

## **King Arthur's Socks**

BY FLOYD DELL  
A COMEDY

To MAX EASTMAN

*The living room of a summer cottage in Camelot, Maine. A pretty woman of between twenty-five and thirty-five is sitting in a big chair in the lamplight darning socks. She is Mrs. Arthur B. Robinson--or, to give her her own name, Guenevere. She is dressed in a light summer frock, and with her feet elevated on a settle there is revealed a glimpse of slender silk-clad ankles. It is a pleasant summer evening, and, one might wonder why so attractive a woman should be sitting at home darning her husband's socks, there being so many other interesting things to do in this world. The girl standing in the doorway, smiling amusedly, seems to wonder at it too. The girl's name is Vivien Smith.*

VIVIEN. Hello, Gwen!

GUENEVERE. Hello, Vivien! Come in.

VIVIEN. I'm just passing by.

GUENEVERE. Come in and console me for a minute or two, anyway. I'm a widow at present.

VIVIEN. (*enters and lounges against the mantelpiece*) Arthur gone to New York again?

GUENEVERE. Yes, for over Sunday. And I'm lonely.

VIVIEN. You don't seem to mind. Think of a woman being that happy darning her husband's socks!

GUENEVERE. Stay here and talk to me--unless you've something else on. It's been ages since I've seen you.

VIVIEN. I'm afraid I have got something else on, Gwen--I'll give you one guess.

GUENEVERE. You can't pretend to be art-ing at this hour of the night.

VIVIEN. I could pretend, but I won't. No, Gwen dear, it's not the pursuit of art, it's the pursuit of a man.

GUENEVERE. Don't try to talk like a woman in a Shaw play. I don't like this rigmarole about "pursuit." Say you're in love, like a civilized human being. And take a cigarette, and tell me about it.

VIVIEN. (*lighting a cigarette*) I don't know whether I'm so civilized, at that. You know me, Gwen. When I paint, do I paint like a lady?--or like a savage! (*She does, in fact, appear to be a very headstrong and reckless young woman.*)

GUENEVERE. (*mildly*) Oh, be a savage all you want to, Gwen. But don't tell me you're going in for this modern free-love stuff, because I won't believe it. You're not that kind of fool, Vivien. (*She darns placidly away.*)

VIVIEN. No, I'm not. I'm not a fool at all, Gwen dear. I know exactly what I want--and it doesn't include being disowned by my family and having my picture in the morning papers. Free-love? Not at all. I want to be married.

GUENEVERE. Well, for heaven's sake, who is it?

VIVIEN. Is it possible that it's not being gossiped about? You really haven't heard?

GUENEVERE. Not a syllable.

VIVIEN. Then I shan't tell you.

GUENEVERE. But--why?

VIVIEN. Because you'll think I've a nerve to want him.

GUENEVERE. Nonsense. I don't know any male person in these parts who is good enough for you, Vivien.

VIVIEN. Thanks, darling. That's just what I think in my calmer moments. But mostly I'm so crazy about him that I'm almost humble. Can you imagine it?

GUENEVERE. Well, what's the matter, then? Doesn't he reciprocate? You don't look like the victim of a hopeless passion.

VIVIEN. Oh, he's in love with me all right. But he doesn't want to be. He says being in love interferes with his work.

GUENEVERE. What nonsense!

VIVIEN. Oh, I don't know about that! I think being in love with me would interfere with a man's work. I should hope so!

GUENEVERE. (*primly*) I don't interfere with Arthur's work.

VIVIEN. Arthur's a professor of philosophy. Besides, Arthur had written a book and settled down before he fell in love with you. I'm dealing with a man who has his work still to do. He thinks if he had about three years of peace and quiet and hard work, he'd put something big across. He put it up to me as a fellow-artist. I know just how he feels. I suppose I am very distracting!

GUENEVERE. Well, why don't you give him his three years?

VIVIEN. Gwen! What do you think I am? An altruist? A benefactor of humanity? Well, I'm not, I'm a woman. Three years? I've given him three hours, and threatened to marry a man back at home if he doesn't make up his mind before then.

GUENEVERE. Heavens, Vivien, you *are* a savage! Well, did it work?

VIVIEN. I don't know. The three hours aren't up yet. I'm going around to get my answer now. I must say the prospect isn't encouraging. He started to pack up to go to Boston. He says he won't be bullied.

GUENEVERE. But Vivien!

VIVIEN. Oh, don't condole with me yet, Gwen dear. It's twelve hours before that morning train, and I'm not through with him yet.

