

## **Opera *Merlin* – libretto by Rudolf Pannwitz**

Translation by Rona Richter with Tessa Smith and Tobias Kuehne (2012)

*The translation follows the author's punctuation and capitalization style, and tries to stay as close to the poetic text as possible.*

### **FIRST PART -- PRELUDE** **FIRST SCENE**

page 1

[Oriental city loosing itself in landscape. a military road into upstage. on right in mid scene a palm grove, reservoir and hermitage. downstage several boys / among them Merlin / playing with a ball. he is 12 years old / dark / with black hair. In the palm grove / writing at a little desk / Master Blasius / and wandering with a prayer book while reading and softly mumbling / Merlin's Mother. All in imaginative clothing / which is, however, simple. –Merlin hits a boy with a stick sharply on the leg.]

FIRST BOY: Aiai! ah! Ah!

SECOND BOY: You!

THIRD BOY: You!

FOURTH BOY: You!

FIRST BOY: Oh! You!

(Merlin laughs)

SECOND BOY: And you are laughing!

THIRD BOY: You are sneering?

FOURTH BOY: You are laughing again?

SECOND BOY: Like you do at everything/ you fool?

FIRST BOY: We are playing nicely together –

And you hit me on the leg.

SECOND BOY: And you hit him on the leg.

THIRD BOY: The dishonorable one here/ he hits him on the leg.

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[From the right and left wings, downstage, two pairs of wanderers cross paths/ greet each other. one of them points to the boys. all watch them.]

FIRST MESSENGER: The boys are fighting in play  
Like kings in earnest.

SECOND MESSENGER: But the handsomest one is mean.

THIRD MESSENGER: But he is the best one.

FOURTH BOY: And who/hehe! do you think you are!

SECOND BOY: A – virgin's son.

FIRST MESSENGER: Listen! Listen!

FIRST BOY: A whore's son!

THIRD BOY: Worse than a whore's son!

SECOND MESSENGER: Listen! listen!

FOURTH BOY: No father's son at all!

ALL BOYS: No father's son at all! (laughter)  
THIRD MESSENGER: It is him!  
FOURTH MESSENGER: It's him!  
MERLIN (softly/to himself): My mother's and my father's son.  
FIRST BOY: He has no answer.  
SECOND BOY: He never has an answer.  
THIRD BOY: I won't play with him anymore.  
FOURTH BOY: He is too proud in my opinion {if you ask me}.

[They disperse and vanish into the wings.]

MERLIN: I am a sad boy  
And have known for a long time  
Who I have for a father –  
Oh! were I not the son of Satan!

My mother is without fault  
It happened in her sleep  
Her soul was in God's grace  
When it hit her body.

Hell wants to force me  
Into being the Antichrist –  
I want to achieve heaven  
On this earth that is ours.

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[Merlin steps up to the messengers.]

MERLIN: Here I am, the one you are looking for.  
FIRST MESSENGER: You know us? How do you know us?  
MERLIN: I am miraculous {ein wunderbarer}.  
(pointing upward and downward)  
I have the memory from below  
The visionary power from above.  
SECOND MESSENGER: We are wanderers from the occident  
And we have found our destination.  
MERLIN: You are messengers from the occident  
And I am your destination.  
THIRD MESSENGER: Yes, you are our destination.  
FOURTH MESSENGER: Oh, wonderful destination!  
THE FOUR MESSENGERS: Oh, wonderful destination!  
MERLIN: You are messengers of king Vortigern  
And you are coming to fetch me  
I am supposed to help him.  
The astrologers could offer no advice  
They could not read it in the stars

Why he cannot build the tower  
Why the tower collapses.  
FIRST MESSENGER: Are you omniscient/ o, child?  
MERLIN: I am.  
SECOND MESSENGER: Will you come with us?  
MERLIN (loud/ abrupt): But you want to kill me!  
THE MESSENGERS (shocked): Yes yes .. No no ..  
THIRD MESSENGER: No. no.  
FIRST MESSENGER: You are lying, are you not?  
MERLIN: I never lie.  
You have been ordered  
To kill me.  
FOURTH MESSENGER: We have been ordered  
To kill you..  
ALL MESSENGERS: We have been ordered  
To kill you.  
MERLIN: For the astrologers read about one  
Who was not conceived by an earthly father  
But born to a woman:  
He shall fortify the kingdom.  
In their ignorance they thought  
That was meant for the tower  
Of king Vortigern.  
In their cruelty, they clamored  
For the boy to be slaughtered  
For the boy to be slaughtered  
Over the cornerstone into the gutter  
Into the gutter his red blood shall flow.  
But you – dear messengers  
You want – you cannot kill me!  
FOURTH MESSENGER: Omniscient –  
THIRD MESSENGER: Child of Heaven –  
SECOND MESSENGER: We cannot kill you –  
FIRST MESSENGER: Let us pray before you  
(they fall before him)  
MERLIN (lifting them up): You should not kill me  
You should not pray before me.  
I will come with you.  
But leaving is painful for me.  
Wait here at the palm grove.  
I will return I will return  
But first I must go to my loved ones  
To take leave for a long – long – long time...

(pause)

MERLIN: Oh, Mother! and pious Father!

Forgive me for disturbing you!

(pause)

MOTHER: I am listening!

(pause)

BLASIUS: Yes I am listening!

[They slowly approach each other. the messengers step back towards the wings.]

MOTHER AND BLASIUS: You usually do not drag us down  
From there (pointing to the sky)  
What do you need us for/child Merlin? {kind Merlin}

MERLIN: I am obedient to you  
But I feel God's power  
It pushes me out into the world  
To an earthly task.

MOTHER: Oh, remain obedient to God  
And fear your power!

BLASIUS: (pointing downward): Perhaps He has crept over you.

MOTHER (lowering her head): You sleep – and you fulfill his tasks.

MERLIN: You dear ones! It is not like that.  
I had a premonition  
That I'd be summoned to the Occident  
From the Orient.  
The messengers have come  
I recognized them from afar.  
I thought of a ploy  
And angered my friends  
Their yelling gave me away  
And the messengers recognized me.  
BLASIUS: Which messengers?  
MOTHER: Recognized as whom?  
MERLIN: Do not hold me up! –  
Battles will be fought and kings crowned.  
But I shall  
Reconcile heathens and christians.  
There will be suffocation in murder and sin.  
But I shall  
Found the Empire of peace for you  
And make round the table of the holy heroes  
And of the eternal meal of love.

(pause)

BLASIUS: That is God's spirit.  
I cannot grasp it.  
But I hope I shall learn it someday.  
MOTHER (softly): May the Tempter be at bay!  
MOTHER and MERLIN (loudly): May the Seducer stay away!

MERLIN (softly): The Seducer – away? (pause)  
 My mother! Fare thee well!

MOTHER: No! we cannot part  
 For you are a part of me.

MERLIN: All the world cannot separate us  
 For I am a part of you.

MOTHER: Today let me confess to you  
 Everything everything I owe to you.

MERLIN: Without you – let me confess –  
This life would not be mine.

MOTHER: No! We cannot part  
 For you are a part of me.

MERLIN: Mother! mother! I must part from you  
 And so let me confess: (pointing to his chest)  
 Dark drives are rooting here  
 But the heavenly fire  
 My mother! I owe to you.

MOTHER: No! We cannot part!

MERLIN: And still we must part!  
 Let us be silent!  
 Let us part! (he hugs her for a long time)

MOTHER: No! we cannot separate!

[The mother goes toward the hermitage. Merlin remains standing with Blasius.]

BLASIUS: Are we – parting, too?

MERLIN: No/master.

BLASIUS: Tell me/most wise one.

MERLIN: It is commanded of me and you.

