

***King Arthur***  
**Test and Synopsis**

ACT ONE

[It is the Feast Day of St. George, Patron of the British Isle. In the opening scene, Arthur and his men gather to prepare for one last battle against the heathen Saxon invaders, led by Oswald. Arthur and Oswald fight not only for the throne, but also for the blind Emmeline, daughter of the Duke of Cornwall. Emmeline's love is for Arthur, who takes leave of her to lead his men in battle.

The second scene represents a place of heathen worships, before the altars of the Saxon Gods Woden, Thor and Freya. The Saxon King Oswald, his priests and followers gather to perform their sacred rites. His magician Osmond and the earthly spirit Grimbald have brought forth six Saxons: "Six Fools, so prodigal of Life and Soul that, for their Country, they devote their Lives a Sacrifice to Mother Earth, and Woden."]

<i>Vers.</i>	<i>Woden</i> , first to thee, A Milk-white Steed in Battle won, We have Sacrific'd.
<i>Chor.</i>	We have Sacrific'd.
<i>Vers.</i>	Let our next oblation be, To Thor, thy thundring Son, Of such another.
<i>Chor.</i>	We have Sacrific'd.
<i>Vers.</i>	A Third; (of <i>Friezland</i> breed was he,) To <i>Woden's</i> Wife, and to Thor's Mother: And now we have atton'd all three.
<i>Chor.</i>	We have Sacrific'd.
<i>2 Voc.</i>	The White Horse Neigh'd aloud. To <i>Woden</i> thanks we render. To <i>Woden</i> , we have vow'd. To <i>Woden</i> , our Defender.
<i>Chor.</i>	To <i>Woden</i> thanks we render, etc.
<i>Vers.</i>	The Lot is cast, and <i>Tanfan</i> pleas'd: Of Mortal Cares you shall be eas'd,
<i>Chor.</i>	Brave Souls to be renown'd in Story. Honour prizing, Death despising, Fame acquiring By Expiring, Die, and reap the fruit of Glory.

*Vers.* I call you all,  
To Woden's Hall;  
Your Temples round  
With Ivy bound,  
In Goblets Crown'd,  
And plenteous Bowls of burnish'd Gold;  
Where ye shall Laugh,  
And dance and quaff,  
The Juice, that makes the Britons bold.  
*Chor.* To Woden's Hall, &c.

*The six Saxons are led off by the Priests, in Order to be Sacrific'd. Exeunt omnes. A Battle supposed to be given behind the Scenes, with Drums, Trumpets, and Military Shouts and Excursions: After which, the Britons, expressing their Joy for the Victory, sing this Song of Triumph.*

*Come if you dare, our Trumpets sound;  
Come if you dare, the Foes rebound:  
We come, we come, we come, we come,  
Says the double, double, double Beat of the Thund'ring Drum.  
Now they charge on amain,  
Now they rally again:  
The Gods from above the Mad Labour behold,  
And pity Mankind that will perish for Gold.  
The Fainting Saxons quit their Ground,  
Their Trumpets Languish in the Sound;  
They fly, they fly, they fly, they fly;  
Victoria, Victoria, the Bold Britons cry.  
Now the Victory's won,  
To the Plunder we run:  
We return to our Lasses like Fortunate Traders,  
Triumphant with Spoils of the Vanquish'd Invaders.*

## ACT TWO

[Philidel, an airy spirit and formerly one of Osmond's familiars, has refused "to hurl a Noysom Fog on Christen'd Heads." He warns Merlin that Grimbald is approaching, disguised as a Shepherd, and will attempt to mislead the Britons, to "trembling Bogs" and dangerous cliffs, all the while promising to lead them to the Saxon camp. Merlin bids Philidel to "warn off the bold Pursuers from the Chase."]

*Phil. sings*           Hither this way, this way bend,  
Trust not the Malicious Fiend:  
Those are false deluding Lights.  
Wasted far and near by Sprights.  
Trust 'em not, for they'll deceive ye:  
And in Bogs and Marshes leave ye.