GUENEVERE. (*curiously*) What are you going to do?

VIVIEN. Nothing crude, Gwen dear. Oh, there's lots of things I can do. Cry, for instance. He's never seen a woman cry. Maybe you think I can't cry?

GUENEVERE. It's hard to imagine *you* crying.

VIVIEN. I never wanted anything badly enough to cry for it before. But I could cry my heart out for him. I've absolutely no pride left. Well-- I'm going to have him, that's all. (*She throws her cigarette into the grate, and starts to go.*)

GUENEVERE. And what about his work? Suppose it's true--

VIVIEN. Suppose it is. Then his work will have to get along the best way it can. (*She turns at the door.*) Do I look like a loser?--or a winner!

GUENEVERE. I'll bet on you, Vivien.

VIVIEN. Thanks, darling. And bye-bye.

GUENEVERE. (*stopping her*) But Vivien--! I've been racking my brain to think who--? *Do* tell me!

VIVIEN. (*in the doorway, defiantly*) Well, if you must know--it's Lancelot Jones.

GUENEVERE. (*springing up, amazed, incredulous and horrified*) Oh, *no*, Vivien! Not Lancelot!

VIVIEN. Absolutely yes.

GUENEVERE. But--but he's married already!

VIVIEN. Oh, is *that* what's bothering you?

GUENEVERE. I should rather think it would bother *you*, Vivien!

VIVIEN. But it so happens that it doesn't. I'm not breaking up a marriage. There isn't any marriage there to break up. I know all about it. Lancelot told me. That marriage was ended long ago. It's simply that he has never got a divorce.

GUENEVERE. But--but if that's true, why *hasn't* he got a divorce?

VIVIEN. On purpose, Gwen--as a protection! Against love-sick females like me. Against getting married again. I told you he wanted to work.

GUENEVERE. But Vivien! If he hasn't got a divorce--

VIVIEN. He'll have to get one, that's all. It won't take long. And in the meantime we can be engaged.

GUENEVERE. A funny sort of engagement, Vivien--to a married man!

VIVIEN. I think you're very unkind, Gwen. It isn't funny at all. It's a nuisance. We'll have to wait at least a month! I think you might sympathize with me. I believe you're in love with him yourself.

GUENEVERE. (*coldly*) Vivien!

VIVIEN. (*contritely*) I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. But I do think he's so terribly nice--I don't see how any woman can help being in love with him. Well--I'm off to his studio, to learn my fate. Wish me luck, if you can!

*She goes.*

GUENEVERE. (*looks after her, then drifts over to the mantel, leans against it staring out into space, and then murmurs*)--Lancelot!

*She goes slowly back to her chair, sits still a moment, and then quietly resumes the darning of socks.*

*Enter, from the side door, Mary, the pretty servant girl, who fusses about at the back of the room.*

GUENEVERE. *(absently)* Going, Mary?

MARY. No, ma'am. I don't feel like going out tonight.

*Something in her tone makes Guenevere turn.*

GUENEVERE. *(kindly)* Why, Mary, what is the matter?

MARY. *(struggling with her sobs)* I'm sorry, ma'am, I can't help it--I wasn't going to say anything. But when you spoke to me--

GUENEVERE. *(quietly)* What is it, Mary?

MARY. I'm a wicked girl. *(She sobs again.)*

GUENEVERE. *(after a moment's reflection.)* Yes? Tell me about it.

MARY. Shall I tell you?

GUENEVERE. Yes. I think you'd better tell me.

MARY. I wanted to tell you. *(She comes to Guenevere, and sinks beside her chair.)* I wanted to tell you before Mr. Robinson came back. I couldn't tell you if he was here.

GUENEVERE. *(smiling)* My husband? Are you afraid of him, Mary?

MARY. Yes, ma'am.

GUENEVERE. *(to herself)* Poor Arthur! He does frighten people. He looks so--just.

MARY. That's what it is, ma'am. He always makes me think of my father.

GUENEVERE. Is your father a just man, too, Mary?

MARY. Yes, ma'am. He's that just I'd never dare breathe a word to him about what I've done. He'd put me out of the house.

GUENEVERE. (*hesitating*) Is it so bad, Mary, what you have done?

MARY. Yes, ma'am.

GUENEVERE. Do you--do you want to tell me who it is?

MARY. It's Mr. Jones, ma'am.

GUENEVERE. (*reflectively*) Jones? (*Then, astoundedly*)--Jones! (*Incredulously*)--You don't mean--! (*Quietly*)--Do you mean Mr. Lancelot Jones?