BLASIUS: I am listening.

MERLIN: You follow me  
 Yet you do not me  
 And wander on  
 Toward the north and to the sea  
 To the sea and across the sea  
 Until the forest of forests.  
 There is no path there  
 There the wild game shows you the way.  
 First you will encounter  
 Another woodsman  
 On the second day  
 A traveling damsel  
 And towards evening  
 The green minstrel!  
 On the seventh day you will be alone  
 And lost in the forest of forests.

There remain until your death.  
Take heart! you shall not suffer.  
But you need to let me know:  
To whom can I be of use in the devil's land?

BLASIUS:

MERLIN:

I will come  
Once and twice, and often come  
From far and wide  
You will prepare a book  
And always enter  
What I will tell to you.  
After our departure  
This will remain for all ages.  
At no turn  
And at no end  
Will it perish.  
It will remain forever  
It begins with Christ's journey to hell  
Where Adam and Eve were rescued  
And the earthly and heavenly realms  
Stood once more beautiful and equal/  
Goes over Satan's counsel  
And Satan's deed  
Through Satan's passage  
On to my birth  
And all my vision and meditation and doing  
Through the rows of kings.  
God shall triumph over Satan!  
For Satan defying God  
With his own son  
Wants to occupy the throne  
And undo redemption  
With me the Good-and-Evil.

BLASIUS:

I worry whether your power  
Can resist him  
For he who keeps himself pure  
Does not conquer the world.

MERLIN:

Do not worry! You shall hear and transcribe  
A wonderful work  
From the dragon kings until the time of blessing  
All the world histories that I shall bring about  
The unholy and the holy war  
Until the peace of God: the ultimate victory.

BLASIUS AND MERLIN (kneeling down): Until the peace of God: the ultimate victory.

## SECOND SCENE

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[Transformation.- Landscape. Winter with some snow. Left front a bare hill. On it an unfinished and tumbled tower of large diameter and strong walls. Behind it a river curls and disappears. Right front the closed king's hall. Behind it an oak forest with dry foliage. Otherwise heath land. A wide road leads from the river on the left diagonally forward across the scene to the hall. In the background scattered farms. – Morning. Red sun rising and wind. First, no one on stage. Then at the bend of the road Merlin/ in green frock/ striding. Two of the messengers are following him. Horn signal from one of the messengers. Shortly after there is response from the hall. The hall is opened. The messengers behind Merlin scatter. One recognizes one of the two other messengers/ who has just taken down the horn from his mouth. King Vortigern/ elderly man/ a mighty almost gigantic figure/ dark with black curls/ in dark red cloak/ with golden tiara/ steps out of the hall with entourage. He strides alone toward Merlin. The two messengers among the entourage step aside.]

FIRST MESSENGER (to the other messenger next to him): I'm still trembling.

SECOND MESSENGER: I am shaking too.

FIRST MESSENGER: He does not believe us.

SECOND MESSENGER: He will see it.

FIRST MESSENGER: As long as the boy does not defeat him.

SECOND MESSENGER: Then we all die including Merlin.

[Vortigern and Merlin stand still in front of each other.]

VORTIGERN:            You are not bowing? (Merlin remains silent and laughs)  
                              You remain silent? You – laugh? (Merlin remains silent and laughs/  
                              Vortigern flaring up)  
                              I am King Vortigern (uncertain)  
                              You are afraid of me. (Merlin laughs out loud)  
                              Come with me!

[Vortigern strides toward the tower/ Merlin right behind him/ the messengers behind Merlin remain standing while talking together and then disappear.]

MERLIN (stops and looks at the tower): This tower is on dragons.

VORTIGERN (turns around/stutters): The tower – on dragons? (impetuous)  
                                      How do you know this?

MERLIN (showing downward and upward): I have the memory from below  
                                      The seer's power from above.

VORTIGERN:            You shall help me  
                                      To build the tower – be it with your blood!

MERLIN:                Yet you are evil and I am good.

VORTIGERN:            No man is good.

MERLIN:                Man is good.

VORTIGERN (erupting): Save the man I am!

MERLIN: Dismiss everyone  
Except for me.

[Vortigern makes a signal with raised arms/ everyone leaves/ the hall is closed. Vortigern and Merlin sit on a bump. Merlin softly:]

Do not be afraid of me (cajoling)  
Come with me – king Vortigern!

[Vortigern gets droopy and rests his head while his body turns to the side/ away from Merlin.]

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MERLIN (monotonously): now close your eyes so you can see.

[Vortigern flinches/tries to erect himself/to turn his head toward the tower.]

There is nothing there now.  
You should look upon – the dead time.  
You should look upon – he who is no more.  
You should look upon – yourself.

[With his hands he strokes him over the eyes.]

Fall asleep here – wake up over there!

[Vortigern bends over/ the head to the ground/ erects himself.]

Atone and recognize yourself!

VORTIGERN (dreamily): Atone and recognize yourself!

VORTIGERN AND MERLIN: Atone and recognize yourself!

MANY VOICES (at the end as choir):

Atone and recognize yourself!

MERLIN: Bad kings ignorant –

Dragons' poison on the crook {shepherd's stick}:

VORTIGERN: Their unatoned deeds

Are atoned in the people's grave.

MERLIN (with raised voice): Vortigern! Damned Vortigern!

[During the following, Vortigern moves in changing moods/ but keeps falling back into his spell.]

Vortigern! You are not king/you are an usurper of the throne.  
You had the righteous king from righteous family killed.  
Then you fought against the pagans:  
Against the pagans and your kin  
Against the big ones and the little ones –  
All for yourself.  
You followed the two sons of the dead king  
The boys, with nets –  
They were fleeing over land and sea  
With their followers.  
You wounded the princes



And mistreated the people  
Until everyone hated you.

VORTIGERN (moaning): That is true.

MERLIN:  
They announced feud  
And recaptured the castles and cities and towns  
From you and burned them/  
Half the kingdom  
Fell away from you piece by piece.  
So you searched for shelter with the pagans  
And you married a pagan woman  
The daughter of the pagan.  
She was baptized – and you infatuated  
Infatuated into her sensuality and customs.  
The heathen storm is approaching again.  
But the tower is not christianity.  
Beneath the ground under the tower  
Heathen worm threatens heathen worm.

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VORTIGERN (half awake/repeating in the same tone):

The pagan storm is approaching again.  
But the tower is not christianity.  
Beneath the ground under the tower  
Heathen worm threatens heathen worm.

MERLIN (in changed tone):

The tower stands on conflict's open mouth:  
The tower stands on both lineages' dragons.

VORTIGERN/then voices and choir:

The tower stands on conflict's open mouth:  
The tower stands on both lineages' dragons.

VORTIGERN (jumping up): I have returned

From night to day!  
How I was burdened!  
How I was instructed!  
I have knowledge and ability.

MERLIN (hand in hand with him): He has returned

From night to day!  
How he was burdened!  
How he was instructed!  
He has knowledge and ability!

VORTIGERN:

Even if I cannot grasp you  
You shall never leave me.

MERLIN (letting go of Vortigern): Even if you cannot grasp it

You must still let me go into the forest.

(pause)

But now that you are king  
Build the tower against the pagans!

VORTIGERN:

If you do not stay with me – we will suffer.

MERLIN: This work is the beginning – and no end – no end ...  
Get your manly hands moving!  
Forget about time! It's all just soul ...  
Up! King Vortigern! Give your orders!

[Vortigern points with raised arm to the tower. Everything he orders is materializing at surreal speed (but remains unseen on stage). Afternoon is coming, evening and starry night/ at last morning.]

