

The New Professor

by JackieJLH

What does Hogwarts do better, really, than beginnings?

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Notes: This was originally written for the genhp_idws Last Drabble Writer Standing competition on LJ. The prompt was "The Older Generation", which could be used in any context, for any story between 100 and 500 words. Many thanks to Christev for alpha reading and helping me trim the word count, and Pyjama pants for beta reading! :D

Amidst the chatter of young voices, the new professor walks toward the Head Table.

~*~

He'd never really expected to be back here. He'd had plans, of course—plans that involved saving the world from itself, and maybe love, too, when there was a quiet moment amongst the chaos.

But... well, all things must come to an end, and if that plan was cut short too early, it was most certainly for the best. Especially after... *Merlin*, he can't even think about it without tears welling up in his eyes.

He'll do well at Hogwarts, he thinks, mentally changing the subject. And maybe he can watch for anyone too ambitious; anyone who might think to pick up where he and Gellert had left off.

~*~

She'd never really expected to be back here. She'd had plans, of course—a respectable job at the Ministry, a cottage somewhere, a loving someone to welcome her home. Maybe even children, one day.

Of course, the war stole all of that away, didn't it?

But such is life, and there's no point in crying now over what will never be. Not excessively, anyway.

The offer letter from Professor Dumbledore—*Albus*, she reminds herself—had been a godsend, in a way. A change of pace will be nice; at least for a while. And she's always enjoyed Transfiguration.

~*~

He'd never really expected to be back here. He'd had plans, of course; all the Marauders had. They'd fancied themselves heroes, he supposes. Maybe they had been. Well, most of them.

But war wasn't *glorious*. He'd seen so many die, and nothing about it had been *exciting* or *heroic*.

Still, he'd kept hope; they'd all make it through, as long as they were together.

And he *had* made it, for the most part, with the notable exception of his heart, shattered on a long-ago Halloween night and ground into dust by the intervening, lonely years.

He's been searching for a place to call home for so long.

He hasn't belonged anywhere since....

Well.

Maybe McGonagall was right—it's never too late to start over.

Perhaps he can belong *here*.

~*~

He'd never really expected to be back here. He'd had plans, of course—and he'd followed through on most of them. Not all, but he supposes that's about the same for anyone. But working for the Ministry was vaguely... soul-crushing. He was tired of hating his job.

So, here he is. He's mildly terrified, truth be told, but he thinks he can do this. After all the things he's survived in this very building, teaching can't be *too* bad.

Besides, Hannah seemed impressed when he told her, so... maybe things *there* will change for the better, too.

~*~

This is all like a second chance. A new beginning. And what does Hogwarts do better, really, than beginnings?

With a determined nod, the new professor sits at the High Table with the rest of the staff for the first time as the

doors open and the Sorting starts.