



Budapest's Mysteries

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Budapest' Mysteries – Part 2
...and the Sleepwalking Caretaker

*A fanfiction based on
the TV show « The Librarians »
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Summary:

A new case has called the Librarians and their Guardian back to the Annex where strange things seem to be occurring. The Librarians and their Guardian embark on a strange journey to save one of their own: Jenkins.

*This is a work of fan-fiction, with no affiliation to Electric Entertainment or TNT
who are the rightful owners of the franchise.
No profit has been made from this story,
none is intended to be made other than the pleasure to write
about a fictional universe and characters.
Did I mention that I'm quite fond of the Librarians?*

Note

When I started writing the fanfiction "Budapest's Mysteries", I wasn't sure I wanted it to become a series.

11 chapters and a few encouraging comments later, I was convinced that I wanted to stick around and write a little more.

This story is for all of you who enjoyed the first episode!

A night at the Annex

He was alone in the Annex, enjoying the quiet and more importantly the silence. Four Librarians and one Guardian were a little too much for him to cope with at times. He, who was accustomed to the loneliness of his task, had seen the intrusion as a violent earthquake that shook his life and habits. As a result, he enjoyed even more those rare moments when everyone was out. He sometimes hoped that they would decide to settle somewhere else and not come back. This was probably too much to ask. They considered the Annex as their new home and even if he hated to admit it, he was starting to grow fond of the small group.

"Is everything alright, Jenkins?"

The caretaker startled and quickly turned around, spilling some of the tea from his cup in the process.

Eve Baird, the Guardian, smiled at him:

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to startle you."

"If you say so," mumbled the caretaker. "What are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to assist the Librarian catching whatever item he is hunting down?"

The Guardian didn't seem to take notice of the sharp tone.

"He is right behind me. We had to postpone our little expedition. Something has come up. Haven't you been notified?"

She looked at the big table. The clipping book was closed. Everything appeared to be normal, as if nothing of importance was happening.

"I'm only the caretaker. When no one is home, nothing pops up. Why should it? It's not like I could do anything about it anyway."

Eve was about to reply when Flynn made his entrance. He clapped in his hands and the room was lighted instantly.

"I never get tired of this!" He exclaimed happily before noticing Jenkins: "How nice of you to welcome me with a cup of tea!"

The caretaker never got a chance to protest. The Librarian was already in front of him. His next move was to take the cup from Jenkins' hand and to drink from it.

"What is this awful taste?" He immediately complained, his face expressing his distaste for the beverage.

"It's my own recipe. It helps me sleep well..."

"Just take it back, it's disgusting," decided Carsen, returning the cup to its owner.

He then saw the closed book and frowned:

"Why is the table empty? And why isn't the clipping book open?"

"We were just discussing it when you showed up," explained Eve. "Jenkins was telling me that it doesn't react when no Librarian is around."

"Nonsense! It always reacts. Always! Unless..."

Flynn casted a glance at the caretaker who didn't flinch.

"You and I need to have a conversation," said the Librarian very seriously.

"Not tonight. I'm off to bed and you two have a case to work on," replied Jenkins

dismissively. "Goodnight Colonel Baird. Goodnight Flynn."

He briskly left the room, leaving the couple alone.

"What was that all about?" asked the Guardian.

"I'm not too sure...yet," admitted the Librarian.

He then opened the book at random. Newspapers clips were covering the page he landed on. They all had the same topic: the theft of two priceless Celtic flagons from the British Museum in London.

There is Magic in the air

It was business as usual in the Annex. The three not-in-training-anymore Librarians didn't get a chance to recover from their evening out. As soon as they entered the room, Flynn started talking:

"Everyone is here, good! Let's not waste any more time and start straight away. What do we know from the theft? What do we know about those Flagons?"

Eve hardly managed to hide her smile watching the stunned expression on the three Librarians' face.

"Is it me or did we miss an episode here?" Asked Ezekiel Jones who was the first to recover.

"If you did, then so did we," added Jake Stone.

"Flynn! Eve! I'm so glad to see you!"

Cassandra Cillian ran to the closest one, which was the Guardian, and hugged her.

"We didn't expect to see you so soon," she continued after releasing Eve from her embrace.

"And I'm surprised that you're still there. All of you."

Baird was quite happy to see that they hadn't split. She had been convinced that the small group worked better as a team. They had apparently come to the same conclusion.

"We were having dinner when our clipping books started to react," explained Jake.

"The three of us got the same case, which is a little odd, even for Library standards. But, hey, seriously guys, you should have told us that you were back in town. We skipped dessert because of the clipping book," complained Jones.

"Not important," interrupted Flynn. "Can we please get to the point?"

He was still reading the various articles.

Ezekiel rolled his eyes and sighed:

"It's good to see you too, but... what's the hurry? Can't we wait until the morning?"

Carsen looked up from his book, and shot him a stern glance.

"Ooch, that hurt!" Complained Jones.

"You asked for it," whispered Stone while Cassandra joined Flynn.

He looked at her suspiciously:

"You aren't going to hug me, are you?"

She smiled broadly, shook her head and looked down at the articles:

"Says here that two Flagons have been stolen from the British Museum..."

Ezekiel yawned loudly: "Boring..."

"They are both around 40cm in height..."

"Easily concealed then," noted Eve.

"Made of a copper alloy, mounted with pieces of red coral and glass. They look really nice," read Cassandra further.

"How old are they?" Jake wanted to know.

"Mid fifth Century BC. They date back to the Iron Age... They have been in the British Museum collection since the late 1920s."

"Why would someone steal them now? After all that time?" Asked Stone.

Ezekiel sniggered: "There are so many reasons someone would steal them, I wouldn't have enough of my ten fingers to list them all."

"Is that so? Well, be my guest, list them!"

"Guys," intervened Cassandra, worried that her friends might enter in one of their heated challenges. "If the clipping book pointed us to this case, one would think that the reason is pretty obvious..."

"There is Magic in the air!" Shouted Flynn.

He then grabbed Eve for a dance all while singing:

"Feel it everywhere there's magic in the air. And the night's full of love from the fire we started. Listenin' to the sound of music all around. There's magic in the air..."

Jake suddenly decided that he wanted to be part of the moment and held his hand out to Cassandra, inviting her to dance with him.

"What is all that noi..."

Jenkins stopped dead in his tracks when he saw the two couple dancing. His puzzled look rested on Ezekiel who grinned:

"Don't count on me to dance with you, mate. Especially not with you dressed like that."

The caretaker was wearing his pyjamas and a nightcap.

"Oh, Jenkins, perfect timing!" Exclaimed Flynn, interrupting his song and the dance. "We need to be off now. At the British Museum."

"But it's the morning in the U.K.! It must be what? 7am in the morning?" Worried Eve.

"All the more reason to go now. The Museum will still be closed to the public and we can simply blend in."

"You want us to pretend that we're working there?" Laughed Ezekiel.

"Exactly. Now, shall we be going?" Urged Flynn.

Eve realised that Cassandra had been very quiet. At first she thought that she was still enjoying mentally the spontaneous moment of happiness that had occurred a few minutes earlier, but the Librarian was staring at Jenkins, a concerned expression on her face. As soon as she caught the Guardian's eyes on her, she smiled and walked towards the door to join her friends, who were ready to leave.

The caretaker had put his empty cup of tea on the table and was already fiddling with his device. Baird made a mental note to have a chat with him as soon as they would come back. There was something odd about his behaviour since they had showed up in the Annex an hour ago, and she wondered if it had something to do with her knowing his true identity. She quickly pushed those thoughts at the back of her mind. Right now, she needed to focus on the case. The device was now active and the gate would open soon, allowing them to enter... directly into Room 50 where the Flagons had been in display.

"You're getting an expert at this," complimented Eve in an effort to cheer Jenkins up.

He didn't even smile at the comment. Instead, he wished them good luck and waited until they would pass the door.

Flynn was the first one to rush into the room, obviously excited by the adventure. Jake and Ezekiel followed suit.

"Maybe I should stay here in the Annex," suddenly said Cassandra.

Eve could easily guess what had caused her change of mind. She too could sense something about Jenkins not being all right and the girl probably wanted to be of help.

"Off you go now. They are all waiting for you, and I'd like to resume my night if you please," the caretaker said.

He sounded mildly annoyed and the Guardian wondered if it was because they were holding the gate open or because the young Librarian was willing to stay behind.

"He is right, Cassandra," decided Eve. "We need your expertise. Let's go."

Both women walked pass the door that closed shut behind them. As if someone had slapped it.