MARY. Yes, ma'am.

GUENEVERE. This is terrible! When did it happen?

MARY. It--it sort of happened last night, ma'am. It was this way--

GUENEVERE. No details, please!

MARY. No, ma'am. I just wanted to tell you how it was. You see, ma'am, I went to his studio--

GUENEVERE. (*unable to bear it*) Please, Mary, please!

MARY. Yes, ma'am.

GUENEVERE. I don't mean that I blame you. One can't help--falling in love....

MARY. No, you just can't help it, can you?

GUENEVERE. But Lancelot--Mr. Jones--should have behaved better than that....

MARY. Should he, ma'am?

GUENEVERE. He certainly should. I wouldn't have believed it of him. So that is why--Mary! Do you know--? But I'm not sure that I ought to tell you. Still, I don't see why I should protect *him*. Do you know that he is going away?

MARY. No, ma'am. Is he?

GUENEVERE. Yes. In the mo'rnng. You must go to see him tonight. No, you can't do that....Oh, this is terrible!

MARY. I'm *glad* he's going away, Mrs. Robinson.

GUENEVERE. Are you?

MARY. Yes, ma'am.

GUENEVERE. Why?

MARY. Because I'd be so ashamed every time I saw him.

GUENEVERE. (*looking at her with interest*) Really? I didn't know people felt that way. Perhaps it's the right way to feel. But I didn't suppose anybody did. So you want him to go?

MARY. Yes, ma'am.

GUENEVERE. And you don't feel you've any claim on him?

MARY. No, ma'am. Why should I?

GUENEVERE. Well! I really don't know. But one is supposed to. Mary, you *are* a modern woman!

MARY. Am I?

GUENEVERE. One would think, after what happened--



MARY. That's just it, ma'am. If it had been anything else--But after what happened, I just want never to see him again. You see, ma'am, it was this way--

GUENEVERE. (*gently*) Is it necessary to tell me that, Mary? I know what happened.

MARY. But you don't, ma'am. That's just it. I've been trying to tell you what happened, ma'am.

GUENEVERE. Good heavens, was it so horrible! Well, go on, then. (*She nerves herself to hear the worst.*) What *did* happen?

MARY. Nothing, ma'am....

GUENEVERE. Nothing?

MARY. That's just it....

GUENEVERE. But I--I don't understand.

MARY. You said a while ago, Mrs. Robinson, that you couldn't help falling in love. It's true. I tried every way to stop, but I couldn't. So last night I--I went to his studio--

GUENEVERE. Yes?

MARY. I told you I was a wicked girl, Mrs. Robinson. You know I've a key to let myself in to clean up for him. So last night I just went in. He--he was asleep--

GUENEVERE. Yes?

MARY. I--shall I tell you, ma'am?

GUENEVERE. Yes. You *must* tell me, now.

MARY. And I--(*She sits kneeling, looking straight ahead, and continues speaking, in a dead voice*) I couldn't help it. I put my arms around him.

GUENEVERE. Yes?

MARY. And he put his arms around me, Mrs. Robinson, and kissed me. And I didn't care about anything else, then. I was glad. And then--

GUENEVERE. Yes?

MARY. And then he woke up--and he was angry at me. He swore at me. And then he laughed, and kissed me again, and put me out of the room.

GUENEVERE. Yes, yes. And that--that was all?

MARY. I came home. I thought I would have died. I knew I had been wicked. Oh, Mrs. Robinson--(*She breaks down and sobs.*)

GUENEVERE. (*patting her head*) Poor child, it's all right. You aren't so wicked as you think. Oh, I'm so glad!

MARY. But it's jest the same, Mrs. Robinson. I wanted to be wicked.

GUENEVERE. Never mind, Mary. We all want to be wicked at times. But something always happens. It's all right. You're a good girl, Mary. There, stop crying!... Of course, of course! I might have known. Lancelot couldn't--and yet, I wonder.... Mary, stand up and let me look at you!

MARY. (*obeying*) Yes, ma'am.

GUENEVERE. (*in a strange tone*) You're a very good-looking girl, Mary.... So he laughed, and gave you a kiss, and led you to the door!... Well! Go to bed and think no more about it. It's all right.

MARY. Do you really think so, Mrs. Robinson? Isn't it the same thing if you *want* to be wicked--

GUENEVERE. You're talking like a professor of philosophy now, Mary. And you're a woman, and you ought to know better. No, it isn't the same thing, at all. Run along, child.

