First Love in Late Spring

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Characters:	Merlin (Merlin), Arthur Pendragon (Merlin), Background or Mentioned Characters, Gwen (Merlin), Gaius (Merlin), Uther Pendragon (Merlin)
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First Love in Late Spring

by yourdeargatsby

Summary

A request based off the prompt from anonymous ; "can you write just like a fluffy fanfiction about the couple of your choice???? Maybe a picnic or smth <3"

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“I will not.” Arthur demanded.

Merlin narrowed his eyes again, knowing Arthur’s ultimate secret.

“Fine then.” He wiped off his hands on the bottom part of his blue shirt, before lunging at Arthur, attacking his sides.

“Ticklish dollophead.” He snickered as he was able to get a firm grip on Arthur’s torso, who started kicking and trying to pull Merlin off unsuccessfully.

Notes

Thank you so much for this prompt!! It took a while to get done, but I had so much fun writing it.

Originally posted on Ao3 on the 24th of August 2025. Posted to ff.lol on November 2nd 2026

See the end of the work for more notes
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It was warmer in Camelot, for this time of year, thankfully not raining at the moment, the sun peeking out from clouds and looking down through the sky, not yet deciding to curse them with more waterfall.

Not that it was an entirely bad thing, of course. They had been in a drought for about a year now, and Merlin personally knew how worried Arthur was getting over how the livestock and crops would grow for commoners with the lack of rain.

Not that he would admit he was concerned directly. But after enough time of seeing him look out the window with the smallest sliver of hope in his eyes anytime a cloud passed over the sun, Merlin knew.

He seemed to be getting better at that, as of late. Just knowing the small things that come to be when it was Arthur. How he picked at his sausages in the morning, leaving the wrap outside the meat alone after removing it, the way he enjoyed sending Merlin back down to the kitchens to fight with the cook, like he knew that Merlin had a personal feud and was looking for any reason to pick a bone.

He was still picky about his clothes, because Merlin had been forced to learn the difference between wine red and pendragon red after he claimed they were the same thing and Arthur (still shirtless) threw a pillow at his head for not getting it right.

Additionally, Merlin was fairly confident his prince wouldn’t be figuring out what was going on between Morgana and Gwen either, without his or someone elses help. He had made several comments to Merlin about Morgana after the flowers incident, which started with Merlin believing he might still think Merlin liked Morgana, but quickly faded into realization that he was curious about Morgana and her maidservant.

Merlin was not a snitch, not even for Arthur. He could figure it out with his own terms.

But still, Merlin turned away from the window, fading warmth as the sun rose gently over the hills and mountains in the distance to go pull a clotpole out of bed, Goddess knows he would never willingly get up himself.

The stone steps up the castle are worn down by the same path taken every morning, getting up, throwing on the first clothes he sees, stealing a roll from Gaius who has been awake for about an hour already, and going off to harass the prince.

Servants from other tasks and stations wave to him as he passes by, and he waves back, though he doesn't have the heart to admit he doesn't remember all of their names. He remembers most of them, so it's the thought that counts at this point.

The knights guarding the door this morning aren't new, and they probably have a clock built in with Merlin's arrival by now, because they're parted for his entry by the time he comes around the corner to see them.

He greets them with the same grace as everyone else, entirely too cheerful for an hour this early, and pushes open the doors without a knock.

It used to wake Arthur up alone, the sound of the doors just banging open with no preemptive warning that this was going to happen, but after 2 years of it, it was practically trained out of him by now. A pity. It was funny to watch Arthur jump at the loud banging.

Merlin debates which of his morning greetings would work the best this morning, and if "The sun is shining, the world says hello" would be worth the candlestick thrown at his head.

Pulling down the curtains with more force than necessary makes Arthur twitch a little, and Merlin knows he's already awake at this point, just doesn't want to get up.

"Rise and shine, your highness." Merlin decides to say, moving over when he hears a loud groan come from the comforters, and he picks up an ice cube from the pitcher for his breakfast and drops it on Arthur's neck when he rolls over onto his chest so he doesn't have to deal with the incoming light.

A startling yelp is elicted, and Arthur rolls over twice and falls off the bed, taking the blankets (and presumably the ice) with him.

“Merlin!” Arthur yells, getting started on his daily torment already, it seems.

“Glad to see you awake and up and at it.” Merlin remarks with a smirk, stealing another roll off Arthur’s plate this time.

He can see Arthur prop himself up on the doughy mattress he had fallen off of, glaring at Merlin from across the room.

“Stop eating off my plate and help me get dressed before I have you tried for treason.” Arthur bites out, already standing up himself, and Merlin shrugs. He knows Arthur wouldn’t ever have him actually tried for treason, Georges had taken his spot one day when Merlin had recieved news that his mother needed help with something (See; there was a troll harassing the lower town and Merlin likes to kill things before they kill Arthur) and according to Georges, and just about every other staff member, the prince had been sullen and in a horrible mood all day, complaining and turning to Merlin, who wasn’t there, instead a shaking Georges who was sure he’d be executed by the end of the day.

He wasn’t.

Merlin got a firm talking to about nothing in particular, making a smart remark about how Arthur must have missed him so bad, which meant he got a pitcher thrown at him. It was worth it.

Georges had also firmly requested that no matter how much he owed Merlin, to never have to do that again.

He really could only oblidge.

He made his way towards Arthur, who was standing naked and still tapping his foot impatiently. Merlin opened the dresser, grabbing whatever he needed and threw it back at Arthur, hopefully hitting him, though he couldn’t be sure, as fabrics didn’t make a great weapon against your trained and insanely good looking boss.