"Alone, at last!" Sighed Jenkins in contempt, a smile blossoming on his lips.

Room 50

The exhibition room was pretty much like any other display room of a museum. Eve Bair started reading the set of explanations printed for the visitors.

"The Flagons were part of the Britain and Europe 800BC-AD 43 section," she said, but none of the Librarians took notice.

Flynn had found the display case he was looking for and was examining it carefully, checking for clues. It seemed untouched, as if someone had taken great care in lifting and replacing it after the theft. He could tell that the case hadn't been replaced and yet he was at a loss to explain how the two Flagons had been taken with such efficiency.

Ezekiel and Jake were walking around, admiring the other items that were part of the collection. Stone was however more concerned that Jones might steal something and was therefore following him closely around.

Cassandra had chosen to remain with Eve. The Guardian had noticed that the young woman seemed worried, but she waited until she felt ready to talk, which happened sooner than expected.

"You saw it too, didn't you?" suddenly whispered the red-haired girl.

Eve remained silent and Cillian went on:

"It's Jenkins. He is acting strangely..."

"Jenkins is always acting strangely, when he is not complaining or whimpering," smiled Baird.

"It's not like that Eve. When we came back from Lima, he didn't even ask how it went. I tried to tell him about our adventures, but he wouldn't listen. It's as if..."

She hesitated, searching for the right words:

"... as if he wasn't interested anymore. As if he didn't care."

Eve turned towards Cassandra, her smile gone:

"That would explain the clipping book."

She then explained further:

"When we returned with Flynn, the clipping book was closed and Jenkins pretended that nothing of importance happened, that the book doesn't react when Librarians are not around."

"But that's a lie!" Shouted Cassandra before lowering her voice again. "Remember when we became LITs? He told us that newspaper clips would be added every single day and that we only needed to pick a page, any page, and we would have a case."

Ezekien and Jake had joined them in the meantime, mildly curious as to Cassandra's reason for screaming.

"What's up ladies?" Asked Jones.

"Have you noticed anything odd about Jenkins?" Bluntly asked the Guardian.

Both men exchanged a glance. The thief shrugged:

"He is always odd. Have you seen his nightcap? That's quite something."

"I'm serious, Jones."

"Now that you mention it," carefully said Stone. "He wasn't his usual self when we

returned from Lima. It was almost as if he didn't expect us to come back at all."

"Something happened to him," sighed Cassandra. "I can't shake this feeling that it has something to do with our last case, but everything is so confused in my mind..."

"Same here, girl. Can't remember a thing," confessed Ezekiel, while Jake nodded in agreement.

"Alright, here is what I propose. As soon as we get back to the Annex, I'll talk to him, ask him what is on his mind and we'll take it from there," decided Eve.

"Do we tell Flynn?" Asked Jake.

The Guardian looked at the Librarian who was turning around the display case in a manner that could have been misinterpreted as a tribal dance.

"No, we don't tell him anything until I've spoken with Jenkins. We might worry for nothing."

Just as she was about to add some comforting words, she saw Carsen walking towards them.

"Did you find anything?" Eve wanted to know.

"No. Not a single thing, not a clue, nothing. And it's..." He smiled dreamingly: "...*vexing*."

"So what's the plan now?" Asked Ezekiel.

"We return to the Annex and try to find out why someone would want to steal those two Flagons."

Before anyone could object, he was already walking in direction of the door they had used to get inside the museum. He opened it and froze. Behind the door was a small closet that was meant to welcome the employees' personal belongings while they were on duty in the area. Flynn closed the door shut, took a deep breath and opened it again.

"Not that I want to state the obvious," started Ezekiel. "But shouldn't that door lead to the Annex?"

"It should indeed," replied the Guardian who was starting to feel increasingly uncomfortable.

Carsen opened and closed the door a few times, before he gave up. The link to the backdoor had been cut. The Librarian turned to face his fellow companions:

"That's not very convenient, but it's not the end of the world either," he smiled.

"Guys?"

It was Cassandra, calling the group from Room 50. She had walked back in the exhibition room following a hunch.

When her friends joined her, she simply pointed to the display case:

"The Flagons are back..."

"And we're stuck..." finished Jones.

The plot thickens

"It doesn't make any sense," Stone sighed.

The librarians and their guardian were standing in front of the display case, staring at the supposedly missing artefacts that were now back where they belonged.

"The clipping book brought us here," added the historian. "It has to mean something."

"Are we sure those are the original Flagons?" Asked Cassandra. "What if they were exchanged with copies?"

Jake shook his head: "I'm positive. Those are the real ones."

"Plus we were there," said Ezekiel. "We would have seen someone temper with the display case. Even the best of thief doesn't exchange items that fast!"

"And you're quite the expert," smiled Jake.

"Unless it's done by magic..." Eve had spoken in a low worried voice.

"What do you have in mind?" Quietly asked Flynn.

"It's as if the Annex itself sent us here."

Carsen shrugged:

"The Library does it all the time, why wouldn't the Annex do different?"

"The Annex sends us at the other end of the world, and as soon as we show up, the missing objects reappear? What's the point?" She insisted.

"Keeping us from going home?" Suggested Cassandra. "May I remind you that the link to the Annex has been cut?"

The small group exchanged a glance.

"I don't like where this is leading," said the colonel.

"Let's not be too dramatic," urged Flynn. "All we need to do is to call Jenkins and ask him to open the door again."

Having said so, he pulled his phone from his jacket's pocket and dialled a number, an encouraging smile on his face.

"It's ringing."

He waited a few more seconds and repeated:

"It's ringing."

"O.K., that part of the plan doesn't seem to go too well," noted Ezekiel. "And that was the easy part."

Everyone felt silent until Carsen put the phone back in his pocket:

"I'm going to get Jenkins an answering machine as soon as we get back."

"So what now?" Stone asked. "Do we still investigate on why the Flagons went missing, and why they mysteriously reappeared?"

Eve shook her head:

"If it's all the same to you, I would like to check on... the Annex."

Cassandra looked down at her shoes, while Flynn frowned.

"Why do I get the feeling that you've been keeping something from me?"

He caught Jake and Ezekiel exchanging a glance, saw the mathematician looking embarrassed. The only one that seemed cool and in control was Baird.

The Librarian made a few steps towards her:

"I could break them easily, you know," he smiled. "But I'd rather have you telling me what is going on..."

He was now very close. His Guardian stopped him by putting her hands on his shoulders:

"Don't get too excited, Librarian. We are merely worried about Jenkins. We find him a little strange since the Library is back."

Carsen looked disappointed:

"And that's it? That's what you kept from me?"

"From the look on the others' face, he knew that they didn't expect him to react the way he just did, so he went on:

"Have you even considered that he may have hoped for us to leave the Annex for good now that the Library is back? How many times did he make clear that he didn't want you to be around? He was expecting us to go away and here we are, still invading his space..."

"So he tampered with the clipping book, sent us on a goose chase and closed the door behind us to make his point. That's so like him!" Stated Ezekiel.

Eve glanced at Cassandra. The girl seemed quite sad.

"He never liked us..." She finally said, unable to conceal the emotion in her voice.

"There is only one way to find out!" Flynn cheered them up. "We take a plane back to the Annex and ask Jenkins some explanations. How does that sound?"

"Sounds like a plan to me," agreed Jones.

"Fine, so let's book us some seats and off we go!"

The entrance door to the Annex opened with a shrieking sound.

"So much for discretion. We really should do something about this door," grumbled Eve.

The rest of the group nodded but it was so dark inside that she didn't see it. Cell- and smartphones soon gave them the light they needed to walk safely down the stairs.

"Is it that dark usually?" Whispered Cassandra.

Nobody answered. They had reached the main corridor that was plunged into darkness.

"Anybody home? Jenkins?" Suddenly shouted Flynn, startling his companions.

"Shht," protested Baird. "We don't know what awaits us."

"So far, only web spiders... with spiders in them," joked Ezekiel as he was getting rid of an unwelcomed eight-legged guest on his shoulder.

They walked in silence until they reached the door to the room that was an exact match to the librarian's office. Under the phones' light, the place seemed odd.

"We need more..." Started Eve, but just as she was about to finish her sentence, Flynn clapped in his hands.

The lights came instantly to life while the group let out a cry of surprise.

Nothing is what it seems to be

The place was nothing like the one they left a day before. The table was covered with books, dust and webs. Dust on the floor suggested that no one had set foot there for a very long time.

"I feel like going back in time," whispered Cassandra. "Do you remember when we first entered here? It was exactly like that."

