

How Argus Got His Groove Back

by SS Lupin

Was Argus Filch the non magical cantankerous caretaker of Hogwarts? Or was he a misunderstood man still coming into his magical prowess? Find out here.

One-shot.

Chapter 1 of 1

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How Argus Got His Groove Back

Argus Filch sat in his office admiring the manacles he'd finished polishing moments earlier. They were a lovely set he had purchased several years ago, and they still gleamed like new whenever he gave them a good shine.

His gaze wandered to the cabinet where he had collected confiscated items for decades. No matter how many detentions he had overseen and patrols he had made, there were always errant students with spelled objects that he wished he could punish properly.

He looked up at all the chains and torture devices he had amassed over the decades, all hanging from the ceiling or walls. God, he loved them all.

And then Filch's eyes finally rested on his desk, where he found the edge of the latest Kwikspell newsletter peaking out from a pile of parchment.

The sounds of screaming brought Filch out of the peace of his office. Who was it that was making the infernal noise? Was it some annoying student? A member of the staff? Was Minerva hurt? Filch ran in the direction of the noise before he recognized the high-pitched yelling.

The Headmistress was in trouble yet again.

Dolores Umbridge was a power hungry bitch, there was no doubt about that... but she knew how children should be disciplined.

Filch quickened his pace to get a chance at using his beautiful chains.

~*~

The bloody brats.

Filch stormed into Umbridge's office and unlocked the last broomstick that had once been part of a trio. Now it was surrounded by broken chains and dust and debris from the damaged brick wall. He grabbed the broomstick and walked out of the classroom, still furious at the most recent events that had taken place.

Those damn Weasley twins had been the bane of his existence for seven years, and he couldn't even get the new drop-outs to serve a detention after what they had done. To top it all off, they inspired a host of new brats trying to take the former position of school fools. Why, he had spent a better portion of the morning scraping the remnants of a Dungbomb in the corridor by the Charms classroom!

It would have been easier with magic, Filch thought as he entered his office, chaining the offending broomstick to the wall. But that would never happen; he could never have such a thing. He caught sight of the Kwikspell letter and ripped it up into shreds before tossing it into the fireplace.

~*~

It had happened. After almost half a century of patrolling hallways and punishing miscreants, Filch had failed to protect the school. Death Eaters had come to Hogwarts, children had been injured, and Dumbledore.... No, he couldn't think about it. Wouldn't think about it. The worst of times had finally come, and there was nothing he could do to protect himself and Mrs. Norris. Even worse, he'd betrayed the headmaster only the year before by backing Umbridge wholeheartedly instead of remaining loyal to the one wizard who saw him as a human being not defining between wizard and Squib.

Filch straightened out his tie and slicked back his hair. Then he walked out the door, Mrs. Norris at his heels, ready to give the former headmaster a final goodbye.

~*~

The summer weeks were peaceful to Filch. He would do his maintenance in the school by day, and drink and modify his disciplinary devices at night. He couldn't believe that Hogwarts would remain open the following year he still had his job and his home. Filch settled into the armchair in his chambers, a glass of Scotch in his hands. It felt good to get profoundly drunk, he thought, draining the cup in a single gulp. But he would need more alcohol...

"*Accio Scotch,*" Filch muttered bitterly. The bottle of liquor was on a small table on the other side of the room. He stood to retrieve his drink when he saw the bottle move.

Filch blinked, but the bottle was still again. He laughed. *That's what happens when the drink gets to you.* Filch stumbled over to the table and reached for the bottle, but they split into two bottles. Filch tried to grab the bottle on the left, but his hand went right through it. He went for the bottle on the right, but that was an illusion as well. A third bottle appeared next to the others.

"You bloody bottle," he said, "think you can outsmart me? All I want is to get pissed as hell, but you have to keep turning into another bottle. Is it because I'm a Squib? Because I don't have a fucking twig I wave around to make sparks appear? I don't go on a broomstick, and I don't wear a pointed hat, but I have rights same as you!" Filch lunged for the bottle, but that one wasn't real either, and Filch then saw a table covered with bottles.

