



Nicholas Conti

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

Hamalot

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Hamalot

FARCE. After Princess Opheliac encounters the ghost of Sir Gawain, she learns that he is doomed to walk the grounds of Elsenomore Castle in Hamalot, Denmark forever until he brings the Holy Grail back to England. To help Sir Gawain move on to his celestial home to be reunited with his wife and his one true love—his stallion, Mercury!—Opheliac concocts a plan to loan the Grail to a museum in Camelotte, England. Eager to display the Grail at the Camelotte Castle Museum, museum personnel and two security guards head to Hamalot to transport the Grail back to England. In Hamalot, the visitors meet Prince Hamelette and members of his royal court, but it isn't long after they arrive that the Holy Grail mysteriously disappears! This play includes a delightful royal festival scene, which provides directors with a unique opportunity to include magicians, acrobats, tumblers, jugglers, singers, dancers, clowns and/or sporting events like karate, boxing, or wrestling.

Performance Time: Approximately 75-90 minutes, depending upon length of royal festival.

Characters

(7 M, 8 F, extras)

SIR GAWAIN: Knightly ghost who cannot leave earth until the Grail is restored to England. [Pronounced Ga-wain.]

LADY SALLY: Ghost of Elsenomore and wife to Sir Gawain.

LADY GUINEVERA: Head curator of the Museum at Camelotte.

JULIE: 17-20, assistant curator.

BETH: 17-20, assistant curator.

ANNE: 17-20, assistant curator.

SIR LANCE: Knight and security escort.

SIR GALAHAD: Knight and security escort.

HAMLETTE: Young prince who resides at Elsenomore Castle in Hamalot, Denmark.

ROSENKRANZ: Young courtier and museum security guard at Elsenomore Castle.

LIEDERKRANZ: Young courtier and museum security guard at Elsenomore Castle.

YORICKY: Young courtier at Elsenomore Castle; has a dark side. [Pronounced Yore-ickee.]

MERLINA: Young lady of the court, magician, soothsayer, and assistant curator of Elsenomore Castle Museum; related to the famous magician, Merlin.

ZERLINA: Merlina's wily, younger sister; young lady of the court in Hamalot.

OPHELIAC: Youthful princess and curator of the Elsenomore Castle Museum.

EXTRAS: As guests and inhabitants of Elsenomore Castle and festival entertainers.

NOTE: Characters wear contemporary clothing.

Setting

Present. Camelotte Castle in England and Elsenomore Castle in Hamalot, Denmark.

Sets

Camelotte Castle Museum: There are some pictures of the Royals, a few fancy chairs, and an exhibit table for the Grail.

Ghostly Garden at Elsenomore Castle: There is an old garden bench and some shrubs.

Castle of Elsenomore Museum: There is an exhibit table for the Grail. Use of the fourth wall allows for minimal set pieces as works of art can be imagined.

Cemetery Tool Shed: There are wooden benches, old garden tools, and a skull hung over the door.

NOTE: The sets can be as elaborate or as simple as your budget allows. In most cases, black backdrops with a minimum of props will suffice.

Synopsis of Scenes

Scene 1: Elsenomore Castle garden in Hamalot, Denmark.

Scene 2: Camelotte Castle Museum in England.

Scene 3: Elsenomore Castle, three days later.

Scene 4: Elsenomore Castle Museum, the next night.

Scene 5: Elsenomore Castle Museum, the next day.

Scene 6: Elsenomore garden, late evening.

Scene 7: Cemetery tool shed, the same night.

Intermission

Scene 8: Elsenomore Castle Museum, the same night.

Scene 9: Castle grounds, late evening.

Scene 10: Cemetery shed, a few moments later.

Scene 11: Castle grounds, a few moments later.

Scene 12: Cemetery tool shed, a few moments later.

Scene 13: *Festival at Elsenomore Castle, the next evening.

Scene 14: Farewell dance at Elsenomore Castle, the next evening.

***NOTE:** The festival in Scene 13 can be an opportunity to involve a number of varied talents in the school or community. However, the size and duration of the extravaganza is up to the director's discretion. The festival can include sporting events like karate, boxing, and wrestling. Entertainers can include magicians, acrobats, tumblers, jugglers, singers, dancers, clowns, etc. For terrible acts, a clown can enter with a sign that reads "Booo" or a giant hook can pull entertainers off the stage. An Extra can also appear onstage holding an applause sign after each act.

Props

2 Wooden benches	Hand bell
Shrub	Toolbox
Small table for Grail	Wastebasket
Sign indicating Grail is missing	Workbench
3-4 Cell phones	Disguises for Zerlina, Merlina, and Yoricky
Large gold cup to represent Grail	Microphone
Fancy cloth	Karaoke or other equip, depending on what acts are used for the talent portion.
Punch bowl and glasses	3 Sets of handcuffs and shackles
Tray of assorted hors devours	2 Handkerchiefs
Old garden tools	
Skull	

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Sound Effects

Waltz music

Wind

Cell phone ringing

Thunder

Dance music

Fanfare

"There's nothing like the smell
of sweaty horse flesh
to rouse a man to battle!"

-Gawain

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Elsenomore Castle garden in Hamalot, Denmark. There is an old bench and a shrub. Two ghosts – Sir Gawain and his wife Sally – are seated onstage.)

GAWAIN: Sally, my love! It's good to see you again. You're looking as beautiful as ever!

SALLY: You mean for a spook, my handsome knight.

GAWAIN: Actually, yes. A little peaked perhaps, but still lovely!

SALLY: Thank you, dearest! So do you, my sweet!

GAWAIN: Look lovely!? Thanks, but I doubt it! Just look at my hair. It's thinning rapidly. Why, it's running away from my forehead like the ocean from the beach at low tide!

SALLY: No, you old goose...*peaked!* As for your hair, it's just as full and silvery as ever, my dear.

