There are so many places to jerk off in Camelot if you use a little imagination. And Arthur's grown very imaginative.

It's not that he hates his bed, though he possesses some cursed internal clock that wakes him with the sun's rise even on the days he does not have practice. Arthur's bed is lovely. It's got this thick, springy mattress, double-sheeted so the down doesn't prickle up through into his skin while he's sleeping. There are loads of pillows. There's even curtains to draw so he doesn't startle any unexpected servants (which had been a harmlessly enjoyable past-time when he was younger, but somehow isn't now that Merlin's been appointed his manservant, especially since it's been months and months and the idiot still hasn't learned how to knock.)

In his bed though, it's easy. Easy to curl a fist around a morning erection, stroke it gently with just the right twist as the light slants over his eyes, through the condensation on the window pane. It's easy to collapse after a long day's riding and work the tension in his muscles out through his dick. Wanking in bed is, by this point, practically routine. Arthur gets enough routine in his day-to-day life: he is not
going to start scheduling his masturbatory habits.

So that's how he comes to be in one of the assorted spare rooms in the wing of the castle no-one ever really passes through — the wing that once housed his mother's rooms. There's dust thick on the mantel and he locks the door, but nevertheless he's hard with the thought that anyone could walk in before he's even licked his palm. Arthur jerks hard, fingers near-painfully tight. He watches the head of his cock slide red and slippery in his hand and thinks of mouths — red, wet mouths, sucking him down, the first pressure at the back of the throat before the perfect tightness. He imagines holding a jaw open, the convulsive swallow of a throat against the tips of his fingers, brings his free hand to his throat just to feel it, and comes like that, with his pulse fluttering madly against his palm and his eyes squeezed shut.

The next time it's in the pantry with the door wedged shut, then the expansive linen closet on the second floor. Then when he's hunting by himself, the long grass tickling his bare thighs, and all that open space, all that possibility, thrills him to the core. Each time it's easier. Before long he's trying it in an abandoned corridor. It's not that Arthur's so gagging for it that he couldn't wait the scarce minutes 'til his room, but he grips the sill of the window and angles himself away so a passer-by mightn't immediately see the Crown Prince rutting mindlessly into his hand and does it anyway.

At first he goes slow, teasing himself, tempting fate. The sounds of the courtyard far below waft up to him. He fancies he can hear Merlin laugh, and for some reason that makes him crazy with it, thinking of the way Merlin's eyes crinkle up all ugly in amusement and the shape of his collarbone with his head thrown back. Arthur's not usually noisy, but he has to turn and stifle a deep groan in the collar of his shirt.

He's not even sure he could stop if someone came upon him. He's not even sure he'd notice.

Arthur can't be the only one, though, surely. After all, everyone likes a bit of a pull and they couldn't all do it behind closed doors, could they? He starts watching for it — actually, he's wondering if he's gone a bit sex mad, because when someone slips away from a feast, or he sees a servant hurrying past him flushed with exertion and the residual summer heat, Arthur finds himself wondering...

During a very long, very boring meeting with his father's council, a terrible idea dawns upon Arthur. It's absolutely horrific, and therefore thrilling, and therefore the thought of touching himself while Uther and Gaius and Morgana and Sir Leon and— everybody, were right there? Has his treacherous cock twitching in interest, and he cants his hips forward, slouches further into his chair. "But surely that will just send them running to the other kingdoms," he comments, which sure enough sends his father off on one of his favourite rants and everyone inwardly rolls their eyes and tries to simultaneously sleep and keep their eyes open.

Arthur, on the other hand, is hyper-aware. He slides a hand with tectonic slowness over his thigh, feeling the rough material of his breeches in a way he never has before. It tingles over his palm. He allows his thumb to trace up the seam of them and over the outline of his dick with the barest of pressures. He licks along his own teeth and does it again, shifts a little and turns it rhythmic.

