Of Aurors, Mirrors, and Mysteries

A thousand years or more ago, in the era of the four great Hogwarts founders, there was a great battle between magic and ignorance. The battle was fought over many years and both sides believed that it was they who were right, true and just. In the middle of this battle was Uther Pendragon who sought to eradicate magic from his land, and in doing so changed the course of history...

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It was generally agreed that the Department of Mysteries was a mysterious place. Objects would vanish from its hallowed halls and often people would as well. Sensible commentators said that the people simply ran off to escape debts, but others claimed that mysterious forces were at work.

Harry tended to think that the latter were a bit crazy and undoubtedly subscribed to The Quibbler. Still, he had to admit that there was something odd about the place, something about the atmosphere. Every time he visited, he was reminded of the night that Sirius had fallen through the Veil. Even though he was going into a different area of the department, the decor around him was still the same. It was as though the same colour-blind person had decorated the entire building.

The few people Harry passed in the corridor sent him dirty looks. That was certainly a change, Harry thought with a sigh. He almost preferred the dirty looks to the looks of adulation, though. His boss had told him when he had signed up for the job three years ago that the nasty looks came with the territory. "Nobody likes Internal Affairs," his boss had said cheerfully. "I've been here for seven years and I haven't made any friends outside of IA yet!"

Nobody had expected Harry to stay long. After all, he was The Boy Who Lived. He was the golden child of the wizarding world. Everybody expected him to end up in the glamorous side of the Auror Programme, but Harry'd had enough of that side of chasing bad guys. He had seen enough of the corruption inside the Ministry to know that Internal Affairs needed all the help it could get. Hermione had been very supportive of his decision.

There were very few perks to his job. Sure, he could poke his nose into the affairs of any department, but people hated that, and Harry always had to be careful to tread the thin line between catching the wrongdoers and not ripping apart the delicate alliances between departments. The downsides to his job were multiple. His friendship with Ron was rocky for a few months, while IA had investigated Ron's team. Ron had never been under suspicion and in the end, his entire team had been cleared, but the damage was done. Harry had considered quitting, but deep down, he knew he wouldn't. He was doing the right thing.

Harry consulted his map as he walked. He was investigating a relatively new section within the Department of Mysteries. Over the last few months, there had been some mysterious artefact disappearances within the section. Richardson was the main suspect, but Harry had some suspicions about some of the other staff as well. The artefacts were all unknown and potentially dangerous. In the wrong hands, some of them could be possibly life-threatening. If somebody from the section was selling or using the artefacts, Internal Affairs wanted to stop them.

"Excuse me," Harry said as he pushed open a door. He could see a rather familiar figure standing next to a mirror. As the person turned around, Harry could feel a familiar curl of anger in his stomach at the look of superiority on that pale, pointed face. He blinked quickly and looked back down at his notes. He wasn't at Hogwarts any more. "Draco Malfoy," Harry said flatly.

Draco raised an eyebrow. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm from the Auror Office," Harry said. Even after so many years, there was something about Draco that rubbed him up the wrong way. There were many things that rubbed Harry up the wrong way, but Draco Malfoy was top on that list. Perhaps it was that permanently arrogant expression on his pointy face. Or perhaps it was simply the fact that there was a leak from the Department of Mysteries, and Harry had a bet going with his co-workers that Draco Malfoy was the source of the leak.

"I know that," Draco said. "One could hardly miss the giant ad the Auror Office took out in the Daily Prophet the day you joined. They must have been ecstatic." He sounded light-hearted, but Harry could hear the underlying snide tone.

Harry narrowed his eyes. Obviously Draco hadn't grown up at all over the last five years. "They were," he said sharply. "I'm here on behalf of Internal Affairs." He looked down at his folder. "I'm supposed to talk to a Mr Richardson."

"Tony's away."

Harry waited for Draco to continue, but it was obvious that was all the git was going to say. Most of the time, people were rather reticent to talk to him. It was no wonder, given that Harry had the power to get them fired or put in Azkaban. But they were generally more communicative than this. "And when will he be back?"

Draco looked at his watch. "After lunch," he said. "He usually takes about an hour for lunch, so ... in an hour."

Harry gritted his teeth. "I'll wait for him then," he said. "Please, continue whatever you were doing. I wouldn't want to disturb you."

"How considerate," Draco said. There was an amused look on his face. "I take it you're here on behalf of IA because of the recent disappearances."

Harry nodded. "The Minister asked us to take a look into it."

"Not all the disappearances came from this section, you know," Draco pointed out.

"I will not discuss the particulars of the investigation," Harry said. It had become one of his favourite phrases nowadays and it was trotted out at almost every investigation. Invariably, one or two employees wanted to talk about what was happening. They claimed it was due to curiosity. Most of the time, this was true, but once in a while, it was the wrongdoer attempting to ascertain how much knowledge he had.

Draco snorted. "Perfect bureaucratese."

Harry resisted the urge to roll his eyes. Looking around, he grabbed a chair and sat down. "Please let Mr Richardson know that I'm here when he comes back from lunch."

Draco shrugged. "Of course."

Harry looked down at his notes and began to flick through them. He hoped his face was a mask of unconcern. It wouldn't do to have Draco realise how uncomfortable this entire situation was for him. He never liked investigating people he knew, and in a perfect world he wouldn't have to. Unfortunately, the wizarding world was small and IA was even smaller. Harry hadn't investigated the case involving Ron's team, but that was only because of the closeness of their friendship. However, there was still tension between them, despite the fact that Harry hadn't directly investigated the case.

After a few minutes, Harry looked up to see Draco studying the mirror. Harry had barely noticed the mirror when he had walked into the room, but now he looked at it properly. It was quite an intricately designed mirror with faint gold markings around the edge. It wasn't the kind of thing Harry would ever want in his house, though. Even though it was obviously well-crafted and well looked after, there was something oppressive about it.

"Interesting mirror."

Draco looked over. "It is, actually," he said, without a hint of sarcasm in his voice. "It dates back almost a thousand years."

Harry lowered his notes. "Magical?"

"Yes, but it seems a bit odd." Draco ran his fingers against the edge of the frame. "There's something strange about the magical signature. I haven't had the chance to study it closely though. We only got this in today."

Harry stood up and put his notes down on the chair. "Mind if I have a look?" All those years of friendship with Hermione had piqued his interest in this kind of thing. Plus, it never hurt to ensure co-operation in whatever section he was investigating, and there was usually no better way to ensure co-operation than to show interest in their work.

Draco snorted, but nodded anyway. "Sure."

Harry bit back a sharp retort. "I presume the magic doesn't match other magical signatures of that era."

"That's what I said, yes."

Harry let out a long sigh. He looked at Draco. "Do you have to be so ..."

"Abrasive?" Draco said with an ironic smile. "Do you expect us to roll out the red carpet when you're investigating us?"

"We're doing the right thing," Harry pointed out. "We're eliminating corruption within the Ministry."

"Still the same Harry Potter," Draco murmured as he leaned over to run his fingers over the back of the mirror. "Always wanting to do the right thing."

Harry stared. Somehow Draco managed to make that sound like a bad thing. "Is there something behind

the mirror?"

"I don't know," Draco said slowly. "It feels like there's some sort of catch behind here. It's rougher than the rest of the backing." He brushed his hair away from his face as he leaned forward. Harry stepped forward and held the mirror. "I think I have something."

The mirror wobbled. "Careful," Harry warned. "These magical artefacts can be rather dangerous if they break."

"I know that," Draco said sharply. "It's not like I haven't been working around these artefacts for years."

Harry's hands were steady as he held the mirror, but somehow, the surface of the mirror appeared to be shaking. It seemed to be rippling, almost as though the mirror was wobbling, but Harry knew he was holding it steadily. "Stop doing that!" Harry suddenly said. Something was obviously happening. Something magical.

"There's some sort of hidden compartment here," Draco said, as if he hadn't even heard Harry speak.

"Don't open it," Harry said quickly, but it was too late. He heard a small sound as a piece of wood fell away from the back of the mirror.

Draco stepped backwards. He was holding a small jewel in his fingers. "This looks valuable."

"Give that to me," Harry said. Draco looked startled as he grabbed the stone. It felt warm in his fingers. The bright redness caught the light as Harry turned it over and over. "There was something happening with the mirror."

"Don't be ridiculous," Draco snapped. "Look at it. It looks fine."

Harry was about to protest, but when he looked over, the mirror did look completely normal. "It was rippling. Shaking."

"You weren't holding it properly," Draco told him. "Now, obviously that ruby is some sort of talisman."

"Obviously," Harry muttered as he looked at it. There was something about it. Something not quite right. "Now what was it doing at in the back of the mirror?"

Draco shrugged. "No idea."

Harry felt a shiver down his back. He quickly handed the ruby back over to Draco. "Let me know what you find," he said as he turned around. Harry stopped and stared. "I put my notes on that chair, right there!"

Draco frowned. "Maybe they fell down on the ground." He took a step towards the chair.

"They didn't," Harry said, pointing towards the ground. It looked dirtier than he remembered, almost as though he was looking at a dirt ground. "Somebody must have come in to take them."

"Nobody came in," Draco said decisively.

Harry scanned the room and as he looked back towards the chair, he stared. It was no longer there. "Wasn't there a chair there before?" he asked.

"Yes," Draco said slowly.

Suddenly, Harry could feel a cold wind on his face. "What the...!" he said as he looked over at Draco.

Draco's eyes were wide. "Something tells me we're not in the Department of Mysteries anymore," he said slowly.

Harry blinked rapidly. The world around him seemed to be melting. It was going hazy, blending into itself and he could have sworn that he was seeing trees, no, a forest around him instead of the room within the Department of Mysteries. A bright shaft of sunlight hit his face and a cold wind whipped his robes around. Slowly, Harry lifted his hands up to his eyes and rubbed them. When he lowered his hands, he found himself standing in the middle of a forest.

"This is ... unusual," Draco said faintly.

"What did you do?" Harry turned around and glared at Draco.

"What did I do?" Draco spluttered. "What makes you think I had anything to do with this?"

"It was a Portkey, wasn't it?" Harry accused. "You were behind the disappearances in your section and now you're trying to get rid of the investigator."

Draco snorted. "As I told you, there have been random disappearances from all sections in the Department of Mysteries lately. And I have absolutely nothing to do with them. Even if I did, don't you think I'd be smart enough to not make the assigned investigator from IA disappear?"

"Then why are we in a forest?" Harry demanded.

"Why are you looking to me for the answers?" Draco shot back. "Do I look like I know why? Does this look like the kind of place that I'd know?"

Harry looked around at the arching trees overhead and the bright autumn foliage. "Wait a minute..."

Draco rolled his eyes. "I didn't grow up in a forest. I grew up in a lovely manor."

"Not that," Harry said resisting the urge to hex Draco. He thought he was doing quite well so far in stopping those urges. Draco was really quite annoying. "Look at those leaves. This looks like autumn."

Draco's mouth opened, undoubtedly to make some sort of retort, and then he closed it again. "That's funny," he said quietly. "Last time I checked, it was spring."

"Yeah," Harry agreed grimly. Random changes in seasons were never good signs. "I think that mirror of yours was cursed."

He hadn't meant to sound accusing, but Draco glared at him anyway. "That wasn't my fault."

"Oh really?" Harry snapped. "You were the one who dislodged the ruby. I'd say it's squarely in the territory of being 'your fault'. Where is it anyway?"

Draco pulled the shining stone out of his pocket and toyed with it. Out here in the open, it looked brighter, more noticeable. "It's not magical," he muttered as he turned it over in his fingers. "There's no residue of enchantment or anything. It's just a pretty stone."

"It's obviously more than that," Harry said. He ran a hand thorough his hair. "Look, we need to get out of this forest."

"If you're going to suggest Apparating away, think again," Draco told him

"'As a matter of fact, I was," Harry said, annoyed. It was the perfect idea. He didn't want to walk in this forest for hours with Draco until they got to the edge. Portkeys could be complicated to enchant. They could easily Apparate away.

Draco snorted. "You don't know where we are. Hell, we might not even be in England any more, given the climate. If you want to splinch yourself, go right ahead!"

"Of course," Harry said slowly, "we could always just walk in that direction until we figure out where we are." He pointed off in a random direction. "We wouldn't starve or die of thirst because we could always change rocks into bread. It might take a few days, but I'm sure we'd enjoy each other's company."

Draco stared at him.

Harry was quite enjoying himself. He suspected that the longer he spent with his boss, the more he caught some of his boss's mannerisms and speech patterns. Sarcasm was apparently also a bonus. "Well, come on then."

"On second thoughts, I think I'll risk it," Draco said.

Harry bit down on his tongue to stop himself from laughing. The look on Draco's face was priceless. He obviously knew that he'd been played. Reaching into his pocket, Harry pulled out his wand.

"If we're too far, we might not get to London," Draco warned.

"I know that," Harry told him. "But I was thinking of aiming for something like Hogsmeade. Less people. Plus, this place feels like it's in Scotland somewhere."

"Or Wales. Or Europe. Or Australia," Draco said. "But obviously you're well-versed in this particular genus of tree to know that it must only grow in Scotland."

Harry glared. "Oh shut up."

Closing his eyes, Harry concentrated on Hogsmeade. He thought of the streets and the pub and the sweet shops, until he'd formed a perfect picture of Hogsmeade in his head. He waited for the familiar warming feeling of his wand in his fingers and the tingling that would indicate that he'd reached his location, but it never came.

"What the...?" Harry opened his eyes to find Draco staring at him.

"It didn't work, did it?" Draco asked. There was an odd look on his face. If Harry didn't know better, he would have thought it was fear.

"Maybe we're not in Scotland then," Harry said quickly. "I'll just try to Apparate to over that ridge there."

"I've got a better idea," Draco said. Before Harry could say anything, Draco had pulled out his own wand and was pointing it at Harry.

"That won't help things," Harry said carefully. He could feel his heart pounding. What on earth was Draco doing? "Hexing me won't help." He really didn't think that Draco was the type to do something this stupid.

"Well, if I'm right, this won't hurt you," Draco said. A smile ghosted across his face. "Stupefy!"

Harry could feel his muscles tensing in anticipation for the strike, but nothing happened. He flexed his arms tentatively. "I think you're a bit rusty."

Draco rolled his eyes. "Try to do magic. Anything."

Harry was beginning to get an inkling of what Draco was on about. Slowly, he lifted his wand. "Lumos!" The tip of his wand didn't even glow. "Something's happened to my magic." Harry felt a sinking feeling.

He was stuck in the middle of some unknown forest with Draco Malfoy and he had no magic to defend himself with.

"Mine too," Draco admitted.

"Great. Just great." Harry looked over at a fairly large oak tree and contemplated slumping down underneath it. He really hadn't signed up for this.

"So," Draco said after a long pause. "I suppose we'd better walk in that direction then." He pointed in the direction that Harry had earlier indicated.

Harry nodded.

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They'd been walking for what seemed like hours when Harry began to feel thirsty. At first, he tried his best not to think about it, but that just seemed to make it worse. The more he tried not thinking about it, the more the whispering of the leaves began to sound like a babbling brook. Even the dappled light through the trees reminded him of a waterfall.

"We're doomed to wander these forests until we die of hunger or thirst," Draco declared as they passed yet another large oak tree. "For all we know, we're going around in circles.

Harry wished that he hadn't mentioned food. He hadn't had lunch yet, and right now, it was probably far closer to dinnertime. "There's plenty of food we can eat," he lied. One of them needed to stay optimistic.

"I can't eat leaves," Draco grumbled.

"Neither can I," Harry said through gritted teeth, giving up on the optimism. "Although, if you keep on complaining, I could quite possibly cook and eat you."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "Why, I never knew you were into that!"

Harry resisted the urge to bang his head against the nearest tree. His stomach growled and he could almost feel it churning. "We'll get to some sort of town soon, I'm positive."

Draco smirked. "I'm sure that positive thinking will help us."

Harry stopped and turned around. He really was sick of Draco's attitude. There was absolutely no reason for him to be acting like some sort of spoiled brat. He wasn't fourteen any more. "It's not like you're doing anything to help!"

"Like what?" Draco demanded. "Look around. We're in the middle of some unknown forest and we don't have magic. Unless you have some sort of heretofore unknown gift for foraging for food, I suggest that we're royally screwed. What'd you want me to do? Start digging for edible roots with my wand?"

"If you think that would help," Harry muttered. Draco just glared at him.

"For all we know, the nearest town is several hundred miles away! We'll die before we get there."

"That's no reason to sit down and give up," Harry pointed out. Inwardly, he let out a long sigh. There was nothing more his legs wanted to do than to simply give up. Over the last half an hour, they'd been steadily climbing up some sort of side of a hill, and Harry was exhausted. He wasn't a teenager anymore and he wasn't used to this kind of exercise. When he first joined the Ministry, he had all these goals of getting enough exercise and eating healthily, but over time, the long hours had eroded that away.

"Sitting down and giving up doesn't sound like a bad plan," Draco remarked. He rearranged his robes around him and sat down on a particularly green looking patch of grass.

Harry couldn't help but notice that there were no other even remotely green patches of grass. There were simply straggling bits and pieces on rock hard dirt. "Fine," he said as he sat down as well. A rock dug into his bum, but he ignored it. "We'll sit here and wait to die, shall we?"

Draco's eyes narrowed. Harry suspected that if they'd both been younger, Draco would have stuck his tongue out. "Or at least we could rest..." Draco trailed off.

"What?"

Draco held up a hand. "I think I hear something."

Harry frowned as he listened. The only thing he could hear was the rustling of leaves and the faint sound of a bird chirping. "You're imagining it."

"I'm not," Draco insisted. "It sounds... like horses."

"Well, I don't hear anything." As soon as the words were out of his mouth, Harry suddenly could hear something a long way off. It was coming closer - and Draco was right, it did sound like horses. "It sounds like somebody's coming," Harry amended.

"Told you," Draco muttered, but Harry ignored him.

"They should be able to help us. Point us towards the nearest town. Give us some water. Things like that," Harry said. He could already imagine the cool feeling of the first gulp of water sliding down his throat. They'd be back in London in no time and he'd be sleeping between his own crisp sheets tonight.

"Unless, of course, they're not friendly," Draco pointed out.

Harry glared at him.

Draco shrugged. "I'm just pointing out a possibility."

"They'll be friendly," Harry said decisively as he pushed himself up off the dirt. "They have to be," he added underneath his breath. Draco was right about one thing. They really couldn't just continue traipsing through the forest. He was already feeling somewhat lightheaded with hunger and thirst. They wouldn't last long like this.

Looking over at Draco, Harry noticed him fastidiously brushing down his robes.

"What if these are Muggles?" Harry suddenly exclaimed. "They'll think we're loonies."

"Or they'll think we're in fancy dress," Draco said smugly. "You're not the only one who knows about Muggles."

As the sound of hooves neared, Harry held his breath as he peered through the trees, trying to spot who the riders were. He really hoped they were friendly and that they had plenty of water to spare. If they were magical, it would be a bonus, but he wouldn't mind a friendly Muggle. As Harry squinted, he could see a bright glint through the trees. "What the..."

"That's a 'no' on the friendly then," Draco said quietly as the riders came in view.

Harry stared as he watched two men rise into the clearing that he and Draco were standing in. One of the men was wearing some sort of metal armour with a helmet. He reminded Harry of those old movies that Dudley used to watch about the knights. The man even had a sword strapped to his side. The other man was dressed equally oddly, but in a different way. His clothes looked worn and old. Harry wasn't particularly knowledgeable about clothing textures, but his clothes looked rough as well. They both got

off their horses and walked towards where he and Draco were standing.

"Who are you?"

Harry cleared his throat as he looked at the armoured man. "Me?"

The man made an annoyed sound. "Yes, you."

"Harry Potter," Harry said. He wasn't sure what he expected from the two men. He was just so used to having people almost fall over in shock when meeting him that it was anticlimactic to see absolutely no reaction.

The man swung around to stare at Draco. "And who might you be?"

"Who's asking?" Draco countered smoothly.

As Harry looked over from the corner of his eyes, he could see Draco giving them a haughty look. It was obvious that Draco was hoping to bluff their way out of this situation. Harry crossed his fingers. It was unlikely that anything else would work, especially since they didn't have magic.

The armoured man seemed surprised. "You don't know who I am? My name's Arthur Pendragon."

It was obvious from the way he said it that he expected some sort of reaction from them. Harry couldn't seem to muster one though. The name was vaguely familiar. He thought he might have heard it before in some History of Magic class. Beside him, Harry heard Draco cough. When he looked over, he could see Draco's face turn pale.

"Are we far from Camelot?" Draco asked in a neutral tone.

Arthur chuckled as he took off his helmet, shaking out his hair. "I was beginning to think we'd stumbled across several idiots who didn't even know where they were. I already have one idiot to look after." He pointed towards the man standing behind him. "Merlin's enough of an idiot for anyone."

Harry smothered a gasp. Merlin? As in the Order of Merlin? Surely it was somebody with the same name. Surely this scrawny young man couldn't be the actual Merlin? Harry scrutinised his face, but couldn't see any sort of resemblance to any of the pictures of Merlin he'd seen. Then again, most of the pictures he'd seen had come from Chocolate Frog cards, so they probably weren't that accurate.

"Arthur and Merlin," Draco muttered to Harry. He turned and bowed. "It a pleasure to meet you, your highness."

Arthur fixed him with a steadfast look. "And who might you be?"

"Lord Draco Malfoy," Draco drawled. "My manservant and I were journeying to Camelot when we were beset upon by robbers."

Harry almost choked. "Yes," he managed to get out after Merlin looked at him strangely. "Robbers. Lots of them. Brandishing..."

"Swords," Draco continued, giving him a glare. "Undoubtedly stolen, as I do not know where robbers would have learned such fine swordcraft. We lost most of our belongings and have been lost in this forest ever since. If your highness had not discovered us here, we'd have surely perished."

Harry nodded. He damn well hoped that Draco knew what he was doing and what kind of lies he was spinning. From what he remembered, Merlin lived over a thousand years ago, around the same time the founders were building Hogwarts. If they had somehow travelled that far back in time, they were in serious trouble. One of the few times Harry had bothered to listen to History of Magic was when Binns was droning on about time travellers. Once he had cut through Binns' waffle, Harry deduced that there had only been a couple of time travellers in wizarding history who had travelled over any significant length of time. And most of them had, according to Binns, 'snapped quickly and painfully back to their

correct time'. Harry had no idea what that meant, but it didn't sound good.