GAWAIN: Thank you, you beautiful spook, you. Any word from the other side about when they'll let me pass into the next whatever-you-call-that-thing?

SALLY: "Continuum," Sir Gawain, my true knight. 'Fraid not. Bunch of procrastinators up there!

(Lights flicker to indicate annoyance.)

GAWAIN: Ah, my Sally, when will they ever relent? Can't they realize there's no possible way I can get the Grail back to Camelot and England.

SALLY: Never! They're adamant. For your sin was great in their eyes! The only thing that will guarantee your salvation and make them happy, is when you get the Grail back to England. Then you, my love, will be restored to me.

GAWAIN: I long for that day...but there's no way!

SALLY: Keep the faith, baby! *(They high-five.)* I'll pray for a miracle.

GAWAIN: Me, too. How can they keep us spirits apart? I only went with my gut, my heart, my love for you! I'm guilty of no great sin...just one small indiscretion. When after all my searching, adventure, and battles to capture the Grail, my faithful stallion and I—a horse, after all, is a knight's best friend—with what we considered an opportunity for a brief respite from our fatigue, decided to stay here at the castle to mend and to woo you, my love! *(Suddenly realizes his error and corrects himself.)* Me! Not my faithful stallion, though he would if he could! You were the very highlight of my quest after my capture of the Holy Grail. My stay which would last an eternity!

SALLY: Oh, yes, my love! And I grew to love the beast, your trusty stallion Mercury.

GAWAIN: Neigh! Neigh! Never a beast, but a fine horse. "Oh my kingdom for a horse!" Is he with you up there?

SALLY: No, Gawain, I inquired for you just last week and was told they send animals, even of royal blood, to a proud place, a happy place, called the Royal Animus Paradiso Limbus, where they're free to graze among the clouds all day long. *(Aside.)* Besides, I'm allergic. And if you want to know the truth, I always hated that horsy smell.

GAWAIN: I'm hopeful he'll be quite happy there.

SALLY: I'm sure he will be, darling. *(Waltz music.)* Ah, good! I asked my dear friend up there to play a sweet old waltz, so we could reminisce in three-quarter time. Gawain, my sweet, would you do me the great honor of dancing with me?

GAWAIN: My pleasure, my dear Sally, my greatest love... *(Aside.)* ...next to Mercury.

(They dance an eerie waltz. Suddenly a wind comes up, pulling Sally offstage.)

SALLY: Oh, dear Gawain! They're calling me, nay pulling me back, which is a sign my time is up. *(Aside.)* Gosh! And I just got here! Let me double-check my Timex... *(Tries to check her watch in the wind.)* ...which is never...well, hardly ever wrong. Oh, never mind! If this wind wants me so badly, it can just have me. So long my sweeeeet! *(She is swept offstage by the wind.)*

GAWAIN: *(Calls.)* So long, my love! *(Aside.)* And just when we were having such a good time! Golly, but I miss my faithful stallion Mercury! *(He sits dejected with his head in his hands.)* There's nothing like the smell of sweaty horse flesh to rouse a man to battle!

(Opheliac enters DSL. She is on her nightly walk round Elsenomore Castle. Suddenly she sees Gawain the ghost and is startled.)

OPHELIA: *(Melodramatic.)* Oh my, not a ghost! Not a real ghost! Surely, it's my imagination playing tricks on me! Heaven protect me!

GAWAIN: Oh, quit carrying on, milady. Around here there are ghosts aplenty. And I'm just a mere royal ghost—a knightly ghost who appears at night. And I wouldn't hurt a flea. And I actually used to be quite the ladies man!

OPHELIA: Oh good! I've quickly gotten over my fright and must inquire...why so forlorn, sir ghost? *(Doesn't wait for his answer.)* Puleeze! Don't degrade yourself to a place of low esteem! Not everyone can be a ghost, my liege. Now then, allow me to introduce myself, for I am, and have always been, for as long as I remember at least, simply called Opheliac, and of royal blood and distantly related to Ophelia of old. So, how do you do, *my man?*!

(She offers him her hand. He kisses her hand, but she cannot feel it.)

GAWAIN: There, now I have done my duty. Did you feel that? *(Opheliac shakes her head no.)* Oh, nuts! Allow me to

introduce myself. I'm Gawain, emphasis on the "Ga" 'cause I was gaga over most of the pretty ladies in King Arthur's court. Anyway, I was one of the knights of old sent out hundreds of years ago from Camelot in England during King Arthur's time in search of the Holy Grail!

OPHELIA: What an honor indeed, sir, to meet such a distinguished knight.

GAWAIN: "Extinguished" is more like my current state, but thank you for those words of praise. Allow me to proffer a question...did you know that I, and my trusty stallion Mercury, rescued the Grail, and on the way home to merry old England and Camelot, decided to rest here at Elsenomore Castle, and because I found everyone so hospitable, decided—after I fell in love with Lady Sally, of course—to make this my home?

OPHELIA: Touching, Sir Gawain, very touching. And that's how the Grail came to be here...at Hamalot?

GAWAIN: Yes, indeed. But I now pay for my indiscretion, due to the fact that I never, ever, took the Grail back to England. So the way things stand—horrors!—I'm doomed to walk these grounds forever and cannot join my dear wife, Sally, and visit with my dear stallion Mercury. (*Goes back and forth.*) Gosh, I love the smell of horses! But I also love the smell of forsythia here in spring. But I must find salvation so I can move to the next dimension.

OPHELIA: How, my dear knight?

GAWAIN: There's only one way...the hard way! When times are hard, the hard get going. I made that up, my own little motto. So I must get the Grail, which is in this castle, and go back to the Camelot of old in England, so I can join my wife Sally... (*Points up.*) ...up there! Meanwhile, she suffers my loss... (*Aside.*) ...and so does my horse.