It's important to breathe evenly, keep his eyes on his father and his shoulder still, and each tormentingly slow intake of air burns through lungs that want to gasp with it. Under the table, he squeezes. When he taps lightly at the base, the shock of it is barely dulled by the material in the way
and he's forced to turn an involuntary little shudder into a headshake, which catches his father's attention and curse it all: "You don't agree?"

Arthur tries not to look like he's panicking. What did he just disagree with? "I," he tries, swallows twice when he hears the state his voice is in. "Well," he adds. "That is."

Merlin comes to his rescue by dropping the water jug. Arthur feels tiny droplets against the back of his neck, which is already heating because Christ, how long had Merlin been standing there? Then Gaius coughs loudly before Uther can order Merlin to the stocks, and talks about things like the lateness of the hour and the importance of meeting with Lord Whoever and didn't your Majesty wish to look over the plans for the new watchtower on the outer wall? Which would require catching Geoffrey before he went for his dinner, and old men eat early, sire.

Arthur sends a silent thankyou to Gaius when his father nods his head in agreement and everyone gets ready to leave.

"Your manservant's actions reflects on you," Uther hisses as he passes Arthur, in a voice that means everyone in the room hears it.

"I will see to his discipline, father," says Arthur in the steadiest voice he can manage given the thoughts that conjures up. Best not to think about discipline and Merlin at all, really, since the two really don't belong together. Unless it's a sort of punishment by deafening: Arthur plans to yell really loudly at Merlin. If he was a better manservant maybe Arthur would expect him to actually show up to meetings and not assume by default that he'd forgotten again and therefore wouldn't be jerking himself underneath the table while Merlin was standing right behind him.

"You are like a cat!" is the first disgusted thing he says to Merlin when they're safely back in Arthur's chambers.

"I thought you were supposed to be telling me not to be noticeable, sire?" Merlin asks in the least deferential tone possible.

"That too," says Arthur impatiently, wrenching his eyes away from the pale skin of Merlin's wrists, where the veins show blue right beneath the surface. He feels flushed, confined. The need to pace is overwhelming, but he's still tight around the trousers and he sits, instead, crosses his legs. Merlin's gaze tracks the movement.

"Look," he says earnestly. "D'you need some time to— I should, I mean I need to go thank Gaius, and he'll probably have errands for me to run, so I'll just."

Arthur's eyes go very wide. Merlin's actually backing towards the door, and he doesn't look embarrassed so much as vaguely apologetic. He makes a little hand-gesture: go.

"That won't be necessary," Arthur says tightly, and he means because even though almost getting caught has done nothing to help with the insistent throb of his cock, so help him god he is not going to send Merlin away just for a wank. At least, not when he's aware of it. Except obviously he's not quite clear because something a little hopeful flickers its way onto Merlin's face, that incredibly irritating expression that always means he's expecting things of Arthur, but it goes away just as quickly when Merlin realizes that wasn't an offer.

Well. Arthur hadn't intended for it to be an offer.

In addition to being trained to kill since birth, Arthur has also been trained how not to think with his
dick — or at least, he'd been lectured enough about the charms of women who would seek the power of the throne, about the importance of legitimate heirs, about choosing his partners wisely and discreetly if he chose any at all. Somehow, with Merlin in the room and the edges of affection creeping around the edges of his face even though he's obviously trying so, so hard not to let it, all of that information loses its pertinence. There are a dozen good reasons why he shouldn't uncross his legs, let a hand drift down over his stomach as though he has all the time in the world. He does it anyway.

When he presses his palm down over the bulge of his cock, Merlin actually whimpers.

"Did you just—" Arthur begins incredulously, because he can hardly be expected to let that pass without comment.

"No!" Merlin denies, rather pointlessly. "Shut up!"

Arthur smirks and tugs at the strings of his laces and Merlin bites his lip. The way it slips between his teeth, the little indentations left behind that flush a wet red — Arthur thumbs over the head of his cock and wants to close his eyes with how good it is but he can't look away. "Christ," he says, "Your mouth."