Arthur nodded curtly.

"If your highness could spare some water..." Draco said politely. "We have been walking for most of the day."

Arthur turned around. "Merlin, get the water flasks."

Harry watched as Merlin reached into the saddlebags. This was Merlin? This was one of the greatest wizards of all time? Harry could see intelligence in his eyes, but he was just a manservant. He didn't seem like a great wizard at all. "Thanks," he said as Merlin handed him the flask. Harry opened it and drank deeply, letting the cool liquid slide down his parched throat. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see Draco doing the same thing.

"What business do you have in Camelot?" Arthur asked politely.

Harry was about to open his mouth when Draco surreptitiously jabbed him in the ribs. "I have heard much about the Knights of Camelot and I wished to join."

Harry spluttered and then hastily disguised it as a cough. Draco wanted to join the Knights of Camelot? From what he knew about them - Harry readily admitted that he didn't know much - they were powerful warriors who knew their way around a sword. Somehow he doubted that Draco knew how to wield a sword.

Arthur arched an eyebrow. "I don't think I've heard of the Malfoy family before."

"We've travelled very far," Draco said casually. "I'm not surprised. My family's land is very far north from here."

"I see," Arthur said. Harry could tell that he was still rather suspicious. "We can escort both you and your manservant back to Camelot. After that, you will have to go through the normal process of becoming a knight."

"Of course," Draco said, nodding.

Arthur turned away, back towards his horse. "Your manservant will have to walk, of course."

"Excuse me?" Harry mouthed to Draco as soon as Arthur's back was turned. "When'd we decide that I was your manservant?"

Draco smirked. "That's not a problem. Potter has been my servant for many years. He's a bit dim at times, but I find that he does the job. He's excellent at walking."

Harry spluttered.

Arthur turned around and grinned. "Good, intelligent servants can be so difficult to find, aren't they?" He easily mounted his horse and patted it on the neck. "I find that Merlin is often too sparing with the polishing. I found a mark on my armour last tournament."

Harry was amused to see Merlin rolling his eyes behind Arthur's back.

"Draco, feel free to take Merlin's horse," Arthur said. "We'll ride slowly. Camelot isn't far away from here. It's about half a day's ride."

Harry stared. That wasn't supposed to be far? He didn't want to know what Arthur's idea of far away was. Merlin wasn't looking that particularly happy about it either. No wonder, since his master had just given away his horse to some unknown person presupposing to be a nobleman. "Not far. Right."

Draco shot him a warning look as he mounted Merlin's horse easily. It was obvious that he'd had horse riding lessons before, undoubtedly, in between eating caviar and being waited on hand and foot by house elves. "Lead on."

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Harry felt like his feet were about to fall off. They were aching like they had never ached before. His throat was parched even though they'd had regular stops for food and water. Of course, the water tasted rather funny and the food might have been slightly off. His stomach had been churning for the last half hour. He glared up at Draco who was looking quite calm and collected on his horse. Glancing over at Arthur, Harry noticed that he seemed to be staring off into the distance. Taking opportunity of the moment, Harry muttered, "Think we could stop for a rest soon?"

Draco raised an eyebrow. "Really, Potter? We only stopped an hour ago."

"Easy for you to say," Harry hissed. "You're on that horse. You didn't have to walk!"

"You really shouldn't allow your servant to talk to you like that," Arthur called over his shoulder. "Merlin gets a day in the stocks if he speaks to me like that."

Harry was rather amused to see Merlin hide a smile behind his hand. He had his own theories about how Arthur's and Merlin's relationship worked. He very much doubted that Merlin was as subservient as Arthur seemed to pretend he was.

"My servant can be rather pert at times," Draco drawled. "But this time, he may be right. The sun is almost set. Perhaps we should retire for the day."

Arthur tilted his head. "Perhaps," he said, sounding neutral. Harry suspected that Arthur was

disappointed in their lack of stamina. "We can bed down here for the night."

Unhappily, Harry stared down at the cold, hard ground. It didn't look like a very good bed. His joints ached at the very thought. He was about to sit down when he saw Merlin gesturing at him. "What?" Harry said as he wandered over to where Merlin was tying Arthur's horse to a tree.

Merlin gave him an odd look. "We need to brush the horses down."

"Oh," Harry said as he stared up at the horse. "Of course, we do." He had no idea how to brush a horse down, but it didn't sound too hard.

"Here," Merlin said as he handed Harry a stiff-bristled brush. He had a small smile on his face.

"Thanks," Harry muttered. Gingerly, he reached up and brushed it across the horse's flank. The horse harrumphed at him and Harry winced. He was probably doing something majorly wrong here, but he wasn't sure what it was. It wasn't as though anybody had ever expected him to brush a horse down before. He glared over at where Draco was sitting a few metres away with his feet propped up, talking to Arthur.

"You might want to brush in the other direction."

Harry jumped as he felt Merlin's breath on his ear, but by the time he'd turned around, Merlin was back next to his horse. "Of course," he said. "I know that. I was just... testing the brush."

Merlin turned around and raised an eyebrow.

Harry turned away and began brushing the horse down in earnest. It was quite hard work, much harder than he would have ever imagined. It was either that or he was absolutely exhausted from the day. Harry hoped that he and Merlin weren't expected to cook. The only things he knew how to make were his Aunt Petunia's favourite dishes and somehow, Harry didn't think that either Merlin or Arthur had caviar

hidden away in one of their knapsacks.

Harry was relieved when he saw Arthur pulling out a small bag that seemed to contain bread, cheese and meat. He obviously didn't need to demonstrate his culinary talents. As he walked over to where the others were sitting - Merlin had finished brushing down Arthur's horse quite a while ago - Harry heard Arthur saying, rather arrogantly.

"Of course, we will be happy to share our food with you."

"Thank you," Draco said, sounding like the perfect gracious gentleman.

Harry bit back a snort as he sat down. He only just hoped that the food tasted nice. His stomach felt like it was eating him from the inside out. He hadn't been this hungry since before he went to Hogwarts. Back then, he was starved for longer, but at least he wasn't expected to walk through a forest for half a day.

Merlin handed him a chunk of bread, and Harry took it gratefully. "Thank you."

Merlin gave him an odd look. Harry was suddenly alarmed. Merlin didn't know who they were, did he? He'd never heard anything about Merlin being able to read minds, but then again, he had spent a lot of History of Magic napping. It was a great way to catch up with lost sleep. His stomach churned as he swallowed the first bite of bread. It was heavily spiced and filled with nuts. Normally, Harry would have hated the taste, but he was so hungry that he didn't care.

He saw Draco's nose wrinkle as he took his first bite.

"Merlin forgot to pack the good food," Arthur drawled as he put his feet up on a stump.

"You said to get the food in the purple knapsack," Merlin protested, his brow wrinkled.

Arthur waved a dismissive hand. "I meant green. Sometimes Merlin, I wonder why I keep you around."

"And obviously, I was supposed to read your mind," Merlin said, sounding amused.

Harry was surprised when Arthur flinched lightly. "It is the sign of a good servant," Arthur said after a moment's pause. "You should be able to."

Harry frowned as he bit into his slice of cheese. He almost spat it out. It tasted strong. Very strong. Draco took one look at his face and put his cheese down. "Delicious," Harry managed to get out. "Simply delicious."

Arthur raised an eyebrow at Draco. "Your servant has no taste."

Draco leaned back against a tree and grinned. "Father keeps on telling me to replace him, but I'm used to his idiocy."

Harry resisted the urge to throw the rest of his cheese at Draco. What on earth was Draco doing? How was this act going to help them get back home? As far as he could tell, they were over a thousand years in the past. This was unprecedented. Time Turners could only take people back a couple of months, tops. Any longer and people tended to get repetitive strain injuries from the repetitive motion of turning the hourglass over and over.

Arthur ate the last piece of meat and then stretched. "It's getting dark. We have an early ride tomorrow morning if we want to get back to Camelot before lunch. I, for one, don't want another meal like that."

"Neither do I," Draco said, with feeling.

Harry wasn't feeling the slightest bit sleepy. It was barely dark. The sun had set, but there was still a red

glow at the horizon. It was a ridiculous time to go to sleep, but it was obvious that Draco was playing along with it. He watched as Merlin pulled out a couple of bedrolls and set them up. Harry sighed. Apparently, he was going to have to make do with the hard ground.

Harry settled down and tried to pillow his head in his hands. It didn't seem to make the ground any softer. Harry closed his eyes and tried to fall asleep, but it didn't seem to be working. The snoring coming from the general direction of Merlin and Arthur wasn't helping either. He wondered which one of them it was. Probably Arthur, Harry thought with annoyance. It made sense that a prat like that would snore.

Turning over, Harry opened his eyes a crack. Through the dim light, he could see Draco watching him. Harry sat up and glared at him.

"That was Merlin?" Draco asked softly, ignoring his dirty look. "That was who was declared the Greatest Wizard of All Time?"

Harry shrugged. He was having a hard time believing it as well. He glanced over at Arthur and Merlin. "We're going to have a talk about this whole servant thing," he muttered.

Draco rolled his eyes. "Out of both of us, who do you think has a better chance of convincing Uther Pendragon that he's a nobleman? Certainly not you!"

Harry ground his teeth. "We could have both been nobleman."

Draco yawned lazily. "I think you make a much better servant."

To Harry's annoyance, Draco seemed to just roll over and go to sleep. After staring daggers at the back of Draco's head for a few seconds, Harry settled back down on the hard ground and used his hand to pillow his head yet again. He was just glad that it wasn't that cold. This would be far more miserable if it was cold or wet. As his eyelids drooped, Harry hoped that once they got to Camelot, they'd figure out how to get back to the future. At least, even if they didn't figure that out, they'd probably get a square meal and a bed. It was better than being lost out here in the forest.

And then they would find their way back to the future. Harry was positive about that.

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"So that's Camelot," Harry muttered as they went through the gates. He couldn't help but feel relief wash over him. His legs felt like they were about to fall off at any minute. If he thought that it was going to be easier the second day, he was sorely mistaken. From the minute he woke up, his entire body had been aching. Sleeping on the cold, hard ground obviously hadn't helped things.

"That's Camelot," Merlin confirmed.

Harry squinted at him. How dare Merlin look so refreshed? He had been doing just as much walking and sleeping on hard ground as Harry had. Yet, he looked like he had spent a comfortable night sleeping in a soft bed. "It looks nice," Harry said neutrally. He could see Draco's upper lip twitch.

Looking around, Harry yawned. Camelot looked quite a bit like Hogwarts. He suspected that he would have enjoyed the sight a lot more if he hadn't been so tired. From what he knew of Camelot it was the pride of these parts of England. Too bad it didn't smell that good. Harry sniffed; he could smell the pungent odour of people and food. Did people shower in this era? Harry wasn't sure about that. Arthur and Merlin had both smelled rather sweaty, but Harry had just thought that was because of their hard couple of days. He hadn't realised that everybody here didn't seem to have standards of personal hygiene. Then again, Harry suspected that he and Draco weren't smelling that nice either.

"It would be nice to freshen up," Draco remarked. It was obvious that he was thinking the same thing as Harry.

Arthur's forehead creased lightly. "You may use one of the palace baths," he said finally. "Then we will see my father. I would not bring you before him in your current state."

Draco looked put out.

Harry choked back a laugh. Draco obviously didn't like his physical appearance commented on. Especially when it was a negative comment. "Arthur's right, you know," he said lightly, trying to sound like a concerned servant. "You should wash before seeing the king."

The look that Draco shot him burned. "You're smelling rather ripe too," he snapped.

Harry grinned. He'd got under Draco's skin and he knew it. It was a rather satisfying feeling.

From the expression on Arthur's face, Harry suspected that he'd just written both of them off as being very odd. "Merlin will show you where you can bathe," Arthur said. "I will come and find you in an hour and take you before my father."

Draco nodded. "Thank you," he said.

Arthur nodded before walking off in the direction of the palace. Merlin turned towards them, an intent look on his face. He looked like he was studying them, so Harry put his best dumb servant expression on his face. "Please," Merlin said, "come this way." He began walking across the town square after Arthur.

Draco shrugged. "I guess we'll follow then."

"After you, my lord," Harry muttered as he gestured for Draco to go.

Draco rolled his eyes. "You're really terrible at that, you know."

"It's not like I've had much practice," Harry retorted as they walked. People bustled past them as Merlin

seemed to lead them straight through the busiest part of the crowd. "If you know so much, then maybe you should have volunteered to be my servant. It's not exactly difficult acting lordly."

"It's harder than you think," Draco told him.

Harry snorted. He very much doubted that. He could stare down his nose at peasant folk as well as the next person. He stared at Merlin's back. Perhaps he ought to be trying to get to know one of the greatest wizards of all time. After all, Merlin was going to make some of the most innovative magical discoveries during his lifetime. Surely, he would be brilliant, even though he was simply a servant. Quickening his stride, Harry caught up with Merlin. "How is it working for the prince?"

Merlin shrugged. There was a guarded expression on his face. "I imagine it's similar to you and Lord Malfoy."

Harry was careful to keep his expression neutral. "I guess so."

"How long have you been working for him?" Merlin asked.

"Sometimes it feels like I just started," Harry muttered. He couldn't see how people lived in this era. He had no idea how anybody could be a servant for somebody as arrogant as Draco Malfoy.

They walked in silence for a few minutes. Harry was beginning to get an idea of the size of Camelot. It was quite large for a medieval city and very busy. Merlin stopped next to a small door on the outer wall of the palace and opened it. "This is the servants' entrance," he said as he gestured for Harry to enter. "My apologies," Merlin said to Draco. "This is the quickest way into the palace."

Harry snorted. Of course, there had to be a servants' entrance. Draco would feel right at home in a place like this. Malfoy Manor probably was structured just like this place.

"No problems at all," Draco said as he waved a hand regally.

"There is a bathing chamber just around the corner," Merlin said as he walked. "It is one used for guests. I'm afraid that it's not very well equipped."

Draco smiled politely. "My servant and I are very appreciative of this. Please convey our gratitude to your master."

Merlin stopped by a door and opened it. Harry was immediately hit by a blast of hot air from inside. "You may use that bath," Merlin said as he led them into the small, heated room. He pulled out a couple of towels from a cupboard and handed them over. "Water restrictions, so I'm afraid that you'll have to share." He left the room and shut the door behind him.

Harry stared. They had to share a bath? He wasn't going to share a bath with Draco Malfoy in any way. He shook his head slightly. Of course that wasn't what Merlin meant. Merlin meant that they were going to have to use the same water, but not that they had to bathe at the same time. He looked at the tiny bathtub. It wouldn't fit two people anyway and there was barely enough water in there to wash one.

"Well," Draco said, "of course, I'm going to take the first bath."

"I don't think so!" Harry exclaimed. He wasn't going to have a bath in Draco's dirty bath water either!

"Well, you're welcome to join me in the bath if you wish," Draco drawled. His face was perfectly straight.

Harry had no idea whether he was serious or not, but he suspected that Draco just wanted to bathe in clean water. "Fine," he snapped. "But I'm getting the next one first."

"I believe that nobility gets baths first," Draco said. He stared at the small amount of not-so-clean water at the bottom of a tiny bathtub. "Not that it'll be fun and games trying to bathe in that."

Harry crossed his arms over his chest. It would be far more fun for Draco than it would be for him. The idea of bathing in Draco's bathwater turned his stomach, but it was probably better than smelling like this. He had smelled his underarms before and almost choked.

"Are you going to watch?" Draco asked.

Harry gave a start. "No," he said quickly. "Of course not!"

"Then maybe you should turn around?" Draco suggested. "Or even better, leave the room." He pulled off his shirt.

Harry coughed and spun around quickly, but not before he caught a glimpse of Draco's pale skin. It was creamy white and looked soft. Nothing like Harry's own skin, which had bumps and calluses from childhood incidents. "Right, well, I'm going to leave then," Harry said awkwardly. He walked towards the door and pulled it open.

"Don't forget to close the door!" Draco called.

Harry could hear splashing from behind him as he stepped outside. He closed the door firmly behind him and leaned against the wall. Here they were, stuck a thousand years in the past, in some strange city, and somehow, Harry found himself thinking about Draco's offer to share a bath. He shook his head quickly. Draco didn't mean anything by it. Besides, he wouldn't want to share a bath with Draco. He wasn't attracted to scrawny young men.

Sure, Harry had slept with men before, but none of them had been like Draco. Plus, at the end of the day, Harry was positive that he preferred women. But then why was the image of Draco's creamy skin distracting him? Obviously, Harry decided, it was hunger. That and tiredness. With a full stomach and a good night's rest, he wouldn't be thinking about things like this.

With a sigh, Harry settled down on the ground to wait for Draco to finish his bath.

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Uther raised an eyebrow slightly as he seemed to look Harry and Draco up and down. He pursed his lips and looked down at them. Harry couldn't help but think that he looked a bit like Lucius Malfoy. He certainly had the arrogant expression down pat. "Arthur tells me that you are looking for work as a knight," Uther said, giving the impression that he didn't believe them at all.

Draco gave a rather elegant bow. Harry wondered rather absently where on earth he'd learned how to do something like that. "Yes, my lord."

Harry bit his tongue. Draco sounded ridiculous.

"We were attacked by thieves on the way to Camelot, sir," Draco continued. "My servant and I have lost all of our belongings except for the clothes on our back, which the thieves were kind enough to leave us."

Uther looked them up and down. "I see," he said. "I suppose that explains the unusual nature of your clothing?"

Harry gulped. He'd forgotten that they were wearing robes.

"Yes, my lord," Draco said politely. "It was either these clothes or I would have had to journey to Camelot completely bare."

Out of the corner of his eye, Harry could see Merlin hiding a smile.

"I suppose that you have proof of your nobility?" Uther asked carelessly.

"My lord," Draco said, bowing again. Harry couldn't help but think that he was taking unctuous a bit too far. "I'm afraid that my papers were stolen along with all of my other belongings. I can certainly send for the necessary seals; however, that will take at least a moon. We have travelled very far."

Uther gave them a long look. Harry had to take a deep breath in order to stop himself from fidgeting uncomfortably. Uther beckoned a finger and an old man came forward. "Gaius, you will confer with Geoffrey of Monmouth to confirm their story."

Gaius nodded. "Certainly, sire. It may take a day or so as he has been ill lately."

A look of irritation briefly passed over Uther's face before he nodded.

Harry gulped. He was about to step away when Draco cleared his throat. "Are you trying to imply that I'm lying?" he demanded. His tone was imperious as it had been every time he had faced Harry down at Hogwarts. Looking at him, Harry wouldn't have found it hard to believe that Draco was nobility.

"One must always be careful," Uther said mildly, but there was a note of warning in his voice.

Draco pulled a ring off his finger. "Look at that," he said sharply as he put it down on the table in front of Uther. "Is that a ring that a commoner would wear? That's the Malfoy seal, right there on the ring."

Uther's eyes flashed. It was obvious that he didn't like being challenged, even though there was nobody else in the room except them. "You dare to talk to me like that?" he demanded.

Harry bit the inside of his cheek. From what he knew of this time period, they could do terrible things to people. Like beheading them. Or burning them to death. He considered taking a step away from Draco.

Maybe if Uther didn't think he was in the same boat as Draco, then he'd be safe. Uther could just burn Draco at the stake. Harry wouldn't mind that too much.

"My apologies, my lord," Draco said smoothly. His face was the picture of contriteness. "I did not mean to be rude. Of course you would wish to check out my story. My father would do the same in your shoes. I would be happy to co-operate with Gaius." He smiled politely in Gaius's direction.

Gaius's face was impassive. "It will take me a day or so to get the records in order, sire."

Uther seemed to be studying the ring that Draco had placed on the table. A frown creased his forehead. "That is indeed not a ring that a commoner would wear," he said finally.

Harry spotted Merlin whispering something into Arthur's ear. They were out of view from Uther. Arthur looked pensive before he stepped forward and cleared his throat. "Father," Arthur said. "I would be happy to vouch for them to stay at the palace while Gaius checks through the records."

Harry blinked rapidly. Why on earth was Arthur vouching for them? What had Merlin told him? It seemed like Merlin had an uncommon amount of influence over Arthur, which was also odd.

Uther's frown deepened. "Very well," he said. "You may stay for the next few days. But if I discover that you have lied to me, you will be thrown into my dungeons."

Harry swallowed hard.

"Thank you, my lord," Draco said. "I assure you that we are not lying to you."

Harry couldn't help but think that Draco sounded as smarmy as the used car salesmen that his Uncle Vernon used to buy cars from. Vernon always came home beaming about the new deal he'd got, but half a year later, the car would break down completely and he would be out of pocket at least several

hundred pounds.

"You," Uther said, gesturing towards Merlin. "You show them to a spare room."

Merlin nodded.

Draco bowed smoothly and then followed Merlin towards the door Harry was about to turn around, but then realised that he probably needed to bow as well. Awkwardly, Harry bent over into what he knew was a terrible semblance of a bow and then hurried after Merlin and Arthur. He could feel Uther's eyes boring into his back on the way out.

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"Do you know how hard it is to brush down a horse?" Harry grumbled as he threw himself onto the bed. "It's bloody hard!"

Draco smirked. "But you're so good at it."

Harry glared up at him. "We're leaving right now and we're going to the next city. That way I'll pretend to be the nobleman and you can be the servant. That way you can brush down horses and sleep on cold hard ground and walk a thousand miles."

"Oh stop whining," Draco said irritably. "Isn't this better than starving in the forest?"

Harry had to concede that point, but not by much. "It isn't like being here is helping us get home," he snapped. "We can't just laze around and pretend to be part of this world. We need to get home!"

Draco's eyes flashed. "Don't you think that I know that? You're not the only person who wants to get back! I too have a life to get back to!"

Harry felt a small flash of guilt but he ignored it. He wanted to get back as well and he hadn't pretended that Draco was his servant in order to make it happen. Arthur had managed to convince Uther to give them a room for the night in preparation for Draco trying out as a knight tomorrow. Uther was already suspicious that he had never heard of the Malfoy family before. He might have accepted the Malfoy seal for now, but Harry had no doubt that Uther was checking out Draco's credentials as they spoke.

"Not to mention that I'm the one who has to pretend to be a knight tomorrow," Draco continued. He picked up a bowl of food off the table that a servant had dropped off earlier. "I can't decide whether this is better or worse than what we had last night."