OPHELIA: Sir, allow me to think this over and see if I can come up with a solution.

GAWAIN: Milady, I will be eternally, and I mean eternally, indebted to you if you do.

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OPHELIA: Sleep tight, friend knight, till tomorrow night.

GAWAIN: Goodnight, milady!

(Blackout.)

Scene 2

(Camelotte Castle Museum in England. An empty museum display where the Grail should be displayed is highlighted with a spotlight and there is a sign indicating that the Grail is missing. In the dark, Guinevera, Anne, Beth, and Julie enter, talking. Guinevera carries her cell phone. Lights come up slowly to reveal them standing DSR.)

GUINEVERA: So, ladies, as we said at our last meeting, something needs to be done about our missing Grail. We absolutely have to resolve this emptiness, this hole in our past. Just look at this miserable display lacking its sole occupant. The Holy Grail of our great forefather King Arthur, which not only occupies a sad, lonely place in our hearts but gives us a...

JULIE: Forlorn...

ANNE: Barren...

BETH: Destitute feeling.

GUINEVERA: It's a pity that Sir Gawain opted for a pit stop at Elsenomore Castle, where the knight fell like a vassal to the wiles of luscious Lady Sally in that castle. Seems he dallied with Sally too long and matrimony and acrimony became his swan song!

BETH: If we could only call them up and make a deal...

ANNE: Say, borrow it on a lend-lease basis...

JULIE: Just for a short period of time...

BETH: Like we talked about...

GUINEVERA: Say, for a year.

BETH: Perhaps we should make that call right now.

ANNE: Yes, great idea.

JULIE: Brilliant.

GUINEVERA: Let's do it. I just happen to have the number.
Here goes.

(Guinevera dials her cell phone. Lights up on Opheliac as she enters DSL. Opheliac's cell phone rings. She stops and answers it.)

OPHELIAC: *(Into phone. Like a recording.)* Hello, you've reached Opheliac, the curator of the museum at the Castle of Elsenomore in Hamalot, Denmark. This is not a recording, so please tell me what's on your mind! Thank you.

GUINEVERA: *(Into phone.)* Yes. Hello. This is a stroke of luck. We didn't know if it was too late in the evening to call or not, but just a short time ago we discussed a little plan, and we were hoping we could launch it with some help from our Danish cousins...right, ladies? *(She holds the phone up in the direction of Anne, Beth, and Julie for their responses. The Girls adlib answers and giggle.)* Girls, please! *(Into phone.)* They're very enthusiastic. We all are.

OPHELIAC: *Launch* it? What is it? A rocket? *(Guinevera and Girls laugh hysterically.)* What exactly are you launching? You haven't said who you are or why you're calling.

GUINEVERA: Oh, I am sorry! I thought you would recognize me by the sonorous and mellifluous sonority of my voice. You see, I'm interviewed frequently on the BBC.

OPHELIAC: Sorry, no...perhaps you called the wrong number. This is Hamalot in...Denmark, you know.

GUINEVERA: Yes, of course. In that event, I'll just have to introduce myself. I am Lady Guinevera, curator of the museum at the Castle at Camelotte, in what some call merry old England. I can't believe you didn't know me by the mellow sound of my melodious voice. At any rate, these are my assistant curators. This is Julie, Beth, and Anne. *(To Girls.)* Say one big "hello," girls!

(Guinevera holds the phone toward the Girls.)

BETH/ANNE/JULIE: *(Shout.)* One big hello! *(They giggle.)*

OPHELIAC: *(Into phone.)* Hello, ladies.

GUINEVERA: (*Into phone.*) You'll notice they're very literal...now then, the reason we're calling is...you're not going to believe this, Opheliac, but...

OPHELIA: Yes? Yes?

GUINEVERA: Wait until you hear our great idea. Right, ladies?

(*Girls adlib response "Great idea," "Right on," etc. and then giggle.*)

OPHELIA: (*Into phone, losing patience.*) What in heavens name is it?

GUINEVERA: No need to be testy, my dear, it's all in good fun. We wondered what you would think of having an exhibit of the Holy Grail at our place, which we understand you have at your place. Purely on loan, of course...say for about a year at our space?

OPHELIA: Well, I'll be spooked! You're not going to believe this, Guinevera, but I was going to call you tomorrow, first thing, to see if you wanted to do the same thing.

GUINEVERA: This is a coincidence and surely bodes well for all of us.

OPHELIA: Perhaps it was ESP!

GUINEVERA: (*Jokes.*) Oh, I thought that was banned for contaminating the drinking water.

(*Guinevera and the Girls break into laughter.*)

OPHELIA: What...?

GUINEVERA: Just a little Brit wit. (*Laughs.*)

OPHELIA: What is your plan then?

GUINEVERA: Well, these three ladies, my worthy assistant curators, thought they should come along with me as security. And we'd like to bring two of our most trusted latter-day knights – traveling by daylight of course – to pick up the Holy Grail – with tight security and as much secrecy as possible – and take it back to Camelotte.

OPHELIA: Sounds like a brilliant idea. And, naturally, you would be so, like, welcomed as our guests at the Castle at Elsenomore in the quaint hamlet of Hamalot in Denmark, and honored by Prince Hamlette, who prefers to be called simply "Ham."

GUINEVERA: That is a mouthful. Ham it shall be!

OPHELIA: And perhaps you would like to stay for awhile in our very own haunted castle with our resident nightly ghosts—two at last count, one an actual knight.

GUINEVERA: I don't think I could tolerate a daytime ghost, in any case. How colorful. And a bit scary.

OPHELIA: Oh. I wouldn't concern myself with that. The ghosts, so far at least, have been well behaved.

GUINEVERA: Certainly glad to hear that. The thing we can't tolerate here is a misbehaving ectoplasm!

OPHELIA: Yes, I, like, totally agree with you. Why don't you plan to stay for awhile?

