Adapt or perish

by tomoewantsdolls

Summary

When a mission fails and they can't trust their magic, Harry needs his intuition, not being distracted by Malfoy's banter.

Notes

Prompt: "The Fates have spoken. You have drawn The High Priestess card, upright. You will write about intuition, unconscious workings, and the inner voice. You will harness the power of the moon and channel the element of water. You may read the full description of the upright card here for more inspiration. The powers that be sense your story will be between 285 words and 782 words."

Thanks Etalice for the beta! (any remaining mistake is my fault and mine alone)

Harry woke up in the dark alarmed and disoriented. He tried not to panic and searched for his wand. By the smell and the noises he was almost sure he was in a forest. Actually, he was positive it was a certain forest; not the best place to be at night, much less with no means of defence.

Also… something was off.

The humidity of the soil had damped his clothes and his bones ached. With trembling hands he
searched farther between the putrid leaves; the moonlight filtering through the high branches wasn’t enough to discern beyond the outlines of the nearest trees and some rocks. Suddenly he was touching something soft and warm. That made his hair rise. He swallowed. A body. He pushed with the tip of his fingers.

“Ngh.”

“Malfoy?”

“Me’head hurts.”

“Yeah, tell me about it.” He exhaled, relieved to have him by his side, safe and sound. Well, more or less, he sounded a bit dazed. Harry tried to recall what happened after they tried to infiltrate the suspects’ den and everything was blurry. In hindsight, it had been reckless, but they needed to get out of the forest before dwelling on it.

He searched Malfoy’s robes for the hawthorn wand ignoring his protests.

“Hey, that’s unsolicited groping. And robbery.”

“I will apologize later but now I want to get the hell out of here.”

He cast a *Lumos* while Malfoy kept muttering his protests, and something weird happened. There were lights, yes but… it faded in a myriad of tiny sparkles.

“Well, that’s pretty.”

“But not very useful. Ok, now you try it, it’s your wand after all.”

“Ha, at least you recognize you’ve stolen it, you thief. I’ve got half a case against you for workplace harassment,” Malfoy quipped before casting.

At first nothing happened. Then a low light appeared on the tip of the wand and became slowly brighter until it ended with a blinding flash.

Harry blinked trying to disperse the bright spots behind his eyelids.

“That was weird.” Malfoy mumbled, squinting.

“Something’s wrong, I don’t feel drunk but it’s like we can’t do magic properly.” Harry huffed frustrated, “What happened there? Did we drink something?”

“I s’pose.”

“Did you?”

“It tasted funny.”

Harry looked at him in disbelief. At his outline at least. Seriously, they were a pair of idiots. Who drinks something untested in hostile territory? Well, in their defense he would argue it would have been suspicious otherwise… wouldn’t it? He didn’t remember, really.

Harry exhaled. Robards would kill them if something in this blasted forest didn’t finish them first. He briefly considered if that was better than the month of desk work that would inevitably come after their fiasco. At least they were alive. Left in the wilderness to die but alive.
His hair raised again and he stood, looking frantically at their surroundings.

“What? What’s happening?”

“Shhh.” Harry pressed one finger to his lips ignoring the fact that Malfoy probably couldn't see it. Everything was muted grey in the dim light, making it impossible to discern one object from the other but he swore he could feel something dangerous approaching. It could be the potion induced paranoia or it could be his instinct kicking in. He chose to trust his instincts just in case. “We need to go.”

“You are not my superior, Potter,” Malfoy protested but he started to move. He staggered up and leaned over Harry for support. “My balance may be a bit compromised though.”

Harry trembled with the urgency to run, the necessity to flee to a safer place, so he did the first thing that came to mind: he took Malfoy by the arm, passed his head under him, and hauled him onto his shoulders.

“What the hell are you doing!” He shrieked.

“We are leaving, now.” Harry started to move slowly in the dark, each step careful.

“Potter, stop, stop! I’m going to puke!”

Harry left him down but it was palpable that he couldn’t walk steadily.

“If you’re determined to be a gentleman here, carry me on your back.”

“Yes, your highness.”

“But if it’s just an excuse to grope me…”

“Shut up.”

When it was painfully obvious they couldn’t go far like this in the dark, Malfoy cast a Lumos. This time the light emerged in dulled colours and eerie forms that blazed around them turning the surroundings into something sinister.

Malfoy tightened his grip, sinking his nose into Harry’s neck. Harry shivered.

“Ok, ok, adapt or perish.” Harry muttered. He ignored what he was seeing, using the weight of his partner as a grounding anchor and trusting his guts in order to get out of the Forbidden Forest.

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