

POST MORTEM

by

Thomas Malory II

The Hero is the Villain
Fantasy, Magnifying Glass, Hotel, and Magician

FADE IN:

EXT. MEDIEVAL TOWN - NIGHT

A dense fog swirls through the narrow street. The scant light is only provided by random kerosene lamps and candles through curtained windows.

SUPER: BRITANNIA MID-6TH CENTURY

The only sign of life is a hunched over OLD MAN in a hooded cloak. His face remains in shadows as he slowly drags a heavy trunk across the cobblestone.

Ker-chunk, ker-chunk, ker-chunk

The old man continues until he reaches a double-door entrance with an old wooden sign above that reads VICUS INN.

OLD MAN

Ah, here it is.

He drags his trunk up the steps and through the doors.

INT. VICUS INN - CONTINUOUS

The inn is classic post and beam construction and doubles as a small tavern. A low chatter of conversation comes from a couple of occupied booths.

He makes his way to the BARTENDER and lowers his hood. The old man has a long white beard and wears a leather skull-cap atop his head.

The bartender leans over the bar, looks him up and down, and emotes an indifferent shrug.

BARTENDER

What's your poison?

The old man sniggers and smiles ever so slightly.

OLD MAN

If you only knew.

The bartender is bemused and leans in closer.

BARTENDER

That's why I ask. What do you want?

OLD MAN

I'd like your finest suite and a bottle of cognac.

It's the bartender's turn to laugh.

BARTENDER

How's about a second floor room and a bottle of mead. Best I can do.

The bartender flops a ledger on the bar, opens it and hands the old man a quill. The old man responds with a scowl.

BARTENDER

I don't make the rules. If you want a room, we need a name or a mark.

The old man shrugs, inks the quill, and writes one name as the bartender looks on.

BARTENDER

Merlin?!

The low chatter in the tavern goes silent. All the patrons turn and gawk.

MERLIN

Well, THAT cat's out of the bag. Now, can you have someone bring my trunk up to the room?

BARTENDER

Sorry, sir, but I got no one that--

A young man, PERRY (18), sprints to the bar from a booth in the corner.

PERRY

I'll do it! I mean, um, I can help with the trunk.

Merlin turns expectedly to Perry. The bartender shrugs and hands him a key.

BARTENDER

Have at it, kid. Top of the stairs on your right. Number two.

Merlin grabs the bottle of mead and struggles slowly up the stairs. Perry follows effortlessly with the trunk.

ROOM NUMBER TWO

Merlin enters into the darkness, finds a candle on the table, and snaps his fingers.

MERLIN

Ignitio maximo.

A flame erupts from the wick and lights the room unnaturally bright. Perry, standing in the doorway, drops the trunk.

PERRY

Whoa.

Merlin opens a pouch on his belt and hands Perry a coin.

MERLIN

Many thanks, Perry.

PERRY

Oh, the pleasure is...wait...how'd you know my name?

Merlin smirks and points to his self.

MERLIN

For one, I'm Merlin. And two, I've been expecting you.

Perry is baffled.

PERRY

Me? Wha-

MERLIN

Close the door and have a seat.

Perry does as he's told and they sit at a small table.

MERLIN

I hear you claim to be quite the mage. I've also heard that you liken yourself to me. Show me something.

PERRY

But I, uh, okay.

Perry holds the coin he was just given between thumb and forefinger. He waves his other hand over, around, and, POOF, it disappears.

Merlin scoffs.

MERLIN

Are you just a mere trickster? Come on, show me...magic.

Perry takes off a rope that he uses as a belt. He coils it, cuts it with his knife, and it uncoils in one piece.

Merlin shakes his head in disappointment.

MERLIN

It seems I've been misinformed.

Perry panics.

PERRY

Merlin, sir, I'm your biggest fan. Let me be your apprentice. I'd do anything to be you.

Merlin raises his eyebrows.

MERLIN
You want to be me?

PERRY
I've always wanted to be you.

MERLIN
You know, there's not much life left in me. I'm an old soul. It's my sorcery and wit that's kept me going all these years.

Merlin leans back and takes a long look at Perry.

MERLIN
Okay, if that's what you want. Let me show you some real magic.

Merlin opens his trunk, digs through the contents and pulls out a base-mounted large magnifying glass.

He places it in the center of the table between them. Merlin leans in close.

MERLIN
When you look in the glass, what do you see?

Perry leans in close.

PERRY
A very large you?

MERLIN
As I see a very large you. And as you slowly withdraw?

They both retract slowly.

PERRY
It blurs. What comes into focus is an inverted image of you.

MERLIN
Precisely. Now, hold my hands and we'll do the same again.

They reach across the table and hold hands with the glass in the middle. They lean in close once more.

MERLIN
Ready? Repeat after me...Tu fui ego eris.

PERRY
Tu fui ego eris.

The candle flares and the room flashes a brilliant white.

Perry POV: The image of Merlin blurs and, when it comes into focus, becomes an inverted image of Perry.

PERRY
I see me!

MERLIN
As I see me.

Perry's body now occupies the cloak whilst the hunched over Merlin is in the lad's shirt and trousers.

MERLIN
Perry, your wish is granted. You...
are me.

Perry stares in shock at his hands with spindly fingers and knurled knuckles.

PERRY
What have you done?!

MERLIN
I gave you your first lesson.

Merlin removes his cloak and drapes it over Perry's hunched shoulders.

MERLIN
You'll need that.

The now youthful Merlin returns the magnifying glass to the trunk, locks the clasp, and hoists it on one shoulder.

MERLIN
I bid you well, Perry. Or shall I
say, Merlin.

With that, Merlin grabs the bottle of mead and leaves as Perry clutches his chest and cries out with his last breath.

FADE TO BLACK