VORTIGERN: Master-builder and all people come hither! ...  
Remember! Before you work! ...  
Beneath the tower is the big river  
Beneath the river are the rocks  
Beneath the rocks the dragons ...  
Now dig from the top of the building's debris  
The earth open! ...  
Get carriages horses people to work  
Demount the hill layer by layer! ...  
Still deeper – until it the whooshing noise ...  
The big river! That's it ...  
The big river shall come out of the bed!  
Dig canals/ditches/dams  
And redirect it down into the field  
Right into the bed back there! ...  
Come on, lift up – the two rocks! Lift! You cannot? ...

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MERLIN: It is done.  
VORTIGERN: Now the dragons will awake!  
Soon the dragons will rise up here!  
Our ancestors the holy dragons  
The irreconcilable brothers will  
Fight each other to death.  
It will be a nice sight.

MERLIN: Be shocked at how large  
And terrible they will appear!  
One of them you will see red  
And see white the other.

They riot at each other and are blind.

Entangled body with body  
Interlaced and jaws locked  
With pointy iron claws  
Tearing the bloody flesh.

They ravage past midnight,

(after a pause)

Now the two have brought about each other's end.

[The sun comes up. Merlin and Vortigern stand opposite each other/illuminated by it and looking at the tower.]

MERLIN: I advise you/hurry up/king Vortigern!  
VORTIGERN: Heroes and saints! Princes and peoples! Master-builder! Workers! All  
come here!  
Finally defeated is the double worm!  
Devote and pray!  
Devote and pray!  
Build the visible tower on top of the bleeding worms!

CHOIR (gathering from all sides):  
Devote and pray!  
Build the secure tower on top of the bleeding worms!

[Sanctification by pagan and Christian priests. Beginning and unimpeded progress of the building at magical speed / on which everyone is working except for Merlin and Vortigern.]

MERLIN: You forgot to say the one word.  
VORTIGERN: Which word did I forget to say?  
MERLIN: It is: Peace. (Vortigern starts.)  
Repeat it after me. (Vortigern stammers/Merlin with emphasis) Peace.  
(Vortigern remains silent.)  
You cannot say the word.  
I knew it.  
VORTIGERN: Will the tower remain standing?  
MERLIN: The tower will remain standing.  
VORTIGERN: Will the empire be saved?  
MERLIN: The empire is eternal.  
VORTIGERN: Will I remain its king?  
MERLIN: If you submit.  
VORTIGERN: Me – to whom? (pointing to the already tall tower)  
My tower will fly to the sky!  
MERLIN: You should submit.  
VORTIGERN: Who is in this land  
To Whom I should submit?  
MERLIN: Two will be coming:  
The true heirs.  
VORTIGERN (angry/with stifled voice):  
Them?  
(howling up and laughing)  
My tower will fly to the sky!

MERLIN: In three moons  
They will be here.  
With fast boats  
Across the sea.  
The old members of a knights-alliance  
Will greet them  
As their dear masters.  
It will be theirs:  
The burgs and castles cities towns and farms.  
Your tower will not be defeated.

VORTIGERN: With my loyal ones  
Will I survive?

MERLIN: Like the red dragon  
You will end in the fire.

VORTIGERN: They will burn the tower?

MERLIN: You inside.  
The black tower will remain standing.

VORTIGERN: Oh, we of ancient dragon blood!

MERLIN: Dragons are good.

VORTIGERN: Unfortunate dragon brood!

MERLIN: But their last one is good.

VORTIGERN: Even if I cannot grasp you  
You shall never leave me.

MERLIN: Even if you cannot grasp it  
You must still let me go into the forest.

VORTIGERN: Must let you go into the forest.

MERLIN (becomes a shadow and disappears/ softly):  
Be who you are  
Heathen or christian –  
We will all become good.

VORTIGERN (repeating dreamily/ softly):  
Be who you are  
Heathen or christian –  
We will all become good.

## SECOND PART – ACT I

### FIRST SCENE

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[Deepest forest. Hint of rough and wild mountain land. Like separated of it an even clearing with pine trees and beech trees/ meadow and flowers. In left front a source flowing from a low rock. At right a roomy cottage/ table and bench in front. Midsummer night. Full moon without stars. Slight and changing fogs. At times one can imagine a lake in the background. – Viviane steps from the left middle scene [stage]. She is approximately 20 years old and is wearing a white veil robe. During her chanting, Merlin steps out of the cottage. He is now an ageless man with a black beard and wearing a woolen green robe. He steps slightly back again and remains standing.]

VIVIANE:                   I am the child of Avalun  
                              I am the life and the fairy  
                              After my land after Avalun  
                              I yearn and pine.  
                              Once I rode from my castle  
                              To wonderful adventures  
                              The forest became dense and confusing  
                              No sun shine no moon light  
                              Will ever guide me back home again  
                              Will ever guide me back home again.

[She retreats back to the left in the deeper forest. – A dance of elves emerges from the bright fog in front of the lake/ the lake becomes visible. The singing begins only toward the end of the dance/ it is clear and soft. All elves are soprano except the second, third and fifth.]

FIRST ELF (soprano):   We are the never ending times –  
SECOND ELF (alto):    Which only the forest knows.  
FIRST ELF:            We are the dead ones that live –  
SECOND ELF:           We are the powerful ones that weave –  
FIRST ELF:            We are the evil ones that strive –  
THIRD ELF (mezzo soprano): We are the good ones that give –  
FOURTH ELF (soprano): The wonderful services we maintain –  
FIFTH ELF (mezzo soprano): And move mortal human beings.  
FIRST ELF:            I had died –  
SIXTH ELF:            I, never born –  
SEVENTH ELF:          I come from the moon –  
EIGHTH ELF:           I used to be a deer  
NINTH ELF:            I, a bird –  
TENTH ELF:            I, an orchid –  
ELEVENTH ELF:         We hug kings –  
TWELVTH ELF:         And heroes and gods –  
SECOND ELF:           To death.  
FIRST ELF:            We are the never ending times –  
CHOIR:                 We are the never ending times –

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Eternal bliss –  
That only the forest knows.  
We are from Avalun.

[Viviane, on her toes, steps out of the forest from the back left.]

VIVIANE (softly): I want to go to Avalun too.  
Where is Avalun?

ONE ELF: Avalun is far.

SEVERAL ELVES: Come!  
Come! Come!  
Come with us, beautiful!  
Be our queen!

[First, Viviane walks toward the elves/ then back again, and so on alternating. From the lake the fog is coming up and nothing can be recognized.]

MERLIN (steps forward/from the right front):

Oh, forest! My wild beard!  
Every journey ends here.  
How we are ugly and delicate!  
But a woman avoids this kind.  
From the order of the Orient –  
Far at the Occident's borders  
I came upon the king's horde  
And I turned into a perpetrator.  
Oh, that I became a man!  
The leader of the peoples  
Who never spared of blood!  
Did I remain pure?  
Heathen and christian and west and north  
Perfidiously slave and rob and kill.  
Curse Satan and the lords!  
I also have become weary of God.  
Oh, grow here, my beard  
And my body, become hairy!  
Woe betide all who have paired!  
Woe betide all who have gathered!  
Nothing has become of the work.  
Killing makes no redeemer  
I nearly became a woman:  
That's how much I long for accord.

[Viviane has been walking toward the front during the chanting/always looking over to Merlin. He now sees her/comes a bit closer and looks over. To the two/hurrying back and for the between them/joins an elf.]