Flynn was already walking around things, frowning in an attempt to find an explanation for the phenomena, while Eve started to search through the various objects on the table.

"What are you looking for?" Asked Jake.

"The clipping book. It should be somewhere on the table but I can't put my hands on it."

"Let me help you," proposed Stone.

Realising that the mathematician was still at the door, apparently unsure about what to do, he offered her to join and search for the book as well. The girl instantly ran to the table, happy to comply.

Ezekiel had walked to the location of the back door that was only a cabinet door at that very moment. The device they used to teleport was missing. He quickly scanned the room, but just as he feared, it was nowhere to be seen. Yet the thief knew that Jenkins kept it close by at all times, in case of an emergency travel for instance.

There was only one other place where he could be found. Jones knew that he had to check it and, despite his best efforts, he couldn't shake away the bad feeling that was growing up inside him. Leaving his friends, he walked to Jenkins' laboratory.

As he feared, there was no sign of the caretaker in the Magic Lab. Even worse, it seemed as if it had been abandoned for quite some time. Yet Ezekiel could tell that Jenkins had worked in his lab. Everything was neat and well organised. One thing was certain: the caretaker didn't leave in a hurry. When Jones found the lab coat with the "J" letter embroidered, his heart felt suddenly heavy. The piece of clothing had turned grey over time, another proof that the Annex hadn't seen anyone in a long time. As he was about to leave, he noticed something faintly glowing in a dark corner of the lab. He walked cautiously towards the origin of the weak blue light and relief washed over his body when he recognised the shape of the object. Seconds later, his hand was gently brushing over the teleport device. The globe was open, revealing the strange circuitry that usually allowed them to travel through space. He carefully rolled it out and into the main room of the Annex, attracting the group's attention.

"Oh great, you found it!" Exclaimed Flynn with enthusiasm.

Baird on the other hand didn't look too impressed.

"It still doesn't explain why the Annex is deserted."

"But it might give us some clue about Jenkins' whereabouts," counter attacked the thief.

"Since when do you care about him?" Smiled Jake. "You two don't usually go along too well."

The glance Ezekiel sent him took him aback. His friends seemed equally surprised about his reaction and refrained from making any further comments.

"What do you propose we do to locate Jenkins?" Gently inquired Cassandra, playing the diplomatic card to ease the sudden tension that had arose.

"It's still active, so I suggest we use the back door, focusing on Jenkins. If we are lucky, we will be able to follow him wherever he has gone."

"That's actually an excellent suggestion," agreed Flynn.

He purposely ignored the sceptical expression on his guardian's face and helped Jones plugging the device.

An idea suddenly stroke Eve.

"What about the small clipping books?" She said out of the blue.

They all turned towards her:

"We can't find the one that is normally here, but we still have yours, right?"

She was talking to the three freshly appointed librarians who responded by checking their book. All of them were blank. For an untrained eye, they looked like a fancy notebook that hadn't been used yet.

"This is not good," whispered Carsen. "Not good at all. I really wish I knew what is going on."

"Right now, there is only one way to find out," firmly said Ezekiel operating the back door device without further notice.

Where are we?

They cautiously opened the door and exchanged a surprised glance.

"O.K., this is really starting to get strange," Stone said, expressing out loud what the rest of the group was thinking.

On the other side of the door stood a forest, a sight that reminded the Librarians and their Guardian of that terrible day when they had lost the library and Excalibur had wounded Flynn.

Shaking the feeling of *déjà vu*, Ezekiel was the first one to step into the vegetation. Looking back, he smiled when he realised that he had come out from the inside of a trunk. Flynn was close behind him, convincing Jake, Cassandra and Eve to join them as well. There was no indication of a gate of any sort on the bark of the tree when the door closed shut after the last traveller had walked through it.

"Where are we?" Asked Cassandra.

Carsen and Baird exchanged a knowing glance. Flynn made a gesture inviting her to find their location on her smartphone and she smiled in return, remembering his old-fashioned localisation method.

She only needed a few seconds to get a result, but she frowned and launched the search again, while her companions gazed at her quizzically. Her second attempt was a match to the first one, helping her decide that it had to be accurate.

"According to my geo localisation app, we are in Brocéliande."

This was greeted with silence at first.

"Brocéliande as in the Arthurian legend?" Finally said Ezekiel. "I didn't know it existed for real."

"It's a legendary forest alright, but it's said that Brocéliande is the Paimpont forest in Brittany," explained Jake.

"Brittany, in France?"

"Yep."

"Why on Earth would Jenkins want to go there?"

The Guardian had a pretty good idea why. Unlike her companions, she remembered everything what had happened when the loom of fate had been tempered with. More importantly, she had witnessed Jenkins save Flynn and overheard his *real name*.

"Yes, why indeed," Carsen insisted staring at her.

All eyes turned towards her. Of course, the Librarian had noticed that she didn't seem as surprised as the others by this apparently odd choice. Then she realised that she had never taken the chance to properly talk to the caretaker. Every attempt she had made had resulted in him eluding the conversation. Thinking about him, she had to admit that the man was all but forthcoming. Elusive, secretive, lonesome were the first qualifying adjectives that came to her mind.

"Who said that he came here willingly?" She heard herself reply.

Flynn seemed disappointed by the answer, but Ezekiel nodded:

"Yes indeed. Take the Annex for instance. It shouldn't be in that state. Something's wrong

here. Plus, Jenkins would never have left like this."

He had spoken with such conviction that Jake frowned:

"What makes you so sure of it? He never..."

The thief interrupted him:

"He doesn't like us, blah blah, wants us out, blah blah. O.K., the man's a little weird, but I know that he cares. He wouldn't walk out on us."

Eve suddenly smiled, recalling the conclave episode. Jones and Jenkins had been forced to work together. Furthermore, they had built something like a special bond.

"Now that you mention it," she carefully said, "I do believe that you are the one who knows him best. I do trust your judgement."

Ezekiel couldn't believe his ears.

"What? You believe me?"

"If you say that Jenkins wouldn't leave voluntarily, then yes, I do."

The thief straightened, pride taking over the frustration he had felt those past months.

"So what do we do next?" Asked Cassandra. "We can't just search the entire forest..."

"Let's follow Jones' intuition," suggested Stone. "Maybe it can lead us somewhere."

"Like to Merlin's tomb?" Smiled the thief.

He was pointing his finger towards a pile of big stones that looked out of place in the surroundings.

"How do you know..." Started Jake. "Forget that. After all, you're *Jack*..."

"And thus, we shall follow your lead..." Finished Flynn, pushing the young librarian in front of him, and motioning the group to start moving.

Merlin's tomb

"Wait."

Colonel Baird stopped, ordering everyone to do as well.

"We can't rule out a trap. We better split and rejoin at the tomb."

Silently, she gave directions to her companions. Jake and Flynn would walk straight to the monument, while Eve, Cassandra and Ezekiel would bypass it, and come from the opposite direction.

The two groups started moving towards the tomb, carefully surveying the path. There was nothing notable about it, nothing out of the ordinary. Birds were singing, the wind was gently brushing trees and bushes leaves.

"It reminds me of the enchanted forest in the fairy tales," whispered the mathematician.

"Well, from what I know, it *is* an enchanted forest," smiled Ezekiel.

"I really hope that this forest is everything but enchanted. I wouldn't mind some normality for a change," said the Guardian who was also keeping an eye on Flynn and Jake's progression.

Both men were walking cautiously but in a casual manner. They stopped just at the opening of a small round clearing. A circle of big cobblestones was set in its middle, marking out an area of grass on which heavy Neolithic stones were standing.

"So that's Merlin's tomb?" Wondered Stone. "I never thought that I would see it with my own eyes."

"Never say never," joked Flynn whose attention was turned towards Cassandra, Eve and Ezekiel about to reach the other side of the clearing. Once they were in position, the two groups met in front on the stones. Jake immediately started to examine them, checking for some unusual markings. Cassandra seemed to be deep in her thoughts, probably trying to find a pattern between the recent events. Just as she was about to speak, Flynn staggered. Eve immediately rushed towards him and supported him.

"What's going on? Are you alright?" She asked worried.

When the Librarian didn't reply, she gently helped him to sit down. The rest of the group gathered silently around him. Flynn was quite pale, a blank expression on his face.

Baird had knelt beside him, trying to understand what was happening. She couldn't know that Carsen had started to hear small bells and a now familiar humming in his head. Before he knew it, the sounds had cut him from reality, transporting him to a different time.