Filch growled at the table and collapsed into his armchair, resigned to sleep off the night more sober than he'd like.

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The next morning, Filch woke to find one bottle of scotch in his hand with the table empty. As he brought the bottle to his lips, he wondered *did it arrive there magically?*

Filch snorted. That was highly unlikely. The important thing was that the liquor was where it was meant to be inside of him.

Suddenly, the flames in his fireplace turned green, and a stern but lovely face appeared in the fire.

"Argus? I know it's early, but I need to speak to you immediately."

"Not a problem, Minerva. What's the matter?" Filch set the bottle down quickly.

"There is a full staff meeting today at noon and your presence is required."

"Not to worry, I'll be there." Filch debated whether to smile at her, but before he made his choice, Minerva was already gone.

~*~

It was pointless, asking him to show at the meeting. The professors all had stayed, with the notable exception of Snape, over the summer were going over the security protocols that would be in place the next term. Like he could be a part of any of it with all the spell work involved. Sure, everyone claimed that Hagrid wasn't allowed to do magic, leaving him and Filch in a similar rut, but Filch suspected Hagrid was hiding something in that pink umbrella of his that everyone chose to ignore. Filch was no doubt the only non-magical being on staff.

And he couldn't take Minerva's looks anymore. They weren't much, but over the years, Filch noticed when Minerva's eyes would dart from her spectacles and soften when they met his. He had observed the late evenings when he would tidy up the staff room and she'd remain, claiming she wanted to finish grading one more essay or read another chapter in her book before she headed to her rooms.

Filch had already told her in no uncertain terms that she and he could never be she was a powerful and successful witch, while he was a Squib working at Hogwarts only because of Dumbledore's past good graces.

Oh, he had promised himself he wouldn't tear up at the thought of the old headmaster, and now he was headed for a big blubbing cry.

Filch stopped his frantic pacing throughout the school building and looked out a nearby window. The grounds of Hogwarts stretched out before him, and Filch could see the place where Dumbledore was buried.

Filch would try one more time. Not for the children, not for Minerva but for Dumbledore.

~*~

It wasn't that hard sneaking to the Charms classroom to "borrow" a feather from Flitwick's supplies. No, the real challenge was to make the thing fly up.

"*Wingardium Leviosa.*" Nothing.

"*Wingardium Leviosa,*" he said, accenting the last syllable. Still nothing.

"*Wingardium Leviosa.*" Maybe stressing the 'o' would work. Filch saw the feather flutter... was it working?

"Or a bloody breeze more like." Filch tried to accompany the spell by swishing and flicking his index finger to no avail. He heard Mrs. Norris mewling, and turned to see his cat give him the look that was usually reserved for the troublesome students that she would catch in the corridors.

The look said, *God, you're stupid.*

He needed a wand to channel his energy, but he'd be laughed out of any respectable wand shop if he showed up without any magical ability...

Ollivander was still missing, though. And his store still had the merchandise...

Filch's lips spread into a ghastly smile as he began his plan.

~*~

Filch couldn't Apparate and couldn't fly a broomstick. Traveling by Portkey left him vomiting for hours, and he couldn't make one even if he wanted to use one of the buggers.

Thus, Filch sat on the Hogwarts Express as it chugged along the tracks to platform nine and three-quarters. The train was surprisingly full of wizards and witches young couples were taking a nostalgic scenic trip to London, while some of the older populace of the magical community were in the train not wishing to splinch themselves on a trip. Then there were the wizarding families who couldn't quite transport all of their children via broomstick and wished that the ban on flying carpets could be removed someday soon.

Filch had shut himself in an empty cabin, not wishing to be in the company of so many magical people and their children.

Not until he could get his hands on a wand.

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Filch rented out a room in the Leaky Cauldron and stayed there until nightfall. He left his room at around midnight and ordered a drink at the bar, waiting for his chance.

There. A raucous group of drunk wizards was leaving the pub, heading for the courtyard leading to Diagon Alley. Filch paid his tab and followed them out.

