

Coffee

by Aling

"It tastes like warmth and familiarity and affection."

One

Chapter 1 of 1

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The first time Hermione tastes coffee, she is eleven years old and scalds her throat. With all the bravado and overconfidence of youth, she turns down her mother's offer of milk and sugar, opting to "enjoy it in its unaltered state." The bitter taste startles her, and she quickly swallows the mouthful of liquid before the flavor can linger any longer. She drowns her taste buds in and soothes her vocal chords with orange juice afterwards.

The second time she chooses to partake of the beverage, she is prepared for the coffee's harsh acidity. She limits herself to one sugar cube, unable as the daughter of two dentists to add any more in good conscience, and a dollop of cream. She grimaces as she takes her first sip, but forces herself to imbibe slowly. The coffee's rich, bold flavors erupt on her tongue, deepening in complexity in the span of a few seconds. She grudgingly admits to herself that it's not *terrible*. Nevertheless, she decides to stick to her traditional English Breakfast.

Her third cup of coffee tastes remarkably like Harry's morning kisses, like his silent promises *fo later*, like his bittersweet, cream-and-sugar-coated evening kisses when he leans down over the sofa on which she is reading, his awkward fingers catching in her tangles, an elderly Crookshanks mewling in protest as his space by Hermione's feet is invaded by long limbs and discarded clothes.

It tastes like warmth and familiarity and affection.

She asks Harry to brew two cups of French Roast instead of one the next morning, and then every morning after that.