

No More Stuffy Parties

by peppermint

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Chapter 1 of 1

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I've been to a lot of stuffy parties in my day. Ginny always gets after me for not knowing the right fork, but I just don't care as much as she does. She got Hermione to teach her all the proper etiquette one summer at the Burrow. I do remember not to divorce the salt and pepper, but that's as far as I get.

Anyway, back to stuffy parties. Been to a lot of them—as an Auror and a “War Hero”, I get a lot of invitations. Ginny's really fond of getting dressed up and going out into society, but I mostly end up sitting a little out of the way nursing a tumbler of Firewhisky. Sometimes Ron or Hermione join me in my corner, or George. Arthur likes to escape too, but Molly hunts him down soon enough. At least Ginny understands that I hate small talk and fake people.

However, last week I inadvertently discovered an excellent way to spice up stuffy parties. Ambrosious Flume was retiring from Honeydukes', and in addition to free-flowing alcohol, there were bowls and platters of sweets and candies all over the place. The corner I had managed to commandeer for myself happened to be stocked with Ice Mice and Pepper Imps. Ice Mice and Firewhiskey did not go very well together, and Ron suggested I try the Pepper Imps instead.

The combination was pleasantly spicy, leaving a warm and comfortable feeling in my stomach, but I soon got the urge to belch. I knew it was going to be ridiculously loud, and I excused myself to head to the gents'. I only got halfway there before I fell to my knees in pain as a fountain of fire erupted from my open mouth, setting everything in its path ablaze. I did manage to recover and cast *Aguaamenti* a few times to put out the flames, but the damage was already done. A bill for a new rug and curtains was delivered by owl the next morning at breakfast, to the mortification of my wife and amusement of my children.

We haven't been invited to any parties since. I can't say I mind.