GUINEVERA: *(To Girls.)* Ladies! Opheliac, for that's her name, is asking us to stay for awhile and not just pop in for a quickie visit.

BETH/ANNE/JULIE: Oh, yes! Yes! *(They giggle.)*

GUINEVERA: *(Into phone.)* Yes, Opheliac, my lady, they are to a man—excuse me, to a woman—ecstatic about your invitation.

GUINEVERA: I dare say, we can catch a flight and be there in three magical days. Does that suit you, my dear?

OPHELIA: To a "T," my Lady Guinevera. *(Thinks.)* Better still...a small ball in your honor.

GUINEVERA: Excellent, and let me congratulate you on your quick wit and good humor. I wish mine were half as witty as yours.

BETH/ANNE/JULIE: *(Shout.)* Then you'd be known as a half-wit! *(They giggle.)*

GUINEVERA: Girls, please! *(Into phone.)* Opheliac, I hope you don't think we're totally daft. Goodbye. And we are looking forward to meeting all of you.

OPHELIAC: No, only half daft! Just kidding, of course. You sound like a fun group. I'm sure we'll all have a wonderful time. And your congratulations are warmly received, but, ha-ha, better wait till you get to know me better. Bon voyage! We'll anxiously be awaiting your arrival. Bye.
(Hangs up. Lights fade on Opheliac DSL.)

GUINEVERA: Girls! Isn't this a bit of joyous news? To achieve the loan of the Grail, the curator of the museum, Lady Opheliac, herself, is inviting us to come to the Castle of Elsenomore in Hamalot, Denmark and meet Prince Hamlette. I've heard that his friends and family sometimes call him Prince, because of his carriage.

JULIE: What's wrong with his carriage?

GUINEVERA: No, no, dear Julie, the way he deports himself.

BETH: I would think that that would be easy to fix.

ANNA: Perhaps a masseuse.

JULIE: No, I've been told chiropractors are excellent for that sort of thing.

ANNE: What he needs is one of those Asian masseuses that walks on your back and solar plexus.

BETH: Like a sumo wrestler—that would deport him, I'm sure.

(All laugh hysterically.)

GUINEVERA: Leave it to you girls to twist everything.

JULIE: But that wouldn't cure his carriage.

ANNE: Or his department.

GUINEVERA: If you don't stop, I'll just have to go to Hamalot by myself.

BETH/ANNE/JULIE: Oh, no!

ANNE: We were just having a little fun.

GUINEVERA: Well, if you promise to behave then.

BETH/ANNE/JULIE: Of course. *(They giggle.)*

JULIE: When do we leave, Guinevera—or shall we call you the Foxy Lady Curator of the renowned Camelotte Castle Museum?

GUINEVERA: Don't you dare. I wouldn't want Sir Lance to hear you call me that.

BETH: *(To Anne and Julie.)* See, I told you the kitten is smitten.

GUINEVERA: Never...well, perhaps a little. He does have great abs, and of course, a nice humble way about him.

JULIE: And the fact that he's a *hunk* doesn't enter into the picture.

GUINEVERA: Oh, is he? I really hadn't noticed.

ANNE: Ha! When he's around you don't see or hear anybody else.

GUINEVERA: Not true, because I can always hear your irritating voice, which wakes me into a harsh reality.

(Lance and Galahad enter DSR.)

LANCE: Greetings, ladies of Camelotte!

GALAHAD: Yes, greetings!

(Lance and Galahad bow.)

LANCE: And whose irritating voice did I hear, may I ask?

GUINEVERA: Oh, it's just a girl thing, but since you asked, it's Anne's. She's the one.

LANCE: *(Playfully.)* But I always found her voice as soft as the summer rain in Camelotte's beautiful castle garden.

GUINEVERA: Lance, you always say things to make me jealous. Some day you'll succeed, and I will leave you for another, as loyal as I seem to be.

LANCE: Only *seem* to be? Fie! I expect my lady to be loyal no matter what.

GUINEVERA: Lance, darling, let's not argue over trivial things.

LANCE: I won't, if you won't.

GUINEVERA: I promise. Now then, gentlemen, we need your presence, protection, and perspicacity in these security matters to pull off our operation, "Mission Possible" – our secret journey to Denmark.

GALAHAD: We're at your service, Lady Guinevera. Your wish is our command. So lay it on us, foxy lady. What is our mission?

GUINEVERA: Call me anything but neh-ver "foxy lady," if you wish to gain my favor! Gentlemen, in precisely 72 hours, at 8 p.m., we shall travel by plane on a very important mission: The temporary retrieval of the Grail, which was recovered by the famed knight Sir Gawain many years ago, and now is in the possession of Lady Opheliac, museum curator at the Castle of Elsenomore in Hamalot, Denmark, where Prince Hamlette, who prefers to be called "Ham," is the prince—and with a fine carriage, I understand.

LANCE: Yes, word of his fine carriage has carried across the channel to us.

GALAHAD: Indeed his fine carriage is known and respected all over Europe.

LANCE: *(To Guinevera.)* Now then, shall I bring my lance, shield, sword, and crest on operation Mission Possible?

GALAHAD: *(To Guinevera.)* And should I likewise bring sword, shield, and crest?

GUINEVERA: Gentlemen! There's to be no violence. This is a goodwill mission. We're merely borrowing the Grail on loan for perhaps a year and putting it on display in our own museum for all of England and the world to see.

LANCE: How noble, my lady. But the items mentioned are merely on the letterheads of the stationery that you gave me for Christmas.

GALAHAD: And with which Beth, my betrothed, gave me for Christmas, and which I shall dutifully use to write my mum while in Hamalot.

LANCE: Ditto. My mum likes to hear from me when I'm out of town.

GUINEVERA: Very good then. Well then, ladies, are you excited?

