

THE “ONCE IN THE FUTURE” KING

By Frank V. Priore

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Ah, the glories of Camelot! Knights in armor, damsels in distress, girls on motorcycles! Girls on motorcycles???

That's exactly what happens in this madcap farce which finds good King Arthur stranded in a small, modern-day town in America. When Camelot is captured by the forces of Modred and Morgan Le Fay, Arthur is forced to retreat through a portal to the future created by Merlin. There, King Arthur discovers that he might have been better off staying in sixth century England than trying to contend with present day America!

The king must remain in this century until he can enlist a new band of knights to go back and retake his rightful throne. Unfortunately, the pickings are quite slim in America. His knights-in-training consist of three college guys who practice horsemanship on a riding lawn mower and fencing with sticks and trash can lids.

Just when the king is about to despair of ever recapturing his throne, an all-girl motorcycle club comes to his rescue. The decisive battle for Camelot will be fought not with knights in shining armor, but with heroines on shining Harleys!

It's a laugh a minute. This easy-to-produce comedy features one easy interior set, a large cast with many opportunities for doubling, and no actual motorcycles on-stage!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 m, 17 w - doubling possible.)

SAMANTHA: Teenage niece of Madge and Aurora and Lisa. A computer whiz.

GAIL: Samantha's friend and schoolmate. Computer whiz.

MADGE JOHNSON: Co-owner of the boardinghouse.

AURORA JOHNSON: Madge's younger sister and co-owner of the boardinghouse.

LISA JOHNSON: Madge and Aurora's younger sister.

HENDERSON: A boarder; a spacey college student.

BILL BARTON: Another boarder, a history major.

SID LEMONTE: Another boarder, a third-year law student.

KING ARTHUR: Himself.

DEVINA: Lady-in-waiting.

ROWENA: Lady-in-waiting.

ELVIRA: Lady-in-waiting.

EDWINA: Lady-in-waiting.

BERNIA: Lady-in-waiting.

MERCIA: Lady-in-waiting.

NAOMI: Lady-in-waiting.

ROSIE: Member of motorcycle club.

TINA: Member of motorcycle club.

BETH: Member of motorcycle club.

RHONDA: Member of motorcycle club.

CANDY: Member of motorcycle club.

CARPENTER: Answers newspaper ad.

CARVER: Answers newspaper ad.

COWBOY: Answers newspaper ad.

J. WINDMEAR POMPINGTON: I.N.S. Agent.

TIME: The present.

PLACE: The living and dining area of a large boardinghouse on Avalon Street in a small American town.

PERFORMANCE TIME: 90 - 100 minutes.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I, Sc. 1: One summer afternoon.

ACT II, Sc. 1: The following morning.

Sc. 2: Later that day.

ACT III, Sc. 1: Two weeks later.

PROPS

STAGE: Several plates and bowls of steaming food; stack of plates; cutlery; school-type hand bell; account book (on shelves); coats, various pieces of clothing, umbrellas (in closet); poker chips, deck of cards and yellow pages; helmet with crown painted on it and leather jacket with "King of the Road" and a crown painted on it (in closet);

SAMANTHA: Computer disk, computer printout.

AURORA: Bowls of food, bowl of flowers, pot holders.

LISA: Piece of chicken, wristwatch, 4 pouches of gold coins.

MADGE: Bowl of fruit.

KING: Pouch of gold coins, wad of currency.

BILL: Wooden sword, garbage can lid shield, small pocket knife.

SID: Wooden sword, garbage can lid shield.

HENDERSON: Wooden sword, garbage can lid shield.

GAIL: Umbrella.

CARPENTER: Toolbox with saw and hacksaw, hammer, rolled-up newspaper.

CARVER: Rolled-up newspaper.

COWBOY: Rope.

NAOMI: Shopping bags, cartons of ice cream.

TINA: Excalibur sword.

POMPINGTON: Clipboard, business card.

NOTE: See back of book for additional production notes.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: Several steaming plates and bowls of food are on the table, along with a stack of plates and cutlery. It is obviously set up for a buffet-style meal. There is also a bell nearby. SAMANTHA enters from stairway SR, holding a computer disk. She is dressed casually in jeans, loose blouse, and sneakers. She is followed by GAIL, who is the same age and similarly attired.)

SAMANTHA: *(Gesturing with disk.)* What did I tell you, Gail? Easy as pie. The latest version of "Mega-Deathstar Virtual Combat." Retrieved from cyberspace. Hot off the wire.

GAIL: "Hot" is right. I don't know, Sam. We can get into a lot of trouble for having an unlicensed copy of this software.

