

Caught!

by apisa_b

Inspired by the "After Hours Challenge" on the LiveJournal-community "30minutefics".

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Chapter 1 of 1

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General Disclaimer: Jo owns them. I'm only playing around.

The light of the waxing moon painted intricate patterns of light and shadow on the floor of Greenhouse 3, as it filtered through the glass paneled roof. It was well past curfew, and so it could be expected that only the moonlight should touch the leaves of the various plants that filled the structure.

But in one secluded corner, a woman, deep in thought, caressed the blossoms of a honking daffodil. Here, in the silence of the night, she could be herself, a woman with feelings and desires; a woman who, during the day, had to uphold appearances. It wouldn't do if she displayed this hidden part of herself to the world. Too much was at stake.

As footsteps ruptured the silence, she turned, smiling, and opened her arms to a welcoming embrace. As soon as HE stepped into her arms, his mouth found hers, and they lost themselves in the dance their lips and tongues performed.

When, at last, they broke the kiss, they leaned into each other, their foreheads touching.

"I wish we could show the world how we feel. I'm so tired of concealing my emotions during the day," she sighed.

"I know, my love, but we have to subordinate our feelings to the greater scheme. If our relationship were to become public, they would finally succeed in removing me from my post. The board of governors frowns upon relationships such as ours. Too easily they would construe an abuse of my position of power over you."

"Abuse of your position of power, indeed! As if ..." she bristled.

In a soothing gesture, he raised his arm and covered the side of her face with his hand, his thumb caressing her lower lip tenderly.

"We both know that isn't the case, but we dare not risk it. Here, at Hogwarts, I'm very valuable. I'm able to keep an eye on many things with the castle's help, and I can protect the children. And moreover ... I don't want you to become more of a target than you already are." His voice faltered at the very thought of her being harmed.

"I am perfectly capable of defending myself. Let them come. I will take many of them down with me!"

"And that's exactly what I don't want to happen. If they take me, you'll have to remain at the castle and take care of things for me. And that's why we only have our nights," he whispered, and their lips met, again.

They were so lost in one another, that they were unaware of a pair of eyes watching them. But as the ear-piercing crash of a shattered flower pot rang through the night, they spun around with their wands leveled, prepared to hex the intruder who used the night to steal into the confines of the castle. But they only came face to face with a shaking boy.

"Mr. Longbottom!" Professor McGonagall cried out, "What on earth are you doing out of bed at this hour! This is outrageous! At dangerous times such as these! You will serve deten--"

"My dear Minerva," Albus Dumbledore interrupted her, "I think Mr. Longbottom is frightened sufficiently by the sight of the two of us towering over him, wands drawn, so I am confident that he has learned his lesson. And I believe if we forget we've seen him out of bed tonight, he may extend to us the same courtesy. Are we in agreement, Mr. Longbottom?" the headmaster asked, smiling conspiratorially at the boy.

Slowly, comprehension dawned on the face of the fearful young man, and as he tentatively returned the headmaster's smile, he said, "I haven't seen or heard anything, sir. Nothing at all!"

"I suggest you return to your common room immediately, Mr. Longbottom," McGonagall advised stiffly.

As the embarrassed young wizard turned to leave, Dumbledore inclined his head to whisper something in his beloved's ear.

"Mr. Longbottom!" his Head of House called out to him.

He stopped abruptly, and then turned to face her. "Y-Y-Yes, Professor McGonagall?" he stuttered nervously, in expectation of his punishment.

"Ten points to Gryffindor for your... erm... cooperation. Now, hurry along."

Alone once more, they continued with their tryst as if nothing had ever happened.

Author's note: Many thanks to vocalion, who showed me how much a brilliant beta can improve a story.