JULIE: I can't wait! And hope that there are some unattached gentlemen there...with good carriages, of course.

ANNE: And abs! That would be cool!

BETH: I'm quite happy with my dude and knight, Sir Galahad.

GALAHAD: And I with you, my love.

(Galahad and Beth embrace.)

GUINEVERA: What about you, Lance? Are you quite happy with your Guinevera?

LANCE: For me, there shall almost never be another.

(Lance and Guinevera embrace.)

GUINEVERA: Only almost? *(Nonchalantly.)* Oh, well, then I shall go ahead and make reservations for our flight in three days. Why don't we all joyously pack our things and prepare ourselves for Mission Possible and catch some ZZZZ's?

(All adlib approval "Way to go," etc. and give each other high-fives. Blackout.)

Hamalot

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Scene ୩

(AT RISE: *Elsenomore Castle Museum in Hamalot, Denmark, three days later. A spotlight highlights a simple display for the Grail. The Grail, a large gold cup, sits on a table and is covered with a fancy cloth. Guinevera, Julie, Anne, Beth, Lance, and Galahad enter and are greeted by Opheliac, Merlina, Zerlina, Ham, Rosenkranz, Liederkrantz, and Yoricky.*)

HAM: Greetings to you all, and welcome to Hamalot! I do hope this handsome troupe of curators had a smooth flight with a gentle tailwind. I'm Ham, your host—short for Hamlette—prince and sovereign of this country and of Elsenomore Castle, which you are standing in, which is in Hamalot, Denmark. Renowned and made famous during Shakespeare's time in a quite famous play with lots of swordplay, deaths, intrigue, witches, poisonings, etcetera... (*Aside.*) ...none of which occur nor exist in this day and age. (*Lights flicker.*) We have a remarkable history, at least as remarkable as Camelotte, so I bid you welcome, my cousins of Camelotte, your presence here is a pleasure to us all. Please consider the castle your home away from home, ghosts and all...

GUINEVERA: I'm Lady Guinevera, curator of the magnificent museum in Camelotte, England. Allow me to act as spokesperson for our troop and say that our flight and journey—though exciting in anticipation of our quest and visit with you—was otherwise uneventful.

HAM: I'm glad to hear it.

OPHELIA: Guinevera, you do our prince a disservice if you do not mention his outstanding carriage. I might say he expects it.

GUINEVERA: (*To Ham.*) I'm sorry, but because of the rush of the moment, it slipped my mind, but as soon as we stepped

through the glorious castle entrance and I beheld you, I realized immediately what a marvelous carriage you have, Prince Ham. And I'm sorry I didn't speak of it sooner.

HAM: It sounds so vain, I know, but it really is so. And as they say...if you have it, flaunt it... *(He flaunts his carriage.)* ...and I do whenever I can.

GUINEVERA: You have style and grace, your majesty—the things I most admire in a Ham of your bearing!

HAM: I appreciate your honesty, and must say I'm struck by your attributes.

GUINEVERA: I know it must sound vain of me now, but most men are.

HAM: I'm not surprised.

OPHELIAC: It's marvelous you two...getting on so brilliantly.

HAM: Yes!

GUINEVERA: Yes!

OPHELIAC: The servants, I understand, have shown you your lodgings, and you are now ready for the grand festivities we have planned.

GUINEVERA: Yes, milady, and the accommodations are fit for a lady such as myself and the other ladies and brave knights. *(Indicates them.)* Allow me to introduce Julie, Beth, Anne and our knights, Sir Lance and Sir Galahad. How grand it is to be here, and we're all so well pleased, aren't we, ladies and knights?

BETH/ANNE/JULIE/GALAHAD/LANCE: Yes! Well pleased!

OPHELIAC: Allow me to introduce our marvelous entourage. Lady Merlina... *(She bows.)* ...our resident sorceress and psychic, and her lovely sister Zerlina. *(Zerlina curtsies.)* And the gentlemen—Sir Rosenkranz, Sir Liederkranz, and Yoricky, a sage and very funny funster—excellent gentlemen all, and quite adroit with the ladies, aren't you, gentlemen?

ROSENKRANZ/LIEDERKRANZ/YORICKY: *(Bow.)* Indeed!

OPHELIA: If you'll kindly step this way... *(They follow her to the table USC.)* ...I shall unveil the Holy Grail to you all.
(In the following exchange, Ham, Opheliac, and Merlina try to be convincing.)

HAM: But wait before you unveil it!

OPHELIA: You mean?

HAM: Yes, of course.

OPHELIA: The holy incantation.

HAM: Of course.

OPHELIA: Merlina, if you please!

MERLINA: The...uh...oh, yes, of course, it almost slipped my mind...

OPHELIA: Please use the formal one.

HAM: Yes, of course, Merlina. It's, you know, a bit more poetic.

MERLINA: Ah, of course...shazam. As up, up, and away we go today, with the sun in the east, the moon in the west, we unveil the Holy Grail the way we know best!

(Slowly, carefully, and with much drama, Merlina removes the Grail from the table. She then kneels with it, and holds it up high, trying to make it look impressive. Lights flash and thunder rolls.)

GUINEVERA: *(Amazed.)* Wow! Such an inspired ceremony. Is it always necessary to go through it? And what was that thunder and lightning about?

(Ham is visibly shook up from the lightning and thunder.)

HAM: *(Stutters.)* Er...uh...I would say perhaps you...er...shouldn't do that er...he... *(Looks up.)* ...might object.

GUINEVERA: Don't worry. After that thunderous display, I wouldn't think of it.

(All who handle the Grail immediately sense its power and mysticism and seem reluctant to pass it on.)

MERLINA: *(To Guinevera.)* Here you are. *(Merlina carefully, reluctantly hands the Grail to Guinevera to look at.)* Please handle it carefully.

GUINEVERA: Thank you. Of course, Merlina. I, of all people, know its worth.