THE ELF (to Merlin): Over there, a pretty one is looking at you.  
What shall I tell her?  
MERLIN: Don't tell her anything.  
THE ELF (to Viviane): Over there, a tall one is looking at you.  
What shall I tell him?  
VIVIANE: Don't tell him anything!  
THE ELF (to Merlin): The pretty one wants something from you.  
What shall I tell her?  
MERLIN: She shall say it.  
THE ELF (to Viviane): The tall one longs for you.  
What shall I tell him?  
VIVIANE: Tell him whatever you want.  
THE ELF (to Merlin): The pretty one says to you: she is not coming over  
You shall go over.

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[The elf hurries over and Merlin wants to go to Viviane. Just then, Blasius steps out of the cottage and then next to him. Viviane immediately steps back into the forest. Morning is breaking. Many birds and gentle/tame game.]

BLASIUS: Be careful, Merlin  
Of this forest and its ghosts!  
MERLIN: The place is sanctified  
And only has small elves.  
They make graceful the forest  
Which everywhere is full of terror  
While here it is a garden of Eden.  
BLASIUS: The elves are lovely  
But Satan is vermin.  
He wants to lure you through her  
That you become the Antichrist.  
MERLIN: Oh, dearest Master: beautiful is beautiful  
And never evil nor good.  
BLASIUS: You speak weirdly  
But teach me!  
MERLIN: There had been creatures before  
Even before heaven and hell were parted  
God let them live without boundaries  
Free from the law, in eternal innocence.  
There were, before Adam and Eve,  
Men and women, and their embraces  
Were sweeter – and without sin.  
I, the son of Satan and a pure woman  
Know more than the scripture.  
I was born before myself  
And before all crucified ones:

BLASIIUS: So that I shall round off the inexpressible guilt  
 And with love I shall turn the evil drive into good.  
 If it weren't you saying it  
 This would be heresy.  
 I bow and tremble.  
 That God never reveals to me  
 All that He knows!  
 MERLIN: So that I shall round off the inexpressible guilt –  
 BLASIIUS: That God never reveals –  
 MERLIN: And with love shall turn the evil drive into good.  
 BLASIIUS: All that He knows!

(pause)

BLASIIUS: That you may never  
 part from your work oh, Merlin!  
 MERLIN (looking toward the forest across the way/softly):  
 If I could now  
 part from my work – Free for fortune!

BLASIIUS: Let me continue writing down your deeds!

MERLIN: Oh! I cannot do it!

BLASIIUS: Don't you want to?

MERLIN: Yes, it must be done. Bring the book!

[Blasius gets the book and writing utensils/ sits down.]

MERLIN: Repeat the previous!

BLASIIUS (reading out loud):

King Pendragon, Uter's brother,  
 Was crowned, and both good brothers,  
 Who had returned across the ocean,  
 And who have burned the fiend in the black tower,  
 Ruled over the land in righteous harmony.  
 But the heathens were not defeated.  
 So King Pendragon thought:  
 Did not Vortigern, the throne stealer,  
 Once call for Merlin to build a tower?  
 And he left the heavily threatened land  
 Entrusted to his brother and traveled  
 With only a few noblemen into the woodland  
 Looking for Merlin for a long time until he showed himself.  
 And he appeared and he spoke the words:  
 Return home! You do not need Merlin.  
 The great chief has just been struck down.  
 Upon his return, the king heard to his astonishment  
 That his brother Uter has just  
 Indeed slain that chief.  
 Uncalled, Merlin appeared in time of woe.



Often, in times of woe, Merlin appeared.  
And so they expelled all the heathens.  
Sometimes Merlin wandered to far-away lands  
Sometimes into the deep forest of forests.  
He always returned. King Pendragon  
Ruled peacefully.

MERLIN (slowly and with strong emphasis/while Blasius writes along):

Then it changed.  
As the blessing must yield to the the curse –  
Also the two dragons that died  
Nourish the following generations on and on  
And the lineage remains split in blood.  
If there is One who pacifies all of this:  
He must give his life before his time  
On the battlefield or to a traitor.  
(he pauses and falls into thinking)  
Oh, I feel sorry for Pendragon  
I love him like a son:  
He saved the kingdom.  
Now the heathens are strong again  
And threaten in the kingdom and at the march  
To avenge their chief's death.

BLASIUS (closing the book/jumping up):

Let the book be, hero Merlin!  
You shall go out for more deeds  
And work new wonders.

At the end of all big distresses  
The Lord's contingent wins:  
The worldly emperor of peace.

MERLIN:

I am concerned about the one only  
Because you should know! Bloodshed is awaiting  
It is the battle of all battles.

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I am faithful to Him as always  
And will help him and the ailing kingdom.  
Farewell! The book can wait.

BLASIUS:

Farewell! And come again!

MERLIN:

Farewell! I will come again!

[Blasius hugs him and goes to his cottage. Merlin walks to the left into the forest. Blasius turns around and hurries one more time to Merlin and tugs him at his robe.]

BLASIUS:

Merlin – I worry.  
You are changed.  
I saw a woman lurking.

MERLIN: Don't worry about anything!  
 BLASIVS: Abstain!  
 They distract from the work  
 Into undissolvable nets.  
 MERLIN: I know, I know.  
 BLASIVS: Everything else.  
 Not what moves you yourself.  
 You see Satan – not the drives.  
 MERLIN: I thank your love.  
 Farewell!  
 BLASIVS: I will commend you to God's love.  
 Farewell!  
 (they hug each other)

[It is early afternoon. Blasius has gone into his cottage. Merlin has stopped walking at a rock and plays with the water source and the foliage. Viviane steps out of the thicker forest/then back again. Then/turned toward Merlin/she sings and steps in a dancing way/forward on the first verse/backward on the second.]

VIVIANE: Sir! I am a poor maid  
 And have not learned a lot at all.  
 A magic spell must be slaking love and pain  
 But I am far away from the art  
 So far away.  
  
 I am the child of Avalun  
 I am life and fairy  
 And I long to rest at my loved one's side  
 So that he never leaves me  
 That shall not be courtship and not, anyway,  
 That shall be eternity!

[Merlin goes toward her. They bow gracefully to each other. She sits down on the grass and invites him with a wave of the hand to sit down next to her. He follows her and places his hand on hers, which she does not pull away.]

MERLIN: We have already greeted each other.  
 VIVIANE: I remember.  
 MERLIN: The sweet song –  
 VIVIANE: Is bitter woe.  
 MERLIN: I am capable  
 About all woes.  
 VIVIANE: That is what I thought and I wished to talk to you.  
 MERLIN: I wished to talk to you – also from woe.  
 VIVIANE: I – am only pretty.  
 MERLIN: Enchantress!

VIVIANE: Enchanter!  
MERLIN: I will serve you.  
Will you reward me?  
VIVIANE: You know the limits.  
Which magic do you know?  
MERLIN: All of Merlin's magic.  
VIVIANE: You are –  
MERLIN: Merlin.  
VIVIANE (wincing): Oh, that is uncanny [eerie].  
MERLIN: What is your name?  
VIVIANE: Viviane.  
MERLIN: Viviane .. Viviane ..  
VIVIANE: Will you serve me – Merlin?  
Teach me your spells – Merlin?  
I need them.  
But I am ashamed.  
Don't ask. I won't tell it.  
MERLIN: There is no salvation in magic.  
VIVIANE: But there is salvation in love.  
MERLIN: But there is salvation in love.  
VIVIANE: If you share your magic with me  
I will share with you – love.

[They lean toward each other. – The following appears and disappears phantasmagorically. Each time, Merlin murmurs unintelligible sounds and draws figures in the air.)]

MERLIN: My first spell, look!  
A castle rises out of the forest.  
VIVIANE: Wonderful! How do I do this?

[Merlin makes it disappear. Then he whispers in her ear and shows her. She imitates it until it works.]

MERLIN: My second spell, look!  
I am creating a river,  
never seen here before.  
VIVIANE: Oh, magnificent! Can I do this too?