*Chor. of Phil. Spirits.*   Hither this way, this way bend.

*Chor. of Grimb. Spirits.* This way, this way bend.

*Phil sings.*           If you step, no longer thinking,  
Down you fall, a Furlong sinking:  
'Tis a Fiend who has annoy'd ye;  
Name but Heav'n, and he'll avoid ye.

*Chor. of Phil. Spirits.*   Hither this way, this way bend.

*Chor. of Grimb. Spirits.* This way, this way bend.

*Philidel's Spirits.* Trust no the Malicious Fiend.

Hither this way, &c.

[The Britons are persuaded not to follow Grimbald any further, but Grimbald tries his hand at luring them with a song.]

*Grimbald sings.*           Let not a Moon-born Elf mislead ye,  
From your Prey, and from your Glory.  
Too far, Alas, he has betray'd ye:  
Follow the Flames, that wave before ye:  
Sometimes sev'n and sometimes one;  
Hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry on.

See, see, the Footsteps plain appearing,  
That way *Oswald* chose for flying:  
Firm is the Turff, and fit for bearing.  
Where yonder Pearly Dews are lying.  
Far he cannot hence be gone;  
Hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry on.

[All are convinced to follow *Grimbald*.]

*Philidel sings.*   Hither this way.

*Chor. of Phil. Spirits.*   Hither this way, this way bend.

*Chor. of Grimb. Spirits.* This way, this way bend.

*Philidel's Spirits.* Trust no the Malicious Fiend.

Hither this way, &c.

*They all incline to Philidel. Grimbald [curses Philidel] and sinks with a flash.*

*Phil. singing.* Come, follow, follow, follow me.  
*Solos.* Come, follow me,  
And me, and me, and me, and me.  
*Chor.* Come, follow, &c.  
*2 Voc.* And green-sward all your way shall be.  
*Chor.* Come, follow, &c.  
*Vers.* No Goblin or Elf shall dare to offend ye.  
*3 Voc.* We Brethren of Air,  
You Hero's will bear,  
To the Kind and the Fair that attend ye.  
*Chor.* We Brethren, &c.

*Philidel and the Spirits go off singing, with King Arthur and the rest in the middle of them.*

[Emmeline enters with her confidante Matilda, concerned about the fate of Arthur. Matilda invites a crew of Kentish lads and lasses to entertain Emmeline until her Lord's return.]

*Enter Shepherds and Shepherdesses.*

*1 Shepherd sings.* How blest are Shepherds, how happy their Lasses,  
While Drums and Trumpets are sounding Alarms!  
Over our Lowly Sheds all the Storm passes;  
And when we die, 'tis in each others Arms.  
All the Day on our Herds, and Flocks employing;  
All the Night on our Flutes, and in enjoying.  
*Chor.* How blest, &c.  
*Shep.* Bright Nymphs of *Britain*, with Graces attended,  
Let not your Days without Pleasure expire;  
Honour's but empty, and when Youth is ended,  
All Men will praise you, but none will desire.  
Let not Youth fly away without Contenting;  
Age will come time enough, for your Repenting.  
*Chor.* Bright Nymphs, &c.

*Here the men offer their flutes to the women, which they refuse.*

*2 Shepherdesses.* Shepherd, Shepherd, leave Decoying,  
Pipes are sweet, on Summers Day;  
But a little after Toying,  
Women have the Shot to Pay.  
  
Here are Marriage-Vows for signing,

Set their Marks that cannot write:  
After that, without Repining,  
Play and Welcome, Day and Night.

*Here the women give the men contracts, which they accept.*

*Chor. of all.* Come, Shepherds, lead up a lively measure;  
The Cares of Wedlock, are Cares of Pleasure:  
But whether Marriage bring Joy, or Sorrow,  
Make sure of this Day, and hang to Morrow.