"Worse," Harry said without looking over. He'd tasted the slop earlier. It tasted remarkably like what he'd always imagined pig food to taste like. "And that's your own fault. You said you wanted to be a knight!"

"To stop us from starving in the middle of the forest," Draco protested. "And I'll have you know that I have taken fencing lessons. I'm very good with a foil."

"I'm sure you are," Harry said cheerfully as he pushed himself up to a sitting position. He grinned. "You can show them your talent tomorrow."

It was Draco's turn to glare at him. "Shut up, Potter. I know you're enjoying this."

Harry took a deep breath. "We could always tell them the truth."

Draco stared at him. "Sometimes, I wonder if we went to the same school."

"What?"

"Did you pay attention in class at all?" Draco asked. "No wait, don't bother answering that. I remember how you were in Potions. Look, if you had paid attention in History of Magic, you would have realised that the situation here is volatile. Uther Pendragon hates magic. Imagine all the hatred of the Dark Lord focused upon magic instead of Muggles."

Harry's eyes widened. That didn't sound good. He wasn't sure how he could have missed that in school, but then again, History of Magic was really boring. "Then shouldn't we get out of here?"

Draco shrugged. "We should be fine if we pretend to be Muggles."

Harry stared. "And you think that's going to work? I can't see that working even if we were in our own time!"

Draco's upper lip curled. "Of course it wouldn't work in our own time. I know nothing about Muggles in our time. However, I got an Outstanding in my History of Magic OWLs. This is a vital time in our history and I do know about this era. We'll be fine."

"Until you have to pretend to be a knight," Harry pointed out.

"Stop harping on that," Draco said wearily. "I'll deal with that when the time comes."

Harry couldn't help thinking that Draco was being rather blasé about it. After all, it wasn't something that was happening in six months. He was going to have to do something knight-ish the next morning. Harry didn't think that fencing was going to cover it. He didn't know much about knighthood, other than the fact it involved lots of valour and bravery. It sounded kind of like being a Gryffindor, actually, but with swords. "You should eat if you're to keep your strength up," he said with a straight face.

Draco gave him a sweet smile. "But you've been walking all day. You must be tired and hungry. I wouldn't be a very good master if I allowed you to go hungry. After all, I've spent my day relaxing on a horse. No, I

believe you should eat."

Harry thought he'd rather starve. He hoped that all the food in Camelot didn't taste like this. From the fruits in the marketplace that they had passed, he didn't think it did. Perhaps it was just the cooks in the palace that were terrible. "I'm not hungry," Harry denied. His stomach took that opportunity to grumble loudly.

Draco smirked. "Certainly doesn't sound like you're not hungry."

Harry rolled his eyes and lay back down on the bed. "Oh shut up," he said.

Draco was silent for a few minutes. Harry almost thought that he had shut up when Draco remarked, "You do realise that's my bed. Yours is over there."

Harry turned his head to see Draco pointing towards a very hard looking pallet on the floor. Was he serious? That was a bed? "I don't think so!" he exclaimed.

"You're the servant," Draco told him grinning.

Harry threw a pillow at him. Hard. Draco glared at him as he picked it off the floor. "I'm not sleeping on that," Harry said flatly.

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A scream shattered the brisk, early morning silence.

Harry sat up bolt upright. "What was that?"

He could hear Draco yawning. "Probably nothing," he muttered. "Go back to sleep."

"Easy for you to say," Harry grumbled. He hadn't slept a wink so far. Apparently servants in this era slept on hard pallets on the ground. Or least that was what he had been given. It was a toss-up, but Harry thought the cupboard he slept in when he was a kid was more comfortable.

"Go back to sleep," Draco mumbled again.

"It's morning anyway," Harry pointed out. He could see the first pink edges of dawn through the dirty window.

"Isn't," Draco contradicted.

Harry rolled his eyes and swung his legs out of bed. "Ow," he muttered as he hit his calves against the cold, hard floor. He'd forgotten how bloody low the pallet was. "They sounded like they were in trouble. I'm going to find out what happened."

Draco let out a long sigh and then yawned. "I guess I'd better come with you just to make sure you don't get killed."

Harry snorted. He'd have a better chance of fighting off any attacker than Draco. Draco probably spent his entire life protected by magic. He wouldn't know what to do in a dangerous situation without magic. "Just go back to sleep."

"Too late now," Draco told him as he stood up. He shivered and then grabbed a blanket off the bed and wrapped it around himself. "It's cold."

"You could always start the fire," Harry suggested.

Draco's mouth opened and his hand made an involuntary motion.

"No magic, remember?" Harry was almost enjoying himself.

Draco scowled and dropped the blanket at his feet. "It's not that cold." He took a couple of quick steps towards the door. "Come on then. Where's that famous Gryffindor adventuring spirit?"

Harry was beginning to regret this whole idea. He should have just ignored the scream. It was probably somebody waking up from a nightmare anyway. And even if it was somebody in trouble, what could he and Draco do? They were two unarmed people with absolutely no experience in non-magical combat. The most they could do was make menacing gestures, which would be rather useless if they came up against a sword or lance.

"Well?" Draco asked impatiently. "Are you coming?"

"Yeah, yeah," Harry muttered as he followed Draco out the door. "I think the scream came from this way. It sounded like a woman."

They walked along the dimly lit corridor for a few minutes in silence. "If this turns out to be somebody who woke up from a bad dream, I'm blaming you," Draco said finally as they turned the corner.

Harry glared at him. "You could always go back to bed."

"I'm awake now," Draco snapped as he pushed the door open and stepped into the hall. "Besides, it's morning. Not everybody sleeps in, you know."

Harry rolled his eyes as he walked in after Draco. The heavy door swung closed behind them. "It's empty

in here," Harry began to say when the words stuck in his throat. He could feel his heart pounding. His eyes widened.

Oh shit!

"What's the matter?" Draco asked impatiently.

Harry took a step backwards. His hand came up and he pointed at the other end of the room. "That," he said, his voice coming out as a squeak. Harry's heart pounded as he stared at the snake that was sliding lazily towards him. Beside him, he could hear Draco's breath coming in sharp gasps.

"Is that...?" Draco muttered into his ear.

Harry nodded tersely. "It looks like a giant snake." He had no idea why there was a giant snake in the middle of Uther Pendragon's palace, but it was definitely there. He was just glad that it seemed to be a normal snake and not something like a basilisk. He took another step backwards until his hand connected with the doorknob. It wouldn't turn.

"What on earth is it doing here?" Draco demanded quietly.

"And you think I know the answer?" Harry hissed. He turned around and tried the doorknob again. "It won't open!"

Draco turned towards him. "I think it might be one of those doors that lock automatically," he said slowly.

"Oh," Harry managed to get out. The snake was only a few metres away now. In one swift motion, Harry dove behind the nearest table. He was glad for the long, thick tablecloth that hid him from the snake. Draco followed him a mere second later.

"Do something!" Draco muttered into his ear.

"What'd you expect me to do?" Harry whispered back. "Charm the snake with my invisible flute?"

"No, of course not," Draco snapped, "but why don't you go and talk to it?"

Harry whirled around. Quietly, of course, since he didn't want to attract the snake's attention. "We've lost our magic, remember?" he ground out. "Didn't you think that maybe I would have lost that ability along with the rest of my magic?"

"I did think of that, in fact," Draco told him. "But then I weighed that up against us being eaten by that very angry looking snake. You could at least try."

"And if it doesn't work then I'll be eaten." Harry didn't like that plan very much.

Draco shrugged. "I could use the distraction to run away."

Harry really wasn't liking that plan much. "It doesn't look that angry," he protested. That was true enough. The snake looked more purposeful than angry. It was sliding towards them very purposefully, and Harry suspected that purpose was lunch.

"All the more reason for you to talk to it," Draco told him. He gave Harry a small push in the back. "Look, if it works, then you'll be able to convince it to back down!"

"If it doesn't work, then I'll be eaten alive," Harry snapped.

"That probably won't happen," Draco said. "It's far more likely to crush your bones first. Then after

you're dead, it'll swallow you whole and then spend the next couple of weeks digesting you."

Harry glared at him. "I feel so much more reassured."

"It's better than being eaten alive," Draco pointed out.

Harry had to concede that point. Although, on the scale of horrible deaths, being squashed to death by a gigantic snake was pretty much the same as being eaten alive by a gigantic snake. "If you know so much about then, then maybe you should go out there."

"I'm not the one who can talk to snakes!"

Harry's knees were shaking. It wasn't as though he didn't want to come out from behind the table and face the snake. Okay, he really didn't, but that wasn't the point. He was plenty brave and he would have done it if he knew that he could talk it down. But at this point, without a wand, possibly without magic and armed with nothing but a butter knife, Harry suspected that any bravery would be terribly misplaced.

"Look, if we don't do something about the snake, it's going to go and attack other people," Draco urged. "Come on!"

Harry resisted the urge to hit Draco on the top of his head using the butter knife. Closing his eyes, Harry pictured a snake in his head.

"What are you doing?" Draco interrupted. "This is no time for meditation."

Harry prised open his eyes and glared at him. "I'm trying to imagine a snake."

Draco stared. "Why are you doing that? There's a great bloody big one over there!" Harry couldn't help

but notice that the more frightened Draco was, the less prim and proper he seemed to get.

Harry gritted his teeth. "I'm trying to see if I can talk to it."

"Then maybe you should get up and actually talk to it rather than imagining that you're talking to it." There was a slightly hysterical note in Draco's voice. "Unless, of course, you can imagine that it'll go 'poof' and disappear. That would be a useful skill."

Harry ignored Draco and closed his eyes again. Snakes. He needed to think of snakes. It wasn't too difficult since there was a great honking big one slithering towards them. "If I end up dead, this is all your fault."

There was silence from next to him.

Slowly, Harry opened his eyes to find Draco staring at him oddly. "What?"

"I guess your meditation worked," Draco said. "That certainly wasn't English."

It took a few seconds for Draco's words to sit in. On one hand, Harry was relieved. t meant that they were getting out of this alive. On the other hand, he wasn't particularly happy about the fact his Parseltongue ability wasn't linked to his magic. That meant that it wasn't just some sort of magical leftover of Voldemort; it was more intrinsic to him than that. "Wish me luck," Harry muttered as he stood up.

Immediately, the giant snake swung its head towards him. Harry gulped. He could feel his knees wobbling. This was much easier when he was a kid. Back then, he had Ron and Hermione helping him. Plus, back then, he wasn't completely aware of the consequences. Sure, he knew that going into the Chamber of Secrets could kill him, but it wasn't the same as the permeating awareness that washed through him now.

"What're you waiting for?" Draco whispered. "Do something!"

"Why don't you do something?" Harry replied almost automatically.

The snake's head swayed and it stopped. It seemed to tilt its head to one side and look curiously at Harry. "What would you like me to do?" it hissed at Harry.

Harry gulped. The snake might have sounded like it was speaking English, but there was a sibilant quality to it. It was obviously coming out of the mouth of a snake and a very creepy, large snake, at that. "Hello," he managed to get out. Harry was rather glad that Draco couldn't understand him. Undoubtedly, Draco would have ridiculed him for not coming up with a better conversational starter.

"Hello," the snake replied. Its eyes looked amused. "You are a mossst unusual human."

"I've had people tell me that before," Harry said. He licked his lips and decided to get straight to the point. There was no point trying to be polite to a snake. For all he knew, snakes didn't have the same concepts of politeness as humans. "What are you doing here?"

He could have sworn the snake shrugged. "One minute, I wasss in my den with my children. The next minute, I was here, ssssurrounded by humans. My children need me! I need to get back to them."

"Did somebody take you here?"

The snake hissed angrily. "No. Sssstupid human. I was brought here by magic. Very powerful magic."

At the back of his mind, Harry couldn't help thinking that Hermione would have been very interested in the fact that snakes could sense magic. Her doctoral thesis had been on the ability of Muggles to sense magic, and during the process, she had studied animals as well. "I'm going to help you go home," Harry promised. He crossed his fingers behind his back. He had no idea how he was going to help, but he didn't

want to annoy the snake more than it already was annoyed.

"And how ssshall you do that, human?"

Harry swallowed a sigh. The snake was just as arrogant as Uther Pendragon. He wouldn't be surprised it was one of Uther's personal pets. "I am magical," he said as he stepped around the desk and towards the snake. "I may be able to send you back."

"Very well," the snake said, inclining his head.

"I hope you know what you're doing," Draco muttered as Harry took another step forward.

Harry hoped that as well. As he stepped closer to the snake, he frowned. There was something odd about the snake. He couldn't seem to figure out what it was though. It was just as massive as he would have expected. His heart pounded as he neared the snake.

"Ssssend me home, human."

"Give me time," Harry stalled. "If it was powerful magic that brought you, it will take time to send you back."

The snake seemed to snort. "You are very weak, young human. I do not sssense much magic in you."

Oh great, Harry thought. Not only could the snake sense magic that was used on it, it could obviously sense magic in a person as well. This made the bluffing much more difficult. "It's true that my magic is currently weak, but I will try my best to get you back."

"I do not doubt that, young human," the snake hissed. "I can smell your fear and the fear of your mate."

Harry spluttered. "Draco isn't my mate!" he exclaimed.

"Very well," the snake said. "But I can ssstill sssmell his fear."

Harry pursed his lips. He wanted to protest more about Draco not being his mate, but he couldn't due to the fact that the snake had dropped the subject so easily. It annoyed him. How dare the snake make the presumption that he and Draco were together? "I'm sure he's terrified," Harry said.

"Asss are you," the snake said, sounding amused.

Harry was about to tell the snake that he most definitely wasn't scared of it, when he suddenly realised something. He was about an arm length away from the snake and he couldn't smell it at all. No animal smell. Nothing. Harry leaned forward and sniffed. Nope, absolutely nothing. It was like... it was almost like the snake wasn't there at all!

The snake gave him a curious look. "What are you doing?"

Harry opened his mouth and then closed it again. If he was right, he didn't really want to tell the snake. He edged to the side and scanned the room around the snake. When he and Draco had entered, the snake was at the other end of the room. Surely there had to be something over there. Harry squinted and spotted a small box on the table. That was it!

The snake slithered closer and began swaying in a distinctly threatening way over Harry.

"We need to go over to that table," Harry said.

"Why?"

Harry took a deep breath. "That was where you appeared in this room, right? It's where the magical signature is strongest. It's where you need to be for me to send you back."

The snake looked dubiously at him, but after a few seconds, it turned and began slithering towards the table. Harry let out a barely audible sigh of relief and followed. The box was just sitting there on the table. As he came closer, Harry realised that there were no buttons or markings of any kind on the box. It just looked like a shiny box-shaped piece of metal.

"I just need to pick up the box," Harry said. "It's where the magical energy is."

When the snake didn't move, Harry reached over and grabbed the box. He expected something to happen, but the snake simply looked at him.

"Right," Harry said quickly as he shook the box. There had to be a catch or something on the box. He had to be able to open it or something. There was nothing else that looked mysterious in the room.

"What are you doing, human?" the snake demanded.

"Nothing," Harry said, his heart pounding. "I'm trying to get you home."

The snake slid forward. "I don't think you're doing that. What's in that box?"

"Nothing," Harry repeated as he slammed the corner of the box against the table. His eyes widened as he saw the snake waver in front of him. It almost looked blurry for a second, like the really old telly that his aunt had.

"I think that you are lying," the snake said slowly. "And I do not like liars."

Harry suddenly had an idea. If hitting the corner of the box against the table made the snake waver, then surely... "Well, I don't like you very much," he snapped. He was really glad that Draco couldn't understand him. Comebacks seemed much easier to come up with in movies. With a sudden quick motion, Harry threw the box onto the ground and then stamped on it with all of his strength.

The snake lunged forward, and Harry was about to duck when the snake seemed to shatter in midair. It burst into a million pieces and then those pieces vanished. Slowly, Harry let out a long sigh of relief as he bent down to pick up the box. He placed it back down on the table carefully.

Behind him, he could hear Draco hurrying up. "What on earth happened?" Draco spluttered.

"It wasn't real," Harry said flatly. "It's obviously some sort of solid hologram controlled by that box."

Draco looked blank.

"Some sort of magical projection," Harry clarified. "I'm guessing it's some sort of cursed box. Probably created by somebody who knows Parseltongue."

Draco looked troubled.

"But at least it wasn't real," Harry said, feeling relieved. It might have been cursed with dark magic but it wasn't actually a giant snake. It made him feel a lot better. He wasn't sure whether it meant that there was somebody here who knew Parseltongue or whether the box was acting of its own accord now. Harry decided to think about it later. They needed to get out of here.

Draco chuckled. For once it was without malice. "It wasn't real," he agreed. "Of course, I wasn't scared."

"No, obviously not," Harry said, rolling his eyes. "Anyway, let's get out of here before somebody finds

us." He turned around and was about to walk away when suddenly Draco clutched at his arm. "What?"

Draco's voice was low. "There was somebody watching us."

Harry closed his eyes. If that was true, then the person would have seen him talk to a snake. To somebody as paranoid as Uther, talking to snakes was a definite sign of magic. "Are you sure?"

Draco looked pensive. "Not completely, but I think I saw somebody looking at us through that door crack." He pointed to a door on the other end of the hall.

Harry stared at it. It was quite far away. "They mightn't have seen anything. I mean, surely, if they did, then they would have been screaming. After all, there was a huge snake in here."

"True," Draco said. "There would have been the sound of running."

"You were obviously imagining things," Harry said. He crossed his fingers behind his back. It was the best possible option, all things concerned. He didn't want to think about what would happen to him if Uther discovered he could talk to snakes. Somehow he suspected that it would make his second year at Hogwarts look like a picnic.

Draco gave him a dubious look, but nodded. "Obviously," he muttered. "Come on. Let's go before somebody finds us here."

Harry followed.

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Harry looked around the room and couldn't help but raise an eyebrow. The tables were covered with papers and the there were stacks of books everywhere. He could see jars of strange looking things on the shelves and there was a distinct layer of dust over some of the tomes. He suspected that Hermione would have been perfectly at home in here.

Draco wrinkled his nose. "You said that Gaius wanted to see us?" he asked bluntly. "Why would the court physician want to see us? Especially in a place like this."

Merlin nodded. "He should be back any minute now. He had to see a patient at the palace. And I enjoy living here with Gaius. It's a nice place."

Draco rolled his eyes. "We were just at the palace. Why couldn't we have talked to him there?"

"Because there isn't much privacy there."

Harry jumped and looked around. The door behind them closed and Gaius walked around the table.

Harry was getting a rather bad feeling about all of this. He hadn't heard the door open at all. He knew from history that Merlin wasn't stupid, and it was pretty obvious that Gaius wasn't a fool either. Gaius was looking at them as if he knew something. A sudden thought occurred to Harry. Was Gaius the person who was spying on them this morning? Had Gaius seen him talking to the snake? That was very bad. Very, very bad. Gaius was obviously friendly with Uther. It didn't bode well for either of them.

"And why would we need privacy?" Draco's voice was cold.

Gaius picked up a large book from the table and blew a layer of dust off it. Harry coughed. "I just wanted to speak to you," he said mildly.

Draco inclined his head. "Did you wish to ask me questions?"

Gaius gave a faint smile that reminded Harry of Dumbledore. Gaius seemed to have the same vagueness about him and sharp penetrating stare. "Please, sit down," he said as he gestured towards a few stools that were around the table.

Harry walked over and sat down.

"No, thank you," Draco said.

Harry shifted on the seat. "You have a lot of books," he said awkwardly as he looked down at the pile in front of him.

Gaius smiled. "Both Merlin and I love reading, don't we?"

Merlin gave an uncomfortable smile as he picked up the pile of books. "I'll move this somewhere else," he said quickly and walked away with them.

"Is there a particular reason why you requested my presence?" Draco's tone was querulous. If Harry hadn't known better, he would have thought that Draco really was an offended nobleman. "I do not appreciate being summoned like this."

"My dear boy," Gaius told him. "You were not summoned. I just wished to speak to you. Both of you, actually. In the past few years, I have had so little opportunity to travel this land and from what I gather, both of you have come from far away."

"Further than you think," Harry said, without thinking.

Draco shot him a dirty look. "What my servant means to say is that we have indeed travelled very far. It is possible that my family would not appear in your books." He gestured towards the huge number of texts

cluttering the room.

Gaius smiled faintly. "Of course, if you were a commoner trying to pass yourself off as a nobleman that would be a perfect cover for you. It has happened before."

Harry sighed silently. Of course it had. There was no way that Draco was getting away from this. He'd known that from the very beginning. This was a ridiculous farce. They needed to get as far away from Camelot as possible and then try to find a way home. He looked over at Draco and was about to suggest that they leave when Draco stepped forward.

"Do I look like a commoner to you?" Draco demanded.

Gaius tilted his head and stroked his chin lightly. There was a look of slight amusement on his face. "It is difficult to tell."

Draco spluttered with indignation.

"It's possible," Merlin pointed out as he walked back into the room. "After all, we did find you wandering the forest without any supplies."

"There is that," Gaius said. "Of course, it is very dangerous for somebody to try to pass themselves off as a nobleman. Very few people would even think of trying to risk Uther's wrath like that. The only people who would try something similar would be those who have nothing to lose."

Harry swallowed. He glanced over and saw a flicker of fear in Draco's eyes before Draco squared his chin.

"Are you trying to insinuate something?"

"Would you like a drink?" Gaius asked suddenly as he walked over to the side of the room. He picked up

a small jug and a cup. "It's only water, but it is warm. I often find that a cup of warm water helps to warm up my old body, especially during cold mornings. I was over at the palace this morning treating Morgana and afterwards, I went to get some warmed up water from the kitchens next to the throne room."

Harry wrinkled his nose at the idea of lukewarm water. He was beginning to get an idea of where Gaius was going with this. From the expression on Draco's face, he was getting the same sinking feeling.

"I saw a rather odd sight when I looked into the throne room this morning," Gaius continued.

"Oh?" Draco asked, his face blank.

Gaius nodded. His voice was suddenly sharp. "Imagine my surprise when I saw both of you in there. Imagine my further surprise when I saw your servant talking to a snake. In a city such as Camelot, that could easily be mistaken for magic."

"I'm afraid you must have been mistaken," Draco said smoothly. "We had a long journey here and both of us slept far into the morning."

Gaius smiled. "I would almost believe you if I wasn't positive that you were lying."

"How dare you accuse me of lying?" Draco exclaimed.

Gaius turned to Merlin. "He's doing pretty well at the offended nobleman act, isn't he?"