[Same as before. But Merlin kisses her softly on the cheek, and she lets it happen.]

MERLIN: I can be here – and not here.  
VIVIANE (as Merlin disappears/in fear):  
Stay! Stay Merlin  
With Viviane!  
(When Merlin reappears as a dragon/fleeing)

Not that! Please not! No! No!  
(when he sits on her breast as a butterfly/kissing him)

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Oh, what a lovely creature!  
What can *I* change into?  
MERLIN: Into anything – except into me.  
VIVIANE: But I want to change  
Into you.  
Teach this magic to me  
To No one else!  
MERLIN: It is possible.  
You must embrace me  
In my flesh exchange with me  
And return – mysteriously and blessed.  
VIVIANE (after a pause/slightly declining):  
How would I do that?  
MERLIN: Now I taught you enough, Viviane  
And claim my reward.  
Soon I must move on.  
VIVIANE: You may kiss me.  
MERLIN (after he kisses her):  
No let me move on.  
VIVIANE: Stay! And sleep in honor  
With me tonight  
In my bed.  
MERLIN: Dishonor it would be  
To lie like this in vain –  
Or to win.  
VIVIANE (ecstatically):  
Well then! I will give myself to you one time!  
Just once to you! just once to you!  
And send you on your way – whether you return to me.  
And if you come to me next year  
Forever to me forever to me  
I swear that you shall never dispense with me.  
MERLIN (the same way):  
Well then! So then give yourself to me one time!  
Just once to me! Just once to me!  
And then send me on my way – whether I return to you.  
And if I come to you next year  
Forever to you forever to you  
You swear that you shall never dispense with me/go without me.

[After they have sung one after the other, they sing together. Thus, dusk sets in, and they go arm in arm into the deep forest.]

## SECOND SCENE

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[The inner tent of the king/on the battlefield. In front of its entrance, on the right, the camp begins. Pendragon/armored/paces anxiously up and down with long strides. From outside, the noise of war/but no battle yet. Merlin, in peasant's clothes but recognizable, walks calmly toward the tent. At the entrance, he is pushed back by the guards.]

GUARD:                      Back up! This is the tent  
                                 Of the king.  
                                 Who are you?  
                                 Whence do you come?

MERLIN (laughing):  
                                 From Adam and Eve.  
                                 That is the oldest royal blood  
                                 Before all kings.

[He pushes the pointed arms slightly aside and enters tent and goes toward Pendragon. The tent remains open.]

PENDRAGON:              Merlin!  
MERLIN:                    Pendragon! (they embrace)  
PENDRAGON:              Finally you come.  
MERLIN (as to himself):  
                                 I'm satisfied ... satisfied  
PENDRAGON:              Shall we begin the battle?  
                                 I was waiting for you.  
                                 It could get too late.  
MERLIN:                    It is the hour.  
PENDRAGON:              What you have asked for has been done  
                                 Two camps: that of the brother is hidden.  
                                 He lets the heathens enter.  
                                 Reams of them.  
                                 Along the stream  
                                 Into the deep country  
                                 They passed by him.  
                                 Then he followed them with swift horses  
                                 And his troops  
                                 At a hurried pace.  
                                 They stood/hesitating.  
                                 I from the side  
                                 Approached  
                                 And encircled them.  
                                 Two days already we have been resting.  
                                 The third one dawned beautifully.  
MERLIN:                    The battle will be the biggest, the bloodiest.

I will rush to Uter to encourage him.  
He attacks. At that moment  
You invade.  
(looking to the sky/to himself)  
Forefather – are you absenting yourself from your kin?  
Dragon – do you not recognize the stars anymore?

PENDRAGON:

Will we be victorious?  
Will we live?

MERLIN:

The earthly has a beginning  
A beginning and an end  
The dear brother's death shall not scare  
The dear brother  
As he must die too (he disappears)

PENDRAGON:

Shall I die or he?  
Were it to fall on him I would suffer very much  
But I sense that I will release him.  
Then he remains alone in the house.

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Take me as a sacrificial lamb  
That the heathen clan may wither!  
Would like to bloom with him  
I would become green again in him

[Pause in complete silence. Pendragon has stepped into the entrance of the tent. There appears a dragon flying through the air, a flame streaming out of his nose and throat.]

PENDRAGON:

Hail us!  
Hail the kingdom!

[The dragon turns in front of the tent and turns to the right and further toward the enemy battle arrangement. Shouts of joy outside. Trumpets. Merlin appears again in the tent.]

MERLIN:

To the battle!

PENDRAGON:

To death!

MERLIN:

Nothing is death/nothing is life.

[They hug each other for a long time/in silence. Pendragon dashes off. Merlin remains by himself in the tent. Trumpets. Then sounds of battle, sometimes closer sometimes farther. Finally, it gets quieter.]

MERLIN:

My lot is the hardest of all lots  
That I know the course of the eons  
And the withering of each rose  
And the souls down und up.

I must wade in blood

And work blessings and curses  
Until the thousand deeds are done  
And the world is a pall.

I tremble before my work –  
That is my mother's heart.  
In the holy dream I survive  
The iron raging through the peoples.

Oh, (softer) God-world that I am planning  
And earthly paradise (softly)  
But dearest Viviane!  
Was it necessary that I left you?

[Suddenly, the music stops. Pendragon is carried into the tent on a stretcher. Merlin leans over him and kisses him.]

MERLIN: Beloved king!  
PENDRAGON (who opens his eyes one more time):  
Where is Uter?  
MERLIN: He is conquering.

[Pendragon dies and Merlin shuts his eyes. From outside, shouts, cries, and lamentation of death. Into this, trumpets and renewed noise of battle and battle music. The battle withdraws slowly. Starting with a few voices only but then growing dramatically a-capella choir singing:]

CHOIR: The king we love  
Has remained in the battle  
The king was as good as bread  
The good king, he is dead.

Death knows no mercy.  
Oh, God help us unfortunate ones!  
May he protect us from new suffering  
And guide us into bliss!

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[Rush of people toward the tent. Merlin/with outstretched arm/pushes all back/does not let anyone enter.]

MERLIN: All to battle!  
I will watch over the king  
Until the king arrives!

[They obey. Merlin/while he stretches his palm toward Pendragon:]

You between life  
And death – Pendragon!  
You between death  
And life – Pendragon!  
Pendragon!  
You, soul  
Are in a hurry  
No, stay  
In the house  
Go across  
From brother  
To brother  
From king  
To king  
To Uter  
To Uter-Pendragon!  
Pendragon!  
Dear little bird  
Let yourself be captured!  
Don't flutter down  
Return one more time  
Mouth to mouth a swift flight  
By the best one of same blood  
By the best one of the living!  
Look, he is approaching!  
Follow the path!  
Pendragon! Pendragon!  
Uter your brother!  
Uter your brother!  
Uterpendragon!  
Uterpendragon!  
King Uterpendragon!

[The battle music has transformed into victory music. Uter enters/ as victor. He waves to his followers to stay back, bends over Pendragon and kisses him for a long time. After he has raised himself again/he wants to speak. Merlin presses his mouth shut and snarls at him:]

Keep quiet!  
For your soul, keep quiet!  
King Uterpendragon!

[Pause with no sound whatsoever. Uter stands fixedly. Merlin starts to relax. He then sits down exhaustedly. His head sinks over his breast and he covers it up. After a while, he jumps up and shouts:]

King Uterpendragon!



[The followers storm into the tent. The music begins. A choir forms from all sides.]

Victory! Victory!  
Oh, big victory!  
Magnificent, like in tales and legends!