*The Dance after the Song, and Exeunt Shepherds and Shepherdesses.*

### ACT THREE

[Emmeline and Matilda are captured by Oswald, who has refused to release them during a parley with Arthur. The Britons prepare to rescue Emmeline from the Saxon fortress.

Arthur's men return with news that the forest before the Saxon fortress is bewitched and cannot be traversed. Arthur recognizes Osmond's work and prepares to face the challenge on his own. Merlin bids him wait until the spells have been broken, but promises to spirit him off to the captive Emmeline, and to restore her sight.

Philidel is captured by Grimbald while trying to find Emmeline, but he escapes and casts a strong spell over the evil spirit. Merlin gives Philidel a vial containing the drops that will restore Emmeline's sight and leaves to attempt to dispel the dire enchantments in the wood.

Emmeline and Matilda enter from the far end of the wood, and Philidel sprinkles some of the water from the vial over her eyes. Emmeline is overjoyed: "I am new-born; I shall run mad for Pleasure." She sees Arthur for the first time, and tells him that not only Oswald, but Osmond too desires her love. Airy spirits appear to wish her well, but Merlin appears to whisk them and Arthur away: their foes are near.

Emmeline and Matilda are left alone. Osmond, whom Emmeline now sees for the first time, crudely woos her, boasting how he has thrown Oswald into prison. Emmeline, frozen with terror, refuses his advances, but Osmond assures her that Love will thaw her.]

*Osmond strikes the Ground with his Wand: the Scene changes to a Prospect of Winter in Frozen Countries. Cupid descends.*

*Cupid sings.* What ho, thou Genius of this Isle, what ho!  
Ly'st thou asleep beneath those Hills of Snow?  
Stretch out thy Lazy Limbs; Awake, awake,  
And Winter from thy Furry Mantle shake.

*Genius arises.*

*Genius.* What Power art thou, who from below,  
Hast made me Rise, unwillingly, and slow,  
From Beds of Everlasting Snow?  
See'st thou not how stiff, and wondrous old,  
Far unfit to bear the bitter Cold,  
I can scarcely move, or draw my Breath;  
Let me, let me, Freeze again to Death.

*Cupid.* Thou Doting Fool, forbear, forbear;  
What dost thou mean by Freezing here?  
At Loves appearing, all the Sky clearing,  
The Stormy Winds their Fury spare:  
Winter subduing, and Spring renewing,  
My Beams create a more Glorious year.  
Thou Doting Fool, forbear, forbear;  
What dost thou mean by Freezing here?

*Genius.* Great Love, I know thee now;  
Eldest of the Gods art Thou:  
Heav'n and Earth, by Thee were made.  
Humane Nature,  
Is Thy Creature,  
Every where Thou art obey'd.

*Cupid.* No part of my Dominion shall be waste;  
To spread my Sway, and sing my Praise,  
E'en here I will a People raise,  
Of kind embracing Lovers, and embrac'd.

*Cupid waves his Wand, upon which the Scene opens, and discovers a Prospect of Ice and Snow to the end of the Stage. Singers and Dancers, Men and Women, appear.*

*Chorus of Cold People.* See, see, we assemble,  
Thy Revels to hold:  
Though quiv'ring with Cold,  
We Chatter and Tremble.

*Cupid.* 'Tis I, 'tis I, 'tis I, that have warm'd ye;  
In spite of Cold Weather,  
I've brought ye together:  
'Tis I, 'tis I, 'tis I, that have warm'd ye.

*Chor.* 'Tis Love, 'tis Love, 'tis Love that has warm'd us;  
In spight of Cold Weather,  
He brought us together:  
'Tis Love, 'tis Love, 'tis Love that has warm'd us.

*Cupid and Cold Genius.* Sound a Parley, ye Fair, and surrender;  
Set your selves, and your Lovers at ease;  
He's a Grateful Offender  
Who Pleasure dare seize:  
But the Whining Pretender  
Is sure to displease.  
  
