

The Time is Ripe

An Arthurian Comedy Inspired by Monty Python Inspired by Time Coconuts

By Pamela Morgan

Pjvalentine77@gmail.com
1403 River Landing
Normal, IL 61761
708-305-4744
Pamelamorganwrites.com

The Time is Ripe

A King Arthur Comedy inspired by Monty Python inspired by Time Coconuts

Cast of Characters

King Arthur - the ruler of all Britain

Merlin - the wisest wizard in the realm

Horse - a dirty servant

All characters can and should be played by any age, race or gender.

At rise, ARTHUR sits on his throne. He appears to have nothing to do. He can blow at his bangs. Tap his fingers. Then he starts to balance Excalibur on his hand. It falls. He glares angrily around like it was someone else's fault.

Finally, he flops back with a sigh. Then suddenly, he sits bolt upright, looking energized.

ARTHUR

My steed! Bring me my steed!

HORSE enters, a peasant person dressed in rags, carrying a large pack. She is clapping her hands over and over together to imitate, poorly, the sound of horses hooves. As she halts in front of ARTHUR, she makes a whinnying nose, then blows out her lips.

ARTHUR watches her the entire time. A beat.

What are you doing there?

HORSE

I'm your steed, your highness.

ARTHUR

I mean with your hands.

HORSE

Oh, I'm clapping them to sound like horses hooves, your majesty.

ARTHUR

Well they sound nothing like horses hooves, they sound like two hands clapping.

HORSE

Would you rather I clapped one hand, my liege?

ARTHUR

I don't know, what does that sound like?

HORSE demonstrates one hand clapping. Both listen earnestly. Finally, ARTHUR shakes his head and HORSE stops.

What happened to the coconuts?

HORSE

I threw them out, your Highness.

ARTHUR

Threw them out?

HORSE

They went bad.

ARTHUR

They wouldn't get better?

HORSE

Unlikely.

ARTHUR

I didn't know coconuts went bad.

HORSE

Indeed, your majesty. They were overripe.

ARTHUR

Can we get more?

HORSE

Not at this time of year, your majesty.

ARTHUR

What time of year can we get them?

HORSE

Considering the impact of climate change and the rising temperatures of the ocean, hurricane and tropical storms have increased in wind velocity, that coincide with the direct flight path of the African Swallow. It's highly unlikely that, burdened with the weight of a fully ripe coconut, the swallow would survive the trip at any time of year.

ARTHUR

What about a European Swallow?

HORSE

They're all on holiday in Spain.

ARTHUR

Oh and they still have that dreadful inquisition going on. So you're telling me that an African swallow, laden with a five pound coconut-

HORSE

Three.

ARTHUR

How's that?

HORSE

The coconut is three pounds, my liege.

ARTHUR

Very well. An African swallow, laden with a three pound coconut can't traverse the ocean with a marginal increase in wind velocity due to a variance of some degree in ocean warming?

HORSE

Point eight three three three three three degrees, your majesty.

ARTHUR

Couldn't we just round that up to point nine?

HORSE

We would round it down to point eight.

ARTHUR

But then we could round THAT up to one degree!

HORSE

As you say, my liege.

A pause as ARTHUR looks very triumphant and pleased. Then he realizes nothing is resolved.

ARTHUR

We can't very well journey across the lands clapping our hands, can we?

HORSE

You wouldn't be clapping your hands, your highness, I would. And I'd be pleased to clap my hands. I've been practicing. Would you like to see?

ARTHUR

Very well.

HORSE begins clapping her hands and moving around like a horse.

HORSE

A trot.

She increases the clapping.

A canter.

She increases the pace.

A gallop.

She pauses the clap a moment and jumps, then lands clapping.

A leap!

She stops and waits.

ARTHUR

No, it's all wrong. It won't do. We need the coconuts. You're absolutely sure about the swallows?

HORSE

Positively.

ARTHUR

Very well then, there's only one answer. Merlin!

Merlin enters.

Old man, I require advice.

MERLIN

Don't eat seafood when you're landlocked.

Merlin starts to leave.

ARTHUR

No, I need advice on something else.

Merlin pauses, turns back.

MERLIN

Don't gamble anything you're not willing to give away.

Merlin starts to leave.

ARTHUR

Oh, well that's terribly good advice but not what I needed. I'm looking for something a little more specific, you see, and I'm not entirely sure how to broach the topic, but you being such a wise man, I'll just come out and say it.

(overlapping)

I need to replace my coconuts.

MERLIN

(overlapping)

Yes, she's sleeping with Lancelot.

ARTHUR

(overlapping)

Wait, what who?

MERLIN

(overlapping)

Your coconuts?

ARTHUR

Who are you talking about?

MERLIN

Oh, some watery tart that Lance met on a quest. Coconuts, you say?

ARTHUR

Indeed. My servant here tells me the coconuts have all spoiled.

MERLIN

Fly in some new ones.

ARTHUR

The European swallows are on holiday.