He recognised the forest and the stones, but not the people gathered around it. He was standing a few feet away, unable to move, silent witness of a scene that was obviously taking place in the past. Flynn saw a man in robes laying motionless on the ground. Knights were all around him, sharing the same expression of sadness. The Librarian realised that he was most probably witnessing a burial ceremony. The bells and the strange humming were still loud in his mind, preventing him from hearing what one of the men - the leader from the look of it - was saying. One of the knights suddenly turned and stared straight at Flynn. He would have startled if he had been able to, but he was totally powerless. Still he felt that he *knew* the knight. There was something very familiar about him, about the way he looked

at him. A picture came on top of his mind.

"Jenkins!" Carsen cried out.

Eve firmly held Flynn's shoulders to prevent him from jumping on his feet. She had foreseen a violent return to reality. The Librarian gazed at her with astonishment.

"What happened?" She asked before he could even open his mouth.

Ezekiel knelt in front of him:

"You called Jenkins, did you see him?"

"Yes... No," replied the Librarian.

His companions glanced at each other.

"Yes or no?" Jake finally asked.

"Just make your mind, mate," muttered Jones.

Flynn stood up, waving Eve away.

"I'm fine. It's over now."

"What is?" The Guardian wanted to know. "Is there something we should know about you?" She went on, her voice reflecting some annoyance.

The Librarian smiled shyly: "Not really. I think that I experienced some sort of vision, that's all."

He then related what he saw. When he was done, he looked at Ezekiel:

"I'm not too sure what to make of this..."

The young librarian looked pretty disappointed. Cassandra was deep in her thoughts again.

"Since this is Merlin's tomb, the man you saw laying was probably Merlin," explained Jake.

"Also, we now can tell that there is a link between this place and Jenkins," added the mathematician. "The fact that you saw him in your vision is the clue we were missing. We couldn't be sure that we were following his trail."

Jones didn't look convinced.

"Yeah, great. And how are we supposed to jump into time to get to him?" He grumbled.

Flynn made a funny face:

"That's the thing. I didn't see *our* Jenkins, but a younger version of him."

Eve suddenly started to feel uncomfortable.

"You mean..." She started.

Carsen nodded:

"Yes, I believe that I witnessed a scene from his own past."

"I know he is old," whispered Cassandra who was shocked by the revelation, just like the other young librarians. "But could he be *that* old?"

It's the right Time

A long silence followed. Eve Baird stared at each of the Librarians, thinking about her options. Their only clues were a mysterious forest, an even so mysterious tomb and Flynn's vision. She caught Carsen's glance resting on her and she suddenly felt uncomfortable. An inner voice told her that it was now or never. It was the right moment to tell them what she knew about Jenkins.

"Alright, let's sit down and think about our options at hand," she said, before showing the example by sitting down on the grass.

Soon they were all sitting in a circle and Ezekiel grinned:

"Now what? We hold hands and make a prayer?"

"It has sometimes proven to be a very good and powerful idea," said Flynn very seriously. "I actually remember..."

"The Loom of Fate." Eve cut him short.

The four Librarians looked at her, puzzled.

"I do remember all of it."

"All of it, like in.. all what happened?" Carefully asked Jake who wasn't sure he liked where this was going.

Baird nodded:

"I do."

"What? You knew and you didn't tell us? That's so unfair!" Complained Jones.

"I'm sure she had a good reason," quickly said Jake.

Flynn raised his hand:

"Please, let her speak."

He was unusually calm and composed. The Guardian wondered if he knew that she had kept something from them. Then again, everything was possible with him.

"Jenkins is indeed very old. In fact, I believe that he is immortal."

Cillian opened her mouth and closed it. Stone exchanged a glance with Jones.

"After Dulaque stabbed me, Jenkins intervened to protect Flynn. That's when I discovered who they were. Dulaque is Lancelot."

"Lancelot? As in Lancelot du Lac..." interrupted Jake before realising. "Du Lac... Dulaque... of course, makes sense..."

"Dulaque called Jenkins... Galahad," continued Eve.

"Wow," was Ezekiel's only reaction.

"That would explain my vision, then," noted Carsen. "It was indeed an event of Jenkins' past I witnessed. Interesting..."

"The question is: why did you see it?" Pointed Jones out.

"And more importantly: what did provoke that vision?" Added Baird.

Silence fell once again upon the small group as they were processing the news. The Guardian knew them well enough to imagine what they were thinking. Cassandra looked sad, she was obviously thinking that the Caretaker didn't trust them enough to share his true identity with them and it hurt her feelings to learn it from the colonel. Jake's mind was

probably wandering at Jenkins' vast historical knowledge and he was no doubt hoping to learn as much as he could from the man. Ezekiel seemed a little annoyed, but Eve couldn't guess if it was because he had been fooled or because he felt betrayed. As for Carsen, he wasn't acting the least surprised, confirming her suspicions that he knew already.

The Librarian was currently thinking about his own experience. Jenkins was for the young Librarians what Judson had been for him. A mentor, a father figure, a secretive man unwilling to share his secrets with others, even the closest ones.

"Don't judge him too quickly," softly said Flynn. "People like Jenkins have lived so much, lost so much... They just want to fit in, as weird as it may sound for someone working in the Library. We can't let our own feelings obscure our judgement. We came here to investigate on Jenkins' whereabouts and that's exactly what I intend to do. Colonel Baird gave us a clue, it's up to us to use it the best we can."

His little speech had the expected effect. The three Librarians' face expressed a new determination. They jumped on their feet and started looking around for any clue. Flynn moved to sit close to Eve.

"Are you O.K.?"

She shrugged:

"I think so. I hope that he won't be mad at me when he finds out I told you all."

Carsen smiled:

"Take my word for it. He won't. Quite on the contrary, it will be a relief. Shall we investigate?"

He stood and gallantly offered his hand to help her up. Their eyes met and locked. Baird didn't let go of Flynn's hand. The time suddenly seemed to stop...until Ezekiel cried:

"Over here!"

He was standing near one of Neolithic stones, holding Jenkins' nightcap in his hand.

The Lonely Lonesome Caretaker

Jenkins opened his eyes and sighed. Once again, he hadn't woken up in his bed. This time, he was standing next to the travelling device. The back door was glowing, a sign that it was still active. The Librarians and their Guardian hadn't returned from London yet. Jenkins yawned. He was still very tired. It had been a few days now since he started waking up in various locations of the Library in the middle of the night and he had come to the conclusion that he was sleepwalking. To the best of his knowledge, this was a first in his long life. His best guess was that it had something to do with the Librarians leaving the Annex a few months ago. Jenkins had actually enjoyed being alone again, resuming his experiments, cataloguing and testing artefacts. After a while, he had started to think about the young Librarians. He followed their progresses through the clipping book, noticing how cases would appear and disappear. A feeling of pride accompanied every solved case. The Librarians also called him occasionally, asking for advices. Then, the calls stopped and that's when Jenkins realised that he missed them. Flynn had sent him a postcard, mentioning how much fun he was having exploring the world with Eve.

At that point, the Caretaker had felt the emptiness in his life even more accurately. He decided that he needed an occupation that would prevent him from thinking about them and therefore focused on the projects he had neglected since the Librarians entered in his life. He closed the clipping book and stopped checking on the cases.

Jenkins tried to remember when he had actually started to walk in his sleep. The first time he woke up in a different place than his bedroom dated back a week ago. He had found himself in the main room, a book about Arthurian legends in his hand. He didn't think much of it at that time. He put the book back in its shelf and went back to bed. Since then, he had been waking up every night, once in his lab, then in the library. As time went on, he was feeling increasingly more tired every morning as if he didn't get enough sleep at night. When the Librarians came back, he naively thought that everything would be back to "business as usual". Alas, it seemed that his condition hadn't really improved. Worse, he wasn't feeling the least relieved that they were all back.

"What's wrong with me?" He muttered to himself before deciding that drinking tea before bedtime didn't help at all.

His mind wandered to the clipping book. Colonel Baird had been surprised to find it closed. He didn't think much at the time, but now he wondered if the Library was punishing him for not caring enough about the Librarians and their Guardian.

"I'm not Judson," he said out loud. "I didn't ask for any of this."

He didn't expect any answer, of course, but he hoped that he would soon be able to resume a good night's rest.

The Caretaker was about to leave the room when the back door started to glow intensely, a sign that someone was about to walk through it. The team probably solved the case in London. Jenkins wondered if they had found the missing Flacons, and more importantly, if they had managed to identify who stole them and for what purpose. He suddenly regretted

his lack of curiosity about the matter. Usually, he would have performed a small investigation on his own, trying to gather as many information about the objects as possible. He was so tired that it didn't even cross his mind.

