## The Druid Princess

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## **The Druid Princess**

by orphan account

Summary

Merlin smiled watching the two different types get along so easily, they danced and laughed like there was no war between them. They had fun like there was nothing in the world that could ever bring them down, she envied them. She sighed and got up, she brushed some dirt off her silky dress. She didn't have time for dancing, she had lessons to learn, dragons to train, and more importantly, a war to stop.

Merlin quickly hid behind the trees, not wanting to be spotted. She only wanted to watch the interesting group that seemed to be on a quest. There was this blond man that seemed to be the leader of the group, he was quite strong. She directed most of her attention towards him, she was fascinated by how his sword shined in the sun like his golden hair and how his muscles flexed when he moved. Another man that she found interesting was another blonde with wavy, longer hair who seemed to be very protective over the leader, how his eyes kept flashing back to the man in front of him every few moments.

Merlin had been watching after the leader for a few months now, she didn't understand most of their language they spoke so she didn't know the blond man's name. Every time there was an urgent quest that their kingdom needed, the leader and the longer haired man always were there. Those two were very dedicated to their kingdom, she only saw their red capes with a dragon symbol on it. She never could tell her father about how she was looking after a nonmagic person but he... was just different. She wanted to know more about him and where he comes from but she isn't brave enough to follow them back. Other Knights always came and went, Merlin didn't like to think of what happened to them. That's why she watches the leader and his follower, they are always going on adventures and they never seem t complain. They are always willing to do anything for their kingdom, just like she is for her people. The leader is especially interesting to watch, how he walks like he owns the ground he walks on but that's silly because she owns the ground since magic helped create the world and she is magic. She likes how the leader laughs when they have overnight camps, everyone seems to really care for the leader, she wonders why. She can tell he is very skilled with his sword but there must be another reason why those other men care so much for him.

The leader of the group gripped his sword tighter, his face became very serious and alert, Merlin stood up preparing for the worse. Suddenly a large group of bandits ran out to attack the group in shiny armor with the glamorous leader. Merlin watched in the distance like usual, her eyes never leaving the leader. She watched as he was able to knock down bandit after bandit, she was fascinated at his golden hair was matted to his forehead from dirt and sweat. His hands were coated in dirt from the long quest that he needed some object. He swung his sword into a bandits torso and knocked him down easily. A few knights behind him have already fallen in defeat but the longer haired blond who quite resembled a fuzzy bear with his beard was helping the leader knock down bandits. A bandit landed a major hit on the devoted follower's leg making him clench his jaw and swing at the bandit back, he missed and the bandit hit him again on his unprotected shoulder. The bandit swung the end of his own sword into the man's jaw which sent him to the ground. The leader called out a weird sound, Merlin assumed it was the man's name. There were still a handful of bandits, all armed, against the one leader who was already beaten pretty well.

Most of the bandits laughed loudly which made Merlin squirm into her tree more, she had to help him. The bandit who seemed to be in charge, charged at the golden leader who tried his best to block the powerful hit. He kept attempting to only block the hits, she saw his fearful look in his eyes hiding behind his powerful focus. Another bandit charged and hit the leader into the side, the cut was quite deep and made the leader almost fall down. The main bandit landed a hit on the leader's more used arm when fighting, the bandit slammed his sword into his chest to knock him over. Merlin gasped loudly and lifted her hand to knock back the main

bandit, he flew in the air and his back made a horrid sound when he collided with a tree. The other bandits were filled with fear and some tried to run away while some were frozen in fear. She let some vines from the ground entangle the bandits attempting to run away, she did not pay attention to their screams nor the sound of snapping. The ones frozen in fear now were attempting to run so Merlin whispered a spell for them to become unconscious, she didn't want to hear any more sounds of agony.

After she waited a few moments to make sure everything was calm, she slowly walked over to the leader of the knights. His eyes were closed, he seemed to be unconscious, she put her hand on his chest lightly. She let out a calming breath when she could feel his heartbeat, it was shallow but it was still there. She brushed back his hair so it wasn't in his carved face, she smiled at how peaceful he seemed but she quickly shook her head when she remembered how much injuries he is suffering. She looked around at the other Knights, they all weren't moving but all were breathing. She continued to play with his hair, she wasn't used to being this close to him. He was even more fascinating up close, he definitely looked like a leader with his strong features.

She couldn't heal them all right here, she must get them back to her nearest camp. Luckily her father isn't at that camp so she doesn't have to worry about being lectured. She must call for Cerdan, a mentor who helps young druids practice their magic. He is very devoted to the Ambrosius family, he even fought alongside Balinor against kingdoms who wished to destroy all magic. But thankfully, Merlin helped most other magic users realize that they should help promote peace and unity, using violence against violence only will make things worse.