The red shirt, to which Merlin knew was Arthur’s favourite, got thrown back at him.

“I want to wear blue today. Put that back.” He scoffed, pulling on his drawers himself. Merlin raised an eyebrow. He had never willingly seen Arthur refuse the stupid “Pendragon” red shirt when it was clean.

“Are you sick?” He asked, an eyebrow raised, light concern gracing his face. Arthur scowled.

“I’m fine. Grab the Cobalt shirt, Merlin.” He snapped, which was pretty normal until he had food. And after. He really was just a prick.

Merlin gave up and grabbed the blue shirt. There were no more complaints after that, and Arthur, newly dressed, took his place at the table while Merlin rummaged through his personal belongings to find the schedule for the day.

It seemed to be physically impossible for the blonde to keep all of his things in order, having to push around multiple unimportant documents containing information Merlin really shouldn’t be privy to, but was anyway. He found the rough parchment scroll further down than it should be, and picked it up.

“It looks like you’ve just got training and a council meeting today.” He spoke, completely disregarding any form of respect in his sentences, addressing Arthur like it was he that was the prince, and not Arthur himself.

Arthur shook his head.

Merlin frowned.

“What?” He asked, biting back snark.

“No.” Arthur said, taking another bite of his sausage, and Merlin wishes he could make a joke about Arthur being unable to just decide to do that, but Arthur really could just. Decide to do that.

“Uther won’t be happy.” Merlin raises an eyebrow and smirks.

“Father is never happy, and you should address him as your king.” Arthur bit back, mouth full of food.

“Oh of course, sire. Forgive my terrible impertinence, my lord.” Merlin said sarcastically, bowing over before snagging his own boot and falling flat on his face.

He could hear Arthur’s laughter beginning before he had even hit the ground, and he groaned as he propped himself up to see the man bent over, howling with laughter.

Merlin’s reponse was to kick Arthur’s chair out from under him, snickering as Arthur fell forward and hit his head on the table in front of him.

“MerLIN!” Arthur screamed as he recovered, which was Merlin’s cue to scramble up and out before Arthur could get to him.

He was down the hall and far gone by the time the prince had even gotten up.

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Merlin has no idea how he was dragged into this. One second he knows he’s helping Gaius with Morgana’s latest potion, and the next Gwen’s coming to tell him that Arthur says to get the horses ready and bring food.

Bastard as he is, Merlin does do his job occasionally, and gets the horses and the food. By the time Arthur marches down wearing light chain mail and confirms they aren’t going on a hunt,
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though that’s the official excuse, Merlin is beyond confused.

Which is how they find themselves in the middle of a field Merlin recognizes as one where he killed Sidhe once, dismounting and Arthur grabbing a quilt he surprsingly packed himself.

“Arthur.” Merlin calls out. No reply. He tries again.

“Arthur. What are you doing?” He pronounced it faster this time, but harsher.

“I’m setting up… a hunting thing.” Arthur finally replied, gesturing his gauntleted hand down at the crumpled quilt. Merlin narrowed his eyes.

“Oh, I’m sure you are.” He quipped.

“I read it in a book! You bring food and a blanket and you eat.” He snapped, and Merlin bit his tongue to stop from laughing.

“You read?” He pronounced the last word slowly, like he couldn’t believe it.

“Merlin!” Arthur yelled.

Merlin threw his hands up, but brought out the food. Arthur tied up the horses, and moved to sit down, Merlin following, though eyeing his armour.

“Take your chainmail off. We’re fine here.” He told Arthur. Arthur scoffed.

“We could be attacked.”

Though Arthur did not know, if they were, Merlin could kill it so much faster than Arthur. He was the most powerful thing in that forest and field.

“We won’t be.” Came the reply, and Arthur shook his head, but stripped the top parts anyway.

He sat down finally as Merlin ate and apple down to it’s core, and they both just sat.

“This is boring.” Arthur remarked, after a few minutes of pure silence. Merlin threw the apple core at his head, making him yelp and dodge.

“I don’t know. I think eating food and doing nothing is wonderful.” Arthur scowled at him.

“Lazy Prat.” He insulted Merlin.

“Illiterate Clotpole.”

“Cowardly Serf.”

Merlin frowned.

“You take that back.” He joked, though he didn’t really mean it. It was a poor insult, but Merlin wanted something to bicker over.

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He lost his breath quickly, turning over in another attempt, which only lead to them falling down the steeper part of the field, still latched onto each other as neither had anything protective on, or any situational skills to stop it from happening.

“I’ll… kill…. you, Merlin!” Arthur grunted out, but he still wrapped his hands around Merlin’s back, less as an attempt to use him as a shield and more like he wanted to use himself as one, which Merlin couldn’t have, and did the same.

He tucked his head into Arthur’s shoulder so he couldn’t see the glow of the golden magic and let them slow before they did hit a rock and get hurt, at which point they let go, flopping out, side by side, out of breath, near the bottom.

There was heavy breathing from Arthur, and Merlin eventually propped himself up, to see Arthur grunting as he tried to stand.

“Merlin.” He said, voice meaning to be mean, but containing no venom.

“Arthu-” He was cut off by Arthur leaning down and pecking him on the lips, gently, but not unfirmly. He was gone as soon as he was there, leaving Merlin speechless and red.

“If I beat you up I’m making you polish my armour! Twice!” Arthur called.

Merlin smiled, fully recovered, eyes golden once again. It was too bad he really really, didn’t want to polish armour.

End Notes

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