He decided that he should for the Librarians who would probably want to tell him all about their adventure and came closer to the door, mentally preparing a welcome sentence.

The words died on his lips as his eyes opened wide when he saw who had come through the door:

"You?!"

"Let me go first"

They gathered around Ezekiel whose face expressed both hope and concern.

"It's a good sign, right?" He asked, staring at the nightcap he was holding.

"Sure," confirmed Jake. "At least we know that we're at the right place."

Cassandra was already studying the stones to find a pattern, while Flynn had kneeled and was exploring the stones with his bare hands.

"Haha!" He exclaimed victoriously, before jumping up on his feet.

A clicking sound could be heard and the stones moved slightly, revealing a set of stairs leading underground. Carsen was about to step on the first stair when Baird grabbed his arm, stopping him.

"I'm going first," she said firmly.

"But there could be traps!"

"All the more reason why I should be going first."

"But I'm the one with experience in those matters!"

Ezekiel, Jake and Cassandra shared a smile, seeing the two arguing.

"You should settle that fairly," offered Jones.

Flynn and Eve frowned, before turning toward the young Librarians.

"And how exactly do you suggest we do that?" The Guardian asked sharply.

"Easy," replied Ezekiel, with a shrug. "Rock-paper-scissors."

The couple looked at each other dubiously. Then Carsen closed his fist and counted to three:

"Rock against scissors, I win!"

Eve grumbled something about how she didn't expect him to play rock, but let go of him and followed him closely. The rest of the team entered behind them. They descended in silence, focused on the surroundings that were cut into the rock. Daylight allowed them to see where they walked and they soon reached the end of the stairwell to find themselves in a dark cave.

"Now what?" Whispered Ezekiel. "We can't see a damn thing down there."

"Just stay put and don't move," ordered Flynn.

Eve activated the torch app on her smartphone and the three young Librarians did the same. The combined white lights allowed them to see two sarcophagi made of stone and set in the middle of the cave.

"Please, don't move," urged Carsen again, this time in a very low tone.

He could sense that the group was as moved as he was. A laying statue of a man had been carved onto the top of the sarcophagus on the left, while Jenkins' motionless body was resting on the other one.

Flynn carefully circled the cave, keeping his back to the wall. Then, he walked carefully towards the side of the Caretaker's strange bed. No traps were triggered. His fellow companions had walked in his steps. Eve motioned Cassandra, Jake and Ezekiel to remain close to the wall, while she joined Carsen.

"Is he...?" She whispered as she came next to him.

The Librarian gently checked Jenkins' carotid artery and sighed in relief. He could feel the regular and steady heartbeats under his fingers.

"He is asleep."

"What do we do, now?" Was Baird's next question.

"You try to wake him up."

The way Flynn said those words set some warnings off in the Guardians mind.

"*We try?*"

The Librarian turned to face her and she was stuck by the concern she read in his eyes.

"It's up to you, Eve. I can't do anything about it."

And with that, he simply walked back to the stairs, while Baird looked at him, a stunned expression on her face.

"Where are you going?" Cried Cassandra. "What is going on?"

She couldn't know that as soon as Carsen had touched Jenkins, small bells started ringing in his head and a now familiar lullaby was threatening to send him away from reality.

He briefly stopped, wished them good luck and then vanished in the staircase.

Morgan

Flynn was breathless when he reached the stones. He turned towards the cave's opening, slightly worried that Baird might have followed him. Everything was silent. Even the lullaby had stopped. The Librarian was tempted to go back inside and help his friends, but decided against it. Despite the fact that he felt that he failed them all, including Jenkins, he couldn't take any risk. He brushed away the memory of Eve's surprised and even shocked face. There was a reason behind those auditive hallucinations. He needed to get to the bottom of this before it endangered his fellow Librarians. The only problem was that he had no idea where to start. He didn't even know what triggered them.

Carsen suddenly heard two voices engaged in a conversation nearby. His first thought was that they might have a link with his hallucination, but when he recognized one of the voices, he quickly took cover behind one of the stones. A couple soon appeared and stopped before the circle. The man was dressed as a knight and the woman was wearing a colourful medieval dress. As she wasn't facing him, Flynn could see that her auburn hair fell down to the middle of her back. She was holding the knight's hand. It took the Librarian some willpower to remain hidden. The knight was none other than a younger version of Jenkins. Carsen had recognized his voice already, but seeing him just confirmed what he feared. Once again, he had unwillingly travelled into a different space. As he kept looking, trying to remain unseen from the two, he noted that Jenkins' face expressed some concern.

"It is not my place to talk about the art you are so familiar with, but I beg of you: do not take this path. It is far too dangerous."

The woman exhaled a deep sigh:

"You are right, Galeas, you shouldn't talk at all. Yet, I do enjoy the sound of your voice."

She suddenly turned towards the stones and Flynn ducked, worried that she might see him. He quickly glanced at her and was struck by her beauty. She seemed to have escaped from a famous painting. He frowned, trying to remember why she looked so familiar. Then it hit him. He had seen a drawing of her a long time ago.

"Morgan le Fay," he whispered to himself.

So Baird had been right when she told him that she suspected some old history between her and Jenkins. The only difference was that Jenkins had asked the Colonel to kill her, while he seemed pretty close to her at that very moment. It seemed pretty obvious to the Librarian that he travelled into time too.

"Then let me come with you, please," asked Galahad. "Let me protect you."

Morgan's laugh rang in Flynn's ears like the small bells in his head. He covered his ears, realising that he just had found the cause of his hallucinations. But it was too late already, he could feel that he was already slipping away from this reality. He could however hear what she told the knight.

"No, my virtuous Galeas. It is me who shall protect you this time."

When Flynn opened his eyes, all he could see was the sky. Clouds were quietly moving, inspiring peace. Birds were singing in the distance. The Librarian didn't move, letting the

sounds of nature sooth him. Then he slowly sat and discovered that he was not alone. A woman was sitting nearby. Despite the fact that she had aged, that her auburn hair were shorter and that her colourful dress was now a dark green suit, there was no doubt in his mind. Morgan le Fay was staring at him.

"I finally get the chance to meet you in the flesh," she said, her voice still bearing that ironic tone she used when he heard her talk to the young Jenkins.

"Nice to meet you too... I think," he simply said.

Questions started to fill his head but something told him that he should save them for later. He quickly glanced around him. He was now outside the circle of stones and he wondered if she had carried him away or if he had collapsed there. Again, he didn't ask. There was something odd about the way she was still staring at him, as if she was fighting some inner doubts.

"Let me guess," he boldly said. "You need me, but you don't know how to phrase it. Here is a suggestion: could you help me, please?"

A dangerous smile blossomed on her lips:

"I do need your help alright. My only concern is that you might ruin everything by interfering. Plus, you really talk too much."

Where and when?

Eve watched as Flynn disappeared in the stairs, her face expressing mixed feelings. She was tempted to run after him but she knew him well enough to sense that it was important she let him deal with his own issues. The young librarians were already trying to wake Jenkins up, without any success. They called his name, shook him, they even hit him. But the man remained motionless. Baird witnessed their fruitless efforts and finally stepped in the conversation:

"If we can't figure a way to revive him, we might try to determine what caused his coma."

Ezekiel immediately started to search the sarcophagi for clues. Cassandra remained close to the caretaker. The colonel realised that the girl was holding his hand.

"He will be OK. He is tough..."

Or at least, she hoped so. There was something terribly wrong in his condition and she was starting to feel helpless. The mathematician didn't react. Eve noted that she was deep in her thoughts, obviously trying to connect the latest events to define a pattern.

Jake came next to Baird and offered to check on Flynn.

"We should give him some space," she replied.

Despite the fact that she was worried for Carsen, she managed to keep her voice steady.

"Something bugs me," Stone said, this time loud enough to be heard by Cassandra and Ezekiel.

"How did Jenkins end up here and how did we travel in time?"

"What?" asked Jones.

"Considering the Annex' aspect, it is clear to me that we travelled in time."

"Not in time," corrected Cillian. "But in space. We are in a parallel dimension."

A silence greeted her words. Ezekiel and Jake exchanged glances while Eve frowned.

"Alright, I'm going to need some explanations," she sighed.

The librarians gathered around her.

"It's the Flagons," replied Cassandra as if she was stating the obvious.

