

Dungbombs for Everyone

by Josie

George solves a mystery that has been plaguing Diagon Alley.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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George Weasley was really tired of the Dungbombs. As sole proprietor of Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes, he was being blamed for every malodorous stench on Diagon Alley, and lately there seemed to be a lot of them. The sales of Dungbombs didn't seem to match the incidents, plus the scent fell outside the range of Hideous and Vile, the two types of Dungbombs offered. George remembered that Fred was like a wizarding thesaurus as they had up with the names of the options. Fred had wanted to come up with a third Dungbomb to use the name "Wretched," but that never came out of R&D.

Development of new product was always a sticking point for George and his younger brother, Ron. Ron meant well, but he wasn't as creative or as devious as Fred. Ron's wife, Hermione, was devious enough, but repressed it too much to be helpful. George's thoughts went to Fred, as they often did when he was in the shop. George walked around, tidied shelves and went over to the Reusable Hangman floor model. "Spell it or he'll swing!"

"That was genius, Fred," George mused. It seemed someone had started a game, as the figure was at the bottom of the gallows steps.

George walked away from the little man and heard a small pop. Turning back, he thought he saw a tiny puff of smoke next to the hangman. Since it had his attention, he decided to play out the last puzzle in the sand tray under the gallows. He tapped his wand on the tray, and two word spaces appeared, one with three letters, the other with five. As he worked out the puzzle, he made a mental note to adjust the latency time for unsolved puzzles – the store had closed over an hour ago. Calling out letters, the little man walked up as George missed some of them, but quickly solved for "HEY FORGE."

George was stunned. Could it be? There was only one way to find out, as he reset the hangman. His silent partner left the hangman languishing at the bottom of the steps, and "HEY GRED" appeared in the sand, letter by letter. George moved the Reusable Hangman display into the lab for further testing.

"It's really you?" George squeaked.

"Been trying to get your attention for months," appeared in the sand.

"Where have you been?"

"Everywhere, nowhere. 93 Diagon Alley most recently."

George sat down on a stool, closed his eyes and rubbed his temples. This could not be.

"It's really me. Been working on that third Dungbomb. Whiz-bang color next."

George laughed until he couldn't breathe. "That's brilliant!"

"Of course, my dear brother, why wouldn't it be?"

"By the way, can you knock off the Dungbomb testing in the back alleys? I'm sick of hearing about it."

"Sure," and the shop suddenly filled with a wretched smell.

George beamed.

a/n Thanks to my beta for her professional development moments. I will eventually learn the finer points of comma usage. Today is not that day.

Prompt: An unseen presence unsettles the denizens of Diagon Alley.