(Guinevera fondles the Grail, caresses it, and then carefully and reluctantly hands it to Julie.)

JULIE: Oh, thank you so much. I've waited for this a long time!

(Julie also fondles and caresses the Grail and begrudgingly tries to hand it off to Beth.)

BETH: Here, I'll take that! *(Unlike her normal self, Beth becomes a bit out of control and grabs the Grail away from Julie.)* Oh, isn't it magnificent! *(She strokes it, polishes it with her sleeve, and refuses to let go of it.)* Magnificent!

ANNE: It's my turn now, Beth! Please let me have it.

(Anne reaches for the Grail, but Beth refuses to let go.)

OPHELIA: It does, on occasion, seem to cast a spell. Just ignore it.

GUINEVERA: I'll settle this!

(Guinevera starts a tug of war. Guinevera, Beth, Anne, and Julie are all tugging at the Grail.)

OPHELIA: Ladies! Ladies! Please! Perhaps your knights would like to see it.

LANCE: No, I pass. It seems to have a mind of its own.

OPHELIA: What about you, Sir Galahad?

GALAHAD: It's just a tad too supernatural and temperamental for me. I'll pass.

OPHELIAC: Hand it back, ladies, please, or I shall call the guard! *(Aside.)* Just kidding!

(As a group, Guinevera, Julie, Beth, and Anne hand the Grail back to Opheliac.)

GUINEVERA/JULIE/BETH/ANNE: We're sorry!

JULIE: It definitely has a mind of its own.

BETH: It's not of this world.

ANNE: It's mystical.

GUINEVERA: I hope it lets us take it back to England with us.

LANCE: I'll see to it.

GALAHAD: And I, Sir Galahad, am afraid of nothing.

LANCE: That goes for me, too.

GUINEVERA: Neither of you were eager to even touch it.

LANCE: Merely out of respect.

GALAHAD: Yes, respect, not fear.

LANCE: No! Not fear.

Both: We're afraid of nothing.

HAM: Excellent, for I, too, am afraid of nothing and have great respect for the Grail. Now then, I have great things planned for our cousins: a dance, a ball for all, and a tour of our world-famous Museum, accompanied with all of our renowned hospitality. But the greatest prize of all...the loan of the Grail!

ALL: Yay! Hooray!

HAM: And now you're all invited, tomorrow night at eight, to our Royal Small Ball in the museum. Wear your dancing shoes and dress down, one and all! Jeans or whatever you prefer. Let's have some fun and get to know each other better!

(Blackout.)

Hamalot

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Scene 4

(AT RISE: Castle of Elsenomore Museum, 8 p.m., the next night. The Museum is set for the Royal Small Ball. There is a punch bowl and glasses and assorted hors d'oeuvres set out. Music is playing and everyone is dancing except Zerlina, who is sitting on the sidelines without a dance partner. Ham and Guinevera dance DSC.)

HAM: *(To Guinevera.)* Well, what do you think of Hamalot, milady?

GUINEVERA: Oh, please, Ham. Please, just call me Guin. And, oh, I just love it! It's so quaint!

HAM: I'm glad, because I've found I'm deeply attracted to you, Guin. And I do hope you like it here.

GUINEVERA: And I'm attracted to you too, Ham. And I love it here.

HAM: That makes me ecstatic, Guin.

(Ham twirls Guinevera away. Lance and Opheliac dance DSC.)

LANCE: *(To Opheliac.)* You have a certain magnetism that immediately attracts me to you.

OPHELIAC: And yours is an animal magnetism that makes me want to go, "grrrrrh!"

LANCE: It's my musk. And "grrrrrh" right back! But especially the effect of this beautiful castle, country air, our chemistry, your beauty and most beautiful name...Opheliac!

OPHELIAC: It's derived from an old relative, Ophelia, who met a sad fate and passed on at a very young age with a broken heart. But that's a long story, and for another time.

LANCE: Yes, another time. Let's enjoy the night, the music, and the dance.

OPHELIAC: And each other.

LANCE: Yes! And each other!

OPHELIA: Are you spoken for?

LANCE: In word only.

OPHELIA: Translation, please.

LANCE: Wish I could. But it was spoken in vague terms and doesn't seem to be as loyal a relationship as it ought to be, even though it's nothing unseemly.

OPHELIA: In that case, you appear to be fair game. Fair game...fairly well taken could prove a fair match if both are playing fairly.

LANCE: Aye! That's the rub.

OPHELIA: So let the game begin!

LANCE: Yes! Match, set!

OPHELIA: Dance on! And on! Till the night wanes...but never my knight, Sir Lancelot!

(Lancelot whirls Ophelia away. Julie and Liederkrantz dance DSC.)

JULIE: *(To Liederkrantz.)* Do you come here often?

LIEDERKRANTZ: I live here!

JULIE: Just thought I'd be unoriginal...to break through the Danish ice.

LIEDERKRANTZ: You'll find we're very warm and passionate people. No Danish ice between these walls.

JULIE: And you'll find me a very warm and passionate person also.

LIEDERKRANTZ: I could tell from the moment I laid eyes on you.

JULIE: And I on you. With me it's always an eye toward the future.

LIEDERKRANTZ: Well then, let's join forces and show them all how to dance with warmth and compassion.

(With exaggerated warmth, Liederkrantz and Julie dance away. Anne and Rosenkrantz dance DSC.)

ROSENKRANTZ: *(To Anne.)* You look stunning, milady!

ANNE: Thank you. I don't hear words like that very often.
And might I say, you are quite the handsomest of men. And we do make a charming couple.

ROSENKRANZ: Indeed, we do. I like a woman who senses her origins and sensibilities and is original.

ANNE: I think it wonderful after having traveled hundreds of miles to have found you in this old but beautiful castle.

ROSENKRANZ: I wish we could dance till the walls crumble and the castle tumbles.