MARY. Yes, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am. Good night, ma'am.

*She goes.*

GUENEVERE. Good-night, Mary. (*She returns to her darning. She smiles to herself, then becomes serious, stops work, and looks at the clock. Then she says*--Vivien! Vivien's tears! Poor Lancelot! Oh, well! (*She shrugs her shoulders, and goes on working. Then suddenly she puts down her work, rises, and walks restlessly about the room.... There is a knock at the door. She turns and stares at the door. The knock is repeated. She is silent, motionless for a moment. Then she says, almost in a whisper*)--Come!

*A young man enters.*

GUENEVERE. Lancelot!

LANCELOT. Guenevere! (*They go up to each other, and he takes both her hands. They stand that way for a moment. Then he says lightly*) --Darning King Arthur's socks, I see!

GUENEVERE. (*releasing herself, and going back to her chair*) Yes. Sit down.

LANCELOT. Where's his royal highness?

GUENEVERE. New York. Why don't you ever come to see us?

LANCELOT. (*not answering*) Charming domestic picture!

GUENEVERE. Don't be silly!

LANCELOT. I am going away.

GUENEVERE. Are you? I'm sorry. Don't you like our little village?

LANCELOT. Thought I'd stop in to say good-bye.

GUENEVERE. That's very sweet of you.

LANCELOT. (*rising*) I've got to go back and finish packing.

GUENEVERE. Not really?

LANCELOT. Going in the morning.

GUENEVERE. Why the haste? The summer's just begun. I hear you've been doing some awfully good things. I was going over to see them.

LANCELOT. Thanks. Sorry to disappoint you. But I've taken it into my head to leave.

GUENEVERE. You're not going tonight, anyway. Sit down and talk to me.

LANCELOT. All right. (*He sits, constrainedly.*) What shall I talk about?

GUENEVERE. (*smiling*) Your work.

LANCELOT. (*impatiently*) You're not interested in my work.

GUENEVERE. Your love-affairs, then.

LANCELOT. Don't want to.

GUENEVERE. Then read to me. There's some books on the table.

LANCELOT. (*opening a serious-looking magazine*) Here's an article on "The Concept of Happiness"--by Professor Arthur B. Robinson. Shall I read that?

GUENEVERE. I gather that you are not as fond of my husband as I am, Lancelot. But try to be nice to me, anyway. Read some poetry.

LANCELOT. (*takes a book from the table, and reads*)--

"It needs no maxims drawn from Socrates To tell me this is madness in my blood--"

*He pauses. She looks up inquiringly. Presently he goes on reading--*

"Nor does what wisdom I have learned from these Serve to abate my most unreasoned mood. What would I of you? What gift could you bring, That to await you in the common street Sets all my secret ecstasy a-wing Into wild regions of sublime retreat? And if you come, you will speak common words--"

*He stops, and flings the book across the room. She looks up.*

GUENEVERE. Don't you like it?

LANCELOT. (*gloomily*) Hell! That's too true.

GUENEVERE. Try something else.

LANCELOT. No--I can't read. (*Guenevere bends to her darning.*) Shall I go?

GUENEVERE. No.

LANCELOT. Do you enjoy seeing me suffer?

GUENEVERE. Does talking to me make you suffer?

LANCELOT. Yes.

GUENEVERE. I'm sorry.

LANCELOT. Then let me go.

GUENEVERE. No. Sit there and talk to me, like a rational human being.

LANCELOT. I'm not a rational human being. I'm a fool. A crazy fool.

GUENEVERE. (*smiling at him*) I like crazy fools.

LANCELOT. (*desperately, rising as he speaks*) I am going to be married.

GUENEVERE. (*in a mocking simulation of surprise*) What, again?

LANCELOT. Yes--again--and as soon as possible--to Vivien.

GUENEVERE. I congratulate you.

LANCELOT. I *love* her.

GUENEVERE. Naturally.

LANCELOT. *She* loves *me*.

GUENEVERE. I trust so.

LANCELOT. Then *why* should I be at this moment aching to kiss *you*? Tell me that?

GUENEVERE. (*looking at him calmly*) It does seem strange.

LANCELOT. It is absolutely insane! It's preposterous! It's contradictory!

GUENEVERE. Are you quite sure it's all true?

LANCELOT. Yes! I'm sure that I never would commit the rashness of matrimony again without being in love. Very much in love. And I'm equally sure that I would not stand here and tell you what a fool I am about you, if *that* weren't true. Do you think I *want* to be this way? It's too ridiculous--I didn't want to tell you. I wanted to go. You made me stay. Well, now you know what a blithering lunatic I am.