Merlin nodded and looked amused. "Quite well. He almost reminds me of Arthur."

"I can guarantee that my blood is bluer than yours," Draco said frostily. His lips were pressed together into a tight line.

"And your magic is stronger than mine," Gaius said with a faint smile.

"Of course," Draco said and then stopped suddenly. He paled and took a step backwards.

"Got you," Merlin said with satisfaction. "So it was both of you that we saw in the throne room this morning." He turned to Harry. "You were talking to the snake and then it just disappeared."

"My dear boy," Gaius said as he laid a hand on Merlin's shoulder. "I think you're frightening them."

"Why would we be frightened? We have nothing to be frightened about. You merely tricked me into saying something," Draco snapped. "You have no proof."

Gaius quirked an eyebrow. "You imagine Uther needs proof?"

Harry had to concede that point. Uther Pendragon didn't seem like the kind of king who needed or wanted proof of magic before executing somebody. He opened his mouth but decided against it. After all, Draco had made it perfectly clear that Harry was supposed to be acting the part of a lowly servant. Servants didn't usually butt into conversations like this.

"There is no point in trying to lie," Gaius told them as he poured water into the glasses. "Would you like some?"

Harry shook his head. Draco just ignored the proffered glass. "I'm not lying," he said flatly. "Now if you'll excuse me, we must be going."

Merlin looked like he wanted to say something, but then he closed his mouth again.

Without another word, Draco spun around and marched out of the room. Harry shot Merlin and Gaius a slightly apologetic look. It wasn't their fault. Draco didn't need to be so rude. "Well, bye then," Harry said awkwardly and then fled.

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"Just who do they think they are?" Draco muttered to himself as he wore a circle in the carpet.

"Well, the skinny one's Merlin," Harry offered. "Otherwise known as one of the most powerful wizards of all time. Founder of the Order of Merlin. I'm sure he did other great things too."

Draco glared at him. "Yes, I know that. I know more about Merlin than you do and that scrawny brat isn't him. It must just be some sort of coincidence."

"It's just that you've been going on and on about it for hours now," Harry protested. "On and on and on about it. It's not like they're actually lying about what they saw. I was talking to a snake."

Draco looked miffed. "It hasn't been hours."

Harry pointed towards their half-finished lunch on the table. "Several hours, in fact," he said. He was quite amused by all of this and would have been more amused if it wasn't actually all really quite serious. If either Merlin or Gaius went to Uther with the information, then they were screwed. More than screwed, really. They'd be dead over a thousand years before they'd actually been born. Harry wasn't sure it was possible for them to be in a worse situation. "Maybe we should think of leaving," he suggested.

Draco gave him a considering look. "Not the stupidest idea you've come up with, Potter," he said. "Although, if you'd stopped to think about it, we were probably dropped on the outskirts of Camelot for a reason. Whatever brought us back in time is probably connected to this place. And that giant snake

was obviously magical."

Harry frowned. "So you're saying we need to stay?"

Draco signed. "I'm saying we need to tread carefully."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Well that's obvious."

There was a sharp knock on the door. Harry looked at it. Was he supposed to walk over to get the door? He had no idea what servants in this era did Fortunately, the door opened before he had the chance to move and Arthur stepped in. "I take it neither of you enjoyed your lunch," he said as he gestured towards the half-finished plates on the table.

Draco gave a disarming smile. "We weren't that hungry, but it was delicious."

Arthur raised an eyebrow. "Our regular cook has been sick for the past week. She claims to have seen ghosts. Her substitute is terrible."

"Well, in that case, I'm glad that this isn't your regular food," Draco said. "I'd feel a bit sorry for you if it was."

Arthur laughed. "Anyway, I came here to tell you that Gaius has finished briefing my father."

"Oh?" Draco asked.

"Gaius said that it took him a while, but he has found mention of your family in one of the old texts about the land. He also found a picture of your family crest, which was on your ring that you showed my father," Arthur said. "My father gave permission for you to join our knights, if you pass the tests."

Harry let out a silent sigh of relief before a wave of worry washed over him. Gaius had found mention of the Malfoy family? He had no idea if Draco's family traced back to this era or if the source was simply fabricated. Either way, it wasn't good.

"I'm glad," Draco said smoothly. "I don't like being mistaken for a commoner."

Arthur chuckled and clapped Draco on the back. Draco winced slightly. "Nobody does. Your equipment and clothing will be deducted from any future wages you may earn, if you pass."

"Of course," Draco echoed.

Harry couldn't help but think that he looked rather green.

"I assume your servant is well-trained?" Arthur asked. "I'd offer Merlin to help you, but that boy doesn't know the difference between greaves and gauntlets."

Harry fought to keep himself from staring blankly at Arthur. He had no idea what they were either. "Of course, I know what they are," he said confidently.

Arthur looked amused. "He's rather charming, isn't he? Reminds me of Merlin when he first started working for me a few years back. Let's hope he isn't as hopeless as Merlin was back then."

"Don't worry," Draco said. "Harry's a quick study."

Arthur took half a step towards the door before he stopped. "Oh, I almost forgot to mention that there's a jousting match tomorrow that you should participate in. Don't worry, it's only for the newer knights and those still in training and all the lances will be padded."

"Sounds like fun," Draco said his face impassive.

Arthur beamed. "It is!" The door closed behind him.

"Uh," Harry said after a short pause in which Draco didn't do anything except cradle his head in his hands. "What's jousting?"

"You don't want to know," Draco said, his voice muffled through his fingers.

"Well you don't have to do this jousting thing," Harry said practically. "Obviously Gaius didn't say anything about what he saw. Nobody will say anything if you just quit." Well, it was entirely possible that they might think of Draco as a coward, but it wasn't like that mattered in the larger scheme of things. Once they were back in the future, none of this would matter.

Draco lifted his head. "Malfoys don't just quit," he said acidly.

"Graciously step aside?" Harry suggested. "Could you do that?"

"Malfoys don't do that," Draco repeated.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Then I guess you'll have to do learn how to joust between now and tomorrow. Whatever jousting is."

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It took Harry until half an hour before the jousting match to figure out exactly what jousting was. Once he'd found out, he discovered the reason for Draco's rather green tone. The entire idea of trying to skewer each other with giant poles while hanging off the back of horses seemed ridiculous. He was glad that the future seemed to have far more sensible sports like Quidditch. It didn't seem anywhere near as dangerous.

Harry heaved the rather heavy piece of armour up and plonked it on Draco's shoulder. "Are you sure you want to go through with this jousting thing?"

"Do I have much of a choice?" Draco muttered.

"Probably not," Harry replied. Draco had been looking rather despondent ever since Uther had agreed to his request of becoming a knight. He suspected that Draco hadn't really thought his plan through very well. After all, a few summers of fencing lessons wasn't really good preparation for becoming a real knight. And Draco hadn't even become one yet. This was just his first test. Harry couldn't help but think that it wasn't particularly easy for a first test.

Draco looked down. "Are you sure I should be wearing this?"

Harry shrugged. "Well, it's either this or the padded vest thing."

Draco stared at him. "I'm not going into battle. This is just training, or my first test as Arthur puts it. We're using padded lances."

"So you don't want the armour?" Harry asked. He frowned. He'd only just figured out how the damn stuff went on. It's not like it came with instructions or anything. It was remarkably confusing, much like the first time he'd worn robes. That had been rather confusing as well.

"Maybe you should go and check in some of the other tents?" Draco suggested acidly. "I'm supposed to be trained in this, after all."

Harry snorted. "You don't think they'll realise that you're a complete beginner once you get on that horse?"

"How hard could it be?" Draco snapped. "It's just hitting a sandbag with a padded lance."

Harry rolled his eyes as he walked over to push the flap of the tent back. "I think it's the padded vest thing," he called over his shoulder. He secured the flap again and walked back over to Draco.

Draco looked doubtfully at the padded vest as Harry brought it out. "That doesn't look padded enough."

Harry threw his hands up. Draco was being beyond frustrating. "It's either this or the armour. Look, you might be forgetting something. I'm not your actual servant, you know?"

"And you're also not the person who's about to be skewered," Draco grumbled as he dropped the armour piece onto the ground.

"You said it was going to be with padded lances," Harry retorted. "They're not going to skewer you." Or at least, he didn't think they would. He didn't exactly have much experience with this kind of thing. It wasn't really something that he'd ever expected to need to know. He lifted the padded vest over Draco's head and lowered it down. "You could be nicer to me."

Draco smirked and raised an eyebrow.

"Well, I don't have to be helping you," Harry pointed out. "I'm only doing this so you don't end up dead." He secured the vest by tying it together at Draco's sides.

Draco's eyebrow shot up even higher. "You think that somehow putting this on me will help me from dying? I could have put it on myself."

Harry gritted his teeth. Here he was trying to be nice to Draco and all Draco did was make nasty comments. He wasn't the person who came up with the ridiculous nobleman and servant story. He wasn't the one who decided that Draco was in Camelot seeking to become a knight. He wasn't the person who had got them into this ruddy situation in the first place. If it wasn't for Draco and that mirror, Harry would be at home.

"And don't you think for one moment that this is all my fault," Draco told him. "If it wasn't for me, we'd be dead somewhere from lack of food and water. Do you think Arthur would have believed us if we told him the truth?"

"Merlin might have," Harry pointed out.

"Fat lot of good that does," Draco said. "He's just a servant."

Harry was silent.

He watched as Draco reached over and picked up the lance he had been given. The pointy end was wrapped in some sort of thick skin, which was tied in place. "That doesn't look very padded," Draco said doubtfully as he poked the sharp end with his finger. "Ouch! Maybe I should go with the armour after all."

There was a loud clanging sound from outside. "Too late," Harry said. "I think it's starting. Come on. You'd better go out. You're the second jouster."

Draco looked rather pale.

"You can still back out," Harry reminded him.

"I've seen these knights," Draco muttered. "Gryffindors, all of them. If I back down now, it'll be a sign of weakness. Plus, I'm the reason we get to stay here in Camelot. Without me, we wouldn't be here. And we need to stay here. Our way home is connected to this place. That giant snake? It's magic."

Harry shrugged. "Well then, you'd better go out."

Draco took a visible breath. Harry thought he could see Draco's knees shaking slightly from beneath the long vest. "This is quite possibly the stupidest thing I've ever done."

"I agree," Harry said, hiding a smile. "Now are you going out or not?"

Draco gave him a dirty look as he pushed aside the tent flap and stepped outside in the sunlight. "If I die, I'm going to haunt you."

Harry snorted. Draco was being a bit melodramatic. People didn't die in training, did they? It seemed unlikely. Having your potential knights die while being trained seemed like a terrible way to keep morale up. Plus, you needed all the knights you could get. "Go right ahead," Harry said. "Haunt away."

Draco shook his head and walked away. After a second, Harry followed him out of the tent. He didn't actually want Draco to die. After all, he was investigating him. It didn't look good on the record to have your suspects die prematurely. Looking around, Harry saw dust being kicked up in the distance. Obviously that was where the jousting match was being held.

"Doesn't look too dangerous," Harry muttered to himself as he walked over. "Just a little... violent." He winced as he saw one of the knights being thrown off his horse.

Draco shot him a death glare as he climbed on his horse.

"Good luck!" Harry called.

Draco's glare intensified. The horse twitched its tail and trotted off. Harry watched with amusement as Draco seemed to be bounced up and down on the horse. It was obvious that Draco wasn't used to riding and carrying a rather bulky lance at the same time. The horse trotted over to one end of the dirt field.

Standing up on the balls of his feet, Harry strained to see the other end of the field. Another rider seemed to be there and that rider seemed far more comfortable on his horse. "Padded lances," Harry told himself as both horses began racing forward, kicking up dust as they went. He could barely see anything from where he was, but he did hear the dull thudding sound of hooves and a whoomp sound as the horses sped past one another.

Harry bit his lip. He didn't like Draco but he didn't exactly want him dead. After all, Draco was probably his best chance of surviving long enough to get back home. Without Draco, Harry would have probably ended up in Uther's dungeons on the charge of practising magic.

Harry let out a deep breath when he saw Draco limping back, his lance trailing the dirt behind him. "You're alive."

"Barely. I hurt all over," Draco said flatly once he was back in the tent.

"I'm sure it wasn't that bad."

Draco glared at him. "I hurt in muscles that I didn't know that I had. How is that not bad?"

"You stayed on your horse," Harry said brightly. "Isn't that a good thing?"

Draco made a grumbling sound. "I think the knights who fell off had the right idea. It would have hurt less if I'd fallen off. The ground seems softer than those padded lances."

"Well, you know that for next time," Harry told him.

Draco gave him a horrified look. "Next time?"

Harry shot him an innocent look. "Yes, didn't you know? This jousting thing goes on for hours. I checked the schedule. You're up against three other trainees. Don't worry, I checked around. They're all novices. More or less."

"More or less?" Draco's voice was dangerous.

Harry winced. "Well, one of them has won all of his jousts so far today, but that doesn't mean he's that good. I don't think he's a knight yet. Somebody said something about him being a squire or something."

"Great," Draco moaned as he prodded his ribs through the padded vest. "I'm probably going to be black and blue tomorrow. This is the training these guys go through?"

"Just imagine what the actual tournaments are like," Harry said and then regretted it when Draco shot him a dirty look.

"Maybe you'd like to get on the horse and give it a shot?" Draco suggested. "Look, with the helmet on, you could look just like me."

"No way." Harry was adamant. He'd seen what jousting was like and he wanted no part in a game that involved a bunch of grown men trying to skewer each other with giant sticks. It was as though they were trying to make a giant human kebab.

"Stop laughing," Draco snapped.

Harry stared. "I'm not."

"You're laughing on the inside. I can tell."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Maybe that blow hit your head instead of your ribcage," he suggested. "I think it might have knocked out a few brain cells." He had to admit that inwardly he was a tiny bit amused. But it wasn't more than a tiny bit and he certainly wasn't showing outward signs of that amusement.

"You're now mentally denying it to yourself," Draco told him. "It's written all over your face."

"I think your next joust is soon," Harry said pointedly. "You might want to drink some water. Eat some food."

Draco made a face. "Who would have thought that being a knight would be so much work?"

Harry snorted. Only Draco would imagine that being a knight was easy. "You're not even one yet," he reminded Draco. "Did you think that you'd prance around holding a sword and look pretty? And then girls would swoon at your feet?"

Draco looked hurt. "Well, not necessarily," he said as he wiped his forehead with the back of his hand. "Men could swoon at my feet too." He grabbed his lance and walked outside. "Wish me luck!"

"Good luck," Harry said automatically. He stared after Draco's departing figure. Did Draco just say men?

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It was dinnertime before Harry had the opportunity to bring up Draco's comment. Well, more accurately,

it was dinnertime before Harry worked up the courage to bring up Draco's comment. Sometimes, Harry wondered how much of a Gryffindor he really was. "So," Harry said casually as he spooned something that looked remarkably like slop into his mouth. "You want men to swoon at your feet?"

"What I really want is something to make my back stop hurting," Draco grumbled. "It hurts if I sit down. It hurts if I stand up. I don't even want to try to bend over!"

"If you were better at this lance business, then you'd probably have a couple of people swooned at your feet right now," Harry persisted. "Both men and women."

Draco stared at him. "Are you trying to tell me something?"

Harry widened his eyes. "No, of course not!" he blustered.

"Then why don't you make yourself useful and come over here," Draco said as he beckoned Harry forward.

"Uh, why?" Harry asked. He stepped forward anyway.

"I have this knot in my back," Draco told him. He twisted his arm to prod at a point in the middle of his back. "Since I can't seem to massage that spot, I thought you could."

"What?"

"In a completely non-weird way, of course," Draco hastened to add. "Look, you're my servant..."

"I'm pretending to be your servant," Harry interrupted. "And I swear, your food looks better than mine. These guys really do treat servants badly."

"Okay, you're pretending to be my servant. It doesn't mean you can't help me work a knot out of my back."

"You want me to ... massage your back?" Harry asked slowly.

Draco sighed. "Well, of course it sounds bad if you put it that way. Look, it was your fault that I was out there jousting today. Therefore, you owe me."

"It was not my fault!" Harry denied hotly. "It was you who came up with this entire insane plan. You wanted to go jousting. You were the one who went on about padded lances and stuff."

"Then it was me who saved us in the forest!" Draco said triumphantly. He leaned back in his chair and then winced. "Look, just a favour? My back really does hurt."

Harry closed his eyes briefly and shook his head. Draco really was an arrogant twat. "Fine," he said flatly. "I'll help you. But I won't enjoy it."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "I wasn't expecting you to."

"So, how do we do this?" Harry asked. He wiped his palms on his shirt. He seemed to be sweating slightly. He'd never given anybody a massage before. He'd tried with Ginny back when they had been dating but she'd just squirmed away from him and laughed. He missed the closeness they had back then. He was still friends with Ginny these days but it wasn't the same as being with her. None of his relationships since had been very serious.

"Use your thumbs," Draco instructed. "And sort of press into the middle of my back."

"Like this?"

Draco leaned forward. "No, not like that! That hurt."

"Then, how?"

"Lighter," Draco ordered.

Harry rolled his eyes but he pressed his thumbs lightly into Draco's back.

"Now sort of use your thumbs to make circles," Draco told him.

Slowly, Harry did what he said. Regardless of what Draco said, this seemed oddly erotic to him. As Harry slowly made small circles in the middle of Draco's back, he heard Draco moan slightly. Harry's cock twitched at the sound and Harry gulped. He couldn't be attracted to Draco.

"Getting better."

"I'm glad my technique is satisfying you," Harry retorted.

"It's very satisfying," Draco murmured.

Harry blinked. Surely Draco didn't mean what he thought he meant? He shook his head slightly. No, this was just Draco being his usual arrogant self. He just had a backache, that's all. Slowly, Harry pressed the tips of his other fingers into Draco's back and used his thumbs to make slow arcs across his back.

Draco inhaled sharply.

Harry was slowly moving his way up to Draco's shoulders when he heard a faint scream in the distance. He jerked his hands up automatically.

"Ahh!" Draco yelped. "Why the hell did you do that? You just dug your nail straight into my back. You have really bloody long nails, you know."

"I thought I heard something..." Harry said as he frowned. "And I do not have long nails."

"Your nails are long," Draco confirmed. "I wouldn't be surprised if I'm bleeding from those claws of yours."

"There was something," Harry insisted. He tilted his head and listened. "There! It was somebody screaming."

"I heard it," Draco said slowly. "Of course, last time we went to investigate screaming in this place, we found ourselves face-to-face with a giant snake. What do you say we stay right where we are this time around?"

Harry glared at him. "I'm going. You can stay if you want."

Draco rolled his eyes. "Why does this feel familiar?" he said with a sigh as he stood up. He stretched and massaged the small of his back. "Come on then. If you really want to get attacked by a giant snake again."

"That was just a once-off," Harry protested. It was really very unlikely that they'd meet yet another giant magical snake in this palace.

"Uh-huh," Draco said. He paused at the door and turned around. He looked pensive. "You know, I remember something in the Department of Mysteries that conjured up giant creatures. It was a cursed

box."

Harry stared. "What are you trying to say?"

Draco shrugged. "It's just an idea..."

"Spit it out."

"What if the box was pulled back in time the same way we were," Draco said. He leaned against the door. "There's something in Camelot that's messing with space-time. It's pulling things from the future - from our future - back in time."

"But..." Harry paused. "That would mean that somebody here was doing it."

"Deliberately," Draco added.

"Possibly deliberately," Harry added. "We don't know exactly what's going on. Anyway, are you just going to stand there or are you going to open the door?"

Draco sighed loudly and pulled the door open. "Fine, let's go and investigate the strange scream." He stepped outside and began walking down the corridor.

Harry followed behind him. He scanned the empty doorways as they walked past. He wasn't entirely sure which direction the scream came from only that it sounded urgent. "Come on!" he said as Draco slowed down.

"For all we know, the person's been eaten by the snake by now," Draco muttered. "It's probably nothing. Somebody having a nightmare."

"You keep on saying that," Harry snapped. "It's barely dark. Why would anybody be sleeping now?" He took a few more steps forward when he heard the scream again. It was much closer this time and the person was obviously female. "See? It's somebody terrified." He grabbed Draco by the arm and dragged him forward. "I think it came from in here."

Harry yanked open one of the doors on his left and almost immediately jumped to the side in alarm as a knife came whizzing past his head, barely missing his ear.

"What the hell?" Harry exclaimed as he gingerly poked his head around the door again. A dark-haired woman was huddled in a corner, behind a huge chair. All around her cutlery was swirling around the room. "What happened?"

The woman looked up. "Help me!" she gasped.

"We will!" Harry called back as he ducked back behind the wall.

Draco stared at him. "How'd you propose we do that?"

"How am I supposed to know?" Harry whispered back. "But we can't just leave her in there!"

"We can't go and rescue every single damsel in distress," Draco retorted. "It's not like you can talk to knives and spoons to make them stop."

"We have to try something!" Harry peeked around the doorway again. He could see the woman visibly shaking as she tried to gather her silk skirts around her.

"Like what?" Draco demanded. "Do you have some sort of hidden martial art skills I don't know about?"

"Don't be ridiculous," Harry snapped. "But maybe we could..." He trailed off. Every single plan he could think of involved magic and copious amounts of it. He couldn't think of any way to stop knives from hitting them that didn't involve charming them away. He could always grab some sort of barrier and try to get to her, but the knives were whirling around all over the place. It was some small miracle that she hadn't been hit yet.

"See?"

"Oh shut up," Harry said. He looked around the room. Even the spoons looked rather dangerous when they were spinning around the room.

"We could get help," Draco said.

Harry looked at him. "That's possibly the smartest thing you've said all day."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "Thank you for acknowledging my brilliance."

Harry was about to walk away to see if he could flag somebody down. A knight would be good, but what he really needed right now was a sorcerer and they were obviously in short supply in Camelot. If there was any time where he needed his magic, this was it. He suddenly heard footsteps coming down the corridor.

"Merlin?" Harry exclaimed.

Merlin looked quizzically at them. "What are you two doing here? These are private kitchens."

Wordlessly, Draco pointed in the doorway.

"Be careful!" Harry added.

"Oh," Merlin said as he stepped backwards, his eyes as wide as saucers. "That looks... dangerous." Carefully, he looked back around the doorway. "Are you alright, Morgana?"

"Fine, once you get me out of here!" Morgana's voice floated back towards them.

"This is magic, isn't it?" Draco asked neutrally.

