thoroughly as possible. Guinevere gave Lancelot some nail polish remover, and he went off to get the rest of the neon green forklift paint off his armor.

About that time, a maiden appeared. "Hello again," she said.

"Hi," Lancelot said. "I hope you made it back to your castle okay after I left you at the Sword Bridge?"

"I did. But all was not well when I arrived. My sister is suing me. It seems she came to visit while I was gone, and while searching for me, she slipped on a piece of curdled cheesecake and nearly broke her neck." Lancelot gulped. "Now she's suing me for negligence!"[16]

"Would you like for me to champion you in a trial by combat?"

"Oh yes!" she cried.

Little did they know however, that Gawain had promised to defend the sister in the impending trial. Unfortunately, Sir Millicent knew what was going on, and made it a point to slip Gawain some sleeping potion in his wine at dinner that night.

[16] This particular episode comes from the story of Yvain, not Lancelot. But, it was such a funny twist, I couldn't help but put it in.

The next day at noon, panic ensued when the sister found out that Gawain would not wake up. Sir Millicent approached her, and offered to take his place. He was just bursting to revenge himself upon Lancelot. The sister agreed, and then entire court came down to the jousting field to watch the combat.

The two contestants came out of their locker rooms. Sir Millicent was wearing Sir Aggravaine's armor, which confused everyone, especially Sir Aggravaine. Sir Lancelot was wearing his own armor, which also confused everyone because it was new, just in from The Limited.

King Arthur spoke, "Let all hear the rules of combat: Only conventional weapons are to be used. The loser is the first one to call for mercy or to be killed or to cry 'Mamma, mamma!' and run out of the courtyard! You may begin!"

Lancelot drew his sword, and wondered who his opponent was, but Millicent, who knew exactly who his opponent was, just drew his sword. And he gave him a smite on the shoulder, and he gave him a passing grievous smite in return. He tripped him, and tried to bash him into the ground, but he got his sword stuck in the wall. He bit him in the leg and he smote him on the knee.

And suddenly, Lancelot had the other knight pinned. But Sir Millicent pulled an eggbeater out of a secret pocket in his armor, and pointed it at Lancelot.

"No!" Lancelot cried, as he backed up in terror. "You're cheating! Who are you that would dare to use an eggbeater in this honorable contest!"

"Who do you think!" Sir Millicent cried as he pulled off his helmet. He continued to bear down upon Lancelot with the eggbeater. Guinevere screamed.

Suddenly, out of the sky, a spoon came flying into the courtyard and hit Sir Millicent in the *gwellodcwy*. He passed out in a dead faint, and Lancelot quickly disarmed him and sent him off to the hospital and the sock maker to see what they could do about his severed *gwellodcwy*. King Arthur proclaimed Lancelot the winner, and everyone, except of course for the sister, cheered!

Then, the Lady of the Lake stood up and cried, "You've found it! The Holy Spoon!"

The spoon arose from the ground, and glowed with a bright light. It flew around the courtyard and landed lightly in the Lady's hand. Everyone stared in awe of the Holy Spoon.

A word from the Hitchhiker's Guide to Camelot *concerning the Holy Druidic Regalia is perhaps in order.*

The Holy Regalia currently consists of a grail, a bowl, a spear, and a sword. It was originally much more complete than this, but accidents over the years have reduced it to these four items, kept by the Lady of the Lake. Contrary to popular belief, the sword Excalibur originally belonged to King Arthur. He loaned it to the Lady while the Holy Butterknife of Bran was being polished. He also loaned her his spear Ron while the Holy Toothpick of the Raven was being sharpened. The Holy Spoon has been making its way home after being stolen some five hundred years ago. Each day, it falls from the sky and hits someone, who promptly hurtles it in some random direction. It just so happens to have landed in Camelot on this fateful day and was thereby found. The Holy Cookie-cutter of Odin[17] *is still lost.*

Another little known fact is that Stonehenge is merely the trivet to an enormous stone tea kettle that was built long ago by the great Druid wizard Freddy and has since been taken apart.

After the contest, there was great feasting and merriment as the Knights of the Round Table were holé togeddirs[18] again.

[17] Yes, I know Odin was Norse, but I don't know any other Celtic gods.

[18] A little more Malory humor.

12 Afterword

I suppose some of the jokes in this story need a little explanation.

The use of modern and futuristic weapons is an exaggeration of the "time" in which Chrétien's story takes place. The stories are based on 5th and 6th century people, but the weapons and armor are taken from Chrétien's time, several centuries later.

The food jokes have to do with the emphasis many of the stories place on lodging and spending the night somewhere. If you notice, the general action of a Chrétien story consists of: go out, ride around, fight some people, then find a place to eat dinner and sleep for the night. The Holy Regalia does consist of two eating utensils and two weapons, which indicates that the two most important events in Arthur's times were lunch and war.

The domestic flavor reveals some of the childishness of the knights. Sometimes, the combat seems very serious, and takes place over serious disputes, and swords and lances are appropriate weapons. Other times, the battles are over very stupid, childish things, and in those cases, egg beaters and dust mops and other childish weapons are appropriate.

I couldn't help but put in a word about O.J. The way everyone in America seemed to know every detail of the trial was just like how everyone in Britain seemed to know that Lancelot rode in the cart. CNN and the green paint are how I explain this mysterious knowledge.

The style of the running joke is borrowed from Douglas Adams' Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy *and the various sequels. Adams uses entrelacement to connect events in the story together, usually by having everything be caused by an astonishing coincidence. For example, there is this one "being" that is constantly being reincarnated, and every time, Arthur Dent kills him completely by accident.*

And of course, a lot of it is just something funny that came to mind as I was rereading the book.

Works Parodized

[1] Bradley, Marion. *The Mists of Avalon.* New York: Ballantine, 1982.

[2] Chrétien de Troyes, D. D. R. Owen, tr. *Arthurian Romances.* Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co. Inc., 1995.

[3] Gantz, Jeffrey, tr. *The Mabinogion.* New York: Penguin Books, 1976.

[4] Malory, Thomas, Eugène Vinaver, ed. *Works.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.