(Anne and Rosenkranz wildly dance away. Beth and Galahad dance DSC.)

BETH: *(To Galahad.)* My true knight, you are the handsomest of all the dudes here.

GALAHAD: And you, milady, the foxiest of ladies.

BETH: Thanks for that, and don't you forget it! I'm so glad we came together on this exciting Mission Possible for the Grail 'cause I'd hate to see you bamboozled by this bevy of buxom women who'd stop at nothing to slow-dance with you.

GALAHAD: Perish the thought, my dear Beth, my thoughts never stray far from you.

BETH: What do you mean by "far"?

GALAHAD: When I'm hungry and my mind is set on a 2-inch thick steak and the steak house is far...very far.

BETH: Pretend I'm your 2-inch steak. If you're hungry, you can nibble on my ear as we dance.

GALAHAD: Brilliant idea!

(Galahad chews on her ear like it's a steak. Just then, Zerlina, who has been sitting on the sidelines without a dance partner, boldly cuts in.)

ZERLINA: Sir knight, may I have the honor to dance with such a gallant and handsome gentleman? I know it's a bit unethical, but after all, this is a new age.

GALAHAD: Well, being a knight, and since the modern rules of chivalry seem to have dramatically changed, and you're not bad looking...dear Beth, you'll just have to excuse me, for in the name of modern chivalry, I'm compelled to dance with this damsel...who is named...?

ZERLINA: Zerlina, sweetie. Zerlina, it rhymes with farina.

BETH: (*Angry.*) I've got your farina, Zerlina!

(*Beth tries to shove Zerlina away.*)

GALAHAD: Is that anyway to treat our hosts?

BETH: Yes, darlin', when the host is trying to steal my betroth.

(*Beth grabs Zerlina and wrenches her out of Galahad's arms.*)

ZERLINA: Let go, you, you so-called *lady* of Camelotte! You've met your match, for I'm a lady of Hamalot! (*Zerlina shoves Beth away and takes back her man.*) And according to the modern code of chivalry, if I ask him to dance, then he must dance with me as the host of the aforementioned hosting castle of Elsenomore in the quaint kingdom of Hamalot. So scram-a-lot!

BETH: (*Proudly.*) Over my dead carcass, for I have tough Roman blood generously mixed with Viking and a smattering of Celtic running through my pure and wholesome body.

(*Beth pushes Zerlina off the dance floor and then calmly dances DSC with Galahad, who is amazed that his woman is so brave.*)

GALAHAD: My lady, how gallant in battle you were! Why you keep getting dearer and dearer to my heart and soul.

BETH: And you to mine, my sweet knight! *(Threatening.)*
And don't you forget it, my sweet!

(Zerlina is standing off to the side pouting.)

ZERLINA: *(Shouts.)* Be careful, Sir Galahad, or I'll have my
sister Merlina put a spell on you and turn you into a frog!

GALAHAD: I hope a bullfrog!

BETH: Pay no attention, my knight. Let's just dance till dawn!

(Galahad and Beth dance away. Merlina and Yoricky dance DSC.)

YORICKY: Merlina, I find it enchanting that you're distantly
related to Merlin the magician of Camelotte. All this time
living under the same roof as I, you lovely creature, you.
And to think I never knew that about you...and that you
have many of his powers. How fascinating!

MERLINA: Yes, my family has lived in the quaint kingdom of
Hamalot for hundreds of years. But tread carefully, for I
could turn you into a frog.

YORICKY: Can you make it a bullfrog? I always wanted to
have a great bass voice and go "rib-bit" all night long,
attracting all the ladies in the pond.

MERLINA: What would you be happiest being? Yoricky the
gentleman, or Yoricky the bullfrog?

YORICKY: Obviously, Yoricky the gentleman, so I can get to
know you better.

MERLINA: All kidding aside, if you misbehave, I can turn
you into a bullfrog with the snap of my dainty little fingers
and with a few incantations.

YORICKY: I'm sure, but as a gentleman, I'd enjoy your sweet
embrace much more.

MERLINA: Hmm...I like your plan better.

YORICKY: So do I, and frankly, we seem to be getting along
swimmingly. Rib-bit! Rib-bit!

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(Yoricky and Merlina happily dance away as lights fade to black.)

Scene 5

(AT RISE: Castle of Elsenomore Museum, the next day. Opheliac and Ham enter DSR, leading Guinevera, Anne, Julie, Beth, Lancelot, and Galahad on a tour of the museum. "Artwork" is displayed on fourth wall.)

OPHELIA: Just keep close so you can all hear us, please! And if you'll look to your right... *(Points toward audience. Indicates a "painting.")* The first ancestral picture we see is that of Hamlet's father, King of Denmark. These are all during Hamlet's time hundreds of years ago.

HAM: If you look carefully at my face, you'll see a resemblance. Notice the good looks and brilliant eyes...yes, overall, a quite a handsome countenance.

OPHELIA: *(Indicates next "painting.")* Next, we have the Queen—Hamlet's mother, Gertrude—and a quite attractive woman was she. So desirable that Claudius helped himself to his brother, the King's, wife. And so on one dark evening when the King was asleep, he poured hemlock poison into his ear, causing him to simply die, while his brother gained a wife, changed his life, and thus became King Claudius of Denmark with little strife!

HAM: Note how I have an even stronger resemblance to the handsomest and bravest of the brave, Prince Hamlet himself.

OPHELIA: *(Indicates next "painting.")* Step this way, please. Here is my very distant relative, extremely attractive and with a beautiful smile...just like mine really. We apparently share many of the same attributes: intelligence, beauty, and a winning personality.

HAM: But with one major exception—she is not mad like her ancestor.

OPHELIA: Thank heaven for that. Now it's back to Ham.

HAM: Just call me the Prince of Hams.