Merlin gave him an odd look. "I don't suspect both of you, if that's what you mean."

"We're not magical," Draco said icily. "What I meant was that this seems like magic. Which means that it's dangerous. We should get somebody to help that poor woman."

"Morgana," Merlin told him. "That's her name."

"We need to get somebody to help Morgana," Draco repeated.

"Are you going to just talk or are you going to help me?" Morgana shouted. Her voice floated out to them over the sound of the knives and spoons. She shrieked. "That was close! A spoon almost hit me!"

"Better that than a knife," Draco muttered.

Harry shot him a dirty look. "We'd be happy to stay here if you go and find somebody to help her," he offered. Undoubtedly, it would be a lot quicker if Merlin went to find somebody.

A flicker of something passed through Merlin's eyes. He hesitated. "Actually, I think I should stay," he said. "I know Morgana. She'd feel more comfortable with me. You two could go and look for help."

"But we don't know who to find," Draco pointed out. "You do."

Harry studied Merlin and frowned. There was something that Merlin wasn't telling them. There was some sort of plan going on behind his eyes. Perhaps Merlin wasn't as oblivious of his magic as they initially thought. Perhaps Merlin knew perfectly well what to do right now but he needed to wait for both of them to leave before he could help Morgana magically.

Draco shot him a look. He seemed to be thinking the same thing as Harry. "I suppose we should find somebody," he said slowly.

"We'll be right back," Harry agreed.

"I'll be right here," Merlin told them. He looked around the doorway again and ducked as a knife nearly missed his nose. "We're getting help for you soon!"

"Hurry up!" Morgana's voice broke slightly. "It feels like they're deliberately targeting me!"

Harry peeked into the room. To him it looked like the knives and spoons flying around randomly, but undoubtedly, Morgana was terrified. To her, it probably looked like they were trying to cut random bits of her off all the time when in actuality, most of them didn't go anywhere near her. In fact, now that Harry was looking at the room properly, he could see a possible escape route for her if she was quick enough and used the chair as a shield.

"Come on, Potter," Draco said as he beckoned for Harry to follow him. "We'll be back with help soon."

Harry hurried after him. As soon as they were out of earshot, Draco stopped. "I think Merlin's up to

something," Harry said.

"Obviously," Draco agreed. "I think our boy is about to try some sort of magical solution to Morgana's situation." He began to creep quietly back towards the room.

Harry followed, trying to keep his footsteps as quiet as possible. "We should let him help her," he whispered.

Draco rolled his eyes. "Of course, but then we have proof of his magic. We can ask him to send us forward in time or we'll tell Uther about him."

Harry pressed his lips together. He wasn't sure he liked the idea of blackmailing anybody, much less one of the most powerful wizards of all time. "We could just ask him for help," he said.

"We could try that," Draco said. "But if that fails, we have another option." He turned the corner and stopped. "You managed to get her out!"

Harry's eyes widened as he saw Morgana standing there. The door to the room was tightly shut and from behind it, he could hear the knives still whirling around. Her face was tear-streaked and she was still shaking. With a trembling hand, she held together a tear in her bodice while she gave them a tremulous smile. "Thank you for helping."

"I see you didn't manage to get help," Merlin observed. "At least Morgana's safe."

Harry could tell that Draco wanted to ask questions, but he shot a look at Morgana. "Are you alright?"

"As well as could be expected," Morgana said drily.

"Lord Malfoy, if you could escort the Lady Morgana to her rooms," Merlin said politely. "Her maidservant

Gwen should be there and will be able to look after her."

"Certainly," Draco said after a pause. He offered his arm to Morgana. "Shall we?"

Morgana smiled weakly and took his arm. "Thank you. I'm still feeling a little shaken but I should be fine soon."

"It's perfectly natural to feel shaken about something like that," Draco told her as they walked away. "I shall ask Gwen to fetch you some mead. It should calm your nerves."

"That would be lovely."

As their voices died away, Harry turned to Merlin. "How did you get her out of there so quickly? We were only away for a few minutes?"

"I saw an opening and I took it," Merlin said. "I didn't want to leave Morgana in there for any longer than necessary. She could have been seriously hurt."

"Then why'd you ask us to go and get help?" Harry asked.

"Why didn't you come back with any help?" Merlin retorted.

"We didn't know who to ask," Harry said. "We were coming back to ask you if you knew anybody who you thought would help."

Merlin snorted.

"In fact," Harry continued, "I think that there's only one way you could have got her out of there quickly enough."

Merlin froze. "And what way is that?"

"Magic," Harry said flatly. "You used magic."

"Do you go around accusing people of using magic often?" Merlin asked softly. "It's dangerous to do that in Camelot."

"It's dangerous to be magical in Camelot," Harry retorted.

"Only one of us is magical and that person is you, Harry," Merlin told him. "Gaius saw you talking to that snake. There's something very odd about you. I can feel it."

Harry took a deep breath. He could prove that Merlin was magical if he could make him perform magic.

"You're a sorcerer. Don't deny it," Merlin said.

"I'm not," Harry told him. With one swift motion, Harry reached into his pocket and threw a bread roll at Merlin.

Merlin simply stared at him. "What was that about?"

Harry could feel his face redden. "I wanted to prove that you have magic."

Merlin's mouth dropped open. "With bread?"

"It was the only thing I had in my pocket," Harry muttered. He'd shoved it in his pocket after lunch and had forgotten about it until now. He wasn't sure what he was thinking, but he'd hoped that Merlin would use his magic to deflect the bread roll. Obviously he needed something more dangerous.

"You're not thinking of throwing one of those knives at me, are you?" Merlin asked slowly.

"Of course not," Harry snapped. "That would be dangerous. Although, given that you're a sorcerer, you'd be able to handle it."

Merlin quirked an eyebrow. "You don't look particularly scared. Most people would be scared if they were confronting somebody they knew to be a sorcerer."

Harry bit the inside of his cheek. Too late, he realised that he should have looked shocked or horrified. "I am scared," he said lamely as he took a step backwards.

Merlin shook his head slowly. "You threw a bread roll at me. You're not scared."

Belatedly, Harry realised that he really should have thought this through a bit more.

"The only reason why you wouldn't be scared is if you knew that magic wasn't dangerous," Merlin told him.

"Are you admitting it then?" Harry asked.

Merlin gave him a half-smile. "I'm not admitting anything. And obviously, neither are you."

Harry couldn't help himself. He let out a small laugh. "I guess we have a stalemate then." He studied

Merlin carefully.

Merlin frowned. "I don't know what you mean."

Harry could have kicked himself. Obviously chess hadn't been invented yet. That was what happened when he absorbed chess terms from talking with Ron. "I have to go," he said abruptly. Harry was about to turn around but he fixed Merlin with a long stare first. "I know you're magical."

"You believe I'm magical," Merlin corrected. "You're wrong."

Harry shook his head. "I know." He turned around and walked away in the direction that Draco had taken Morgana. They needed to convince Merlin to admit his powers to them. Neither of them had their magic back yet. Harry thought he could feel tingles of magic at times, but whenever he tried to use it, nothing happened. Merlin was the only person in this era who they knew was definitely magical.

If they could get Merlin to help them, maybe they could get home. Harry bit his lip. Now all they needed to do was convince Merlin.

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Uther's eyes flashed as he looked at the assembled knights. "Find out what's happening!" He wrapped an arm around Morgana. "My ward was almost killed yesterday by magic. It's a plague upon this land. Innocent people are killed by it every day."

Morgana's bottom lip trembled slightly, but she lifted her chin. Her fingers seemed to be fastened tightly around Uther's arm.

Harry couldn't help but that Uther was taking it a bit far. Morgana had been in danger, but she wasn't

almost killed. The knives weren't targeting her; she could have easily got out of the kitchen if she hadn't been so scared. Turning his head, Harry realised that Draco's lips were pressed very tightly together and his eyes were narrowed. "Don't do anything stupid," Harry whispered.

Draco gave him a wry look. "I'm not the type."

Uther waved his hand and the knights began leaving the room. Harry stepped to the side as one of them pushed past him. "This isn't going to be good," Harry muttered. All of the knights he could see seemed to be riled up from Uther's speech. It was obvious that they wanted to do something to protect the Lady Morgana. The fact that Morgana was currently perched on the edge of a chair wearing a rather tight green velvet dress probably didn't hurt.

Harry sighed. He knew he wasn't being fair to her. It wasn't her fault she was in the middle of that attack. It wasn't her fault that Uther was a crazy bigot. Of course, she probably didn't need to flutter her eyelashes at every knight who looked her way, but it was probably her way of forgetting about the whole situation.

"We need to talk," Harry hissed into Draco's ear.

Draco gave him an annoyed look but followed Harry out of the room. Harry kept on walking until he came to an empty room. Harry closed the door behind them. "What?" Draco asked.

"We need to come up with a way to get back home."

"That was urgent enough to drag me out of the room that quickly?" Draco demanded.

Harry ignored him. "I asked Merlin whether he had magic."

Draco stared. "What?"

"I thought that Merlin could help us. So I asked him whether he had magic," Harry repeated.

"What do you mean you confronted Merlin?" Draco spluttered.

Harry narrowed his eyes. "I didn't confront him! What would you have me do?" he demanded. "We need his help. His magic. How can we ask for that if he doesn't admit his magic to us?"

Draco rolled his eyes.

"What?" Harry asked. Draco's expressions were really beginning to annoy him. It felt like Draco thought he was some sort of idiot or some sort of child that needed to be guided through everything. "You were the one who decided that we couldn't tell them."

Draco tilted his head. "I'm rethinking that, actually."

"Oh, you're rethinking that," Harry retorted. "It would have been nice if you'd told me that."

Draco glared at him. "I hadn't made a final decision yet."

"Still, you should have told me," Harry snapped. "This isn't some sort of dictatorship. I'm not actually your servant, you know."

"Of course I know that. How could I forget with you reminding me every two minutes?"

Harry resisted the urge to punch Draco on the arm. "So why were you rethinking it?"

Draco's forehead creased lightly. "If there's anybody in this godforsaken era that we can trust, it's probably Merlin. We could tell him the truth."

Harry stared. "Great," he complained. "I just denied it to him again today. What makes you think that he'll believe us?"

"You forget one thing," Draco told him. "I actually paid attention in History of Magic. I know about this era. I know about Merlin's dragon friend. I know things that other people wouldn't know. We can prove to him that we're from the future using knowledge."

Harry wasn't too sure about that but he nodded anyway. "We need to find Merlin."

"I saw him going in that direction." Draco pointed a vague hand towards the corridor winding off into the distance to the right.

"Very helpful."

"That's not what I'm here for," Draco informed him. "I'm here to stop you from doing anything too dumb."

Harry glared at him and then stalked off in the direction that Draco had pointed in. A few seconds later, Draco came up and fell into pace next to him. They'd only walked along for a couple of minutes when Harry suddenly spotted Merlin sitting at a table. He seemed to be half-polishing armour and half-sleeping. "Merlin!" Harry called.

Merlin jerked his head up. The brush fell from his fingers. "Oh," he said, sounding relieved. "It's you."

"Who'd you think it was going to be?" Harry asked.

Merlin's face fell as he looked over Harry's shoulder. "Him," he said as he pointed a finger.

Arthur walked around Harry and picked up a piece of armour. "Nowhere near polished enough," he said.

"That's because this method takes too long!" Merlin exclaimed.

Arthur gave him a warning look. "You know how I feel about shortcuts."

Merlin glanced over at where Harry and Draco were standing. "Ah, yes," he said. "Of course. How can I help both of you then?"

"We wanted to talk to you in private," Draco asked.

"No," Arthur said flatly.

Draco raised an eyebrow. "No?" he asked. "I know that he's just a servant, but surely he can decide to have private conversations if he wants to. We have something that we want to discuss with him in secret."

"I said no."

Harry frowned. There was something about the way Arthur seemed overly protective of Merlin. Sure, he ordered Merlin around in a way that was reminiscent of how Draco ordered house elves around, but there was an underlying protective streak. "Merlin, I'd like to talk to you about our earlier conversation."

Merlin froze.

"I'm sure you remember it," Harry pressed. "I'd like to talk to you about it."

Merlin exchanged a glance with Arthur before Merlin nodded.

"Would you like to talk in private?" Harry asked. Given the sensitive nature of the previous conversation, Harry figured he needed to give Merlin that choice.

Merlin looked over at Arthur again. "No, Arthur stays."

Harry let out a deep breath and frowned. "Are you sure?"

"Whatever you say to him, you can say to me," Arthur said imperiously.

"You do remember what we talked about..." Harry trailed off.

Merlin shook his head slightly. "It's fine."

Harry bit the inside of his cheek. Draco had made a special point of emphasising to him the importance of being not magical in this era. Actually, Draco had ranted about the prejudices of Muggles, but Harry had got the idea. He didn't want to get Merlin in trouble with Arthur, but since he was so insistent, Harry wasn't sure what to do. Merlin couldn't have forgotten their earlier conversation, so if he still wanted Arthur here, then he must have a good reason for it. Suddenly, Harry realised something that should have been obvious to him. He looked over at Draco whose eyes were wide. Maybe Arthur knew about Merlin's secret!

"I guess you can stay then," Harry said slowly.

Draco opened his mouth, but Harry shot him a look. It wouldn't hurt to have Arthur on their side in this. After all, he was the king's son. Of course, if they'd misjudged this, then they'd probably all be hanged,

but Harry didn't think he was misreading the look on Merlin's face.

"Fine," Draco said grudgingly.

"Oh good," Arthur said sarcastically. "This is my castle, you know. It means so much to me that a lowly servant has given me permission to stay."

Merlin, however, was looking at them seriously. "Go ahead," he said.

Harry looked over at Draco who nodded. He took a deep breath and began.

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"You're from the future?" Merlin spluttered.

Harry nodded as he fiddled with his cup of mead. He sipped it and then immediately spat it back in the cup. It tasted disgusting. Alcohol definitely had changed over the thousand years and Harry liked the alcohol in his time much better. "We were examining a mirror when we were suddenly dragged back a thousand years into the past," Harry explained. He shot a glance at Draco. To his surprise, Draco had actually managed to convince Merlin. Turned out that Draco's knowledge of History of Magic was quite extensive and detailed. From Arthur's lack of shouting and the fact none of them were in shackles yet, Harry also surmised that Arthur knew about Merlin's magic.

"Suddenly and unceremoniously dragged," Draco drawled. "I believe it's something to do with either the mirror or the jewel we found in the back of the mirror." He pulled the ruby-like gem out of a pocket and put it on the table.

Arthur picked it up. "It looks precious," he said. He passed it from hand to hand and looked thoughtfully

at it.

Harry shrugged. "Maybe it is. It's also probably magical."

Arthur carefully placed it back on the table and gave it a wary look. "Perhaps Merlin could help then," he said, sounding cautious.

Draco snorted. Harry glared at him and jabbed him in the ribs. "We were hoping he could."

Merlin looked puzzled as he picked the jewel up. "I don't think this is enchanted. Or at least, not any more. I can't sense any magic in it."

"Then it must have been the mirror," Draco said with a sigh. "We need to find the mirror."

Merlin nodded. "That sounds like a good idea. We could help with that. Ask around and stuff."

"That wasn't the only reason why we're telling you," Harry said. "Our magic is... malfunctioning right now. We wanted to ask for your help to see if you could send us back into the future."

"No," Arthur said flatly.

Harry stared. Arthur looked calmly at him. There was a stubborn set to his lips and his arms were crossed across his chest. "Why?" Harry asked. "Look, we don't belong in your time. We don't want to be here and Merlin could help us get back."

"I said 'no'," Arthur snapped. "I will not have Merlin risking his life for you two."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "You will not have Merlin risking his life? Doesn't Merlin get a say in this?"

"No."

Merlin sighed. "What Arthur means to say is that ..."

"I meant 'no'," Arthur said grumpily. "You don't need to risk your life for these two. We barely know them. We don't know that they're telling the truth. All we know is that they know a creepy amount about your life. For all we know, they spent all this time spying on you so that they could know this information."

Merlin bit his lip. "I'm not sure about that. They know some things that were very private."

Draco turned to Harry with a smug look. "I told you I was good at History of Magic."

"And I'm not sure I'm comfortable with the idea of my life's secrets being studied in some classroom!" Merlin exclaimed.

"But you're one of the most famous wizards of all time," Draco said as though that explained everything.

Harry could feel his heart go out to Merlin. He understood what it felt like. Even though it had been years, he still had people staring at him in the streets. He still had little kids coming up to him to ask for autographs. While it was flattering, it was also rather annoying, especially when he was in a hurry. When he was juggling shopping bags, the last thing Harry wanted to do was smile and sign an autograph. But he couldn't be rude to the kids either.

Merlin gave him an odd look. Harry suddenly realised that he was staring at Merlin. "Sorry," he muttered.

"You wouldn't be risking your life," Draco said. "All we'd need you to do is perform a spell."

"And what you don't seem to understand is that Merlin will be risking his life simply by performing this spell," Arthur snapped. "As I keep on telling him, every spell he performs increases the risk of him getting caught by my father. Even this conversation itself is highly risky."

"But we can't just sit by and not help," Merlin said.

Arthur sighed. "That's exactly what you said the time an ogre attacked the city."

"If I hadn't done something, then it would have completely flattened Camelot."

Arthur laid a hand on Merlin's arm. "I know. I know. But you almost died."

"But I didn't," Merlin said. "And it worked. It's now happily in love with an apple tree." He hesitated. "Well, at least it would have been if your father's knights hadn't killed it."

Arthur shuddered. "I think I preferred it when it was terrorising Camelot. At least it wasn't singing love songs then."

Harry turned to Draco and raised an eyebrow. "What's that all about?" he mouthed.

Draco shrugged.

"I want to help them," Merlin said.

Arthur let out a long breath. "We're not going to do this in Camelot," he warned. "There's too high a risk.

Not with the guards on the lookout for any sort of magic."

"We have no problem with that," Draco said smoothly.

Harry nodded. "No problem," he echoed.

"We'll meet you early in the morning on Friday," Merlin said. "Arthur usually goes out riding and it won't be suspicious if you come with us."

That was two days longer than what Harry wanted to wait, but he nodded anyway. "Sure," he said. "But in the meantime, you need to look up possible spells you can use to send us to the future."

"I'll bring the books," Merlin promised.

Arthur pursed his lips but didn't say anything. "Don't take unnecessary risks," he said to Merlin. "These two... they don't mean anything to us."

"They're our future," Merlin said quietly.

That was true, Harry reflected. They were the future for these people. Merlin's future, definitely. Their entire legacy of magic could probably be traced to the skinny person sitting in front of them. It was an odd feeling. It was like being in the presence of the father of modern magic.

"You're looking oddly at me again," Merlin pointed out.

Harry could feel his face turning red. "Sorry," he muttered. He really needed to stop doing that. Merlin was just a normal person. Or at least, right now, he definitely was. It would be years before he would be the powerful wizard textbooks talked about. Right now, he was an ordinary wizard who was willing to

help them. And hopefully, that would be enough.

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"That's surprising."

Harry began to get a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach. There was something about Draco's tone of voice that warned him that yet another incident had happened. "What's surprising?" he asked wearily.

Draco beckoned him over to the window. As Harry gazed over the courtyard, he could see a large Dark Mark hanging over the cobblestones. People were giving that area a wide berth. In fact, there were much fewer people in the courtyard than would be expected for mid-morning. Obviously word had spread and people were avoiding the area. One could never be too careful when it came to magic. "About a thousand years too early for that," Draco drawled, pointing at the sky, but Harry thought he could detect a note of worry in his voice.

"This isn't good," Harry muttered, more to himself than anything.

Draco raised an eyebrow anyway. "That's obvious," he said snidely.

Harry ignored the tone. "I wonder how much more security Uther will order around the palace?" And how many civilian houses he'll order to be searched, Harry added silently. The atmosphere lately had been so brittle that Harry was afraid that it would shatter if he breathed too hard. Uther was furious that magic was obviously happening under his very nose, and under that bluster, he was obviously scared. Because of that, both Arthur and Merlin seemed on edge too. The general population of Camelot was terrified. Harry wished he could just tell them that magic wasn't a bad thing, that the events were just magical objects being pulled back in time from the future and that the world wasn't going to end.

"For the last time, we're not going to tell everybody who we are," Draco said, his voice sharp. "It's bad

enough that Arthur and Merlin know."

Harry gave a start. "How'd you know what I was thinking?"

"It was written all over your face," Draco told him. His tone was flat. "If you want to be an idiot and risk your life, I'd prefer you do it when my fate isn't tied in with your own. You might not know anything about this era, but I do."

"Yeah, yeah," Harry muttered. He'd heard Draco's spiel before. He knew that this was an era where people were terrified of magic. You could tell that just by the smell of fear in the air. These people were more scared of magic than his aunt and uncle.

There was a brief knock on the door before Merlin burst in. Draco raised an eyebrow. Merlin had the grace to look slightly embarrassed before he burst out, "You've seen that, haven't you?"

Harry nodded.

"What on earth is it?" Merlin's eyes were wide as he looked out of the window. "I was with Morgana a few minutes ago and she was so shocked, she had to be escorted back to her quarters."

"Something magical, obviously," Harry muttered.

Merlin sighed. "Don't say that around Uther. He's twitching every time somebody mentions the word magic now."

"I wish we could just tell everybody that magic isn't evil," Harry said softly.

Merlin shot him a warning look.

"Don't worry," Harry said. "I'm not going to tell anybody. But don't you wish you could say something sometimes?"

"Of course I do," Merlin burst out. "Don't you think that I hate it that Gaius and Arthur are the only ones who know about this?" He waved a hand at himself. "I'd love to tell Gwen and Morgana. I'd love to be able to help people more obviously without all this sneaking around. But it's dangerous." He bit his lip. "I've almost got Gwen killed once. I'm not going to risk it."

"I guess," Harry said. He sighed. "But I wish it wasn't like this."

Merlin turned bright eyes towards him. "But at least I know it won't always be like this. The future's different, isn't it?"

"It is," Harry said. He was about to say more when Draco clamped a hand over his arm. "Ouch! What'd you do that for?"

"But we can't tell you anything about it," Draco said flatly. "Time continuation issues. We're changing the future enough already just by being here. We don't want to change it even more."

Harry closed his eyes. They'd had this conversation at least once a day since they got here. "How'd you know that we weren't supposed to be here?" he challenged. Least that was what happened the last time he'd brushed with time travel. Harry couldn't really see the difference between this and the time turner Hermione used back in their third year.

