

The Trial Of Lancelot

Heather Dale

King Arthur's knights, they filled the Table Round,
Save for one who stood before them,
For once without a weapon;
For once he stood in shame.
The trial's charge was treason
And betrayal of an oath,
And should his guilt be proven
Death would fall on traitors both!
The knights would counsel Arthur's hard decision.

And Lancelot, his head held high, said,
"I'm tried for love of Guinevere...
My crime was love."

The first to speak was Kay with sharpest tongue,
"He is a man like any other
The word of kings command him;
His heart does not obey.
For all his strength and boldness,
This knight's spirit is too weak.
His crime knows no excuses,
And no favours may he seek!
The laws of kings don't bend and can't be broken."

And Lancelot, his head held high, said,
"I stand for love of Guinevere...
For pride in love."

"I know this knight right well," spoke bold Gawaine,
"And he has ever stood beside me.
With steel he's answered insults,
Defended chivalry.
And oft this man contended
For the honour of your wife.
His actions were not proper,
But should not cost him his life!
His service past should earn of you some mercy."

And Lancelot, his head held high, said,
"I fought for love of Guinevere...
I'll fight for love."

Sir Tristan spoke, "I love my uncle's wife.
For her I gladly suffer;
She is my heart's delight:
Iseult, the one who tempts me
And she for whom I'm pure...
My love for her confounds me,
And is all of which I'm sure.
I understand my brother's contradictions..."

And Lancelot, his head held high, said,
"I cry my love for Guinevere...
I've cried for love."

Spoke Galahad, the purest of them all,
"Have no fear of predilection,

For though he is my father,
He is my source of shame.
He joined in sinful union
With my unbeguiling mother,
And for all his claim at virtue
He has gone and bed another!
The laws of God declare this act damnation."

And Lancelot, his head held high, said,
"I lie in love with Guinevere...
I've lied for love."

As Arthur wept, he called the wrath of Heaven
On the lovers who'd betrayed him:
On the knight he had called "brother,"
Thought worthy of his trust;
On the queen who'd hid deception,
Yet could say she loved him still;
For lost innocence and beauty,
And in justice for their guilt,
King Arthur knew the only price for treason...

And Lancelot, his head held high, said,
"I'll die in love with Guinevere...
I'd die for love."