

Firewhisky

by *_Levicorpus_*

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Note: This story is dedicated to Lauren for her never-ending prompts, unfailing friendship and support, and her limitless supply of hilarious noises.

Harry Potter's days of glory were through. He was nearing his fortieth birthday and twenty-third anniversary of teaching Defense Against the Dark Arts. It was the last day of school, and the end of the year feast was in progress. As Deputy Headmaster, Harry sat next to a ninety-year-old McGonagall, whom he had frequently been invited to call Minerva. She stood up and began a speech.

Harry almost dozed off into his plate of roast mutton, but he caught himself just in time. After finishing her speech, the headmistress sat herself and ate her food cautiously as the students began their meal. Draco Malfoy's seventh-year daughter sat at the Slytherin table and discussed plans with her adoring group of followers. She looked nothing like her mother, Pansy Parkinson, at all; she had her father's blonde hair and steel-grey eyes. Meanwhile, at the Gryffindor table, Hermione and Ron's sixteen-year-old son Theodore sat next to his thirteen-year-old sister Ellie and spoke to his beau, the daughter of Neville and Luna Longbottom.

Harry felt old as he observed everything he hadn't accomplished in the prime of his youth; all the things he had missed for no reason in particular were stretched out before him like a map, and he suddenly felt queasy. He excused himself from the table and minutes later stood in the broom cupboard off of the Great Hall and quelled his stomach. He let himself sit in the silence of the cool, dark room for a moment before returning to the feast. He made pleasant conversation with the headmistress and excused himself to his office as quickly as possible.

He remained in his classroom and quarters over the next week that the children were gone, preparing for the year ahead of them. The house-elves were instructed to bring him meals, and so he left the door ajar as he puzzled over charts and graphs late into the night. So when he heard a soft knock on his door, he uttered a word of permission without a thought to the matter.

"Hello, Professor Potter," said a soft feminine voice with a Yorkshire accent. Harry stiffened and looked up to see a beautiful, raven-haired girl in white, knee-length dress robes standing in his door way. She looked about twenty, perhaps a year over, and she had astoundingly clear, pale skin.

"May I help you?" Harry stammered with great difficulty after observing the beauty for a moment.

"Well," she began, adjusting the blue bow in her waist-length hair, "I was sent to talk to you."

"About what?" Harry asked pleasantly, having regained his composure. He wondered why exactly this beauty was standing in his doorway, but, not having had contact with humans for a few days, he gladly accepted her presence without question.

"May I sit?" she asked as she sat herself.

"Be my guest," Harry said, taking his seat across from her, "Miss—"

"Everyone calls by my middle name, Ann," she paused and leaned in. "Between you and me, Professor, I have a truly horrific first name."

"Ah, yes, I know a few women who dislike their first names," said Harry, thinking of Tonks.

"Well then, on to the point." She smiled. "I was sent to cheer you up, sir, as a birthday gift, if you will."

"Ah, well then," said Harry, sitting up with genuine interest. He wondered who had sent her, but he always handled surprises like an idiot, so he didn't ask.

"I come bearing firewhisky," she said, pulling two bottles out of a canvas bag Harry hadn't noticed before. She poured him a glass without asking him, and they drank. She shivered as the drink washed down, and Harry found himself immensely attracted to this younger woman. He downed a sip as well. Fire licked his insides, and he glanced at the fragile girl with intrigue.

"Nothing like getting smashed to lighten the mood, eh?" she said, standing.

"No, ma'am," Harry said in response, standing next to her.

"Harry, how many times—" she clapped a hand over her mouth and quickly took another sip of her drink.

"Thanks for calling me by my first name; I didn't want to ask you to," Harry said, downing another gulp.

"Well then," she said, striding over to the gramophone Lupin had left at the school. She played it, and a soft jazz tune broke the silence in the room. Harry watched her closely, noting how much he wanted to kiss her elegant jaw line.

"Listen," he said as he strode over to where she was standing, drawing her close to dance with him. "I know we've just met, but... I'm tired of seeing my life go past me."

She sagged against him and leaned her head on his shoulder, sighing. They swayed gently until the record finished. She flipped it over, and seeing the moonlight play in her hair made the old professor almost insane. He pulled her to him, and without thinking, he kissed her. She reciprocated his excitement and kissed him back with a yearning characteristic of someone much older. Harry closed his eyes and did not open them even as a bell tolled midnight somewhere in the distance. He didn't need to open his eyes; he knew he was in love.

But beneath him, Ann had shrunk a bit. The hair that he grasped so lovingly disappeared in his hand. The lips softly resting upon his own changed in texture; he withdrew to see Minerva McGonagall standing before him with a terrified look in her eye.

She rushed from the room, wearing the off-the-shoulder robes still. Harry was at a loss for words as she stumbled from the room. The thoughts whizzing through his mind puzzled him so that he decided to simply sleep on the spot. His drunken mind seemed content to think he had imagined the whole ordeal. And so he slumped onto the stone floor and slept heavily until daybreak.

Minerva woke in her office, feeling humiliated. She glanced at the remains of the aging potion on her desk with pure disdain. She rubbed her temples and resurfaced to hear a determined knock on her door.

"Come back later," she groaned, but when Professor Potter stormed in with a fearsome expression on his face, wearing the same loosely-buttoned shirt as he had been the night before, Minerva's heart gave an involuntary leap.

"Look," he began, panting as though he had just ran there, "I don't know exactly what happened last night—"

He sat and caught his breath as Minerva looked on in a horrified silence.

"—but I don't care what anyone says because—"

They then spoke simultaneously.

"I'm sorry!"

"I love you!"

"What?" Minerva asked, looking up at him, blaming her misconception on her age. "Did you just say—"

"I love you, Minerva, I'll do anything to have you." he panted, his green eyes piercing hers. "I don't care what they say; I've lived too much of my life alone, and I can't bear for that to continue. I felt something last night."

"Are you trying to pull some horrible joke on me, Harry?" she asked. "Because I am not in the mood—"

He stifled her complaints with a gentle peck on the cheek.

"I think we're going to be great friends," he said with a smile, and with that he grasped her hand and led her out to the warm, summer grounds.