"My mouth?" Merlin sounds a little strangled. "Do you know how many times you've licked your lips this afternoon? Thirty-seven, Arthur. Thirty-seven!"

"The air is very dry lately," demurs Arthur, and brings it up to thirty-eight just to be annoying. He's drawn his cock out now, trying not to think to hard about it as he palms it dry, just a squeezing hold that feels so fucking good after teasing himself for so long, and the adrenalin of doing it with Merlin right there drowns out the acute awareness that yes, Merlin is right there — the thoughts about size and the blush he knows is creeping across his collarbones and down his chest. "Listen," he says reasonable, "This would be a lot less weird if you gave me a, you know, hand?"

"No," says Merlin (and Arthur has somehow managed to retain his ability to be surprised by that word.) "No, thanks, I think I'll just. Watch for a bit. If you don't mind.

And Arthur should, and maybe sort of does, but there's this look on Merlin's face that's so unfamiliar it takes him a moment to place it. Avaricious, maybe, he thinks. Lustful. It's pretty flattering, and Arthur finds he doesn't mind so much after all. "All right then," he breathes, and fishes some oil out of the pouch on his belt all clumsy and one handed.

"Wait, why do you have—" says Merlin, and, "How much have you been doing this?" and Arthur pulls a long, smooth stroke and Merlin just groans like it's his own cock being wanked. "Yeah, that's — yeah." Takes a step forward, stops himself. Arthur rocks his hips upwards and throws his head back and watches from under hooded eyelids as Merlin just sits right down on the stone floor and starts tugging off his own trousers. The cant of his posture is brazen in a way Arthur understands, a challenge, a bastion against shyness.

The sight of Merlin's cock clutches something low in his stomach and he feels it right to the tip. Arthur toys with the unfamiliar idea that he wants to suck it, wants to take it in messy with spit everywhere, maybe somewhere Merlin's supposed to be composed, somewhere he'd have to hold back the moans that are bubbling out of his chest and into Arthur's chambers, and Arthur prays for them to seep into the stone so later when this is over he'll be able to listen and hear the echo.

Neither of them are talking. There's nothing but the slap of skin on skin, their choked noises, and Arthur can taste sex whenever he chokes in a breath. Merlin's got a jerky, desperate kind of rhythm that matches Arthur and he's a picture; the curve of his spine, the clench of his jaw, the chiaroscuro
where the shadow of the table and the gloaming play across all his revealed skin. His eyes, blue like deep lakes, fixed on Arthur with that look, that fucking look. Arthur wants it, forever, this. *His.*

He grunts, spills into his hand as pleasure shakes through his skeleton in a blinding moment that doesn't stretch nearly long enough.

"Come on," he urges Merlin, when he's able to put words together properly. The rasp in his voice has Merlin whimpering again, thumbing the precum gathered at the head and speeding up. "Come on, I want to see."

"You're so—" grits out Merlin, "Impatient— Arthur! God." And obliges, curling in on himself and then unfurling with a long, lithe arch. Arthur knows he can't get it up again, but the aftershock of the way Merlin cries out his name has his cock twitching.

For a while they just pant into the silence, awkwardness seeping into the gaps around their breathing.

"Right," Arthur says, going over to wash his hands, clean himself up. The cold water feels impossible against his hands. He blinks a couple of times, tries to think of something to say that isn't totally useless.

Merlin joins him at the water bowl with a slanted sideways glance, holding up his pants with one hand. "Next time, mouths, all right?" he says, a little bit quietly.

"Say it like you mean it, Merlin, please," says Arthur, flicking droplets at him. They grin at each other stupidly for a moment as they consider the many possibilities of mouths. "And light the fire, I can barely see."

"Maybe you're going blind," Merlin says mischievously, and ducks away.

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