Since the Fruit of Desire is possessing,  
'Tis Unmanly to Sigh and Complain;  
When we Kneel for Redressing,  
We move your Disdain:  
Love was made for a Blessing,  
And not for a Pain.

*Chor.* 'Tis Love, &c.

*A Dance, after which the Singers and Dancers depart.*

[Emmeline is saved from Osmond's lustful advances when the ensnared Grimbald cries out, compelling the magician to go to the rescue of his evil spirit.]

#### ACT FOUR

[Osmond learns that Merlin has broken his spells and sets out to cast them anew, but of a different kind: he will seduce Arthur with visions of beauty and love.

Arthur, having been warned by Merlin that everything he sees is illusion, is left alone in the wood under the watchful eye of Philidel. Arthur is amazed that, instead of the horrors and dangers he had expected to encounter, he hears sweet music and sees a golden bridge spanning a silver stream. He suspects a trap, but approaches the bridge. Two sirens, naked to the waist, arise from the water, bidding Arthur to lay his sword aside and "waste the Joyous Day with us in gentle Play."]

*2 Sirens.* Two Daughters of this Aged Stream are we;  
And both our Sea-green Locks have comb'd for thee;  
Come Bathe with us an Hour or two,  
Come Naked in, for we are so.  
What Danger from a Naked Foe?  
Come Bathe with us, come Bathe, and share,

What Pleasures in the Floods appear;  
We'll beat the Waters till they bound,  
And Circle round, and Circle round.

[Arthur is tempted, but finally resists and presses on.] As he is going forward, Nymphs and Sylvans come out from behind the Trees. Dance with the Song, all with Branches in their Hands.]

*Passacaglia.* How happy the Lover,  
How easy his chain!  
How sweet to discover  
He sighs not in vain.  
For Love every Creature  
Is form'd by his Nature;  
No Joys are above  
The Pleasures of Love.

*3 Women.* In vain are our Graces,  
In vain are your Eyes,  
If Love you despise;  
When Age furrows Faces,  
'Tis too late to be wise.

*3 Men.* Then use the sweet Blessing,  
While now in Possessing:  
No Joys are above  
The Pleasures of Love.

[Arthur commands the sylvans, nymphs and sirens begone and they vanish. In an attempt to break the spells, he draws his sword and strikes a blow at the finest tree in the wood. A vision of Emmeline appears from its trunk, her arm wounded by the blow; it persuades him to lay down his sword and take her hand. Philidel rushes in, and with a touch of his magic wand reveals the vision to be Grimbald in disguise. Arthur fells the tree, breaking the spells and opening a safe passage for the Britons to the Saxon fortress. Grimbald is captured by Philidel.]

## ACT FIVE

[His spells broken and his spirit Grimbald captured, Osmond decides to release Oswald from prison in the hopes that together they might defeat Arthur. The Britons march on the Saxon fortress, and are met by Oswald, who proposes the war be decided in single combat with Arthur. After a struggle Arthur succeeds in disarming Oswald, but grants him his life, liberty and honour. Arthur commands Oswald to return to Saxony with his men. Emmeline is restored to Arthur. Merlin imprisons Osmond and proclaims the triumph of British sovereignty, faith and love.]

Merlin waves his Wand; the Scene changes, and discovers the British Ocean in a Storm. Aeolus in a Cloud above:  
Four Winds hanging, &c.

*Aeolus singing.*           Ye Blust'ring Brethren of the Skies,  
Whose Breath has ruffl'd all the Watry Plain,  
Retire, and let Brittania Rise,  
In Triumph o'er the Main.  
Serene and Calm, and void of fear,  
The Queen of Islands must appear.