"What if everything's predetermined?" Draco snapped. "I'm working on the presumption that we're trying to minimise the flow-on effect of our actions. I suggest you do the same."

Merlin grinned. "Are you sure you weren't master and servant in the future?" he asked. "Or lovers? You certainly act like it."

Draco spluttered. "We most certainly were not lovers!"

"Most certainly," Harry echoed.

Merlin didn't look convinced. "You were definitely something."

"Enemies would be closer to the mark," Draco muttered. "Much, much closer."

Merlin shrugged. "Well, Arthur and I began as enemies, but now I'd say we're ... friends."

Harry blinked and stared at him. There was something about the way Merlin said friends that made him think that there was more to it. "He certainly orders you around a lot."

Merlin waved a hand. "Arthur's like that. He makes up for it in other areas."

Draco arched an eyebrow. "I'm sure he does."

Merlin coloured. "No, not like that!" he exclaimed. He quickly stepped towards the door and opened it. "Gaius wanted to see all of us. Whenever you're ready." He closed the door behind him and his footsteps echoed down the cobblestones.

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Gaius looked worried. His bushy brows were drawn together and his fingers were tight around his cup. "Merlin tells me that you are going into the forest to perform magic," he said bluntly.

"What did you tell him?" Draco asked. There was a note of warning in his voice.

"Nothing he didn't have a right to know," Merlin told them. "You can trust Gaius. He's known about my powers from the beginning and he hasn't betrayed me."

"That's not what I'm worried about!" Draco exclaimed. "The more people who know, the more likely it is that Uther's men will find out."

"And the more dangerous it is for all of us," Gaius said quietly. "You both are newcomers to this city. You haven't lived here. You haven't felt the atmosphere of fear in Camelot during these purges. We know how to be careful."

"Why did you summon us here then?" Draco asked.

Harry shot him a look. It wouldn't hurt Draco to be more polite. Gaius was well-connected and a friend of Uther. It was obvious that Gaius was on Merlin's side, but to have Gaius on their side as well would be far more useful.

Gaius looked amused. "I wished to talk to both of you."

"Talk away then," Draco said sharply.

To Harry's surprise, Gaius stood up and walked slowly towards one of the bookshelves that lined the room. Standing up on a footstool, Gaius groaned lightly as he reached for one of the books. The book seemed very old and leather-bound.

"I'll get that," Merlin said as he hurried over. He reached over Gaius's shoulder and grabbed it. He handed it to Gaius.

"I wanted to give you this," Gaius explained as he brought the book over. He shot Merlin a glance. "It's another one of those aspects of my past life that I have been reluctant to get rid of."

Merlin shook his head. "Arthur wouldn't be happy about this."

"This should be able to help you. There are spells about time travel in here," Gaius explained.

"May I?" Draco asked as he held out a hand. Gaius handed him the book and he began to flip through it. Looking over Draco's shoulder, Harry frowned. The book looked like complete gibberish. None of the words seemed to be in English and there were little squiggles all down the margins like a little kid had got in and drawn all over it.

"This doesn't make sense," Harry protested.

Gaius smiled softly. "That's because language would have changed between our time and yours. I suspect your magic is helping you understand our speech, but it obviously cannot translate the writing."

"So Merlin can read this?" Draco asked as he put the book down.

Merlin nodded.

Draco looked rather miffed that Merlin could do something better than he could. "Very well then. As long as somebody can read it. That's the important part. I'm still not sure why you needed us to see this."

"I also wanted to warn you," Gaius said. "Uther is ordering a search of all the rooms in the palace today. If you have anything magical in your rooms, I suggest that you find a good place to hide it."

Harry patted his pocket where he still kept his wand. "We don't have anything."

Gaius gave him a grave look. "As long as you are sure. Uther's men can be..."

"Unnecessarily harsh," Arthur interrupted. "But they're just doing their jobs."

"Of course," Merlin said. There was a slightly bitter twist to his lips.

"We'll see you tomorrow morning then," Draco said quickly. There was a slightly uncomfortable look on his face. It was obvious that he didn't want to be here any longer.

Merlin nodded. "I'll find a spell that will send you back home."

"Hopefully," Harry said as he walked towards the door. He really wanted to go home. Once home, he wouldn't have to talk to Draco any more. It was odd being so close with him here. They were former enemies stuck in a situation together which almost made them friends. It was a very odd situation.

Harry yanked the door open and stepped outside into the sunlight.

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"Ow," Harry said as he bounced up and down on the horse. "I'm never doing this again once we get back home." It would be worth it if this meant that they could get home though. He couldn't get used to the idea of not having magic. Over the last day or so, it almost felt like his magic was coming back. His wand had warmed under his fingertips, and Harry almost thought he saw one of the books move when he pointed his wand at it.

But even if his magic was coming back, he still couldn't do anything with it. Harry had talked to Draco about it, and Draco said that he had felt something similar. It felt like there was something blocking their magic. Harry crossed his fingers. They both hoped that once they got home, everything would go back to normal.

"Ah!" Harry exclaimed as he was jolted out of his thoughts by his horse leaping over an old rotting log. "Did you have to do that?" he demanded crossly.

Draco shot him an amused look as his horse passed Harry's. Harry looked enviously at how comfortable Draco looked on his horse. It was nothing like the way Harry felt and undoubtedly looked. Arthur had smirked when he saw Harry getting on a horse and Merlin had bit back a laugh before helping him.

"Never ever," Harry vowed. His backside felt bruised. It really did feel like the horse was deliberately trying to make his ride as uncomfortable as possible. "How long left?"

"Not long," Merlin called over his shoulder. "Almost there!"

Harry reflected on the fact that Merlin had said the exact same thing ten minutes ago. Obviously his idea of almost there and Merlin's idea of almost there was not the same thing. Nowhere close, actually. "Come on," Harry muttered. He almost let out a sigh of relief when he saw Arthur's horse slow down and then come to a stop.

"We're here," Arthur said with an amused look.

Wincing, Harry slid off his horse and was ridiculously relieved when his feet touched the ground. "Couldn't have come sooner," Harry muttered.

"That was a lovely refreshing ride," Draco drawled as he gracefully got off his horse. "We must do that more often. This is something we don't do in the future."

Harry looked over to see Merlin busily pulling the thick book that Gaius had given them out of his saddlebag. Merlin looked up and grinned. "I found a spell that will send you back."

Harry felt a wave of relief slide through him. "Oh thank God," he exclaimed. He could feel his face turn red. "I didn't mean it that way."

"No offense taken," Merlin said cheerfully. "I'm sure if I were sent to your time I'd want to come back as soon as possible as well."

Harry shifted awkwardly on his feet. What could he say to people who he was never going to see again? There was also a blister growing on one of his feet. He had no idea how he could have got a blister from riding a horse, but somehow, he had one. "It was interesting," he said finally.

"I'm sure it was," Arthur drawled. He looked around quickly. "Now hurry up and get this over and done with." He grabbed the leads of the horses and led them away.

"I guess we should hurry up with it," Harry said as he looked back towards Merlin.

Merlin nodded as he sat down cross-legged and opened the book on his lap. "I just need to find the spell again."

Harry exchanged glances with Draco. They were going home! It meant that they could talk to their friends again. He could see Ron and Hermione. Draco could see whoever he was friends with. They would both go back to work again on Monday morning and it would be like none of this ever happened. Harry felt an uncomfortable twinge of regret at that idea. He had got to know Draco quite well during this adventure. What would it be like pretending that none of this had ever happened?

"Don't get maudlin, Potter," Draco advised.

Harry glared at him. "I'm not maudlin," he snapped. It would be quite easy to forget this, after all. Draco was an annoying twit and Harry was glad that he'd never have to talk to him again.

"Found it!" Merlin said as he spread the book open before him. "So are you two ready?"

Harry took a deep breath and then nodded.

"Of course," Draco said smoothly.

"I've never done this before," Merlin warned. "So I don't know what'll happen. It should be a smooth ride though."

Harry closed his eyes. He didn't care what Draco thought, but he suspected this would be easier with his eyes closed. It would be like waking up from a dream. He would open his eyes and be back home again. It would be like Dorothy returning to Kansas by clicking her heels. He could hear Merlin clearing his throat and then murmuring some harsh syllables. Then there was silence.

Harry held his breath. Were they back home again? He didn't want to open his eyes until he was sure. The disappointment would be too hard to bear.

"Hmm," Merlin said.

Harry opened his eyes. "Was something supposed to have happened?"

Merlin was frowning as he flipped rapidly through the pages of the book that Gaius had given them. "You should have been sent home," he said. "Maybe I said it wrong."

Harry shivered slightly as Merlin waved his hand again and said the strange, harsh syllables. "We're still here," he complained. This was one of the greatest wizards of all time? He seemed to be learning spells from textbooks and not getting them right.

"This isn't easy, you know," Merlin snapped. He waved his hand again and said the words, this time more forcefully.

"Still not working," Draco pointed out.

Harry hesitated. "Maybe you should try one of our wands."

Draco snorted. "It won't work."

"How do you know that?" Harry demanded.

"Just trust me on it," Draco said in that superior tone that Harry hated. "I actually listened during my seven years at Hogwarts, unlike you."

Harry resisted the urge to punch Draco on the arm or in the face. Taking his wand out of his pocket, he handed it to Merlin. "Try it anyway."

Merlin took the wand and looked at it doubtfully. "What am I supposed to do with this?"

"Just wave it around and see if it helps," Harry said.

With a disbelieving expression on his face, Merlin waved the wand in Harry's face. Harry leaned backwards and winced. "I don't think it's working," Merlin said as he handed the wand back. "Maybe our magic isn't compatible."

Harry handed it back to him again. "Just say the spell while waving the wand around."

Merlin looked uncomfortable, but he complied. As the harsh syllables came out of his mouth again, Harry stiffened. He wasn't sure what he was expecting. Maybe some sort of tugging sensation at his bellybutton much like what happened whenever he used a Portkey. Or maybe some sort of pulling sensation. Or the same feeling he felt when they had been dragged into the past.

But there was nothing. Harry sighed and took his wand back. "Maybe we need another spell," he suggested. "There's a lot of other spells in the book that you could try." Out of the corner of his eye, Harry could see Arthur moving towards them.

"But this one seemed like the most likely one," Merlin said with a frown.

"I said I'd give you ten minutes," Arthur said as he came up next to them. He gave an uneasy look at the book spread out on Merlin's lap. "Put that away."

"But he needs to try more spells," Harry protested.

"Merlin can figure it out from his own room in the castle," Arthur said bluntly. "He doesn't need to sit out here in the middle of the forest, in the open, putting his life in jeopardy."

"And whose idea was that?" Draco snapped. "You were the person who decided we needed to come all the way out here."

Arthur's eyes narrowed. "You seem to forget who you're talking to."

"You seem to forget where we come from," Draco said flatly. "Your nobility means nothing to me. Where we come from, magic means everything."

Harry coughed. "What Draco means is that we really would like to get home."

Arthur's eyes narrowed. "I'm well aware what he means. And it doesn't matter. Obviously the spell isn't working and it could take Merlin half the day to find another viable spell. We're going back to the castle." With that, Arthur spun on his heel and marched back to where they'd tied the horses to a tree.

Harry looked over at Draco. "Well, I guess we're going."

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Draco was pacing again.

Harry looked over, sighed and tried to bury his head in his pillow. "If you keep on doing that, you're going to fall through the floor."

Draco simply quickened the speed of his pacing. "Merlin's useless," he ground out.

Privately, Harry agreed with Draco's assessment. He really didn't seem like the most powerful wizard of this era, let alone one of the most powerful wizards of all time. "He's just a kid," Harry protested. "He doesn't really come into his powers properly until later in life. Right now, he's just like any other wizard. Remember what we were like when we were his age?"

Draco raised an eyebrow. "You'd defeated Voldemort and joined the Aurors."

"Actually," Harry pointed out. "I joined Internal Affairs within the Auror Division. And I was a special case."

Draco snorted. "You were certainly special," he drawled. "What about me?"

Harry sighed. "We were special cases," he pointed out. "Think about it, surely even Dumbledore was pretty ordinary when he was Merlin's age."

"If he was ever Merlin's age," Draco pointed out. "But I get your point. It still doesn't help us though. If Merlin can't help us, nobody can. It's not as though we can take out some sort of ad and ask for powerful witches and wizards to help us!"

Harry slumped back down on the bed. He then sat back up again. "We know there's at least one other powerful witch or wizard," he said excitedly.

Draco gave him a baffled look.

"The person who enchanted the mirror," Harry said. "They're obviously magical. If we could get them to help us take the spell off the mirror, then maybe that'll take us back to the future."

Draco tilted his head. "Sometimes you surprise me."

"What'd you mean?"

"That was quite possibly quite intelligent," Draco drawled. "Perhaps I was too hasty in dismissing our Merlin's abilities. His magic could be being blocked by whoever this mysterious witch or wizard is. Once their spell is removed, then it should be simple enough for Merlin to send us back to the future."

Harry stared. That wasn't what he had meant at all, but it made sense. "That's exactly what I meant."

Draco gave him a slightly amused look. "We need to figure out who the person is."

"That isn't going to be easy."

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"How are you feeling?" Harry asked politely.

Morgana smiled. "Still a bit shaken up," she admitted. "But I've been thorough worse. Gwen's been a treasure. She's looked after me."

Gwen gave a rather embarrassed smile. "Morgana didn't need that much looking after. She was very brave, especially given the circumstances."

Morgana shook her head. "Nonsense," she said briskly. "Gwen, you stopped me from reliving the moment by keeping me company. You got me mead for my nerves and brought me food."

Harry gave her an encouraging smile, but frowned inwardly. Wasn't that what Gwen was supposed to do? After all, she was Morgana's maidservant. From the slightly puzzled look on Gwen's face, he could guess that she was thinking the same thing.

Morgana stood up from the table. "I must go and see Uther now. He wishes to make sure that I am fine after my ordeal."

Harry nodded.

"No need to come with me, Gwen," Morgana said. "You haven't even finished your soup yet." She

pointed down at the half-finished bowl in front of Gwen. "You were just saying this morning how you hadn't had the chance to talk to either of our guests." She winked at Gwen before leaving.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "You were saying?"

Gwen laughed. "I only said that because I was curious."

"Curious, eh?" Harry was amused and flattered.

"Not that way!" Gwen exclaimed quickly. "I was curious because Morgana has mentioned you several times. She seemed very interested in both of you."

Harry frowned. There was something rather odd about the entire situation. Since they had been here, they had barely talked to Morgana. Why would she be interested in them? Did she suspect anything? If she did, Harry would assume she would have gone immediately to Uther. So what was going on?

Seeing the look on his face, Gwen hastily added, "I'm sure it's nothing. We don't always get a lot of visitors here, and we haven't had any for a while."

"I'm sure that's it," Harry said absentmindedly. But inwardly, he wasn't so sure. Morgana had seemed so intent on convincing him that she really was scared about the event. It was strange given that Gwen didn't seem to think that she was scared at all. "So you think that Morgana was pretty brave about the whole thing?" he commented, trying to sound casual.

Gwen nodded. "She seemed a bit pale when Draco first escorted her into her chambers, but a few minutes after he had left, she seemed to be almost back to her old self."

Harry's carefully honed senses that he had developed after years in Internal Affairs were tingling. There was something very suspicious about this entire thing. Why on earth would Morgana try to convince them that she was scared? Anybody would assume that she'd be terrified by knives whirling around her.

She shouldn't need to try to convince anybody. Harry bit the inside of his cheek. The only reason why she'd need to try to convince them is if she wasn't scared. And that meant that she most likely had something to hide.

"Are you okay?" Gwen asked.

Harry snapped back to the present. "Of course," he said, trying to sound natural. "I'm perfectly fine."

"It's just that you looked like you were very far away for a second," Gwen said, sounding wistful.

"I'm right in front of you," Harry joked. "But you were right. I was thinking about something."

"Must have been something very serious."

Harry shrugged. "It might be," he said slowly. His gut feelings when it came to these things were usually right. Of course, when they were wrong, they were blatantly wrong, which was why nowadays Harry tended to investigate first and arrest later. Right now, his gut feeling was telling him that Morgana has something huge to hide.

"Good luck with whatever it is," Gwen told him.

"Thanks."

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Harry was having a very odd dream about a semi-naked and dancing Draco when he was suddenly woken up by the sound of a scream. He sat up in bed and stared into the darkness trying to forget the

dream. He was never one for dwelling too long on dreams, not after Voldemort, but there was something rather unforgettable about a tutu-wearing Draco dancing the can-can. Then Harry realised what woke him up.

"Not again," Harry complained. He looked over and could see the silhouette of Draco sitting up and rubbing his eyes.

"If this is another giant snake..." Draco muttered.

"Hopefully not," Harry said as he swung his legs out of bed. "Come on. We should help whoever it is."

"I tell you every time," Draco said. "We should just leave it. Merlin can help them this time. Or they could help themselves. We can take a break sometimes, you know. It's not like we're masked vigilantes."

Harry glared at him, but he suspected the glare lost its effect due to the darkness. "I think we owe it to them to help. These objects come from our time. We have the responsibility to fix the damage they cause."

"No, we don't," Draco said. "The person who's dragging them through time has that responsibility. Once we find out who they are, they're toast."

"I think it's more important to get back home," Harry pointed out. "Revenge later." He could almost hear Draco rolling his eyes in frustration.

"Well, I guess we'd better get this over and done with," Draco muttered as he stood up. "Come on. Let's go to this poor bugger's rescue."

Harry stifled a yawn as he opened the door and poked his head out into the dark corridor. "Left or right?" he asked.

Draco shrugged. "Let's go right."

Harry stared. "Any particular reason?"

"It leads towards the kitchens," Draco told him. "So even if this ends up being a huge waste of time, we can grab some food."

Harry considered it. What Draco said made sense and now that he was thinking about it, Harry realised that he was rather hungry. "Right it is then," he said as he turned and began walking down the corridor. He shivered slightly. He really should have put on some shoes.

"So what'd you think it'll be this time?" Draco said sarcastically. "A giant snake? A giant lion? A giant penguin?"

Harry stared. "A giant penguin?"

"Well, you never know," Draco told him.

They walked along in silence for a few more steps before Harry frowned. "Isn't Arthur's room around here?" He bit his lip. Arthur wouldn't be terribly happy if he was accidentally part of some sort of magical event.

Draco stopped suddenly. "That's Arthur's room," he said softly. "And the door's open."

Harry squinted. Draco was right. The door was open. "We should see if he's okay."

Draco glanced at him. His eyes were shadowed in the moonlight. "He's not going to be too happy if we

come bursting in loudly into his chambers."

"Then we go bursting in quietly," Harry told him.

"We don't even know that there's anything wrong!" Draco was saying when there was suddenly a muffled sound from inside the room.

"There!" Harry exclaimed quietly. He took a few steps towards the door. It sounded like there was somebody in danger in there. He knew what danger sounded like. Slowly, he pushed the door open and then stopped dead in his tracks. Harry's eyes widened.

"What is it?" Draco whispered into his ear.

Harry opened his mouth to reply, but his throat was dry. Impatiently, Draco pushed him forward and Harry stumbled into the wall. He bit his tongue to stop himself from crying out. "Shhh," Harry said softly.

"Ah," Draco murmured as he took in the scene.

"Exactly," Harry said as he dragged Draco backwards.

"I'm glad that we didn't go bursting in there," Draco said. He licked his lips.

"Well!" Harry closed his eyes as he stepped away from the door and closed it. He tried to wipe the images away from his mind, but he couldn't. He opened his eyes and stared at Draco. "That was..."

"Very unexpected," Draco finished. His eyes were wide.

"Yes," Harry agreed. "Very." His throat was dry. The images of Arthur and Merlin's entwined bodies were still at the forefront of his mind. He shook his head slightly, trying to erase the images, but they were still there. To his shock, Harry realised he was slightly aroused. He'd experimented with men before, but he liked women better. He was positive about that.

"Well," Draco said, his voice sounding strangled. "I think I might go to bed."

Harry licked his lips. "Bed, right." He was sure that Draco didn't mean it that way, but he suddenly wondered what Draco would be like naked. Would his skin be pale all over? What would he look like sprawled on Harry's bed?

Draco raised an eyebrow. "I didn't mean it that way."

Harry could feel his face flush. "I'm not the one with the dirty mind," he snapped. "I just meant that I was tired."

Draco looked amused. "Look, if I didn't know better, I'd think that you enjoyed what we just saw. Look, you're blushing."

"I'm not," Harry insisted as he turned away. "Look, it's late. I'm going to bed. Hopefully nothing else will happen tonight."

"I wouldn't bet on it," Draco muttered.

Harry had to agree. There had simply been too many instances of magical items appearing all over Camelot. He wished that the items were obviously magical. It would have made things easier for them. Instead, they looked like everyday items, except for the fact that they were dangerous. Very dangerous. And most of them had come from the Department of Mysteries. "There's nothing we can do to stop things from happening."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "Okay then," he said.

Harry was surprised. He expected that Draco would insist on looking around some more just to spite him. After all, he was the one who had dragged Draco out of bed on this wild goose chase. As they began walking back towards their room, Harry was glad that Draco had agreed so easily. He wanted to go back to bed. Perhaps in the morning he would've forgotten about what he had just seen. Perhaps by morning, he wouldn't be so intrigued by the way Arthur had disentangled himself from Merlin and his mouth had enclosed around Merlin's cock just as Harry had turned away. Harry swallowed and looked over at Draco. Was Draco thinking about the same thing?

Draco gave him a quizzical look. "Are you going to just stand there and stare at me?"

Harry coughed. "No, of course not." He turned around quickly and began walking as fast as he could back towards their rooms.

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"I heard there was another magical incident last night," Draco drawled as he sat down next to Merlin who was spooning food into his mouth monotonously. He grabbed a rather wizened-looking apple and wrinkled his nose at it.

Harry choked. It certainly was a rather interesting incident they saw the previous night, but he wouldn't call it magical. Well, perhaps it was magical, but only for Arthur and Merlin.

Merlin nodded and sighed. "The walls in Morgana's room started screaming."

Harry blinked rapidly. What on earth was Merlin talking about? Looking over at Draco, Harry could see him hiding a smile. Obviously, Draco had heard of the screaming walls before now. "Screaming?"

"Positively shrieking," Arthur interjected.

Draco frowned. "We didn't hear a thing."