MERLIN

And the African ones?

ARTHUR

Something about the rising temperature of the ocean and an increase in wind velocity
They can no longer carry a five pound-

HORSE

Three pound.

ARTHUR

Three pound coconut.

MERLIN

A travesty.

ARTHUR

So what can you do about it?

MERLIN

What can I do about it?

ARTHUR

Yes, you're Merlin the Wizard! Almighty and powerful. Magic me a coconut. Summon one from thin air. Transmute her hands into coconut shells. Oh! Or better yet, teleport us directly to Africa and I'll pick one out on my own. What's the weather like this time of year?

HORSE

83 degrees Fahrenheit, my liege.

MERLIN

I'm not exactly that kind of wizard, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Well, what kind are you?

MERLIN

I'm a time wizard.

ARTHUR

A time wizard? So you can stop time?

MERLIN

Not precisely.

ARTHUR

Move through time?

MERLIN

In a manner of speaking, I suppose.

ARTHUR

What manner?

MERLIN

I progress through time in a linear fashion relative to those around me.

ARTHUR looks confused.

HORSE

He ages, your Highness.

MERLIN

I will have you know that I have amassed a considerable amount of arcane training to reckon a specific date within a chronological system that is the most opportune for certain encounters within a regnal year that benefit the kingdom.

ARTHUR

Like when you helped my father sneak into a castle to lay with my mother and conceive me...

MERLIN

The right time.

ARTHUR

And all those years you were raising me, when I could have run over to that sword in the stone and yanked it out and ruled England, sparing myself all the poverty that you forced me to live in?

MERLIN

Not the right time.

ARTHUR

What about when you told me to send 150 of my most loyal and bravest knights on a quest for the Holy Grail, that only ended in death, dismemberment and disappointment for everyone involved?

MERLIN

Two out of five ain't bad.

HORSE

Three.

MERLIN

Two out of three ain't bad.

ARTHUR

So what exactly is your power?

MERLIN

In a coconut shell...I wait around for the right time.

ARTHUR

But anyone could do that!

MERLIN

Not anyone!

ARTHUR

My horse could do that.

HORSE

I'm certain I would make an era, my liege.

ARTHUR

And why couldn't you tell me when the time was right to order more coconuts?

MERLIN

I clearly remember advising you to invest in aviation, but no one ever listens to Merlin.

ARTHUR

I always listen to you.

MERLIN

What about when I told you not to marry Guinevere?

ARTHUR

She's the love of my life!

MERLIN

And your sister, let's not even go there.

ARTHUR

Don't bring my family into this, if you hadn't plucked me off my mother's breast and raised me as an urchin, that never would have happened.

MERLIN

Without my interference, you wouldn't have survived toddlerhood!

ARTHUR

You're useless!

MERLIN

You're incompetent!

HORSE

May I make a suggestion?

*ARTHUR and MERLIN pause, turn to consider
HORSE as if they've never seen her before.
Finally, ARTHUR waves at her to continue.*

Merlin is a time wizard, which means he knows when the time is ripe.

ARTHUR

Right. He knows when the time is right.

HORSE

And when the time is ripe.

They all stare at each other. No one gets it.

If he knows when the time is ripe, he can apply inverse operations to the current weight and density of a fully ripe coconut to determine the size and stability of a coconut both light enough, young enough, and durable enough for an African swallow to survive the ocean passage in tact.

MERLIN starts calculating in the air.

ARTHUR

Is that true? Would that work?

MERLIN

Drop the two, carry the five-

HORSE

Three.

MERLIN

Carry the three, and...yes! I think she's right. We could have a swallow here by the time it takes us to ride to the shore to meet it.

ARTHUR

Brilliant! Let us obtain the coconut! Away!

ARTHUR and MERLIN run out of the room.

HORSE remains. MERLIN and ARTHUR run back in.

Why are you just standing there? I said, away!

ARTHUR and MERLIN run out again. They run back in.

Come, we don't have all day. We must ride to the shore to meet the swallow.

HORSE

But your majesty, without any coconuts...

ARTHUR

Oh fine, use your hands but just this once.

HORSE begins clapping her hands.

MERLIN

Oh, that's a terrible sound.

ARTHUR

I told you, it's all wrong.

MERLIN

Does she go different speeds at least?

HORSE speeds up her clapping.

All I envision is a horse with giant hands instead of hooves, slap slap slapping the ground.

HORSE slows down her speed.

Oh, now she's just mocking us with the slow clap.

HORSE stops clapping.

ARTHUR

Well there's nothing to be done.

HORSE

Your Majesty, we could wait for the coconut to come to us.

ARTHUR

We could?

MERLIN

Yes, for the right time!

HORSE

For the...ripe time.

*ARTHUR looks from HORSE to MERLIN, then
rolls his eyes and flops back onto his throne.*

ARTHUR

Very well, let me know when its time.

*MERLIN and HORSE exit, both clapping.
ARTHUR resumes his bored activities.*