GUENEVERE. (*quietly*) It *is* lunacy, isn't it?

LANCELOT. Is it?

GUENEVERE. Sheer lunacy. In love with one woman, and wanting to kiss another. Disgraceful, in fact.

LANCELOT. I know what you think! You think I'm paying you an extremely caddish compliment--or else--

GUENEVERE. (*earnestly, as she rises*) No, I don't think that at all, Lancelot. I believe you when you say that about me. And I don't imagine for one moment that you're not really in love with Vivien. I know you are. I could pretend to myself that you weren't--just as you've tried to pretend to yourself sometimes, that I'm not really in love with Arthur. But you know I am--don't you?

LANCELOT. Yes. ...

GUENEVERE. Well, Lancelot, there are--two lunatics here. (*He stares at her.*) It's almost funny. I don't know why I'm telling you. But--

LANCELOT. You--!

GUENEVERE. Yes. I want to kiss you, too.

LANCELOT. But this won't do. As long as there was only one of us--

GUENEVERE. There's been two all along, Lancelot. I've more self-control than you--that's all. But I broke down tonight. I knew I oughtn't to tell you--now. But I knew I would.

LANCELOT. You, too!

*They have unconsciously circled about to the opposite side of the room.*

GUENEVERE. Oh, well, Lance, I fancy we aren't the only ones. It's a common human failing, no doubt. Lots of people must feel this way.

LANCELOT. What do they do about it?

GUENEVERE. Well, it all depends on what kind of people they are. Some of them go ahead and kiss. Others think of the consequences.

LANCELOT. Well, let's think of the consequences, then. What are they? I forget.

GUENEVERE. I don't. I'm keeping them very clearly in mind. In the first place--

LANCELOT. Yes?

GUENEVERE. What was it? Yes--in the first place, we would be sorry. And in the second place--

LANCELOT. In the second place--

GUENEVERE. In the second place--I forget what's in the second place. But in the third place we mustn't. Isn't that enough?

LANCELOT. Yes. I know we mustn't. But--I feel that we are going to.

GUENEVERE. Please don't say that.

LANCELOT. But isn't it true? Don't you feel that, too?

GUENEVERE. Yes.

LANCELOT. Then we're lost.

GUENEVERE. No. We must think!

LANCELOT. I can't think.

GUENEVERE. Try.

LANCELOT. It's no use. I can't even remember "in the first place," now.

GUENEVERE. Then--before we do remember--!



*He takes her in his arms. They kiss each other--a long, long kiss.*

LANCELOT. Sweetheart!

GUENEVERE. *(holding him at arm's length)* That was in the second place, Lancelot. If we kiss each other, we'll begin saying things like that--and perhaps believing them.

LANCELOT. What did I say?

GUENEVERE. Something very foolish.

LANCELOT. What, darling?

GUENEVERE. There, you did it again. Stop, or I shall be doing it, too. I want to, you know.

LANCELOT. Want what?

GUENEVERE. To call you darling, and believe I'm in love with you.

LANCELOT. Aren't you?

GUENEVERE. I mustn't be.

LANCELOT. But aren't you?

GUENEVERE. Oh, I--*(She closes her eyes, and he draws her to him. Suddenly she frees herself.)* No! Lancelot--no! I'm not in love with you. And you're not in love with me. We're just two wicked people who want to kiss each other.

LANCELOT. Wicked? I don't feel wicked. Do you?

GUENEVERE. No. I just feel natural. But it's the same thing. *(He approaches her with outstretched arms. She retreats behind the chair.)* No, no. Remember that I'm married.

LANCELOT. I don't care.

GUENEVERE. Then remember that you're engaged!

LANCELOT. Engaged?

GUENEVERE. Yes: to Vivien.

LANCELOT. (*stopping short*) So I am.

GUENEVERE. And you're in love with her.

LANCELOT. That's true.

GUENEVERE. You see now that you can't kiss me, don't you?

LANCELOT (*dazedly*) Yes.

GUENEVERE. Then thank heavens! for I was about to let you. And that's in the fifth place, Lancelot: if we kiss each other once, we're sure to do it again and again--and again. Now go over there and sit down, and we'll talk sanely and sensibly.

LANCELOT. (*obeying*) Heavens, what a moment! I'm not over it yet.