"Her rooms are on the opposite side of the castle to yours," Merlin explained.

Draco lifted an eyebrow. "Doesn't explain why both of you look so tired though."

Harry suspected that he knew why. It might have had something to do with the exercise both Arthur and Merlin had had the previous night.

"Uther came to get Arthur," Merlin explained.

"And I decided that, because I had to get out of bed in the middle of the night, Merlin should as well," Arthur said with a grin. His grin faded, and he looked around quickly. "Plus, I thought that he would be the best person to deal with the... situation."

"He came knocking on my door with his sword. Woke Gaius up. Let me say that he wasn't happy this morning," Merlin said flatly.

"I'm sure Gaius understands," Arthur said with a dismissive wave of his hand.

"I'm not so sure," Merlin muttered. "He was very grumpy this morning."

"So I guess it's all fixed now?" Harry asked. He certainly couldn't hear any screaming.

Merlin nodded. "It turned out that it was the paint on her walls. We just scraped it off and the screaming stopped."

Harry could see at least three things that were confusing about that scenario, but his mind kept on being distracted by what he had seen the previous night. "I guess you didn't get much sleep afterwards, then," he said casually.

Merlin's cheeks turned slightly pink. "No, we didn't."

"We?" Draco asked smoothly, looking amused. He'd obviously caught onto what Harry was doing.

"We," Arthur said flatly. "I didn't get much sleep either. I'm sure Merlin can tell from the dark circles under my eyes."

Merlin nodded.

"Both of you certainly do look tired," Draco drawled. "It must have been quite the night."

Arthur narrowed his eyes. "It was."

Harry stifled a laugh as he reached over to grab his own piece of fruit from the table. About the only thing that was nice about the food from this era was the fruit. It might have been the fact that it was fresher than the fruit he bought in the future, or it might have been the fact that it simply tasted better than anything else he'd had here. "Hopefully you have quieter nights from now on," he said. "Maybe you'd get more sleep."

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Harry shook his head and tried to dispel the images. Damn it, the image of Merlin and Arthur together wouldn't leave his mind. It wasn't like he wanted to think about them. In fact, Harry had done everything he could to stop thinking about them short of taking a cold shower. He rather thought that taking a dip in the palace moat was close enough though. It was certainly as freezing as a cold shower.

But the image of those two wouldn't leave his mind. The redness of Arthur's lips around Merlin's cock. The paleness of their skin as they almost seemed to blend together into one person.

Harry's cheeks flushed as he reached under the covers. He glanced over at the sleeping form of Draco in the other bed. Draco was lightly snoring; it was something that he would never admit when awake, but Harry knew better. "Draco?" Harry whispered softly. "Are you awake?"

There was no sound from the other bed.

Taking a deep breath, Harry decided to risk it. Lifting up the waistband of his boxers, Harry wrapped his fingers around his already hard cock. Harry bit back a gasp as he brushed his thumb over the tip of his cock. He leaned backwards into the thin pillow and thrust his hips up. He didn't see everything properly, but he did see Arthur's lips enclosing around Merlin cock. He did see the way Merlin threw his head back and the way Arthur was rhythmically moving his head up and down.

Harry couldn't help a small gasp escaping his throat. It was almost exciting doing this while Draco was in the same room. It reminded him of back at Hogwarts when he would furtively rustle around underneath the covers, while he knew that behind the other curtains, all the others were doing the same thing. For all he knew, Draco could be lying there, listening to him.

Somehow, that seemed to make him even harder. Harry's hand quickened over his cock as he imagined Draco lying there, in the dark, listening to the sound of Harry's hand on his cock. Would Draco be turned on by the sound? Harry bit his lip to stop himself from moaning out loud at the idea of Draco reaching down and wrapping his fingers around his own cock. Maybe Draco would wonder if Harry was turned on by the sound of him wanking off as well and it would make him harder and harder until he would come all over his blankets.

Maybe Draco would secretly sit up in his bed and lean over to watch Harry's hand move up and down underneath his blankets. Harry's breath caught in his throat as he glanced over but Draco still seemed asleep. He was almost disappointed.

Maybe Draco could come over and they would tumble into bed together and they would tear their clothes off and it would be quick and dirty and everything they'd ever wanted. Maybe Draco would take Harry's cock into his mouth and run his tongue over the tip of his cock. Draco could look up and smirk in that arrogant and annoying way of his and Harry could drag him up and kiss him until that smirk disappeared and was replaced by a lazy, sated expression.

Harry's heart pounded as he moved his hand quicker and quicker. With a gasp, Harry felt himself spurt all over his blankets. He sank slowly down and could feel his heartbeat slow down to normal.

As he thought back on what had just happened, Harry flushed. Draco had played a prominent role in his fantasy. While Harry knew it was just a fantasy, it still made him feel uncomfortable. He wasn't attracted to Draco, was he? No, Harry decided. That was ridiculous. Draco was an arrogant prat and that was it.

He definitely wasn't attracted in any way to Draco. The fact that he had just fantasised about him was just a hormonal thing. Draco was the closest person there. That was it. Besides, he had more things to worry about, like how to clean up.

Wrinkling his nose, Harry shifted in bed slightly. Now came the really awkward part. He usually used magic for the clean up process, but that wasn't possible at the moment. He was going to have to do it the old-fashioned way. With a sigh, Harry pushed the blankets aside and got up.

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Harry shot Draco a nervous look. Draco hadn't heard him last night, had he? Draco certainly wasn't giving him strange looks or anything like that, but sometimes Harry found Draco looking at him oddly. Like over breakfast that morning. Every time Harry looked up from his sausages, Draco was looking away from

him.

Harry shook his head. Draco couldn't have heard anything. Undoubtedly, Draco would have said something about it if he had. He bit his lip. Then again, if Harry had heard Draco wanking off, he probably wouldn't say anything. In fact, he'd feel incredibly uncomfortable by the entire event and probably be unable to look Draco in the eye for quite a while. Of course, right now, he couldn't look Draco in the eye, but it was for a completely different reason. It was just a fantasy. Harry knew that. But he couldn't help but wonder what it would be like to mark Draco's creamy skin with kisses.

"You're staring," Draco drawled.

Harry could feel his face flush. "I am not."

"You are," Draco confirmed. "You keep on looking at me and then looking away. It's distracting."

Harry blinked rapidly. It was distracting? Draco was distracted by him? He wasn't sure why, but the idea of that made him feel good. "How am I distracting you?" Harry blurted out.

Draco hesitated. "I didn't mean that you distracted me."

"Then what did you mean?" Harry asked.

"You're distracting me in an annoying way," Draco said flatly. "So stop staring at me."

Harry rolled his eyes and looked at the wall. "Is that better?"

"Much better," Draco said smugly.

Harry glared at the wall.

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"I heard you last night," Draco said bluntly over dinner.

Harry almost spat his food out over his plate. "What?" he spluttered. "What did you say?"

"I heard you last night," Draco repeated. "Doing... you know."

Harry closed his eyes and resisted the urge to bang his head on the table. "Why didn't you say something earlier," he muttered. Like over breakfast. Or lunch. Or at any other point where they had spoken during the day.

"I didn't want to embarrass you," Draco said.

"Then maybe you shouldn't have said anything at all," Harry pointed out.

Draco shrugged and gave him a haughty look. "I was going to do that, but then I wondered if you were going to do the same thing tonight. I barely slept last night. If you were planning to do the same thing tonight, you should go to another room."

Harry couldn't believe he was having this conversation. He was just glad that Draco didn't know that Harry had been wanking off thinking about him. He couldn't imagine how awkward that conversation would be. "You want me to... do that in the corridor?"

"Well, if you want," Draco said, "but I was thinking about another room or something like that."

"No," Harry said automatically. "I can't."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "You can't?"

Harry closed his eyes. "Can we stop talking about this?"

"No," Draco said bluntly. I'm not getting the sleep I need because of you. We're talking about this."

Harry couldn't help but think that he too wasn't getting the sleep he needed. And it was also because of Draco. "I didn't mean that I can't."

Draco shot him a suspicious look. "I think you did. What makes this room so special?"

You're in it, Harry's mind put in helpfully but he quashed it. "Nothing," he said quickly. "Absolutely nothing." Harry frowned. Surely his imagination would be just as fertile elsewhere. He didn't need to be in the same room as Draco.

Draco shook his head. "I really didn't need to hear that last night."

"It didn't go on for that long!" Harry protested. "It shouldn't have kept you up all night."

Draco looked uncomfortable and turned away. There were two bright spots of red on his cheeks. "I don't need to explain anything to you." He pushed his chair back and walked towards the door.

Harry frowned. There was something about the look on Draco's face. It looked familiar. It looked like a combination of embarrassment and discomfort that Harry saw on his own face at times. Harry's eyes widened. He saw the same expression on his own face whenever he was thinking of Draco. "You liked what you heard, didn't you?" Harry demanded.

"Don't be ridiculous," Draco snapped as he opened the door.

"I know you did," Harry retorted. "You enjoyed it, didn't you?"

Draco snorted. "In your dreams. Not all of us are strange like you. I can wank off perfectly well privately."

"So can I," Harry snapped. "It just worked out better with you there." As soon as the words were out of his mouth, he regretted them.

Draco froze. He turned around very slowly. "You were what?"

Harry looked down and wished that a giant hole would suddenly appear and swallow him up. If he still had his magic, he would have charmed one to appear. "Nothing."

"No, you didn't say nothing," Draco persisted. "You implied that you needed me in the room."

"Did not."

"Oh yes you did," Draco said. His eyes widened. "Don't tell me. You're... you're thinking of me while...?"

Harry pressed his lips together and didn't say anything. He wished that he didn't flush so easily. It would have been much easier to lie to Draco if his face didn't give it away.

"Well, that's interesting," Draco said.

"I'm sure it is," Harry said, his throat suddenly dry. "Now, you were leaving?"

Draco took a step towards him. "I don't think I'm going to leave now."

"What?" Harry spluttered.

Draco seemed to take a deep breath. "I'm thinking that maybe we could live out one of your little fantasies. Right here. Right now," he said softly.

Harry swallowed. Suddenly, Draco's voice seemed to have a direct line to his cock. He could feel himself getting harder and harder. "What?"

Draco's eyes gleamed as he stepped closer until he was right in front of Harry. "This," he murmured as he pulled Harry forward.

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Draco pushed him up against the wall, one of his hands pushing Harry's shirt up and the other one fumbling at the strings holding Harry's trousers up. Harry reached down and quickly undid the strings, letting his trousers fall down into a puddle around his feet. Draco made a tiny noise at the back of his throat as Harry thrust his hips forward, his cock brushing against the bulge in Draco's own trousers.

"Fuck," Draco gasped as he pulled his own trousers down. "You really do move fast, don't you?"

Harry inhaled sharply as he could feel Draco's fingers wrap around his cock. It was obvious that Draco had done this before. His fingers seemed to dance over Harry's cock, brushing over all the right places. "I've been thinking about this for days," Harry admitted.

Draco quirked an eyebrow. "Days?"

"Ever since... well." Harry turned red. "Ever since we saw Arthur and Merlin together." It was only when those words were out of Harry's mouth that he realised that the Arthur and Merlin event only happened a day ago. Crap. He tensed slightly and expected a snide remark from Draco.

However, Draco just laughed softly. "Me too."

Harry could feel himself hardening more from the words. Somehow, the idea that Draco had been turned on by that scene was a turn on in itself. Draco probably had wanked off to the same image of Arthur and Merlin's entwined bodies as Harry himself had. "So you did enjoy listening to me last night," he accused.

Draco chuckled. "It was ... very intriguing. I wanted to come and help you."

Harry's breath caught in his throat as Draco knelt down in front of him. He could see Draco lick his lips and lean over. His cock was covered by a warm wetness and it took all of his strength not to just grab Draco's head and thrust into that mouth. "Well, next time," Harry panted. "You can certainly help me."

Draco winked.

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Draco burst into the room. His eyes were wide and he looked like he had just been running. "Before you say anything," he said quickly. "I need to tell you something."

"What?" Harry asked. Draco had completely ignored him this morning when they had woken up curled up around each other. Every attempt at talking to him had been rebuffed. In the end, Draco simply made some excuse and left, leaving Harry staring at the door. Harry wasn't sure he wanted to hear what Draco had to say now. If Draco wanted to ignore what happened, Harry would ignore what happened.

Draco looked serious. "You know the magical incidents."

Harry nodded.

"Well, somebody just died," Draco said quietly. "I just ran into Arthur and Merlin and they told me that they think it was caused by magic."

Harry felt sick. "Somebody died?" he repeated. What he was about to say flew out of his mind as the horror of the first death caused by the magical incidents sunk in.

Draco looked slightly pale as he closed the door. "According to Arthur, a little girl walked in to find her mother eviscerated on the bedroom floor. Apparently there was blood everywhere."

Harry swallowed. "Eviscerated?"

"Yeah, you know? Cut up?" Draco explained.

"I know what it means," Harry snapped. "But there was something at the Department of Mysteries that did that? Why wasn't it under tighter security?" He shivered. The idea of a magical object causing that much damage was rather frightening.

"Of course it was under tight security!" Draco exclaimed. "It was under the tightest spells available. Plus, one of the Muggle-borns I work with bought some Muggle gear to protect it as well. We have a couple of magical objects that were used by serial killers in the past. All of them were under the same security. Obviously whatever spell that dragged us into the past nullified all of our security."

"And just how many other magical objects like this are there?"

Draco looked troubled. "About ten. Maybe fifteen."

Harry cradled his head in his hands. "Great," he muttered. "Just great."

"Morgana was the first on the scene," Draco continued. He bit his lip. "She didn't look too well when I spoke to her."

Harry let out a long breath. Morgana seemed to be having a lot of bad luck lately. He felt sorry for her. It can't have been easy to have so many horrible things happen to you. "Is she alright now?"

"As well as she could be," Draco said. "She insisted on making sure the little girl was okay before Gaius tended to her."

Harry supposed she couldn't have been that badly shocked if she was looking after the girl. He looked over at Draco and suddenly had the urge to put a hand on his back. Harry shook his head slightly. He obviously wanted to pretend the previous night hadn't happened. Harry wasn't sure how he felt about that. On one hand, they seemed to have developed a reasonable working relationship that might have been called a friendship if it was with anybody else. On the other hand, Harry couldn't see how he could just forget. His lips still felt almost bruised from Draco's kisses, even though when Harry looked in the mirror, they looked normal.

Draco gave him an odd look. "You're staring."

"Sorry," Harry muttered. "I was just thinking about Morgana."

Draco nodded. "She seems to be having a string of bad luck, doesn't she?"

Harry stared. "A string of bad luck," he repeated.

"Yeah, so?" Draco asked.

"A string of bad luck," Harry said again. It was like a light bulb had gone off inside his head. No, it was like a Lumos had gone off inside his head. Harry suddenly felt like he could see everything clearly, and he didn't like what he saw. Two and two were adding up together, and Harry could see, for the first time in days, that they equalled four.

"You have a funny look on your face," Draco observed.

Harry pushed his chair back with a scrape. "I need to go," he said quickly.

Draco raised an eyebrow. "Go where?"

"I need to go and talk to somebody," Harry told him. "I have this hunch. It could be wrong, though." He didn't think it was wrong. It fit. Somehow, all the pieces seemed to be sliding together like one of those childhood jigsaw puzzles that Dudley never ever played with.

"Fine," Draco said sharply. "Go and talk to this mysterious person then."

Harry hesitated and bit his lip. "About yesterday..." he said quietly.

"It's nothing," Draco interrupted. "We don't need to talk about it."

Harry could feel his temper bubbling up. "I think we do," he protested. "It's not like something like that happens every other day. I don't know for you, but it certainly doesn't happen every other day for me!"

"I said, we don't need to talk about this," Draco said tightly.

"You might not want to talk about it now, but we can't just ignore it." Actually, Harry suspected that Draco would have absolutely no issues ignoring it completely. Normally, under similar circumstances - not that he made a habit of sleeping with childhood enemies or anything - Harry would be happy ignoring it as well, but somehow, he didn't want to this time.

"Sure we can," Draco drawled.

Harry glared at him.

"Go and talk with your mysterious person," Draco told him.

Harry let out a mental sigh. "Fine," he snapped as he shoved his chair back under the table with more force than necessary. He stormed over to the door and pulled it open rapidly.

"Careful there," Draco said. "You wouldn't want to break anything."

Harry rolled his eyes and stepped outside. He resisted the urge to slam the door behind him. He needed to forget about the previous night. It obviously meant nothing to Draco and it meant nothing to him either. The only reason why he wanted to talk to Draco was out of simple curiosity, Harry decided. It was an odd event. It was normal that he'd be curious about the reasons.

Harry shook his head almost violently. He needed to concentrate on the task at hand. He was almost positive who was behind the recent events. He just needed to talk to them calmly and rationally, without thinking about all the havoc they had caused. Of course, Harry realised, that wasn't going to be that easy. He bit his lip. A woman had died today. It was the first magical fatality, and it changed everything. This person wasn't just a prankster or somebody with a vendetta against Camelot.

This person was a murderer.

Harry dug his fingernails into his palms. He couldn't just confront this person. Not with their connections. He needed to be subtle about this. With a sigh, Harry realised that he should have dragged Draco along. Draco would probably know what to say to make the person confess, whereas all Harry could think of was the direct approach.

He stopped at the door and took a deep breath. Sometimes the direct approach was the only way, Harry thought as he reached for the door handle.

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Harry burst into the room. "It was you!" he said quickly, pointing a finger. "Don't deny it. I know it was you!"

Morgana turned around slowly. She didn't look surprised that Harry had come rushing into her room. In fact, there was a small smile playing about her lips as she pushed her long hair away from her face. "I'm surprised it took you so long to figure it out."

Harry couldn't believe he hadn't seen it earlier. It was so obvious now that he was thinking back on it. So many of the events seemed to happen when Morgana was around. Merlin had mentioned that she was obviously shaken when the skull had appeared over the market. She was around when the knives had flown into the walls. Harry hadn't thought anything of it at the time, but she was around almost every time he had seen something magical happen. He looked across the room at the table she was sitting in

front of. Harry's eyes widened. There was a Pensieve in front of her.

"You're judging me," Morgana said flatly.

"Of course, I'm judging you!" Harry spluttered. "Look at what you're doing!"

Morgana's eyes flashed. "What exactly am I doing?" She looked down at the Pensieve in front of her and swirled the tip of her index finger through the bowl. "You're no stranger to magic, Harry Potter. I can tell."

Harry could feel his heart skip a beat. Of course. She must have been watching them that first morning too, when he had spoken to the snake. "You're hurting people," he told her. "You don't understand what powers you're playing with!"

Morgana looked up, her eyes narrowing. "No, it's you who doesn't understand! You don't know what it's like!" she hissed. "You don't know what it's like being the ward of Uther Pendragon, to watch him drown himself in his bitter vendetta against magic and then realise that this magic is part of you. It's part of my body, my soul."

Harry swallowed. "That still doesn't excuse..."

"It doesn't excuse what I've done?" Morgana said mockingly. "What I've done is show Uther that the future of the world is magical. He won't win. We'll win."

"You've endangered everybody here," Harry snapped. "That's what you've done! You've brought unknown magical artefacts from the future streaming into this time and you've killed people."

There was a brief flicker of remorse in Morgana's eyes before she tossed her hair over her shoulder. "It was for the greater good," she said flatly. "You don't know what it's like here. You haven't seen Uther's purges. You haven't seen the persecution here. You haven't seen people being killed, not for what

they've done, but for who they are!"

Harry could feel bile rising in his throat. "You don't think I've seen things like that? You don't know what the future is like." He took a deep, calming breath. He didn't want to explain Voldemort and the Death Eaters to Morgana. Despite everything, he still felt sorry for her. She was naive to believe that what she had done would change Uther's mind. As Harry looked closely at her, he could tell that she was obviously just holding on by a thread. What had happened over the last few weeks had affected her harder than anybody else. "I feel sorry for you, Morgana," he said quietly.

"Don't!" she spat. "I know I've done the right thing."

"You need to fix it," Harry told her. He curled his fingers around his wand that was in his pocket. It warmed a bit underneath his fingertip. Mentally, he breathed a sigh of relief. His magic had been coming back, albeit slowly. This wasn't a good time for it to disappear on him again.

Morgana shook her head. "Uther's wavering." She bit her lip. "I don't want people to get hurt, but if I stop now, more people will die."

Harry gritted his teeth. "Uther's not going to change his mind. When're you going to see that?"

"He will," Morgana said, her eyes overly bright. "He has to."

Harry very much doubted anything would change Uther's mind short of a miracle. "You've hurt people, Morgana," he told her. "You've seen that little girl. She's going to have nightmares for years about what happened to her mother."

Morgana's eye flashed. "And what of the druids and all the other people who practice magic in this land. What of their nightmares? What of the nightmares of the children whose parents were burned at the stake?"

"And you think that killing that little girl's mother will change any of that?" Harry snapped.

Morgana's cheek twitched. "I didn't mean for that to happen," she said evenly. "It was a mistake. She was just there at the wrong time."

"And what of all the other people who were at the wrong place at the wrong time? Do you care about any of them?" Harry could hear himself begin to shout. He took a deep breath and tried to calm himself down. He wasn't going to convince Morgana of anything if he was yelling at her. In fact, he very much doubted he could convince her even if he wasn't yelling. "What about all the people Uther's persecuting right now because of you?"

Morgana's lips were set in a hard line as she flipped her curls over her shoulder. "Uther will see his mistake soon."

Harry didn't like the word of warning in her voice. "What have you done?" he demanded.

Morgana gave Harry a smile that sent a shiver running down his spine. "It's not just me," she said, her eyes glittering. "We're teaching Camelot a lesson. We're teaching Uther a lesson. Magic is a part of this world and it's here to stay."

Harry's blood ran cold. There was somebody else involved?

Morgana laughed. "You didn't know that, did you?" she said softly. "It's not just me. You can't just get rid of me. It won't end it. You can't end this. Nobody can, except Uther. Once he accepts magic back into the land, this'll end."

"By then, you'll have destroyed this land," Harry snapped.

Morgana shrugged. "That will be on Uther's head."

"No!" Harry exclaimed. "That'll be on your head and on the head of whoever you're helping."

Morgana's cheek twitched. "What makes you think that they're not helping me?"

"You're not powerful enough for this," Harry said. He mentally crossed his fingers. Maybe this would work. Maybe he could get her angry enough to reveal something about the person she was working with. "You couldn't pull any of this off."