"The Annex sent us to investigate on their disappearance," explained Jones who was following her logic. "Then the link with the Annex is lost and everything goes awry."

"Not to mention that the Flagons mysteriously reappeared."

Baird thought about it for an instant.

"Why not. But may I remind you that the first odd thing happened before that? The clipping book was closed when we all arrived in the Annex."

"And Jenkins was acting strangely," added the mathematician. "But it doesn't change the fact that we probably moved to an alternate dimension."

"Unless we got stuck in a time loop on our way back," insisted Stone. "From his clothes, I'd say that Jenkins disappeared shortly after we left for London. If time got distorted during our trip back, we might find ourselves years away in the future, which would explain why the Annex looked deserted for so long."

"And how knowing where or when we are actually help us in our case?" gently asked the colonel. "I'm afraid that we are now back to our first priority. We need to find a way to wake

Jenkins up. And then we will worry about where and when we are.”

A caretaker's melancholy

Flynn and Morgan were sitting on large stones, facing each other. The Librarian was growing impatient and frequently checked Merlin's tomb entrance, fearing that Eve and the gang would emerge any moment.

"Do not worry," finally said Morgan. "For the purpose of this meeting – and because I want to talk to you without being interrupted – I've frozen us in time."

"Oh, nice. Well done. Always interesting to know what kind of things you can do. Anything else I should know about you?"

The fairy pretended that she didn't hear and went on, speaking in a very serious tone this time:

"As you know, the man you call Jenkins and I have been around for a very long time. So long in fact that there is always the risk that you finally realise that you want your immortality to stop. I'm afraid that Galeas has become increasingly tired of his life. Despite the fact that we grew apart, he is still a part of my past and I can't let go of him. That's why I keep an eye on him. I sensed that something was wrong a while ago. It was just a feeling, but experience taught me that an immediate action was usually the best thing to do. So I reached for you."

"I'm sorry, what?"

Carsen sent a cold shiver go down his spine as he realised what Morgan's words meant:

"You're the one responsible for what happened in Budapest. I suspected it already but I never expected you to confess it openly."

The sorceress shrugged:

"I really thought that endangering your life would motivate Galeas. But somehow he decided to accept the fact that you were slowly dying, losing your grip on reality, losing your mind... So I had to come up with something else."

The Librarian sent her a hard glance:

"You're so evil. No wonder he doesn't want to have anything to do with you anymore. What did you do to him that he would stop caring for you and want you dead instead?"

The woman waved his question away with her hand.

"It's really not the point here. The point is, will you help me save him?"

A twisted smile blossomed on Flynn's features:

"No."

Morgan was taken aback by his answer. He didn't even think before answering.

"What? But he is your friend!"

There was anger in her voice.

"And if he wants to die, because he feels that it is time for him to go, then I have to be that friend and respect his wish."

"You can't!"

Flynn winked at her before standing up.

"Now if you don't mind, I shall go back to my friends and tell them that we are leaving."

The fairy's eyes shone with fury. She seemed on the edge of doing something wild and violent, but suddenly she realised what this was about.

“Oh, of course. Fine.”

She closed her eyes, obviously concentrating. The Librarian instantly felt as if a burden had been taken away from him.

“You’re safe now. I lifted the curse, you’re no longer dying. Now, will you help me save him?”

To this, Flynn laughed. He felt so well again that he even started dancing around.

“Of course, I will. Do you really believe that I would let him go like that? I don’t want to lose him. We need him, more than he even realises it. But I disapprove of the way you deal with things. Did it ever occur to you that you might have worsened Jenkins’ melancholy by threatening my life? He cares for us as much as we care for him. He probably couldn’t stand the fact that he would endanger us by being at our side. So, considering that he was starting to feel depressed – and I suspect it’s our fault, because we left him alone – it only made things worse. He was ready to make the biggest sacrifice to ensure you wouldn’t threaten us anymore...”

Carsen witnessed a change in Morgan’s expression. She seemed to soften a bit. She stood up and came closer to Flynn.

“I misjudged you. I still don’t like you but I just realised that we had been allies all along. Let’s agree on this: when it comes to Galeas’ safety and well-being, we are friends.”

She held out her hand and Flynn shook it without second thoughts.

Snow White me

"Now that this is settled, we should join your friends," casually said Morgan. "We really don't want to stay around here too long."

"Yes, about that..."

But the woman was already walking towards the tomb. Flynn reached her just before she entered the opening and blocked her way.

"Let me go first. Something tells me that if they see you before they see me, they might just do something stupid."

"Such as trying to kill me?"

"Something along those lines, yes..."

She smirked but made two steps back and waited for Carsen to go inside Merlin's tomb.

Eve, Cassandra, Ezekiel and Jake were running out of options. Gathered around Jenkins' motionless body, they were sharing the same distraught expression on their faces. They turned around when they heard footsteps coming down the stairs and their faces lit up when they recognised the Librarian.

"Flynn! You're back!" Happily screamed Cassandra.

But before he could answer, the Colonel's ice cold voice filled the cave.

"What is she doing here?"

Morgan le Fay had appeared behind Flynn.

"Hello to you too. It's been a while. Did you miss me?"

Carsen shot a warning glance at his companion, hoping that she would just keep quiet.

"She is here for Jenkins," he explained.

Instantly, the group grew closer shielding the Caretaker.

"Oh come on," said the sorceress loosing patience. "Stop being so childish. Galeas and I go way back, you wouldn't understand our relationship even if I explained it to you with simple words."

"What I do understand," snapped Eve, "is that he asked me once to kill you. That tells me a lot about your relationship."

"O.K., you both made your point, but it's irrelevant here. Let's start all over again," intervened Carsen who could see that the situation would go nowhere unless he did something about it. "She is really here to help. She fears that Jenkins doesn't want to live anymore."

Eve, Cassandra, Jake and Ezekiel exchanged concerned glances.

"You mean: he wants to die?" Repeated the mathematician whose voice was now trembling.

"Yes," bluntly replied Morgan. "And before you start arguing again, let me be clear. I don't want him to die. He is the only one I've got from my timeline. I don't want to be alone. I don't want to be the only one left. So I'd appreciate if we could stop wasting time. Let me go through."

Silence descended on the cave. Baird was staring at Flynn, trying to read his face. There was no indication that this was a trap or that he was under le Fay's influence.

"I say, let us try and work with her for Jenkins' sake," decided Jones.

"What?" Erupted Stone. "Are you out of your mind? You know her!"

"Yeah, and I also know that she is telling the truth. She cares for Jenkins. We couldn't find a way to bring him back. Maybe she can."

"He is right," sighed Cillian. "We need all the help we can get..."

Flynn and Morgan walked closer. The sorceress' eyes were fixed on Jenkins. To Eve's surprise, the woman seemed genuinely sad and worried.

"She really cares for him," she whispered in Carsen's ear.

The Librarian simply nodded and the Colonel got a feeling that he knew more about Morgan and Jenkins than the rest of them.

She watched as the sorceress came to a halt in front of the sarcophagus.

As soon as she reached Galeas, Morgan felt overwhelmed by emotions long buried inside her. She could sense the man's melancholy. It was floating around her, trying to convince her that she didn't belong here just as he didn't. The sorceress was impressed. The knight was very powerful. Memories flashed before her eyes. She saw herself curled into Galeas' arms. They were sitting under a tree, smiling at each other. Morgan rested her hand on Jenkins'. She had to fight hard to resist the temptation to lay down with him and let the world be without them.

Instead, she leant over Galeas and kissed him.

"Did you just Snow White me?" faintly whispered Jenkins, seconds later.

Three problems

The Librarians and their Guardian couldn't take their eyes off Morgan and Jenkins.

"I thought that they hated each other?" Whispered Jake.

"This is another proof that the frontier between love and hate is very thin," replied Flynn.

Eve reached out for his hand and she squeezed it gently.

"What now?" She asked.

"Now? We wait."

The sorceress helped Jenkins to a sitting position, before taking place next to him. The Caretaker blinked a few times, obviously trying to make out his immediate surroundings. His eyes fell on Eve and the Librarians, and he frowned. There was no doubt in everyone's mind that he was trying to remember the events that had brought him in the cave.

"What are you all doing here? And by the way, where are we?"

His voice was still a little sore, but the tone indicated that he was fully awake and back to his old self.

Flynn was about to explain everything, when Ezekiel stepped in:

"Now wait a minute. Since when is she a member of the gang?" He was pointing at Morgan. "She might have helped waking up Jenkins, but last time I checked, she was still a member of Team Evil."