SAMANTHA: Only if they catch us. And that's never going to happen. I downloaded this from a pirate board that's been going strong for over five years. Nobody's gotten wise to them yet.

GAIL: But if they do get busted, we can get traced through phone company records. I can just see it now - FBI agents swarming into your aunts' boardinghouse, confiscating your computer, arresting everybody ...

SAMANTHA: *(Giggling.)* My Aunt Aurora would have a hemorrhage!

(AURORA enters as this is said. She is about 40, attractive, but much of it hidden by the plain, floor-length dress she is wearing and the "bun" her hair is tied into. She is carrying another bowl of food, which she sets down on the table.)

AURORA: *(In a critical tone of voice.)* What was that I would have, Samantha, dear? And why, pray tell, would I be having it?

SAMANTHA: Er ... I ... um ... heh, heh.

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AURORA: You and your little sidekick had better not be up to any hijinks with that computer of yours. I have read about the trouble you young computer hugglers get into.

SAMANTHA: That's "hackers," Aunt Aurora.

AURORA: Whatever. Just remember - your Aunt Madge and I gave you that computer. We can take it away from you just as easily.

GAIL: *(Stage whisper to SAMANTHA.)* If the FBI doesn't beat them to it.

SAMANTHA: *(Shushes GAIL.)* Don't worry, Auntie. We'll keep everything on the up-and-up.

AURORA: Mmm, hmm. And speaking of up-and-up ... *(SHE moves to knickknack shelves, picks up account book on top of them, flips to a page near the middle.)* Our electric bill is up seven percent. I think we both know why.

SAMANTHA: Well, Aunt Aurora. You did buy me the computer to help me become smarter at school. And the more I compute, the smarter I get.

AURORA: I see. Since you're now so smart, let's see if you can figure this out. *(Holds HER hands out as if she were a scale.)* Now let's say this hand is my electric bill and this hand is your allowance. *(Raises the "electric bill" hand while lowering the "allowance" hand.)* Now, as my electric bill goes up ... *(SHE stares at the "allowance" hand, which is now all the way down.)* Does that compute, dear?

SAMANTHA: Er, loud and clear, Aunt Aurora.

AURORA: Oh, good. Isn't it amazing how a computer can unleash the untapped power of a girl's brain.

SAMANTHA: C'mon, Gail. Let's get this loaded onto your hard drive.

AURORA: That will have to wait. It's time for dinner. I'm about to ring the bell. *(Moves to table, picks up bell.)*

SAMANTHA: Oh, no! The charge of the "Boarder Patrol!"

GAIL: Border Patrol? We're over a hundred miles from the border.

SAMANTHA: Not the United States border; my aunts' boarders - three very hungry college students. Take cover, Gail!

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(SHE pushes GAIL into the alcove between the stairs and the bookcase as AURORA rings the hand bell. Within seconds, BILL, HENDERSON, and SID charge down the stairs, pushing each other out of the way in an effort to get to the table first. Henderson arrives first, picks up the platter of chicken pieces and pours them all onto his plate. After a moment's reflection [while Bill and Sid are still battling each other to get to the table], he "considerately" puts one piece of chicken back on the platter. Bill arrives at the table just before Sid, and attempts to grab the last piece. Just as he is about to, Sid grabs his arm and points under the table.)

SID: Hey, look, Bill. There's a UFO under the table.

BILL: *(Startled, starts to look under the table.)* UFO? ...

What? *(SID snatches the last piece of chicken.)* Hey!

SID: *(Grins.)* Gotcha! And I also got the last piece of chicken.

BILL: Sid LeMonte, if I didn't already know you were a law student, I could have guessed. That was a sneaky, underhanded, and vile trick!

SID: Why, thank you, Bill. We get graded on things like that at law school.

(While this exchange is going on, HENDERSON has been piling potatoes onto his already overloaded plate. BILL and Henderson both make a stab with their forks at the last potato. Bill comes up with it and holds it aloft triumphantly.)

BILL: Hah!

HENDERSON: Hey man, leggo of that spud!

BILL: Sorry, Henderson, but I beat you to it fair and square.

HENDERSON: Oh, yeah? *(Screws up HIS face, as he makes a vain attempt to think, then points under the table.)*

Uh, there's a UFO under the table!

BILL: I don't fall for the same trick twice, Henderson. And I never fall for any trick your lame brain can come up with!

HENDERSON: *(Puts down HIS plate, but holds onto his fork, using it for emphasis. Menacing.)* Are you trying to call me stupid?

End of Freeview

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