

Ghost of Parties Past

by timestep

Birthday celebrations

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: written for bambu345 @ hpcon_envy who gave the prompts holey and ghost. BIG thanks to sshg316 for the really quick beta job! Anything you recognize is not mine, but either JKRs or credited at the bottom of the story.

"Do you have the recipe for the 'Ghost of Parties Past' punch?" George shouted from the counter he was standing on as he opened the cabinet with all the alcohol leftover from their previous soirees. On the counter next to George was the ugliest punch bowl anyone had ever seen. It looked like someone had formed the basin, painted it a hideous puce green, and then squished it down, causing the entire dish to bubble out at odd angles. No one was certain how it held liquid, but it seemed to contain an unending supply of beverages.

"Right here, Bro," Fred said.

"Take all alcohol left over from any party held in the past five years," Fred read from the piece of paper in his hand, "pour it into a punch bowl, add fruit punch, mix, serve to unsuspecting party guests."

"Excellent."

George handed down all the bottles as Fred unscrewed each one and began to pour the many liquids into the ugly green punch bowl.

When they were done, Fred headed to the living room. All the furniture was pushed against the walls, making the room look larger than it was, and a makeshift bar had been set up in a corner.

"I have the rest of the stuff in here," Fred shouted to George, who was still in the kitchen.

Fred looked at the pile of WWW products sitting on the living room table as he inventoried the items.

"Instant Darkness Powder for making our grand entrance, Headless Hats so the guests won't know who they are talking to—"

"Wildfire Whiz-Bangs," George shouted from the kitchen, "and don't forget our newest product, the WOW Pops—crackers so amazing when they pop, you can only say **WOW**."

Fred laughed as he walked into the kitchen. "I have one more for you here, George. No birthday party would be complete without a birthday present for the birthday boy."

Fred handed George a wrapped package. The paper was covered with colorful squiggles that squirmed around the package and balloons that would grow bigger until they popped in a burst of confetti.

George smiled tentatively as he opened the package. Inside was a book.

"Fred, you wrote a book? Without me?" he said as he looked at the cover of the book.

The Complete Book of Jokes and Gags.

"Open it. I dedicated it to you."

As George opened the book, five Muggle joke snakes suddenly assaulted him. He looked at Fred, completely shocked that his brother got him as Fred dissolved into a fit of giggles while rolling on the floor. This was a day to be remembered.

"Happy April Fools', mate," Fred said between laughs.

"Happy birthday to you, too."

That had been two years ago. Now, George's family and friends all knew to leave him alone on March 31st. Most days, he was not so lost. Most days he was able to complete his sentences on his own, without missing the voice that used to chime in with him. But today was not most days.

After closing the shop, George planned to climb the stairs to his flat—alone. He planned to pull on the old, holey jumper his mum had knitted for Fred, the one with the faded yellow F. He planned to make a batch of "Ghost of Parties Past", get two glasses, and toast his brother.

A/N: The book was inspired by the comic strip Lio, here is yesterday's comic: <http://wpcomics.washingtonpost.com/client/wpc/lio/2009/07/17/>