"Which stone do I got to tap?" one wizard said with his wand in hand.

"I dunno," another said, leaning against the wall.

Filch checked his pocket watch. He didn't want to spend too much time out when he had to get his wand, but the imbeciles were still poking at the wall in all the wrong places.

"Give me that!" Filch grabbed the wand from the nearest wizard and marched up to the trash can in the courtyard.

"Three up and two to the right." Filch tapped the brick he'd selected three times and held his breath.

After some moments, the archway leading to Diagon Alley appeared. Filch's smirked to himself at the sight, and he turned to face the speechless wizards, who were no doubt all Hogwarts alumni.

"And that," Filch said as he passed the wand back to the wizard and left the group of bewildered men, "is how you wield a wand."

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Filch observed the street in front of the shop. It was blessedly empty, with all the other shops surrounding it closed for the night. No one wanted to be out alone at night when Death Eaters were on the loose again.

Filch approached the store and hoped he could get through without getting caught. His hand hovered above the doorknob for some moments before he grabbed it and opened the door.

The shop was dark and dusty. As Filch shut the door, he felt a thick layer of dust coating the doorknob on the other side. Filch took care not to breathe in too deeply; he almost choked on the stale air within the shop.

Filch's eyes took in the many shelves full of wands. Now all he had to do was find the right one...

"H-halt! Stop w-where y-you're g-g-going!" A small voice sounded from the back of the shop.

Filch froze. The store was supposed to be empty. Now he'd be arrested for attempted theft and God-knew-what-else. Unless...

"Who's there?" Filch stepped toward the voice.

"Sh-shop keeper... Edmund Ollivander at your s-service don't come any c-closer!" A young wizard in his early twenties rose from behind the counter, his wand aimed at Filch. He had a narrow face, short dark hair, and wide eyes that looked ready to pop out at any moment. Filch tried his best to smile, but it only seemed to scare the boy further.

"I'm looking for a wand, Edmund."

Edmund lowered his own. "Oh, g-g-good, not another thief... S-seems that everyone and their mother have tried to steal from here now that my uncle's... away."

"What a shame," Filch said, pretending as if he wasn't just attempting to do the same thing moments earlier.

"Y-yes... it is." Edmund walked over to one of the shelves and began searching through the boxes.

"You've been measured before?" Edmund asked as he set up a stack of wands on a nearby stool.

"Yes, but it's been years..." Filch had no idea what the man was talking about, so he went along.

"Not a problem." Edmund seemed at ease at this point and handed a wand to Filch. "See what you can do with this."

Filch held the wand in his hands for a moment, but Edmund took it away. "No... no," the wizard muttered, handing another wand to Filch. "So what happened to your former wand?" Edmund asked conversationally as he handed to, then took away from, Filch wand after wand.

"Er... trampled. By hippogriffs." Filch wanted to cringe at such a bad lie, but Edmund just shook his head and handed Filch yet another wand.

"What a shame, that," he said, observing Filch. "No, hold on to it. I think this is the one. Go on, wave it!"

Filch did as Edmund asked, but nothing spectacular nor glorious occurred. Filch's heart sank. He was found out now... he had no powers, and he had no hope for doing something that mattered.

And then he heard the sound of a kitten mewling.

"It seems that your Transfiguration skills are up to par, sir." Edmund murmured *aFinite Incantatem*, and the gray kitten turned back into an old wand box. "This is a pine and dragon heartstring, twelve inches a wand perfect for transfiguration, as a matter of fact. Though I'd imagine your charms work is left to be desired?"

"I guess." Filch's heart sprang back into its squelchy beating. He had a wand and he had a chance. Hell, he turned a box into a cat!

However, Filch almost had a heart attack when Edmund notified him of the wand's cost.

~*~

Filch spent the trip back on the Hogwarts Express practicing as many spells as he could. He soon realized, after spending some Galleons on his wand, that even if he hadn't purchased the wand as his plan had dictated, he still needed to buy some basic spell books. He knew which ones were necessary to buy he'd spent many a summer overseeing the delivery of the letters to prospective first year students, sending out the very piece of parchment he'd wished he could have received as a child.