This victory is the biggest victory  
Oh, larger, oh larger than in all tales and legends!  
All heathens are slain!  
All heathens are slain!  
Hail you, hail you  
Hail you, oh, hail you  
Our King Uterpendragon!  
Our King Uterpendragon!

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UTERPENDRAGON (stepping to Merlin):  
You have advised two kings  
Now serve me!

MERLIN (leaning forward):  
You are the king.

UTERPENDRAGON (to the next ones):  
Prepare the celebrations for death and victory!  
Invite the princes for tonight!  
Leave us alone!

[Everyone but Uterpendragon and Merlin leaves the tent.]

UTERPENDRAGON (to the stretcher):  
What are you now? Appearance of appearances/  
On top nothing below nothing  
Your soul became mine  
Our souls became one  
Hatred and death cannot prevail over the one  
Life/the one love  
(to Merlin/grabbing both his hands):  
Again you have ended it well  
Guardian spirit of the tribe, hero Merlin.  
Always when heaven sends you  
Destiny takes a turn  
You are good like God/Merlin.

MERLIN (pressing his hands and then stepping back):  
But it is not over yet.  
Before the Lord has not sent the Redeemer  
The war is not averted.  
For the Lord to send the Redeemer  
That is what Merlin lives and strives for.

UTERPREDRAGON: Until the Lord has sent the Redeemer

MERLIN: Stay with us, oh Merlin!  
Let me, oh please let me move on  
Before midsummer.

UTERPENDRAGON: No! We cannot be without you!  
But promise to return  
Even from the farthest sojourn!

MERLIN: I must wander on earth forever.  
Yes, I promise to return  
To you, oh king -- and to the forest.

[then both together. Then Merlin by himself verse 3 and 6.]

(pause)

Uterpendragon! You, the last one before the Only one! –  
Now listen to me/king! I want to tell you something beautiful.  
You shall found a kingdom of Heavenly Peace.  
The pagans are expelled/but all evil ones  
And all good ones demand: it shall release them from hatred.  
Only the blood that becomes wine in the holy cup can do that.  
Only the flesh that becomes bread in the earthly meal can do that.  
Gather heathens and christians so that there may form  
The round table of eternal alliance of love.  
The countries and peoples shall be steered by the best  
The heathens and christians shall ignite virtue with virtue.  
They shall reign over the world with deeds  
And keep unfortunate mankind united.  
One seat will remain vacant: the one left by Judas.  
He who is above good or evil, he will fit in it.  
It is chosen for the world's emperor of peace:  
But he is not yet conceived and born.

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(pause)

UTERPRENDRAGON: But tell me, oh tell me (and alleviate the pain!)  
When will the time come?  
Who will be the father?  
Who will be the mother?

MERLIN: That is hidden and secret.

UTERPRENDRAGON: Will you not tear a tiny hole  
Into the curtain for me?

MERLIN: I will tell you the name:  
He shall be called Artus.

BOTH: He shall be called Artus.  
Artus.

Artus.  
MERLIN: He is still unconceived and unborn  
And only an illusion.  
But because you are the root of the flower  
Look at the blossom!

[The tent's walls float away. Far in the background appears the round table as a mirage. Twelve handsome men in white coats with simple, neatly cut hair sit around a splendidly set table in an open hall and spring grove. In the middle and looking to the foreground/Merlin and Uterpendragon across from him/Artus in a night-blue shining coat and with silver tiara.]

SONG OF THE ROUND TABLE (spookily):  
Oh, bless us venison and fish  
And ever-flowing wine  
God Father, bless us the earthly table  
Christ's son, bless the union of love!  
Oh, holy Spirit, may your fire  
Drive us against the enemy who ravages  
That we may pacify the land  
With rose-adorned swords!

### THIRD PART – ACT II

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[The location is the same as in the Part II, Scene 1, but slightly moved. Blasius' cottage is no longer in view/only the part of the clearing with table and bench. The front most part of the lake and the beginning of its left bank occupy the middle stage. In front of it, grass/meadow with low bushes, and at the left edge of the woods a very large blooming whitethorn bush. – Full moon night. Elves dancing in front of the lake. Merlin and Viviane sit under the whitethorn.]

FIRST ELF: We are the never ending times –  
SECOND ELF : That only the forest knows.  
FIRST ELF: We are the never ending times –  
CHOIR OF ELVES: We are the never ending times –  
Eternal bliss –  
That only the wonderful death knows.

MERLIN (standing up/to the elves):  
A child came like a ray  
Down to the dark valley of earth.  
It had very shiny body and soul  
And brings love and honor to mankind.  
VERY FAINT CHOIR: Oh, Artus! Oh, Artus! Oh, Artus, all hail!  
CHOIR OF ELVES: We are of Avalun.  
MERLIN: It will be comfort and fortune to mankind  
And brings back paradise  
Where all was eternal and good.  
It is pure divine glow.  
VERY FAINT CHOIR: Oh, Artus! Oh, Artus! Oh, Artus, all hail!  
CHOIR OF ELVES: We are of Avalun.

[The elves disappear into the slight fog against the forest and over the lake. Viviane stands up and Merlin takes her hand. They walk back and forth.]

VIVIANE (singing to herself):  
To my land of Avalun  
In longing in longing  
In longing I dissolve.  
MERLIN: Where we love it is always Avalun.  
Is it death? Is it life? Blissful, blissful it is.  
VIVIANE: Blissful, blissful it is  
That you have returned to me.  
MERLIN: I have returned many times.  
I will always return to you.  
VIVIANE: Why don't you stay?  
MERLIN: I circulate – and stay.  
VIVIANE: What do they need you for, now that Artus is alive?

MERLIN: I must protect him in this evil world.  
VIVIANE: You will never defeat this evil world.  
MERLIN: Once Artus shall rule pure and magnificent.

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VIVIANE: Heinous sin fathered him.

[They stand still/across from each other.]

VIVIANE: Merlin/you have not done good  
With Duchess Ygerne.

MERLIN: You do not grasp what I did.  
And I did not like doing it.

VIVIANE: She was the lady at the side  
Of King Uterpendragon.  
But she refused his gifts  
And refused his company.

He drank to the health of her master  
So she had to drink with him.  
Then she rode away toward Tintayol  
Without receiving leave and without waving.

MERLIN: I was forced to do all of this.  
Otherwise my king would have gone to ruin.  
He would have died because of love.

VIVIANE: You gave him the persona of the duke  
Betrayed her senses  
So that she would win the secret royal fruit  
the blessed child.

MERLIN: Heaven is in alliance with hell.  
Or else the round table would have been doomed  
And no savior would have emerged.

VIVIANE: Leave the world! It is without grace.  
But you are of graceful blood.  
What will harm you? What will fault you?  
Look how the whitethorn is blooming!

It numbs us with its smell and splendor  
Thus time and space fade:  
The overlong night of love.  
You are awake? But day is dream.

[In the mean time, it has become morning.]

MERLIN: You are jealous of Artus.  
VIVIANE: Love has afflicted me.

Master! I am a poor maid  
And I have not learned a lot at all.  
Magic might satisfy love and pain  
But I am so far away from that art  
So far, so far away.

[She pulls him toward the whitethorn.]

MERLIN: Love has afflicted me.  
MERLIN AND VIVIANE: Love has afflicted us.  
MERLIN: My people are the heathens  
As well as the christians.  
I had to suffer from the heathens  
I was tormented by the christians.  
I defeated the tyrant  
And raised the empire of mankind.  
But the world disgusted me  
And I fled to the elves' choir.  
Viviane! Holy life's  
Queen of Avalun!  
Everything else is in vain –  
Come now to the blooming whitethorn!  
Let us rest under the whitethorn!  
Rest under the blooming whitethorn!  
Forever loving forever resting!  
Everything else is in vain –  
Blessed queen of life!  
Everything else is in vain!