He faced the sorceress and bowed in a comical way:

"Thank you for your help, we are very grateful. You can go now. Bye!"

Eve and Jake exchanged a worried glance, but Morgan remained very calm:

"May I remind you that we have a common goal?"

"But it's done and over!" Reacted Cassandra. "Jenkins is awake now!"

The sorceress smirked:

"And how exactly do you intend on leaving this time and go back to your own?"

"What do you mean?"

The mathematician didn't like where the conversation was heading. She liked to be on familiar grounds, but so far she had been unable to build any pattern that would help explaining their situation and she felt extremely vulnerable.

"What she means is that we didn't simply travel through space as we usually do," quietly explained Carsen. "We also travelled into time."

"If someone would be so kind to jog my memory, maybe I would be able to help as well," said Jenkins.

Flynn looked at his friends, as if he expected them to complain, but this time no one spoke and he was able to fill in the Caretaker.

"Now that you know our side of the story, maybe you could tell us how you ended up here?" Suggested Baird when the Librarian was done talking.

The Caretaker sighed:

"I'm afraid that I can't. I have no recollection of coming here in the first place."

"What?"

Everyone looked at the sorceress who seemed quite shocked by Jenkins' reply.

"You didn't come by yourself?" Added Morgan lowering her voice a little.

Jenkins seemed quite annoyed by the question.

"Of course not! I might be a bit melancholic but you know well enough that it happens every five hundred years give or take a few centuries. I didn't plan on coming here!"

Eve was starting to get a headache from all those mysterious talks and she decided that it was time someone put some order.

"Alright," she said strongly. "We seem to be faced with two major problems. One, how do we go back to our own time? And two, who kidnapped Jenkins and why?"

"I think that you can add a third one to your list," sighed Jake. "What if those who brought Jenkins are still around? They won't be pleased to see that we have disrupted their plans..."

"What is this place anyway? Apart from being Merlin's tomb, that it," asked Cassandra.

"This," replied the Caretaker, "is our tomb. It's the place where Morgan and I will come to rest for eternity when we get tired of immortality."

"Oh great," whispered Ezekiel. "Someone has just decided that it was time for you to die..."

A walk in the forest

They unanimously agreed that they would probably be safer outside.

"We have no way of defending ourselves, we are easy targets down there and we don't stand a chance of escaping should we be under attack," summarised Eve.

As a result, they carefully climbed the stairs up and reached the relative safety of the forest. Morgan was supporting Jenkins who seemed to experience some difficulties to adjust to the light.

"That's what you get when you spend too much time in the Annex," grinned Morgan.

The Colonel had decided to put a safe distance between them and the tomb. In fact, she was heading towards the door they had used to arrive in the first place.

"You do realise that there is virtually no chance that the door is still open, right?" Gently said Flynn who was walking next to her.

"Maybe. But at least, we are doing something. What do you make of Morgan?"

The Librarian looked over his shoulder. His voice betrayed his indecision:

"I honestly don't know. I wish I could understand what is happening but I fail to put all the pieces together."

Eve abruptly stopped, realising that he was more or less telling her that he kept something for himself:

"Which pieces?"

"It's nothing important, really."

He smiled but Baird's eyes were starting to shine with anger so he quickly added:

"Morgan tried to contact me before, but I didn't realise it until it was too late. She suspected that something was amiss and she tried to warn me."

This wasn't entirely right, but it would do for now, he thought.

Apparently satisfied by his answer, Eve resumed walking.

"I still don't trust her," grumbled Jake.

He, Cassandra and Ezekiel were walking behind Morgan and Jenkins.

"Nobody does," stated Jones. "But we have no choice; we need to stick together on this one."

"Speaking of which," added Cillian, "I don't know how we will manage to get back to our time."

The thief pointed in the general direction where they were heading.

"Seems obvious to me; we find the door we used to come here and walk through it the other way round."

Stone smiled:

"Excellent plan. There might just be a small problem here however, and I'm not talking about the odds that we find the door again!"

"You mean the time distortion, right?" Sighed the mathematician.

"Yeah, that's exactly what I mean."

He casted a glance towards Ezekiel who was frowning, apparently trying to put two and

two together.

“Do you remember the Annex’ state of decay?” He asked.

“Oh, I see where you’re going at! We don’t want to go back to this Annex, but to ours instead.”

“And therefore, we need to find a way to go back to London and discover what happened there in the first place,” said Jake.

“And what part the Flavons are playing in all this,” added dreamingly Cassandra.

When I say run...

"I won't say it, I promise."

Eve shot Flynn an angry look. As usual, he wasn't taking things seriously. She suddenly wished to rip his smile out of his face. When would he learn to behave like an adult? She sighed. The answer was obvious. Never. He would never react the way she hoped he would because she was there for this. While she was around, he would be able to behave like his usual self. She turned towards the rest of the group.

"That's where the door was," she announced.

"The door to the decayed Annex," clarified Jake.

They were standing in front of a very old tree. Ezekiel started to examine thoroughly the trunk, hoping to find any trace of a door.

"I can open the door if you want," offered Morgan. "But I'm not sure that's where you want to go..."

Cassandra faced the sorceress:

"And where would you like to go?"

Baird didn't like the way things were going between the young Librarians and Morgan. As far as she was concerned they would team up until they reached the Annex. She certainly hoped that the sorceress would leave them for good. And yet, deep down, she was starting to have doubts. The fact that Jenkins and Morgan were close again was disturbing to say the least. She still remembered very vividly the day Jenkins ordered her to kill the sorceress...

"Can't we use the way you came here backwards?" Suggested Ezekiel who had apparently decided that it was time to work as a team.

The sorceress shook her head:

"Sadly no. This is our resting place. All we need to do is to reach a state of deep meditation to get here. If we want to leave, we need to find our way home..."

"And since it's the first time we ever came here, we have no idea how to leave..." Added Jenkins.

"Great," sighed Jones. "It really sounds like we are stuck in the middle of this huge forest for the rest of our lives."

"That's a little dramatic, don't you think?" Smiled Baird.

"Shht," suddenly said Jake, forcing everyone to become silent.

His body language suggested that he had spotted something or someone. The colonel's professional instincts kicked in and she focused on their surroundings. Soon, she could hear footsteps. Whoever was approaching their position was trying to be very discrete, which was certainly not a good sign.

"We need to take cover," she whispered. "Someone's coming."

Stone picked a solid stick, ready to fight.

"That won't do you any good," said Jenkins. "We're up against a too powerful enemy..."

His voice trailed off and he collapsed without any warning.

"What's going on?" Asked Cassandra who was starting to feel frightened.

Flynn and Morgan had kneeled next to the Caretaker while Jake, Ezekiel and Eve had taken a defensive position around them.

"We stand no chance if we stay here," said the sorceress. "I'm weakening too. Someone is draining our life force."

And indeed Morgan was looking paler by the minute.

"Open the door," urged Carsen. "We need to take that risk. As long as we are in the Annex, Jenkins and you will be safe. Get ready all of you!"

The sorceress started casting a spell. The shape of a door soon appeared on the trunk. When it creaked open, Eve gave the signal.

"Run!"

Cassandra was the first to go through, followed by Ezekiel. Jake and Flynn were the next to go carrying Jenkins. Morgan and Eve came last and the sorceress sealed the door after her.

They had reached the Annex alright. But it was the decayed version.

"Jenkins won't be very happy when he wakes up," smiled Jones.

Everything's fine

Jenkins began to stir and opened his eyes to find Flynn staring at him with concern.

"How do you feel?"

"Better, thank you."

Carsen helped him get up. The Caretaker frowned when he realised that they were back at the Annex alright but that something was wrong. The place was in such a state of decay, it was as if it had been abandoned for centuries.

"I don't recall leaving the Annex in such a poor state," casually noted Jenkins.

"That's how we found it when we came back from London," explained Ezekiel.

Before the Caretaker could ask another question, Cassandra let out a cry of joy.

"Look! The clipping book! It's back!"

Her companions looked in the direction she was pointing. The book was standing at its usual place and was open.

Jake and Flynn immediately walked towards it, almost colliding in each other when they both leaned on the book. It was indeed quite difficult to see anything in the dim light and Jenkins sighed with annoyance.

"Your sense of priorities never ceases to amaze me," he grunted before he clapped in his hands.

The room was instantly bathed in bright light. Everyone stared at the Caretaker in shock.

"What now?" He grumbled.

"The light... it wouldn't work before," said Eve.

Jenkins simply shrugged and announced that he was going to get changed. Morgan who had remained very quiet laughed softly.