'Veni in auxilium mihi opus et auxilium' (Come help me, I'm in need of help) Merlin spoke within her mind, she was always very gifted in speaking to others with her mind. Most magic users master it at 12 with constant teaching but she mastered it at 7. She spoke in Latin, it was the most common language she knew other than Dragons tongue.

Cerdan responded right away, 'Ego statim venire, aliis opus sunt?' (I will arrive right away, are others needed?).

She squirmed, even though talking through the mind is the most common way of speech for Druids, she hasn't gotten to the feeling, 'Deterioratus homines, circiter decem. Paucis curare potero. Most non nocere male, Nescio quid faciemus' (People are injured, around ten. I can heal only a few. Most are hurt badly, I have no idea what to do).

Cerdan did not ask who they were nor where they were from, he only was concerned about their health which she was appreciative of, 'Nolite ergo solliciti esse, bardus faciemus ut cuncta sua bona sanitas laesae ad sanitatem perducenda. Expectare ad venire usque ad nos omnia esse licet.' (Do not worry Emrys, we will make sure all of the injured are healed to their good health. Wait for us to arrive, everything will be alright.)

She did as she was told, she waited calmly. Knowing that the Knights would be healed to their original health and no one would die. She waited patiently while combing the leader's hair, she whispered softly to the man 'somnum sane mea miles' (Sleep soundly my Knight).

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Leon groaned, refusing to open his eyes that were heavy as lead. He jumped lightly at the feeling of a wet cloth cleaning his chest and stomach but he tried to relax at hearing a woman lightly hush him and start to sing a song. He frowned at not knowing the language but he found the deep sound of her voice due to the language very soothing. His head felt heavy also and his jaw felt like it was cracked. But there was a cooling lotion on his jaw, it felt like the lotion was mending his jaw bone back together. His forehead had a cooling lotion on it also, it smells refreshing like mint. He shifted as the woman started to trail the wet cloth down his torso, she hushed him again a bit more harshly this time. His back tightened as she trailed it up and down his thigh, the skin stung from his previous cut. Her hands were very gentle on his skin, the cloth glided easily against his war beaten skin.

"You- healed me?" He croaked out to the woman, he opened his heavy eyes to see a middle-aged woman who had kind eyes.

"I did not, Merlin did. It was her idea to help your traveling group," She smiled, "She healed your thigh and shoulder quite easily but your jaw is still healing so I suggest you not talk that much that way you don't disaline your jaw again." Leon was about to object but the woman hushed him again like a mother hushes their disobedient child. He stayed quiet for a moment, letting the woman finish cleaning him off. It felt good to finally get all of the dirt off of him, their quest was more tracking through mud than they thought.

"Where is Arthur?" He asked, he needed to know where his Prince was.

The woman hushed him again, "The blond man? Arthur is with Merlin, she is healing him. Is he someone important to you?" She covered him again with a light cloth.

"Yes. He is my friend, he is the Prince of Camelot." Leon instantly regretted staying the last part when he saw the fear on the woman's face. She sputtered out random words.

"Camelot?!" She harshly whispered, "Dammit, Merlin must have taken your capes before we arrived!" A little girl popped into the tent when she heard the shouts.

"Queen? What seems to be the problem?"

Leon was more confused at why Camelot would seem bad, "Why does Camelot frighten you?"

The little girl's eyes widened immediately and her mouth dropped, "Camelot!" She jumped in excitement and ran out of the tent with a smirk on her face.

The woman took a few deep breaths to calm herself, "You are from Camelot? Really?" Her hand was on her chest trying to calm her rapid heartbeat.

"Yes, I did not mean to frighten you. I mean no harm," He promised, still not understanding what was exactly happening.

"Is Uther Pendragon still your King?" Her voice was shaking, he reached out to put a calming hand on her trembling one. A few tears ran down her face from saying his name.

"Yes," She sucked in a fearful breath, "And Arthur is his son. But we mean no harm to you or anyone else at this camp."

"Promise?" She whispered lightly, so quietly he barely even heard her.

"I promise on the Prince's life," She must have noticed the stern tone in his voice and the serious look in his eyes, he doesn't take his promises lightly nor his Prince's life.

She nodded and wiped her face to get rid of the tears, "Thank you." She clasped his hand harder, "Do you have any questions for me? You must be very confused."

"How are the others? Did anyone-" His throat refused to say the word, Camelot has lost a lot of men already this year. They couldn't lose any more men.

She smiled at him which calmed him a little bit, "Everyone is healed, but Arthur needs more attention. He has the most serious injuries than the rest but Merlin is the best healer and with her magic, he will be healed in no time."

"Wait, magic?" His heart dropped, that explains why she was so scared of the mentioning of Camelot.

She looked at him with a confused look and took away her hand from him, "Yes, you do realize that you are in a Druid camp? Right?" He stared at her and silently shook his head which made her laugh suddenly.

"Oh sweetheart, I'm so sorry," She was giggling into her now free hand. "You must have been terrified when you woke up."

"Not really, I heard you singing and it almost instantly calmed me," He chuckled honestly.

"My daughter when she was a baby loved that song, she always would stop crying and fall asleep right away," Leon noticed her youthful smile at remembering past memories.

"You really love your daughter," He said more of a statement than a question, he smiled brightly at her chuckling at his statement.

"More than the anything, she has brought me many gray hairs since her childhood," She shook her head while smiling at the thought of her child getting into mischief.

He chuckled lightly, this woman reminded him of his own mother, "Pardon me, you never told me your name?"

She gasped and covered her mouth lightly, "Oh I'm sorry darling, my name is Hunith."

"I'm Sir Leon, a Knight of Camelot," He tried to sit up so Hunith helped him sit up.

"Would you like to walk around? If you are not in too much pain?" She offered kindly. Leon nodded and groaned while getting up, Hunith helped him up. She always had her arm on his while they walked around the camp. The word must have gotten around that the men were from Camelot because everyone looked at the pair oddly, their expressions were a mix of fear and excitement.

Hunith's hands were calming on his beaten skin, "I'm still a bit confused."

Hunith sighed to herself, "Were you expecting us to try and kill you? The sorcerers that attack Camelot are different from the Druid's that Merlin rules over. Druids are peaceful and want only to spread peace across the land."

"Was it always like this?"

"No." Hunith immediately said, "Merlin was the one to create the idea. Balinor, my husband, wanted revenge on Camelot when Merlin was first born because of past events."

"Like what?" Leon asked, "If it's not too much to ask."

"Not at all, more people should know about this anyways. Uther," Her voice cracked again at his name, "When he found of that Balinor had magic, he chased him out of Camelot and wanted him dead more than anything. Someone filled his mind that Balinor somehow betrayed him but he did not. Uther wanted to kill anyone close to Balinor, meaning myself and my daughter. One night, when Merlin was only around 5 summers, she was adventuring in the forest alone and Knights from Camelot captured her. He almost burned her alive since he knew she was Balinor's daughter. Uther wanted Balinor to suffer greatly just like Uther suffered himself."

"She escaped?" His voice was barely there, his eyes were stinging at the idea that a small child was almost burned at the stake for simply being alive.

"Yes," she nodded sadly, "But she has a giant scar on her back from one of the Knights who hurt her. She doesn't really remember the event though, nor does she really understand the idea why most magic users are afraid of Camelot. We almost lost her so she finds it very hard to stop going on adventures, she is a very wild child. If Balinor finds out she helped your men, she will be in a whole lot of trouble."

"Am I allowed to thank her personally?" Leon is impressed by this girl, he is very curious to meet her.

"Of course, I will take you to her. I believe Arthur should be awake, it has been a few days since your men have arrived." Hunith started to guide him to the main tent, he started to look around a bit, this camp honestly looked like a small little village. There were children running around laughing and adults drinking while others were doing chores. "Merlin is still working on her English since Balinor wanted her to know Dragon's tongue perfectly before she started English."

"Pardon me for asking but are you magic?"

She shook her head gently, "Merlin is magic, but most Druids have magic, they aren't magic itself."

"Merlin is magic itself?" He asked while his head spun, this is the first time he has been ever introduced to the knowledge of magic.

"It is very complicated, you must ask Merlin herself about that. I'm afraid only her and Balinor are aware of the prophecy." They entered the main tent, Leon watched as a beautiful young girl put some lotion on Arthur's ribs very gently.

"Are his ribs healed yet?" Hunith walked over to Merlin who was kneeling beside Arthur.

Merlin shook her head gently, she looked confused at her mother. "Speak," Hunith ordered, "You need to practice your English more."

"No mother," Her voice had a deep sound to it but still sounded feminine. Her mouth had trouble forming words in their odd language. "He is sleep."

Hunith shook her head gently, "No sweetheart, he is asleep or he is sleeping," Hunith said the words slowly for Merlin to grasp the sound of them.

"He is asleep," She dragged out the words longer than what is needed. When Hunith nodded in approval, Merlin smiled brightly.

"Merlin this is Sir Leon, he is a knight of Camelot." Hunith introduced Merlin to the strong man. "Can you introduce yourself to him?"

She smiled up at him, "I am Merlin, how are you?" She pointed at his shoulder, meaning she meant how is he feeling physically.

"I'm all healed but my jaw is still a bit sore, thank you very much." Leon didn't know how much she knew in English so he kept his speech short and simple. Merlin frowned slightly but soon nodded, it took her a while to process English sentences but she knew simple ones. Leon pointed to his jaw which made her open her mouth in understanding, she hopped up and grabbed a different potion bottle next to a dead fire. She popped the bottle open and walked up to him unafraid. She turned his head to the side so she could examine it.

She held up her two of her delicate fingers and said only "Hurt." Leon assumed that her word mean a question, so he was going to respond but suddenly he heard a snap and instant cooling from the lotion on his jaw again which she spread quickly. He bit his tongue in pain, it was not a question, it was a warning. But his jaw felt a whole lot better since the jaw was finally back into place and fully mended. "Sorry, needed."

"Merlin use full sentences," Hunith sighed, "You can't get any better if you only use a few words."

Merlin sighed to herself and took in a calming breath, "I am sorry, but it was needed so you would not be in any pain." She tumbled with the words, her thick accent took a bit for Leon to understand but he nodded.

"It's alright, thank you for healing me," She smiled brightly at him. "When will Arthur wake up?" He pointed to his Prince on the ground who was heavily unconscious.

Merlin nodded slowly, "Not that long, maybe a day at most."

"I just wanted to say thank you, greatly, for helping our group. Even though we are thought to be enemies of yours," Leon bowed slightly to her in respect.

It took a bit for Merlin to process his long speech to her foreign ears, "You are most welcome. I wouldn't want anyone to die. This man is very important to you?"

"Very important. He is a long time friend of mine," Leon smiled at a memory of the two of them going on little quests when they were children, they were only searching for sticks in the forest after lunch but it was enough for them.

She frowned a bit, "That is it? He is only a friend?" She did not understand that level of friendship between two people, as Emrys she never really had close friends.

"Well he is also the Future King of Camelot and I would always put my life in front of his but he is, more importantly, my friend."

Merlin stared at the man before her, he worried she might not have understood him but she looked down sadly, "How?"

"How what?" He asked while sympathizing for her.

"I don't have friends," Was all she said, Leon placed his hand on her dainty shoulder.

"Of course you do," She shook her head sadly and looked up at him with slight tears in her eyes, "I am your friend."

She gasped loudly, "Really?" Leon's chest hurt from the excited look on her face, like a child who is first experiencing kindness.

He nodded while smiling at her, "I'm Leon, and you are Merlin right?"

She blushed lightly, "Yes. It's not," She sighed at her words, "It's nice," She corrected herself, "That you call me by my name and not Emrys."

"Is Emrys your nickname?"

She chuckled lightly, "You could say that."

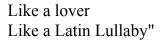
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Merlin sat by the fire, children were dancing around and the adults were sharing stories while drinking questionable liquid. The nonmagic Knights weren't freaking out, they were a bit stiff but they were warming up to the other Druid's. Anyone would be nice to people who saved their lives, gave them shelter and food. It mostly seemed like Leon had a quick little talk to the other Knights so they would behave. Merlin smiled and laughed to herself watching her mother dance with Leon, they seem to be creating a nice friendship. Merlin smiled watching the two different types get along so easily, they danced and laughed like there was no war between them. They had fun like there was nothing in the world that could ever bring them down, she envied them. She sighed and got up, she brushed off her silky dress. She didn't have time for dancing, she had lessons to learn, dragons to train, and more importantly, a war to stop.

Merlin walked silently to her main tent, she sat down by the healing man. Still too sore to be woken up, she didn't want him to be in any more pain so she was letting him heal while he slept. She brushed his soft golden hair again, "Arthur." She tested the man's name on her tongue, the name felt forbidden on her tongue. She loved it. "Arthur Pendragon." His name sent shivers down her spine, his name even has power to it. She couldn't believe this is the Once and Future King of Albion, she was supposed to help him achieve greatness and conquer foreign lands. If her father found out that she healed him or even said his name, she wouldn't be able to speak for weeks. Merlin didn't understand why this man was so feared by others, he is simply a man. Nothing more nor less. Her father hasn't told her much about Camelot, only that she must never have contact with it until she is older and wiser. But why not now? This powerful leader seems like he needs help, she could help him. But... he must not know about her. If he knew that a magic user touched him, she wouldn't be alive the next morning. Leon warned her of his hatred of magic, she wasn't scared by it. There really isn't much he could do to her with that tiny brittle sword.