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[They walk arm in arm toward the whitethorn. Blasius/very old now/walks diagonally across the stage toward them.]

BLASIUS: Merlin!

[Merlin and Viviane stand still. Blasius/still a ways away/raises the cross. Viviane flees into the outer forest. Merlin stands indecisively. Viviane waves to Merlin. He hesitates. She flees into the deeper forest. Blasius steps up to Merlin.]

BLASIUS: The paramour of Avalun  
Fled from the cross.  
MERLIN: It is not Christ hanging from it anymore  
It is all creation.  
BLASIUS: But Artus has been born.  
Woe, if you shall forget him!  
MERLIN: Oh, master! Whoever needs Merlin  
Shall be sure to get Merlin.

BLASIIUS: But you have made the traveling courtesan  
 Into a powerful magician  
 You taught the paramour the secret art  
 And have revealed to her divine knowledge  
 She will throw your noose over your head  
 And capture you as if it were you capturing yourself.

MERLIN: Woe is me! She will succeed.  
 In the timeless times of love  
 I will work my destiny until the ultimate  
 Teach her the spell – that is the ultimate –  
 That will bestow me upon her without defense  
 In eternity.

BLASIIUS: That will bestow you upon her without defense  
 Forever.

BOTH (first the same together/then):  
 Forever.  
 Forever.

MERLIN: Thus ends the man.

BLASIIUS: Not me/an old man.  
 But to die soon is my destiny  
 My book remains unclosed.

MERLIN: No, write assiduously.  
 What new primeval times will bring  
 I will sing you of Artus.  
 I want to prophesy to you.

BLASIIUS: I hear you, oh voice!

[He fetches the book, sits at the table and writes repeating each line with emphasis. It is late morning and turns into noon.]

MERLIN (walking back and forth):

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Uterpendragon will lay down to die after  
 king's kingless deeds:  
 Long awaited Merlin will approach him  
 And whisper in his ear: the one who is your son  
 Artus will succeed you in your kingdom  
 He will exceed you and all others/  
 At the wonderful Round Table  
 He will assume the empty seat:  
 He will found the Empire of Peace  
 That hails from heaven/not from the people  
 And peacefully bring order to the entire world  
 Build a site for all to come.

[As Merlin has sunk into thoughts and become silent/Blasius puts down his pen. He puts his arms on the table and places his head in his hands. First he looks for a long time at Merlin/then

toward the sky. Merlin stands a bit away and looks now steadfastly and fixedly at him. During the following it becomes afternoon.]

BLASIVS (in sudden delight):

You captivate me, my son, so that I see miracles!  
The glow of your seer's eyes fall onto my brows.  
Look! King at home and emperor through all the lands!  
He loosens the old ties and makes everlasting ones  
Here he distributes the loans and gifts in graceful abundance  
There he feeds the poor and clothes the loins of the naked.  
Then he crushes the tyrant oppressors of the people  
And judges and mediates and restores morals.

MERLIN (by a few steps closer to Blasius):

Where deeds done by no one else are in great demand –

BLASIVS: The veritable deeds are more necessary than bread –

MERLIN: Where baseness speaks with mockery to heroism –

BLASIVS: To mankind and to divine glory –

MERLIN: To virtue and honor of Christians and all heathens –

BLASIVS: To good will and active compassion –

MERLIN: There is need for firm advice where the kings are foolish –

BLASIVS: Where priests and lay people are slaves to hell's lies –

MERLIN: Where knowledge is shrouded and wisdom is dishonored –

BLASIVS: Where even among the best the conscience is broad and distorted:

MERLIN: Into this world and into this hour of demise –

BLASIVS: Artus sends the knighthood and the Round Table –

MERLIN: For them to act, secretly and individually, out of some fire

BLASIVS: On earth like stars/in the ocean like rudders –

MERLIN: In the chaos like gods. They all will die –

BLASIVS: And return as God-sent heirs –

MERLIN: Who will nobly rule over the good and the evil –

BLASIVS: Fulfill and redeem the world, as long as it lasts.

... then after ... a-capella choir of 12 ..... voices.

[Blasius bends tiredly over and places his head on his folded hands. Merlin turns around and looks toward the lake. A fog is rising there and develops into a dance of elves. The latter stretches toward the right foreground and circles around Merlin/but avoids Blasius and his area. It then concentrates in the direction of the whitethorn and takes the dreamlike wandering Merlin with it. It has become twilight. The fog has finally also reached Blasius. He disappears in it.]

FIRST ELVES-HALF-CHOIR:

We are the never ending times  
Eternal bliss  
That only the heart knows.

SECOND ELVES-HALF-CHOIR:

Past already are the times



Forgotten are the people who ride and do battle  
Dust that no one names.  
ELVES CHOIR: Only those who devoted themselves to love  
Remain because we accompany them  
Unsevered from life.  
MERLIN: Viviane! – Viviane! –  
Oh, do you know where she dwells?  
[The fog in the foreground gives way. Each elf individually steps up front and then hurries back.]

FIRST ELF: You do not love her enough.  
So she hurried far away.  
SECOND ELF: You abandoned the whitethorn  
For fools who hate each other.  
MERLIN: Viviane! – Viviane! –  
Oh, tell me where she dwells!  
THIRD ELF: Perhaps on her barge  
The water ghost has befallen her –  
FOURTH ELF: Perhaps in the forest of forests  
The green minstrel has tempted her –  
FIFTH ELF: Perhaps sorrow has killed her.  
For you are that heartless and obdurate.

[The elves flutter away. It has become dark. Merlin wanders lost back and forth/calling.]

MERLIN: Viviane! – Viviane! –  
She is not coming.  
(pause)  
MERLIN: Go there, my dear! One more time  
I am leaving for the mission.  
I will lead King Artus  
Up until the empire  
Then I will return home to this ground.  
My course of time  
Has drowned in love.

[He strokes with his hand over his forehead and eyes and then goes with quick steps into the forest.]

ELVES CHOIR (who have come back):  
We are the never ending times  
Eternal bliss  
That only the heart knows.  
VIVIANE (calls from the forest in the left background):  
Merlin! – Merlin! –  
Merlin!

[She approaches the elves and remains standing close to them. Again, each elf steps individually to the front and then hurries back.]

VIVIANE: Oh, do you know where he dwells?  
FIRST ELF: He rushed to Artus.  
VIVIANE: Faithless one! Rushed to Artus!  
Oh, tell me/when is he coming back?  
SECOND ELF: Perhaps with the blue lilac  
Perhaps with the white snow.  
VIVIANE: What have I done! Oh, dear!  
THIRD ELF: You wanted him forever and ever.  
FOURTH ELF: So you affronted him instead of refreshing him  
VIVIANE: Oh, he will make Artus immortal  
And never return to the enchanted forest!  
FIFTH ELF: He will put an end to the deeds.  
Only love has force.  
Viviane: He will put an end to the deeds.  
Only love has force.  
ELVES CHOIR (floating away):  
We are the never ending times  
Eternal bliss  
That only the heart knows.

[Viviane leans on a tree and looks onto the lake. While fogs and changes between light and dark coming and going, a long time goes by with days and nights. – Merlin returns. He is behind Viviane's back in the forest and not yet visible. Musical variation of "we are the never ending times".]

MERLIN: I have served God and man  
And have pined to death  
Because she fled from me I left her –  
Oh, how I have pined!  
Me and lord of mercy – my friend –  
Feoffed with the evil world  
We did how we pleased  
But how I have pined!  
But how I have pined!  
Viviane!  
VIVIANE (looking for him in the forest and luring):  
Merlin, my dear magician, come!  
Why are you roaming in the night?  
And looking for me and calling me?  
I am not here.  
I am entirely within you.  
MERLIN: Viviane!  
I am astray in the enchanted forest.