Morgana smiled coldly. "That won't work with me, Harry." She spun on her heel and walked towards the door, her dress swirling around her. At the door, she turned around, her hair swirling around her like a dark cloud. "If you're thinking about telling anybody else about your little theory, I'd think again. It'll be your word against that of the king's ward."

Harry ground his teeth together as he watched her leave the room. She was right. There was no way he could go to Uther directly with his theory. Arthur didn't know about her magic and he wasn't completely sure Merlin would believe him. Morgana was Merlin's friend and he was loyal to her. Harry suspected he wouldn't want to know this about her.

That left one person for him to tell. It was with a purposeful stride that Harry went to find Draco Malfoy. He really should have brought Draco along to begin with.

"We need to talk," Harry said quickly as he opened the door. A worried expression flickered over Draco's face. "It's Morgana. She's the one behind all the magical stuff in Camelot. We need to tell somebody."

An expression of relief passed over Draco's face. And then what Harry said sank in. "What?" Draco spluttered.

"It's Morgana," Harry repeated. "She basically confessed to me." Harry hesitated. They needed to go to somebody with this news. While he agreed with Morgana's reasons for doing what she did, she needed to be stopped before some other innocent person died. "Gaius," Harry decided. "We need to tell Gaius."

Harry suspected that out of everybody in Camelot, only Gaius had anywhere near enough clout with Uther to convince him of his ward's guilt. "And Arthur and Merlin, of course," he added.

"You want to tell Gaius?" Draco asked, raising an eyebrow. "You want to go there with this hare-brained idea and you expect him to believe you?"

Harry pressed his lips together. "It's not a hare-brained idea. Morgana told me that she was behind all of this."

"And do you think that he'll believe you?" Draco asked quietly. "Look, do they even know that she's magical?"

Harry bit his lip. "I don't know." From what he'd seen, he doubted it. Arthur seemed like he was conflicted enough about the fact Merlin was magical. He obviously accepted that Merlin was a force for good, but he still didn't seem completely comfortable when Merlin performed spells. If Arthur knew about Morgana's magic, then he would have shown it when he was around Morgana.

Draco sighed. "Come along then," he said and beckoned for Harry to follow.

Harry gave him a startled look.

"I know when you've made your mind up," Draco told him. A small smile played about his lips. "You've got your stubborn look on."

"I do not," Harry said automatically. He had a stubborn look? That was ridiculous. Of course he didn't have a stubborn look.

Draco rolled his eyes. "Of course you do," he said. There was almost a fond note in his voice.

Harry stared at his back for a few seconds before following. He was glad that Draco seemed comfortable around him again, but it still felt like something was missing. They needed to talk about what happened. He just needed to make Draco see that.

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Gaius gave Harry a level look. "You come bursting in here to tell me that Morgana is behind these magical incidents?"

"Yes," Harry said. He bit his bottom lip. "She told me she was."

"That's impossible!" Arthur exploded. "She wouldn't be behind something like this. She's not ... she's not like that."

Merlin cleared his throat. "Like what?"

Arthur looked somewhat abashed when he realised what company he was in. "Sorry," he muttered. "But you know what I mean. She's not... a sorceress."

Merlin cleared his throat again. "Actually," he said.

Arthur stared at him. "You mean she is?" he interrupted. "Why on earth didn't you tell me? Why didn't she tell me?" He stared around the room. "You mean that these people... these people from the future know more than I do?"

Merlin shrugged helplessly. "I meant to tell you, but it really wasn't my secret to tell. I told Morgana that she should say something, but she was scared."

"And rightly so," Draco cut in. "If you'd told Uther, she would have been dead."

Merlin ignored the interruption. "Remember what happened last time Uther suspected something. He thought nothing of throwing her in the dungeon. He thought nothing of locking her up in chains. And he didn't even suspect her of being a sorceress."

Arthur's eyes flashed. "You should have still told me."

"We should have," Gaius said gravely. "But that's not the issue at the moment. The issue at the moment is whether Morgana is capable of doing something like this."

"She's not!" Arthur said adamantly. "Sorceress or not, she wouldn't do something like this to Camelot." He shot a look at Merlin. "Not all magic is evil."

"Nobody knows that better than me," Merlin countered. He hesitated. "But ... it's possible."

Arthur's mouth fell open.

"I confronted her about an hour ago," Harry said hesitantly. He didn't really want to interrupt what was obviously a very personal discussion, but there was a pressing matter. "She admitted it."

"Why?" Arthur's voice was cold. "Why would she betray Camelot like this?"

"She wanted to show Uther that magic would survive. That it would flourish," Draco explained. "And it does. Our world is a testament to that." He looked over at Merlin. "You're famous in our world. One of the greatest wizards of all time."

Merlin looked shocked.

Arthur shook his head. "I'm still not really sure I believe where you come from."

"Well, if you help us make Morgana remove the spell, you'll have proof," Draco said eagerly. "From what I know of Merlin's powers, they should be more than powerful enough to send us back. They didn't work for a reason. And now we know the reason."

"I'm not going to help you hurt her," Arthur said flatly. "We're taking this to my father."

"Arthur!" Merlin exclaimed.

"Keep out of this, Merlin," Arthur warned. "Your name doesn't have to come up, but it can."

"Don't do this," Merlin snapped. His hands were clenched into fists by his side. "We're not going to hurt Morgana. We just need to remove the spell."

"The spell's on some sort of mirror or on a jewel," Draco explained. "We'll know it once we see it."

Harry stepped forward and gingerly laid a hand on Arthur's arm. "We're not going to hurt her," he said quietly. "We promise. We just want to get home."

Arthur gave him a long and steady look. "I'm not necessarily agreeing to this," he said. "But I'm going to come along when you speak to her. I need to hear this for myself. I need to hear it from her mouth."

"Fine by me," Draco said. "Come on then. What are we waiting for?"

"Draco!" Harry hissed. "Couldn't you show some respect? Obviously they're going through something here."

Draco sighed. "This is our chance to get home," he whispered. "Do you want to miss it? What if she runs away? It's already been over an hour since you last saw her."

Good point. Harry turned quickly to everybody else. "I last saw Morgana in her chambers. We could check there."

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"Arthur!" Morgana exclaimed as she pulled open the door to her chambers. Her gaze roved over the rest of them standing there. "What an unexpected surprise. How can I help you?"

Arthur hesitated.

"Perhaps we could step inside for a small chat," Gaius said gently.

Morgana paused before giving them a tight smile. "Certainly," she said. Her dress swirled around her as she opened the door fully. "Gwen?" she called.

Gwen looked surprised to see the group amassed in Morgana's room. "Yes?"

"If you have any mead, our visitors might like some," Morgana said politely.

"I think we're fine," Arthur said curtly. "We're not here for mead."

"If you change your mind, there's plenty." Morgana swept her dress around her and sat down gracefully on one of the plush chairs. She tucked a stray strand of hair behind an ear.

"We wanted to ask you a few questions," Harry said bluntly. "About the recent events that have been happening around Camelot." He was pleased to see a flicker of fear in Morgana's eyes. Obviously he was getting to her.

Arthur shot him a look. "Of course, we don't think that you had anything to do with it."

Harry pressed his lips together. "Except for the fact you basically confessed to me an hour or so ago," he snapped. Arthur glared at him, but he ignored it.

Morgana's hand flew to her throat. "You couldn't possibly think that I had anything to do with the recent unpleasantness! Surely you remember that I was almost killed by one of the incidents."

"You weren't even injured," Draco remarked.

Morgana shot him a frosty look. "I could have been killed. I was very shaken up. Gwen had to fetch me several glasses of mead before I was calm enough to fall asleep."

"You told me yourself that you were part of this," Harry said flatly. "You told me this today, only an hour or so ago. Why are you trying to lie now?" He watched her intently for a flicker of the eye, a shaking of the hand, anything that would indicate that she was lying, but Morgana simply looked at him steadily.

"I'm not lying," she told him. She turned to Arthur. "Why are you allowing these visitors to interrogate me like this?"

Arthur turned to Harry. "Why indeed?" His voice was low and dangerous.

"You told me that you were in league with a druid," Harry said. "A very powerful druid. Who is he? Who set this spell? Who's the person pulling things from the future here?" Out of the corner of his eye, he could see Gwen's eyes widen. Obviously this was all news to her. He was glad that she wasn't part of Morgana's plans. It was one less person to interrogate.

"I have no idea what you're talking about," Morgana snapped. "Arthur, why are you allowing this servant to address me in this manner?"

"You know perfectly well that I'm no servant," Harry said. "Just like I know perfectly well that you're lying."

Morgana's eyes widened. "I'm not lying." She swivelled in her chair and stared at Arthur. "You have to believe me."

Arthur laid a hand on her arm. "Of course I believe you," he said.

Harry glanced around the room. He knew that Draco believed him and from the look on Merlin's face, he suspected that Merlin believed him too. He wasn't sure about Gaius though. His face was unreadable. "You are lying."

Morgana's eyes glittered as she stood up. She turned to address Draco. "Please get out of my room and take your servant with you."

Harry waited for Draco to protest, but he didn't say anything. Turning his head, he looked over to where Draco was standing. There was a slight frown on Draco's face as he seemed to be examining one of the mirrors hanging up on Morgana's wall. Harry's eyes widened. If you polished up the mirror in the Department of Mysteries, took away the stand and cleaned up the glass, it would look practically identical to this one. "Is that...?"

Draco nodded grimly. "Morgana, we know you're lying."

Morgana pressed her lips together. "Arthur, please tell your guests to leave my quarters."

Before Arthur could reply, Draco stepped forward and pointed at the mirror. "This is magical," he said flatly.

Morgana delicately arched an eyebrow. "How would you be able to tell that?"

Draco smirked. "You're not the only person in this room who has control of magic. I know that mirror is magical."

Harry held his breath. Draco was walking a fine line here. If his magic hadn't come back yet then Draco's wouldn't have come back either. Draco obviously couldn't sense whether there was magic in the mirror. He was bluffing. Harry just hoped that Morgana didn't know that.

"Arthur!" Morgana exclaimed. "Are you going to let him talk to me like this? Imagine what your father would think."

Arthur closed his eyes and seemed to be thinking deeply. When he opened his eyes again, he looked steadily at Morgana. "What would my father say if he knew about your... special powers?"

Morgana looked aghast. "You can't believe them, can you?"

"I'm not sure what to believe any more," Arthur said, sounding tired. Harry watched as he looked over at Merlin who gave the tiniest of nods. "But I accept that there is magic in that mirror. And since the mirror is hanging in your room, I can only assume that you are to blame. I can't believe you would do something like this."

Morgana's arms shook as she crossed them in front of her chest. "And I can't believe you stand by while your father murders innocents!" she snapped.

Harry stepped forward. "Take the spell off the mirror," he said quietly. "Please, you don't know what this will mean to us."

Morgana's upper lip curled. "If I'm not mistaken, both of you are from the future."

Harry couldn't help the flare of surprise in his eyes. He had no idea that she had guessed. He thought they'd been so careful. From the expression in Draco's eyes, he also had no idea. "What makes you think that?"

"It's in the way you look at this place. It's in the way you act." Morgana shook her head. "What right do you have to judge what I did? You grew up in a world with magic. You grew up in a world that accepted who you were and appreciated you for it. You didn't grow up in a world where you could be killed for something that you didn't choose!"

"You don't know what you're talking about," Harry snapped. He could feel anger bubbling up in his stomach.

Morgana snorted. "I know all I need to know. You're judging my actions when you have no right to judge."

Harry clenched his hands into fists. "You don't know what my childhood was like." He could feel Draco touch the back of his arm, but whether to comfort or to stop him, Harry wasn't sure.

Morgana laughed. "I'm sure you didn't see children murdered in front of your very eyes merely because they had the unlucky chance of being born with magical powers."

Harry took a deep breath to try to calm himself, but his fingers were still trembling. He didn't want this to

get into some sort of argument about whose childhood was worse. He still thought that being locked in a cupboard was pretty bad. Definitely not as bad as seeing murdered children, but still fairly bad.

"No response?" Morgana mocked. "You can judge me but you won't answer me?"

His deep calming breaths weren't working. Harry could feel something flaring up inside of him. It felt like his magic was surging, bubbling up through his fingers, his skin, and his very pores. It swirled up towards Morgana whose eyes widened as Harry took a step towards her.

"What are you doing?" she demanded.

Harry wasn't sure. All he knew was that this didn't feel like his normal magic. His normal magic was like a comforting blanket. This was more like a coiled snake and it was striking out towards Morgana. As Harry watched, she seemed to freeze in mid-step and then collapse down on the ground.

"What did you do to her?" Arthur exclaimed as he hurried over. He pushed her hair away from her face and felt her pulse.

"She's alive," Harry managed to get out. He wasn't sure how he knew it but he knew she was still alive. "I think..." His voice was harsh as he cleared his throat. "I think I did something to her."

"You think?" Arthur demanded.

Harry flexed his fingers. They felt strange. It felt almost like some sort of current was buzzing underneath his skin. "I don't think the mirror's magical anymore," he said as he looked over at the mirror. He didn't know how he knew that either, only that he did.

Merlin walked over and ran a finger lightly along the side of the mirror. "You might be right," he said quietly. "The spell to send you two back to the future might work now."

"Well," Draco said, looking amused, "I suppose it's good that Potter's performed one of his miracles again."

"It's not like I meant to do that!" Harry exclaimed but Draco simply winked at him. He could feel a little wave of relief slide over him. Draco was simply joking. "And, of course it's a good thing if it means we can get back home."

"That's all great, but Morgana's hurt," Arthur snapped. He gestured for Gaius to come over.

"I didn't have a choice," Harry said, feeling a wave of guilt. Morgana might have endangered all of them, but she thought she was doing the right thing. She thought she was protecting magic.

Arthur glared at him as Gaius knelt down next to Morgana. He pried open her eyelids and peered at them. "She's just unconscious," Gaius said firmly. "She'll be fine. It could have simply been the shock."

As though she had heard him, Morgana's left arm twitched slightly and she moved her head towards the sound of Gaius's voice.

"Are you okay?" Arthur asked roughly. He was still cradling her, but he let his other hand drop to his side. "How're you feeling?"

Morgana's eyes opened slightly and she frowned as she looked around at the crowd around her. "What happened?" she murmured.

Arthur jerked his head towards Harry. "He did something."

Morgana looked puzzled as she looked at Harry. "Who are you?"

"What?" Harry exploded. Was she now pretending that she didn't know him? That was ridiculous. Nobody would believe that.

Morgana shrunk back and looked scared. "Where am I?"

Harry turned away. He couldn't believe that Morgana would first deny having confessed to him and now was pretending to have forgotten everything.

"You're in your chambers," Arthur said, sounding surprisingly gentle. "What do you remember?"

Morgana looked confused. "I'm not sure." She pushed herself up off the ground and quirked an eyebrow at Arthur. "Being chivalrous, are we?"

Arthur frowned. "Gaius?" he called. "I think you need to look at her."

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"Are you sure?" Harry demanded.

Merlin shrugged. "Gaius believes she isn't pretending. She really has lost her memory. Not all of it, but her memory of the last year or so. She believes that she hit her head while trying to stop the sorcerer."

"I wonder who made up that story," Harry muttered.

Merlin shot him a look. "Arthur believes that she deserves another chance and so do I. She doesn't

remember anything about being magical."

"But won't she just discover her magic again?" Harry pointed out.

Merlin smiled faintly. "We're hoping to prevent that. I'm going to help her. Morgana's my friend. I don't like the person she turned into the last year. This is like another chance for me to get my friend back."

Harry's stomach churned. There was something about what Merlin was saying that made him extremely uncomfortable, but he couldn't seem to put his finger on it. "I guess this is all pretty fortunate for you then."

Merlin frowned. "I wouldn't say that," he said slowly. "I didn't want this to happen to Morgana. She barely knows me now. We've lost a lot."

Harry raised an eyebrow. It sounded to him that Merlin wasn't sure whether he was happy about the turn of events or unhappy. "Well good luck with it all," he said awkwardly. "Without Morgana's magic acting as a damper, you should be able to send us home."

Merlin nodded. "Are you sure you don't want to stay for a bit longer? Arthur convinced his father that Morgana lost her memory when she was trying to stop the sorcerer. Uther's celebrating tonight and Draco is invited."

Harry shook his head and smiled slightly. "And I assume that as his 'servant', I'll get to come along to help?"

Merlin gave him a crooked smile. "Sounds about right."

"I think we've been here too long," Harry said. He sighed. "We don't even know if we've changed the future." He bit his lip. The idea of finally getting back home and finding it changed was horrifying. He

tried to think of the possibilities that their actions could have caused and it just gave him a headache.

"I guess a morning ride out into the forest is in order," Merlin said.

"Sounds good," Harry agreed. Privately, he was glad that, if all things went right, this going to be his last horse ride ever. Riding was painful. The faster the horse went, the more painful it was.

Merlin gave him a long look. "It was interesting," he said finally. "I still can't come to terms with the fact that I'm famous in the future."

"Very famous," Harry interjected. "Your picture is on Chocolate Frog Cards."

Merlin gave him a dubious look. "Doesn't sound like much of an honour."

"It is," Harry reassured him. "It's a massive honour. Only the most famous witches and wizards get on those cards. You're not just famous. You're famous."

Merlin shook his head. "It still isn't sinking in." He tilted his head to one side and frowned. "I'm not sure it ever will, actually."

Harry laughed. "Well, it was interesting for me too. I found all of this to be an experience that I'd never forget." There was no need to tell Merlin that most of the experiences had been horrible and he wished that he had never ended up in this horrible era.

From the amused look on Merlin's face, he knew exactly what Harry meant. "Tomorrow morning," Merlin said as he stood up. "It'll work this time."

Harry crossed his fingers. He hoped so.

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Harry looked around. "It didn't work," he said, his heart sinking. He couldn't bear the disappointment. They thought that it would finally work. Morgana had taken the spell off the mirror; and without that holding them in the past, it was a simple matter of combining their power with that of Merlin's. The combined magical energy should have snapped them back to the future as easily as a rubber band.

Draco's lips were pressed tightly together. "It should have worked!" he exclaimed.

"Maybe there's something we're missing," Harry said. "Maybe there's another spell cast by the druid friend of Morgana's that we forgot to get removed."

"Or maybe this was a one way trip into the past," Draco said flatly. "We never knew that we could get back to the future."

"We also agreed to not think like that," Harry snapped. "Yes, we might be stuck. Yes, the future could change. But we agreed to try to get back anyway."

Draco let out a long sigh as he turned around. "Well..." he began to say when he suddenly stopped. "Where are Arthur and Merlin?"

Harry turned around and stared. "I don't know," he said slowly. "They were right next to us." Except now, the clearing was obviously empty. "They couldn't have walked away. We would have heard them." He couldn't hear anything except the faint sound of birds twittering.

Draco was beginning to look excited. "Maybe it did work!"

"We're still in the middle of a forest," Harry pointed out. "It looks exactly the same." All the trees around them looked the same. Even the grass on the ground looked the same. Harry had to admit that he wasn't any kind of tree and grass expert, but he was pretty sure it was the same.

Slowly, Draco took his wand out of his pocket and fingered it. "It's worth a try..."

Harry stared at it. Neither of them had taken their wands out much over the last few weeks. There was no point. Even though their magic had been coming back slowly, it wasn't reliable enough yet to use magic. Draco had theorised that it was probably something to do with the fact that they weren't born yet and that they didn't have their own magic to tap into so they were siphoning off excess magic in the air. Harry had just nodded and pretended he understood what Draco was babbling on about. "Try it," he said.

Draco took a deep breath and closed his eyes.

Harry's eyes widened as he saw the air around Draco shimmer slightly and then Draco disappeared. "It worked!" Harry exclaimed. He felt the beginnings of a huge grin spread across his face. It worked! They were back in their own time.

His smile faltered. Unless, of course, their magic had just come back on its own accord. They could still be in the past. Draco could have just Apparated back to Camelot. Maybe Uther was arresting him right now? Harry bit his lip.

"Stop being an idiot."

Harry jumped and turned around to see Draco standing there with a smirk on his face. Draco held out a chocolate bar and Harry took it with trembling fingers. He turned it over in his hand and saw the label. Bertie Bott's. "We made it?"

"We made it," Draco confirmed, grinning.

"And you Apparated into Honeydukes?" Harry asked as he looked at the small sticker on the chocolate bar.

"Scared a lot of kids when I appeared," Draco confirmed. There was a slight smile on his face. "I'm so glad I have our magic back. Have you tried yours yet?"

Slowly, Harry took his wand out of his pocket and waved it around experimentally. He almost felt like he was eleven years again and trying out a wand for the first time. What spell would he try? A sudden thought crossed his mind and Harry smiled. "Accio Draco's trousers!"

With a ripping sound, Draco's trousers detached themselves from his body and sped into Harry's awaiting hand. "You... you..." Draco spluttered.

Harry smirked. "What?"

Draco slowly shook his head. "You're an idiot," he pointed out.

"Tell me something new," Harry retorted. "You say that every other day of the week." He couldn't help but look down at Draco who was clad in only his boxers. Almost unconsciously, Harry licked his lips. Draco mightn't want to talk to him about what happened, but it didn't mean that he couldn't think about it.

"Are you checking me out?" Draco asked sharply.

"Maybe," Harry said. He took a small step backwards. If Draco decided to attack him, he could always run. Or fire another spell at Draco. Either one would work.

"Two can play at that game."

Harry frowned. What on earth did Draco mean by that?

Before Harry could open his mouth to reply, he saw a grin slowly spread over Draco's face. "If you want it that way. Accio Harry Potter's trousers!"

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A thousand years or more ago, a great battle was fought over the right of magic to survive. Both sides sacrificed self-dignity and morals in the battle, and in the end, neither side won outright. Magic survived and thrived in some parts, nurtured by witches and wizards. But in other parts, people were burned at the stake for daring to believe. There emerged a word for non-magical people - Muggle - and henceforth, witches and wizards hid away from these Muggles.

It has been said that Uther Pendragon won in his quest to eradicate magic. Certainly, Muggles would agree.

Harry put the book down and walked over to make himself a cup of tea.

"Utter drivel," Draco said as he came up behind Harry. His arms encircled Harry and his hands reached for the cup. "Not a true word in that book."

Harry nodded slowly. "Not a true word," he echoed as he kept his cup of tea out of Draco's reach.

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