She watched him attempt to open up his eyes but she simply cooed him back to sleep and held her hand over his eyes so he wouldn't see her face. Once he was asleep again, she sighed lightly to herself. If she must protect and serve this man, she will. But for now, she must continue to hid in the shadows and hopefully, this young man will grow up to be the greatest King any royal has ever seen. He must leave tomorrow at dawn, he is becoming too restless in his sleep. His eyes scream to become open once more, his muscles flex wanting a purpose to be used, she wishes not to restrict him anymore. But until the next morning, she will relax tonight with his presence, knowing he is safe and alive. She sang lightly to her Knight, practicing her English for him.

"Give me a kiss and I'll savor this night
Just as the wind breathes its breath to my life
You have awakened a part of my soul
A pleasantry
Here in my dreams
And so I am lost in the shadows on the wall
And this Latin Lullaby is all I have to remind me...
Oh so many stars
But no not half as bright as you
And a warm mandolin wind
Plays next of kin



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The next morning, Merlin notified the Knights that it would be wise to leave so no one would be asking questions about their week-long disappearance. Leon agreed but expressed his concern that they still did not have the flower to heal an illness.

"What illness?" Merlin asked calmly, she knew how to fix any illness with or without magic.

"The Lady Morgana has some type of illness, and Gaius our Court Healer asked us to get theit's a purple flower," Merlin could tell her forgot the name of the flower.

"The Saffron flower?"

Leon's face brightened instantly, "Yes. Yes, that one. How did you know?"

"These forests are known to hold fields of the mystic flower, it is a stress reliever and also brings down nervousness and anxiety issues. It contributes greatly to emotional health." A few Knights seemed impressed by her advanced knowledge of plants and their healing powers.

"Are they around here?" He asked hopefully, most likely wanting to return home as quickly as possible.

"Yes," She pointed north from the camp, "Go that way until nightfall and you should arrive there in a field of Saffron flowers." Leon thanked Merlin again heavily, the other Knights nodded in appreciation, possibly they wanted to return home to their warm beds. She didn't blame them, she also wished to return home greatly. The Knights started to pack up their things back onto their horses which were taken care of neatly by the smaller Druid children who were fascinated by the exotic beasts. The Druids gave them plenty of water and food for their travel back, wanting to ensure a well trip. Arthur was slung over a horse which made Merlin use all of her strength to not laugh at, he still seemed to be quite tired from his tedious healing process. The Knights thanked them all again for their help and caretaking, then they were off once again.

As the group of Druids watched the group leave their sight, Cerdan spoke up, "Merlin you do realize that you sent them back off to Camelot, without any flowers?"

Merlin smiled, "Don't worry. I planned it out."

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Leon splashed water on his face as he was kneeling at the edge of a river, it felt odd to finally wipe off the lotion from his face. He looked up at the sky, it was starting to turn night and they still have not arrived at the fields. He was starting to doubt the friendly Druid so were many others.

A knight cursed and kicked a stick on the ground which made Leon roll his eyes, there really was no need to be childish.

"Sir Leon," Leon jumped up and wiped his face on his sleeve to look at his Prince. He had only woken up a few moments ago and surprised all of the Knights, "Where are we?"

"I have no idea sire," He admitted, Arthur rubbed his face but then frowned and looked at his hands which were not bleeding anymore. Before Arthur could ask any questions, Leon sighed loudly, "I believe we are lost."

Arthur thought for a moment, "No we are not," Leon looked at his leader confused, he pointed to a little hut deeper in the woods, "Isn't that the hunting hut that is right on the south border of Camelot?" Leon stared at the hut bewildered.

"Yes it is sire but we do not have the flowers to heal the Lady Morgana yet," He swallowed, since when were they directed to go North to Camelot. Merlin?

Arthur frowned at his best Knight, "Then what are those purple flowers in your bag?" Leon looked over at his horse which carried his bag and saw a few purple flowers sticking out. He walked over and opened his bag, his bag was filled to the brim with Saffron flowers.

Leon chuckled, "You are right sire, shall we return home?" Arthur nodded and hoisted himself up onto his horse, still looking a bit dazed when he couldn't find any cuts or bruises anywhere on his body. The rest of the Knights were very thankful, they were all too eager to return home. Leon was the last to be seated on his horse, he followed in the back. He played with one of the little delicate flowers in his rough hands, he only could think of Merlin at the moment. He smiled at the sign of relief as the moonlight started to pour down onto the noble group, he only could wonder what the future may hold with his new friend.

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