

# THE COTTAGE By Jo A. Hiestand

## EXCERPT

McLaren's cheeks flooded with color, and he felt his mouth go dry. He was embarrassed as well as honored by Barry's request, but how could he find such a man? Barry stared at McLaren, that same fear in his eyes, yet with a bit of hope, McLaren thought. Barry's gaze never wavered, and McLaren placed his hand on the man's shoulder, squeezing it slightly. "I'll try, Barry. But I need to know what Mordred looks like. Did you see him well enough so you can tell me? Is his hair dark or light? Is he bigger than I am?" McLaren patted his chest. "If you saw him walk, does he have a limp?" He stopped, not wanting to overwhelm Barry with questions.

"I don't know. It was night. His light didn't show him." The fear was still in his voice, but his grip on McLaren's arm has lightened somewhat. "You'll find him. You'll know when you see him. He's bad."

McLaren considered asking another question but thought it best to drop the identification attempt. "And Mordred and the man were at the cave, right? Outside of it?"

Barry nodded. "I was waiting for Pendragon's horse to come to take me home. That's why I saw them."

McLaren blinked. Was the horse one of the cars that dropped Barry off at the kilns? "Did you wait a long time for the horse?"

"All night. It didn't come until morning. I don't like being at the cave at night. Too dark. I went where it was safe. I stayed behind a bush after Mordred killed the man."