

Impressing Filius

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First impressions are important, but they aren't always mutual – or are they?
Companion one-shot to "Falling for Pomona," which should be read first.

First Impressions

Chapter 1 of 1

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Note: This is a companion story to the one-shot ["Falling for Pomona."](#) which should be read first.



Pomona Sprout looked around her quite happily. Back at Hogwarts again! It had been a while, but it still looked the same, the same gates, the same path up to the great oak doors, the same lake the same Giant Squid, presumably the same forest, still forbidden, off in the distance. She was looking forward to seeing the greenhouses. The previous Herbology teacher, Birnbaum, had been quite good, and very modern, and she understood that he had expanded and improved the greenhouses while he had been there. He would be paying a visit later in the summer, before term began, to answer any questions she had and to show her around. But at the moment, she was the only Professor of Herbology present at Hogwarts, as well as the new Head of Hufflepuff House, and the thought was a little thrilling. Well, more than a little. She was one of the youngest teachers Hogwarts had seen in a century, and one of the youngest Heads of House, as well, though not the youngest; that honour went to the current Transfiguration teacher, Minerva McGonagall. Pomona had a vague memory of a studious, serious, and rather skinny Gryffindor with a heavy Scottish burr. If Pomona hadn't been a prefect, and quite earnest about her duties, including getting to know the younger students, she may have never noticed the girl, who had only finished her second year when Pomona had taken her NEWTs and left school.

So she knew Minerva; that would be one familiar face. And Albus Dumbledore had become Deputy Headmaster and Transfiguration teacher during her last year at school, and she had met with him briefly in London a few months ago after she had accepted the job. Of course, there was Horace Slughorn, who had taught her Potions during her final year at Hogwarts. So there was absolutely no reason to be nervous, Pomona told herself, none at all. The Head of Ravenclaw would be at the meeting, as well, but she had no clue who that might be, as her predecessor in Herbology had been Ravenclaw's Head of House before he left.

Pomona approached the great front doors, and wondered whether she should knock. Well, that was just a silly idea. Who would answer? Pomona grasped the large iron ring on the right-hand door and pulled. The door swung open easily, and as it did, there was a little crack and a withered old house-elf appeared.

"It's being the new Professor?" the wrinkled grey creature asked, bobbing its head up and down, as if in answer to its own question. Pomona couldn't tell whether it was male or female, though it was neatly dressed in a pair of clean Hogwarts tea towels. "Frustin takes the luggage, if the new Professor pleases."

"Thank you, