

The guards assembled outside the wizard's hearing range.

"We needs to get that wizard," the first one said, pounding a ham-like fist into the ground.

"Yeah," his second-in-command agreed.

"He *needs* to come with us."

"Uh-huh."

"Otherwise, well, otherwise--"

"We'd have more people trying to resist arrest, and more people helping Lorius," the junior guard finished for him.

The two senior guards turned to him, one of them raising his hand to strike. The junior guard cringed. This was his first time on a job, and he kept forgetting he wasn't supposed to speak.

"So how does we get him?" The first again spoke.

The second nodded. "Yeah, how?"

"Do we needs to get him, or just teach him a lesson?" first mused out loud.

The junior guard sighed and held back his thoughts. They would be unappreciated, after all.

"Yeah!" the second agreed, again.

"Yeah, just a lesson! Maybe, maybe, a *fiery* lesson!" The first guard's face broke into a grin.

Hesitantly, to avoid the thrashing he'd get if he were over-eager, the junior guard offered the fire starters, straw, and special ignition fluid to the senior guards.

The two senior guards laughed stupidly. "We'll *burn* him out, or burn *him!*"

"Yeah, we'll burn him, or burn him out," the second once again echoed.

The junior guard sighed resignedly. He didn't really like this part of his job, but the King's Justice must be upheld. Break one law, or let one miscreant get away, and that would bring trouble. Besides, they had a traitor to catch. Burning out the strange old man who had aided Lorius would be a more efficient way to getting the end results: Capturing Lorius, and making him face justice for all he had done. Exactly what Lorius had done, the junior guard didn't know. But he trusted the King's Justice, and the king said Lorius was a traitor. The king spoke for the King's Justice, and that was enough. The traitor, and all who aided and abetted "traitorous treason" (the junior guard winced at that), would need to be "taken care of." King's Justice depended upon it.

"But... he might see us if we burns him right now," the first guard said. The junior guard was astonished at the thoughtful tone in his voice. "Maybe, if we waits until tonight, he won't see it coming!"

"Yeah!" the second agreed.

"We'll burn him tonight, then!"

The two senior guards laughed again. The junior guard sat down moodily. If this was what he had to look forward to as a senior guard, he wasn't sure even the King's Justice was worth it.