

Old Friends

by lyn_f

Harry and Neville share a park bench as they quietly celebrate a milestone birthday.

Old Friends

Chapter 1 of 1

Harry and Neville share a park bench as they quietly celebrate a milestone birthday.

I don't own them. It's all JK Rowling's. I'm just borrowing them for the moment.

Old friends, old friends

Sat on their park bench like bookends

A newspaper blown through the grass

Falls on the round toes

Of the old shoes of the old friends.

Harry and Neville were sitting on an old park bench in a plaza near the old church and graveyard where his parents were buried. It was early morning, and the sun was just barely rising above the horizon. The two old friends, with birthdays a day apart from each other, agreed to meet and reminisce about days gone past.

But when they met at the bench, all they could do was sit quietly and watch life go by: a bird chirping and hopping past them, bees buzzing from flower to flower, a flock of ducks waddling past them single file.

"I can't believe we're thirty," Neville said quietly.

Harry nodded. The day before, they had met some of their other friends at Hogwarts to celebrate Neville's thirtieth birthday in addition to celebrating the fifth anniversary of his having taken over the Herbology professor position upon Professor Sprout's retirement. It was a reunion of sorts, and it was wonderful to see everyone again.

"Any big plans for your birthday tonight?" Neville asked.

Harry shook his head. "Ginny's off with the Harpies and the children are at the grandparents'. I think it's just going to be a quiet day." He leaned back into his bench and sighed. "And that's just how I like it. No fuss. No huge parties. No grand speeches. I can just be... me. I can be Mrs. Potter's Mr. Potter."

Neville smiled as he watched what appeared to be an old copy of the *Daily Prophet* blow past them in the gentle late July breeze.

The sounds of the city sifting through trees

Settle like dust on the shoulders of the old friends

Old friends, memory brushes the same years,

Silently sharing the same fears

At Neville's party, a group of old friends were drinking to the memories of friends long gone. The war that had shaped their adolescence seemed like a lifetime ago. Shared memories, both funny and sad, wove through their consciousness, binding them together.

"Ah, those were the days," an obviously drunk Seamus declared.

"Indeed," everyone else mumbled as they drank another round of Firewhisky.

"To old friends and old memories," Dean said as he lifted his glass.

"To old friends and old memories," everyone else mumbled.

"And to those who gave their lives so we could live our lives free of threat," said Ron.

As the sounds of the morning traffic reached their ears, both Harry and Neville stood up.

"Hannah will need my help soon," Neville murmured. He shook Harry's hand. "Happy thirtieth, mate. If you're not doing anything later, why don't you stop by for a pint? We'd be more than happy to see you at the Leaky."

Harry nodded. "We'll see. Thanks for spending a quiet morning with me."

They wandered down the park, away from the hustle of the waking morning.

"Daddy!" "Uncle Harry!"

Harry was tackled by his three children as well as his other nieces and nephews. Ron walked into the room, chuckling.

"They were talking about making an Uncle Harry sandwich before you walked in," he said, smiling. "When you're able to make your way out of the jungle, you should come into the kitchen. Mum wants to show you something."

Harry's chuckle was barely audible above the giggling of the children. "All right," he said.

Eventually, Harry and the children wandered off to the kitchen, where the sight and smells of Harry's favourite foods were awaiting him. The walls were decorated with little flying Snitches.

"Happy Birthday, Harry!" Molly said as she enveloped Harry in a bear hug.

Harry smiled. There was nothing he liked better than to spend such days in the company of family. Happy Birthday, indeed.

A/N: Prompt issued by karelia: In honour of his 30th birthday, how is Harry spending it?

The song lyrics: "Old Friends," words and music by Paul Simon.

The quote, "I can be Mrs. Potter's Mr. Potter" is adapted from an episode of M*A*S*H, where Col. Potter was explaining how he'd like to spend his days after retiring from the Army.

Thanks go to blue artemis for the beta-reading.