OPHELIAC: I'm not going to touch that one. Now then, if you would all walk this way.

(Opheliac mimics Groucho's walk and flicks an imaginary cigar. The group mimics this. They continue looking at the imaginary pictures from USL while moving USC.)

HAM: Now, the one with the grim face is King Claudius, who, as Opheliac already mentioned, poured Hemlock poison down the reigning king's ear, causing him to expire and leave this mortal sphere. Thus, he became king and married Gertie, but later he got his. It's not easy being a monarch, even deadly at times!

OPHELIAC: Next, we have the piece de resistance! The very highlight of the tour—the Holy Grail—sometimes referred to as the Sangreal, solid gold, and believed to be the cup from which Christ and the Apostles drank from at the Last Supper.

(Everyone "oohs" and "ahs.")

HAM: Isn't it beautiful? Almost surreal! But sorry to say, our little museum tour has come to an end. But the exciting news is...everyone, follow me into the banquet hall for a feast suitable for a king and his guests!

(Everyone starts to exit SL. Blackout.)

Scene 6

(AT RISE: Elsenomore Castle garden, late evening. Opheliac and Lance are strolling through the garden. The ghosts of Sir Gawain and Lady Sally are sitting forlornly on a bench.)

OPHELIA: My dear Lance, what do you think of Elsenomore, Hamalot, Denmark, and the people you've met here?

LANCE: In a word...cool!

OPHELIA: I like your attitude. You're so "today." But I do want your honest opinion.

LANCE: Well, I am being honest...well, almost. To tell you the truth, I'm getting strange vibes from that Sir Yoricky and his lady friend Merlina just by the way they went slinking around the dance floor and the curious way they stared at the Grail as if transfixed by it. Besides which...I heard she has magical powers, which makes me suspicious of her intentions.

OPHELIA: She is, after all, distantly related to your court magician Merlin of the Round Table days, who they say had remarkable magical powers. So we should keep her under surveillance so she won't find herself in difficulty or get into any supernatural mischief.

LANCE: You're a wise and lovely woman.

OPHELIA: And you, sir, a charming knight.

(While strolling, Lance and Opheliac suddenly discover Sir Gawain and Lady Sally sitting forlornly on a bench.)

GAWAIN: *(To Opheliac.)* Oh, there you are, my dear. I see you've brought a friend.

OPHELIAC: Yes...and I would like you, Sir Gawain and Sally, to meet Sir Lancelot. Lance is a knight from Camelotte, your home town.

GAWAIN: *(To Lance.)* Pleased to meet you, sir. Are you by any chance related to my good but long-dead friend Lancelot?

LANCE: Distantly...yes!

GAWAIN: This *is* a small world!

SALLY: It's a pleasure to meet you, Lance.

LANCE: I'm overwhelmed with emotion to meet two ghosts from the past and one actually from Camelotte.

GAWAIN: I'm sure. Opheliac, I'm getting anxious. Can you tell me...were you successful with your scheme to have the Grail returned to England, so that I may join Sally in her special spatial space?

OPHELIAC: Yes! Oh, yes! But with a slight hitch—it can only be on a yearly loan basis. Do you think it will be acceptable to your superiors so that you can move on to your just rewards?

GAWAIN: Great news! What do you say, Sally?

SALLY: I'm ecstatic!

GAWAIN: I'll bring it before the heavenly knights of the Round Table. I'm sure they'll agree.

SALLY: I think by now they're tiring of our caterwauling and would be more than happy to settle this matter.

GAWAIN: *(To Opheliac.)* Thank you for this great news.

SALLY: *(To Opheliac.)* Yes, thank you. We'll let you know how we made out with the heavenly knights in the morning.

OPHELIAC: We'll check back soon. Till then, goodnight, sweet ghosts.

LANCE: Goodnight...and good luck!

(Blackout.)

Scene 7

(Lights slowly come up on the interior of a cemetery tool shed, the same night. There are wooden benches, old garden tools, and Yorick's skull is hung over door. Merlina is polishing the Grail as Zerlina and Yoriky look on with awe.)

MERLINA: *(Polishing the Grail.)* Isn't it exquisite?

YORICKY: A thing of rare beauty.

ZERLINA: I could look at it all day.

MERLINA: Watch out. It has metaphysical powers and can hypnotize.

ZERLINA: I'll be careful.

YORICKY: Nonsense! Do you believe that rubbish? It's just a drinking cup. Or put a flower in it, and it's a vase!

ZERLINA: Don't blaspheme. You may anger the Grail.

YORICKY: Get a hold of yourself, Zerlina!

MERLINA: Yes, Zerlina, there's nothing to fear. I have powers as great as the Grail.

(Lights flash and thunder rolls.)

ZERLINA: Watch what you say, Miss All-Knowing!

YORICKY: Now let's take a vote on it and decide on what to do with it. I say sell it on the black market to the highest foreign bidder.

ZERLINA: And I say we keep it hidden in Hamalot and charge admission to see it.

MERLINA: Zerlina, you obviously don't have a brain in your head. Their spies would be out searching, or a reward would be offered and someone would turn us in.

ZERLINA: Oh, right. What am I thinking?

MERLINA: I say we keep it and hide it till things cool down.
This could be our Aladdin's Lamp with which to make wishes. I feel it has great powers begging to be unleashed.

YORICKY: I say sell it!

MERLINA: No, keep it and hide it. It'll be our golden goose and make us wealthy.

YORICKY: How do you intend to do that?

MERLINA: We'll merely hide it in the cemetery shed. Nobody would ever look there.

ZERLINA: That sounds like a good idea.

YORICKY: I'd settle for that, provided we're able to have the Grail grant us wishes. If not, we'll sell it to the highest bidder on the black market so we don't get caught. All agreed?

MERLINA: That suits me.

ZERLINA: And me.

(Blackout. Intermission.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]