I have trapped myself.  
 I know nothing any more.  
 VIVIANE: Merlin! Oh, my Merlin!  
 Who can escape love?  
 You easily find your way in  
 But never ever out.  
 MERLIN: Viviane! The darkness confuses me.  
 Where do I find you?  
 VIVIANE (imploringly):  
 Darkness, scatter!  
 Whitethorn of love  
 Bloom forever  
 In your own midday  
 And noon light!

[Sudden brightness. They both meet under the whitethorn and embrace for a long time. Above them the sun. All around in the forest night and moon.]

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MERLIN: Eternity!  
 VIVIANE: Eternity!  
 BOTH: Eternity and love!  
 MERLIN: Have I ever been anywhere else  
 But in your arms?  
 Will I ever be anywhere else?  
 We are one body.

[They sink down and the whitethorn closes above them.]

VIVIANE: We are nowhere and never  
 We sense  
 The enwinding  
 The disappearing –  
 MERLIN: I am melting  
 Without senses  
 Within you –  
 VIVIANE: Within me –  
 MERLIN: We sense –  
 VIVIANE: Without senses –  
 MERLIN: The enwinding –  
 VIVIANE: Within me – [singing together]  
 MERLIN: Within you –  
 VIVIANE: The disappearing – [singing together]  
 MERLIN: The disappearing –  
 VIVIANE: I am melting.  
 ELVES CHOIR (softly over the sea):  
 These are the never ending times

Eternal bliss  
That only death knows.

[Viviane clears the branches, gets up and pulls Merlin up and to her breast. They stand at the edge between the narrow circle of light and the all-encompassing night around them.]

VIVIANE: This shall be eternity.  
It may not change any further.  
MERLIN: What do you want to do?  
VIVIANE: You know it.  
MERLIN: Tell me.  
VIVIANE (with passion):  
You have held back the most powerful spell  
To yourself/Merlin!  
You shall teach me – for else all the rest was nothing –  
The spell and the science  
How, without walls and without chains  
I can capture you forever so that you will never leave me  
Not for one moment.  
Under the blooming whitethorn  
Of eternal love it shall be.  
You are mine for sure: I come and go  
And feed the flames of your desire  
And you never go without me.  
But I could never find peace  
Unless I tie you down forever.

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(pause)

MERLIN (lets his head sink and talks to himself):  
That is the spell of Avalun.  
That is the spell of death ....  
Could the wisest being be confronted with this?  
I have loved a woman more than myself ....  
And even if I escaped from the loved one and from love  
I cannot escape from destiny!  
If fate is love to me  
Then love is fate to me!  
VIVIANE: Oh, teach me the magic of Avalun!  
Oh, teach me the spell of death.  
I want to practice the spell of Avalun!  
I want to practice the spell of death.  
MERLIN: I will teach you the spell of Avalun!  
I will teach you the spell of death.  
You shall practice the spell of Avalun!  
You shall practice the spell of death.

(pause)

MERLIN: Viviane!  
 Look at here on my finger  
 The black ring.  
 I will take it off!  
 It will hurt me  
 Deep in my heart.

VIVIANE: Merlin!  
 I see on your finger  
 The black ring.  
 I must take it off.  
 But the pain  
 Breaks my heart.

MERLIN: Viviane!  
 Now tighten around your finger  
 The black ring.  
 It will give you bliss  
 But will hurt me.

VIVIANE (after a while of hesitation):  
 Merlin!  
 I tighten around my finger  
 The black ring (she does it and starts crying)

MERLIN: Viviane! Yes, cry the tears  
 The last ones of bliss and pain! (they kiss each other)  
 Now you need to do one more thing:  
 To bond me to the place.

VIVIANE (embracing him violently):  
 Then you will never leave me again!

MERLIN: Sit down with me under the whitethorn  
 And close my eyes!  
 I will put my head in your lap  
 Until sleep comes over me.  
 Then you may not wake me up.  
 But walk nine times carefully  
 Around the whitethorn without  
 Sound nor song!  
 Then release the veil from your lap  
 And place it around the flowering bush  
 And place my head in your lap  
 And now you know the spell as well too.

VIVIANE (jubilating): Now I know the spell as well!  
 (She kisses him and they remain entwined for a long time. She releases herself from him.)  
 Green-secreive veils shiver  
 Shelter me in plant walls  
 Soul aspirate tricklingly weaving  
 Death fertilizes eternally living.

[Viviane strokes over his eyes, pulls the defenseless along under the whitethorn and puts his head into her lap. Interlude until he falls asleep. She steps up again and strolls slowly nine times around the whitethorn. Then she takes off her veil robe and delicately wraps it around the shrub so that for a moment she is naked. After that she slips under the branches and places Merlin's head in her lap.]

VIVIANE (under the whitethorn):

Oh, veil of whitethorn!  
Just me and you.  
Oh, celebration of love!  
Just me and you.  
Oh, height of noon!  
Just me and you.  
Oh, night of closeness!  
Just me and you.  
You secure with me  
And entirely familiar!  
Concealed in the ring  
Entrusted to me!  
My darling nestle  
Yourself to rest!  
My lap is your cradle!  
Just me and you.  
Oh, eternal love!  
Oh, blissful deed!  
Sweet it is to live  
In Avalun.

[Meanwhile, the midday sun disappears. All over it is full moon night. Fog is covering the stage up to close to the whitethorn. The elves appear vaguely out of it.]

CHOIR OF ELVES:      These are the never ending times  
Eternal bliss  
That only death knows.

[The setting remains the same. First, complete silence. Then music accompanies the transition from night to early morning. Out of the forestry background at the lake's left bank, Gavan/young/in knight's armor.]

GAVAN: Oh, black bird's singing! Oh, new day!  
 Oh, tent of azure!  
 Oh, elevated knighthood!  
 Oh, Artus our hero!  
 You announced the Round Table  
 Twelve shall set off  
 To look for the missing one  
 The wonderful Merlin.  
 Ah, our eyesight is breaking  
 He is the only wise one!  
 Now I have roamed through the world  
 And cannot find him anymore.  
 Who is like me in Artus's kingdom  
 Famous like me Gavan?  
 But since I have not found the wise one  
 All is like a delusion.

[He reaches the whitethorn and stops before it.]

How beautifully this whitethorn is blooming!  
 And is fragrant  
 And is thawing  
 And is shivering  
 In the whispering wind!

MERLIN'S VOICE (out of the whitethorn):

Gavan!

GAVAN (wincing/ the hand at his sword):

Who is lurking?

MERLIN: I am Merlin.

GAVAN: Merlin! Where are you?

MERLIN: In the whitethorn.

GAVAN: Then come out.

MERLIN: I'm enchanted.

GAVAN: I will release you.

MERLIN: You cannot do it.

GAVAN: Who has banned you?

MERLIN: Tell Artus: I will never come  
 I greet him and wish him well

To him and the young ones.  
My heart has shattered  
But my heart remains faithful.  
He shall bear it without regret.  
I weave in the forest of all forests  
Ancient one forever faithful.  
Who has bonded you?!  
You are the last one to hear my voice.  
Also my location no one will ever find.

GAVAN:

MERLIN:

[Gavan waits and still hesitates.]

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GAVAN:

Oh, come back to us!

MERLIN (after a pause):

I have loved her too much  
I still love her  
She would release me because she loves me  
But the spell is too severe  
She does not break it  
I do not break it  
Oh, under whitethorn Avalun  
This land is without return.

[Gavan lowers his head and rides slowly on.]