But that didn't matter now. He had a feather lying on the seat beside him, and *he would* make the thing fly by the time he got to Hogwarts.

~*~

So it didn't go that high, Filch reasoned as he headed for his chambers. The feather did manage to hover a few inches above the seat, and that had to count for something. Filch could have sworn that he felt the magic coursing through him now it was a new, tingly sort of feeling that seemed to start in his chest and travel throughout his body, finding a place to go as it went through his wand.

"Argus?" Minerva's sweet voice came from the staff room. He changed his path and entered the room. Minerva was sitting in an armchair by the fire, a book in her hands.

"There was a meeting a few minutes ago," she remarked, opening the book and flipping through the pages.

"Ah..." Filch hesitated. No one had informed him... but Minerva liked to let him know the day of the meeting, and he was absent that morning.

"I know you must have had some pressing business I just wanted to give you an update on what happened in the meeting."

"Sure, Minerva. Maybe we could meet tomorrow? I have to see to Mrs. Norris..." Although spending a few minutes alone with Minerva sounded extremely appealing, Filch wanted to practice more spell work in his rooms.

"I suppose." Minerva tried to feign nonchalance, but Filch saw her stiffen as she flipped through her book once more. "Good night."

"Good night." Filch nodded to Minerva and left the staff room.

~*~

Move, you little bastard, I know you want to. Filch concentrated on his feather once more and said the magic words.

"*Wingardium Leviosa.*" Please. Filch had swished and flicked and said the words. It had to work. It had to

"You did it, you son of a bitch!" Not meaning to insult his mother, Filch cheered as his feather floated high enough to hit the high ceiling of his chambers.

Filch smiled to himself and went to his bedroom. He had spent a full two hours on that spell, and he knew he would have to work harder and faster to master the spells necessary to protect Hogwarts.

But first, he'd sleep.

~*~

Filch woke to the sound of roaring flames in his fireplace. That didn't make sense, since he didn't light a fire the night before. He wouldn't do it again until he could properly work out an *Incendio*.

"I tried to call you, but you didn't respond..."

Filch opened his eyes and shot up from his bed. "Minerva?" He didn't even have time to grease his hair before she had abruptly showed in his bedroom.

"I believe that's my name," she said huffily, taking a seat on the edge of the bed.

Filch began to panic. Minerva was in his rooms. No, she was in his bedroom, on his bed. A bed in which he had many fantasies starring a beautiful black-haired witch in emerald robes.

"Argus, is that your wand?" Filch looked at his sheet-covered lap.

"Not that." Minerva swatted Filch's arm and pointed at his bedside table.

"Oh, that." Filch took the wand sitting there and held it in his hands. Now she was going to laugh. No, Minerva wasn't like that... she would have a concerned look on her face not many people saw, and she would calmly rationalize how having a wand was facilitating an illusion Filch could never attain.

"When did you get it?"

Filch stared at her in disbelief and tried to respond. "Yesterday... when I was out." Now the speech would begin, Filch was sure of it.

Instead, Minerva smiled. "So does it work?"

"I managed the Levitation Charm last night."

"Why didn't you tell me about this before that you wanted to try magic again?"

"You knew about Kwikspell?" Filch thought that he kept that a closely guarded secret.

"My sister Daisy created the Kwikspell courses. She wasn't a very powerful witch herself, but she believes that if you have magic in your blood, there is a chance. She once told me about an employee of the school who sent for the brochure, so I knew it was you..."

"Oh." He had no idea Minerva had noticed his attempts to learn magic. "The wandmaker I went to said I had a knack for Transfiguration," Filch added. "Do you think you could help me practice?"

"I'd love to." At the sight of Minerva's smile, Filch went on to tell her about the kitten transformation and asked her to stay for tea.

As they made their way to the kitchen, Filch saw that the feather he'd charmed the night before was still flying near the ceiling.

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