*Aeolus ascends, and the four Winds fly off. The Scene opens, and discovers a calm Sea, to the end of the House. An Island arises, to a soft Tune; Brittania seated in the Island, with Fishermen at her Feet, &c. The Tune changes; the Fishermen come ashore, and Dance a while; After which, Pan and a Nereid come on the Stage, and sing.*

*Pan & Nereid*           Round thy Coast, Fair Nymph of Britain,  
For thy Guard our Waters flow:  
Proteus all his Herd admitting  
On thy Green to Graze below:  
Foreign Lands thy Fish are Tasting;  
Learn from thee Luxurious Fasting.

*Enter Comus with Peasants, and sing the following Song.*

Your Hay it is Mow'd, and your Corn is Reap'd;  
Your Barns will be full, and your Hovels heap'd;  
Come, Boys, come;  
Come, Boys, come;  
And merrily Roar out our Harvest Home.

We've cheated the Parson, we'll cheat him again;  
For why shou'd a Blockhead have One in Ten?  
One in Ten,  
One in Ten,  
For why shou'd a Blockhead have One in Ten?

For Prating so long like a Book-learn'd Sot,  
Till Pudding and Dumplin are burnt to Pot;  
Burnt to Pot,  
Burnt to Pot,  
Till Pudding and Dumplin are burnt to Pot.

We'll toss off our Ale till we canno' stand,  
And Heigh for the Honour of Old England;  
    Old England,  
    Old England,  
And Heigh for the Honour of Old England.

*Enter Venus. Song.*     Fairest Isle, all Isles Excelling,  
    Seat of Pleasures, and of Love;  
    Venus here, will chuse her Dwelling,  
    And forsake her Cyprian Grove.

Cupid, from his Fav'rite Nation,  
Care and Envy will Remove;  
Jealousy, that poisons Passion,  
And Despair that dies for Love.

Gentle Murmurs, sweet Complaining,  
Sighs that blow the Fire of Love;  
Soft Repulses, kind Disdaining,  
Shall be all the Pains you prove.

Every Swain shall pay his Duty,  
Grateful every Nymph shall prove;  
And as these Excel in Beauty,  
Those hall be Renown'd for Love.

*A Dialogue. She.*     You say, 'Tis Love Creates the Pain,  
    Of which so sadly you Complain;  
    And yet wou'd fain Engage my Heart  
    In that uneasie cruel part:  
    But how, Alas! think you, that I,  
    Can bear the Wound of which you die?

*He.*             'Tis not my Passion makes my Care,  
    But your Indiff'rence gives Despair:  
    The Lusty Sun begets no Spring,  
    Till Gentle Show'rs Assistance bring:  
    So Love that Scorches, and Destroys,  
    Till Kindness Aids, can cause no Joys.

*She.* Love has a Thousand Ways to please,  
But more to rob us of our Ease:  
For Wakeful Nights, and Careful Days,  
Some Hours of Pleasure he repays;  
But Absence soon, or Jealous Fears,  
O'erflow the Joys with Floods of Tears.

*He.* But one soft Moment makes Amends  
For all the Torment that attends.

*Both.* Let us love, let us love, and to Happiness haste;  
Age and Wisdom come too fast:  
Youth for Loving was design'd.

*He alone.* I'll be constant, you be kind.

*She alone.* You be constant, I'll be kind.

*Both.* Heav'n can give no greater Blessing  
Than faithful Love, and kind Possessing.

*After the Dialogue, a Warlike Consort. The Scene opens above, and discovers the Order of the Garter. Enter Honour, attended by Hero's.*

*Honour.* St. George, the Patron of our Isle,  
A Soldier, and a Saint,  
On this Auspicious Order smile,  
Which Love and Arms will plant.

*Chorus.* Our Natives not alone appear  
To Court the Martial Prize;  
But Foreign Kings, Adopted here,  
Their Crowns at Home despise.  
  
Our Sovereign High, in Aweful State,  
His Honours shall bestow;  
And see his Sceptr'd Subjects wait  
On his Commands below.

*A Grand Dance*