Coffee, Tea, or Butterflies?

by DevonShea

Summary

Merlin has had WAY too much coffee.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

It was the manic butterflies lighting on every surface in the flat that told Gwen there might be a problem. Of course she had seen Merlin pull this trick before; conjuring butterflies was one of his favorite things to do to cheer her up. She had just never seen so many at one time, and never in such neon colors.

“Merlin?”

“In here, Gwen.” His voice came from the tiny room in the flat they’d turned into a study for both of them.

She poked her head in the room, cringing when she saw the surfaces of both desks covered in papers and books. “Merlin, what are you doing?”

“What does it look like? I’m studying.”

It looked like he was about to have a nervous breakdown. His hair was pulled out so it stood on end. There were bags under his eyes and he still wore the same clothes he’d worn on Friday when Gwen left to stay with Lance for the weekend. It was Sunday afternoon. “Merlin, you look like you’re
Merlin looked at Gwen through the tiny reading glasses he’d finally given in on needing a year ago. “But I need to study. I need to pass this test. I need- I need more coffee.” He stood up abruptly, grabbing the mug and cradled it to his body as one would a delicate baby.

Gwen stayed right where she was, planted solidly in his way. “You sit back down and I will get your coffee.” She grabbed the mug from his hands, arching her brows when he made a sound of protest. She didn’t wait to see if he obeyed her, but left the doorway and went to the kitchen. It was a disaster. There were plates in the sink, just waiting to be put in the dishwasher. A pizza box was on the counter, the lonely leftover piece nearly dried out.

She shook her head in exasperation as she went over to the cabinet above the coffeemaker. She was going to grab the decaf blend they kept for Leon. The first thing she saw was the bag of coffee Gwaine had gotten them as a joke a year ago that had never been opened. It was supposed to have at least three times the normal amount of caffeine in one cup.

Gwen stormed back to the study door. “Merlin, is this what you’ve been drinking this weekend? How much have you had?”

Merlin looked up, his eyes glazed over, “Huh?”

“How much of this coffee have you had?”

“Oh, um. One cup, maybe two. Three?” His mouth curved in that sweet smile that tended to make Gwen’s heart melt. “Are you making me more? Is that where my mug went? Hey, when did you get home?”

Gwen sighed. “That’s it, you’re going to bed.” She walked over to her friend and tried to pull him up from the chair.

He mulishly crossed his arms and pouted. “I have to study, Gwen.”

“Merlin, you’re out of it. You’ve had so much caffeine that your butterflies are psychedelic. You didn’t even realize you talked to me. You haven’t bothered changing clothes in days. You can’t pass the test if you can’t even function. You need sleep.” Gwen crossed her own arms, the bag of coffee dangling from one hand. “Do I need to call your mother? Because I will.”

Merlin sagged, the lack of sleep and the caffeine crash finally getting to him. “Fine. I’ll go to bed.” As he stood, he picked up one of the notebooks from the desk. He was blocked by Gwen in the doorway who simply held out her hand. “Come on, Gwen, I just want to read it.”

Gwen didn’t move. She didn’t say anything. She simply kept her empty hand out until he heaved a dramatic sigh and gave it to her. She moved out of the way and let him pass. Gwen watched as he went to the bathroom and closed the door before she walked back to the kitchen. She put the kettle on to boil and pulled down some of the herbal teas she and Merlin had stocked up on. While the water was boiling she poured a glass of water and knocked on the bathroom door. “Merlin, I’m leaving some water on your nightstand. Drink it when you get in there. I’m also making you some chamomile tea. I’ll bring that in when it’s steeped.”

She waited for a moment. “Merlin?”

There was no response.

“Merlin? If you don’t say something, I’m coming in. I really don’t feel like seeing your source of
pride flashing about, so you’d better say something.”

A moment later she heard a giggle. “They really are psychedelic, aren’t they, Gwen?”

“What? Oh, the butterflies.” Gwen snorted. “Yes, Merlin. They’re psychedelic.” She shook her head as she walked toward his bedroom.

When she got back to the kitchen she started cleaning up, dislodging butterflies from the pizza box when she picked it up. Trust Merlin to conjure up butterflies that liked ham and cheese. As she was cleaning and waiting for the water to boil she looked at the bag of coffee. She picked it up, opened it, and poured the grounds into the garbage.

End Notes

Merlin belongs to Shine and the BBC.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!