GUENEVERE. Neither am I. We're a pair of sillies, aren't we? I never thought I should ever behave in such a fashion.

LANCELOT. It was my fault. I shouldn't have started it.

GUENEVERE. I am as much to blame as you.

LANCELOT. I'm sorry.

GUENEVERE. Are you?

LANCELOT. I ought to be. But I'm not, exactly.

GUENEVERE. I'm not either, I'm ashamed to say.

LANCELOT. The truth is, I want to kiss you again.

GUENEVERE. And I... But do you call this talking sensibly?

LANCELOT. I suppose it isn't. Well, go ahead with your sixth place, then. Only, for heaven's sake try and say something that will really do some good!

GUENEVERE. Very well, Lancelot. Do you really want to elope with me?

LANCELOT. Very much.

GUENEVERE. That's not the right answer. You know perfectly well you want to do nothing of the sort. What! Scandalize everybody, and ruin my reputation, and break Vivien's heart?

LANCELOT. No--I don't suppose I really want to do any of those things.

GUENEVERE. Then do you want us to conduct a secret and vulgar intrigue?

LANCELOT. (*hurt*) Guenevere!

GUENEVERE. You realize, of course, that this madness of ours might last no longer than a month?

LANCELOT. (*soberly*) Perhaps.

GUENEVERE. Well, do you still want to kiss me?--Think what you are saying, Lancelot, for I may let you. And that kiss may be the beginning of the catastrophe. (*She moves toward him.*) Do you want a kiss that brings with it grief and fear and danger and heartbreak?

LANCELOT. No--

GUENEVERE. Then what do you want?

LANCELOT. I want--a kiss.

GUENEVERE. Never. If you had believed, for one your chance.

LANCELOT. Kiss me!

GUENEVERE. Never. If you had believed, for one moment, that it *was* worth the price of grief and heartbreak, I should have believed it too, and kissed you, and not cared what happened. I should have risked the love of my husband and the happiness of your sweetheart without a qualm. And who knows? It might have been worth it. An hour from now I shall be sure it wasn't; I shall be sure it was all blind, wicked folly. But now I am a little sorry. I wanted to gamble with fate. I wanted us to stake our two lives recklessly upon a kiss--and see what happened. And you couldn't. It wasn't a moment of beauty and terror to you. You didn't want to challenge fate. You just wanted to kiss me.... Go!

LANCELOT. (*turning on her bitterly*) You women! Because you are afraid, you accuse us of being cowards.

GUENEVERE. What do you mean?

LANCELOT. (*brutally*) You! You want a love-affair. Your common sense tells you it's folly. Your reason won't allow it. So you want your common sense to be overwhelmed, your reason lost. You want to be swept off your feet. You want to be *made* to do something you don't approve of. You want to be wicked, and you want it to be some one else's fault. Tell me--isn't it true?

GUENEVERE. Yes, it is true--except for one thing, Lancelot. It's true that I wanted you to sweep me off my feet, to make me forget everything; it was wrong, it was foolish of me to want it, but I did. Only if you had done it, you wouldn't have been "to blame." I should have loved you for ever because you could do it. And now, because you couldn't I despise you. Now you know. ... Go.

LANCELOT. No, Guenevere, you don't despise me. You're angry with me and angry with yourself because you couldn't quite forget King Arthur. You are blaming me and I am blaming you, isn't it amusing?

GUENEVERE. You are right, Lancelot. It's my fault. Oh, I envy women who can dare to make fools of themselves who forget everything and don't care what they do! I suppose that's love--and I'm not up to it.

LANCELOT. You are different....

GUENEVERE. Different? Yes, I'm a coward. I'm not primitive enough. Despise me. You've a right to. And--please go.

LANCELOT. I'm afraid I'm not very primitive either, Gwen. I--

GUENEVERE. I'm afraid you're not, Lance. That's the trouble with us. We're civilized. Hopelessly civilized. We had a spark of the old barbaric flame--but it went out. We put it out--quenched it with conversation. No, Lancelot, we've talked our hour away. It's time for you to pack up. Good-bye. (*He kisses her hand lingeringly.*) You may kiss my lips if you like. There's not the slightest danger. We were unnecessarily alarmed about ourselves. We couldn't misbehave! ... Going?

LANCELOT. Damn you! Good-bye!

*He goes.*

GUENEVERE. Well, *that* did it. If he had stayed a moment longer--!

*She flings up her arms in a wild gesture--then recovers herself, and goes to her chair, where she sits down and quietly resumes the darning of her husband's socks.*