"What a shame. I found that nightdress of yours very fitting..."

He ignored her and disappeared through the door leading to his quarters.

"Is it wise to let him go alone?" Wondered Baird. "We don't know if this version of the Annex is safe..."

"If you want I can go and give him a hand," offered the sorceress with a cocky smile.

"We'd rather keep you in our sight," replied the Colonel.

It was not a suggestion but an order and Morgan complied. She removed the dust that had accumulated on a chair and sat down, looking as the young Librarians tried to solve their problem. She eventually grew tired of their babbling and started staring at the door through which Jenkins had disappeared earlier. It had been quite some time since he had gone and the sorceress wondered what took him so long. She even regretted that she didn't accompany him. He had been through quite an ordeal and she shivered at the thought that she nearly lost him forever. She realised that she didn't want to be the last one remaining. Despite the fact that they had avoided each other for centuries, despite the fact that Jenkins hated her, Morgan knew that she wasn't alone and that thought was enough. But now that someone was threatening the Caretaker's life, things were different. It had been so long since she had feared to lose someone close to her that she had almost forgotten how it tasted. She felt a tear on her cheek and wiped it quickly. She noticed that Flynn was staring at her. She was tempted to make an acid comment but there was something about the way

he looked at her that prevented her doing so. And then he smiled and she frowned. She hadn't paid attention at first but it seemed that the Annex was *recovering* from its decaying state.

"It can't be," she whispered.

But it was real. The Annex was no longer the abandoned place they had reached. It was slowly coming back to life.

Jenkins chose this moment to emerge from the corridor. He was wearing a black suit, a white shirt and a purple bow tie. The sorceress had to admit that he looked far better than a few moments ago.

"You look good for an immortal," she smiled.

"I never realised that you had such a strong relationship with the Annex..." Said Flynn.

Morgan and the Librarian exchanged a glance while the Caretaker raised an eyebrow. Now that he was back, the Annex was alive again.

"Guys," called Carsen. "We were in the right place all along. The Annex decayed because it missed Jenkins. Now that he is back, so is the Annex we know! No more mysteries!"

"Except that we still don't know why the Book sent us after those Flagons and we still don't know who tried to kill Jenkins," sighed Eve. "Apart from that, everything's fine, yes, sure..."

There is a connection

The clipping book was no longer displaying the articles related to the theft of the Flagons.

"Not suprising, considering that they haven't been stolen in the first place," noted Eve.

"I don't like where this is leading us," frowned Jake. "Those Flagons were clearly a decoy meant to send us away from the Annex."

"But whoever devised this scheme also knows how the clipping book works. He or she was able to influence it in such a way that we all thought it was a genuine case," concluded Flynn whose face expressed his concern.

"But who would want to hurt Jenkins?" Asked Cassandra.

To this, Morgan snorted.

"My dear girl, he had time to make a few enemies during the last millennia."

"But certainly not as much as you did," Ezekiel fought back.

"Please," intervened the Caretaker. "Let's try to focus on the case. I can't think of anyone with the skills we describe. Remember that this person not only knows how the clipping book works, but he or she also knows about our resting place. If Dulaque was still around I would have pointed..."

"Oh please," interrupted the sorceress. "Dulaque would never harm you. He may have turned into a nostalgic freak, but his dream was to restore Kamelott's glory."

"And I prevented him from doing that when I defeated him at the Loom of Fate."

Morgan was still unconvinced.

"He loves you, Galeas. He always did. He wanted you on his side. He would never destroy you."

"Maybe you're right. I don't know..."

Jenkins seemed a bit confused and Eve suspected that he was holding something back about Dulaque. She looked around but no one else seemed to have noticed. They were all gathered around the table, like they always did when faced with a difficult case, all thinking about the current mystery. Morgan was standing close to Jenkins and Baird wondered if it was because she feared for his safety or because she felt out of place with the Librarians. Either way she didn't belong here.

"How long have you known about the threat?" Suddenly asked Flynn.

The sorceress shrugged:

"I tried to contact you as soon as I realised that he was in danger."

"Budapest..." Whispered the experienced Librarian. "The cartographer's lair. That's where we need to go. We overlooked something. I'm sure it's connected."

"Connected how?" Asked Jake.

"I don't know yet, but it will eventually come to me."

He was getting excited again, but the Colonel didn't share his enthusiasm. She remembered all too clearly what happened when he went to Budapest last time.

"And what about your friend, the archivist?"

"What about him?"

"We don't know how he reacted after being possessed," she quietly said. "For all we know he might have sealed the room or maybe he burnt it."

Flynn smiled: "Then we better check, right?"

"Alright, but this time, you're not going there alone."

The young Librarians were eager to join them but the Guardian shook her head.

"No, let's not make the same mistake twice. Someone has to look after Jenkins. Just to make sure that nothing happens while we are away."

"Why don't we split up?" Offered Ezekiel. "Cassandra, Jake and Flynn can search the Cartographer's lair while we stay here."

Stone sent him a suspicious glance.

"Why don't you want to go?"

"You heard Eve, someone has to stay to look after Jenkins."

The Caretaker didn't seem too pleased to be the centre of a dispute.

"I'm perfectly capable to look after myself, thank you."

His tone suggested that his pride was hurt.

"I will stay with him," offered Morgan le Fay.

"No," coldly said Eve. "Your involvement in this case stops here and now. Please leave. You're not welcome in the Annex."

The air suddenly felt heavy. Cassandra, Jake and Ezekiel exchanged a worried glance. Even Carsen looked surprised by her sharp tone. Then he was even more surprised when the sorceress didn't fight back. She certainly wasn't the type to get orders from anyone and yet she remained perfectly calm.

Morgan smiled at Jenkins and whispered:

"Take care of yourself, my incorruptible knight."

Together or not at all

As Morgan was about to turn away and leave, Jenkins grabbed her hand and squeezed it, a way to retain her.

"I tend to disagree, Colonel. Morgan le Fay might very well be an asset. We share a common history and maybe a common enemy. I would feel safer if she remained with me while you go explore the cartographer's lair."

Ezekiel, Jake and Cassandra exchanged a glance. When Stone discreetly pointed towards the door leading outside, both the thief and the mathematician nodded. The young Librarians silently left, while Flynn looked at them with envy. Somehow he didn't fancy witnessing what promised to be a heated discussion, but someone needed to be the mediator...

"And I would feel safer if she was not to stay in the Annex. For all we know, she could have organised the whole thing to make us trust her."

Carsen had to admit that she had a point here. Morgan le Fay had quite an history in trickery and cunning. Before Jenkins could argue, Baird went on:

"Plus, as you don't remember anything from your abduction, how can you know that she wasn't one of those who took you away?"

The Librarian had stopped looking at Eve to focus on the sorceress. He could see that she was upset. She was struggling to keep a cool and detached composure, but her body language was betraying her anger. She was furious and Flynn wondered what stopped her from fighting back. A look at the Caretaker's confused face brought him the answer.

"The decision is yours, Jenkins," said Carsen, stepping in the conversation. "But as long as she is here, she is your responsibility."

He then offered his arm to Baird and they both left the room, leaving the knight and the sorceress alone.

"That was awfully clever of you," whispered the Guardian as they walked down the corridor.

"You think? I was rather good, wasn't I?"

He looked very proud and gave her a cheeky smile. Eve rolled her eyes but she was smiling inside...

Jenkins hadn't let go of Morgan's hand. She slowly turned to face him.

"What is your decision?" She asked softly.

There was something different about her. He looked down at their hands, as difficult memories came back.

"I can't forget what you did those last centuries. All those deaths..."

She realised that he didn't dare look her in the eyes and it hurt her more than his words. She came closer and memories came back to her too. Only her memories were from a distant past, when everything was easier, when she was only a girl who believed that magic and chivalry could work together.

She felt nostalgic and wished for those times to be real once more.

"So that's why Dulaque wanted Kamelott back so badly," she whispered.

Jenkins frowned and tensed:

"What did you say?"

This time, their eyes locked and the Caretaker was surprised to see tears in Morgan's eyes.

"I just remembered how happy we were before Kamelott fell. How life was kind on us; that made me think about Dulaque and his hopeless dream..."

She paused and when she spoke again, her voice was hollow.

"Do you remember what we promised each other?"

"Together or not at all," he gently said. "We're in this together..."

Next thing she knew, she was in his arms. She rested her head against his chest, listening to his heartbeats and she whispered like she was casting a spell:

"Together or not at all..."

End of Part 2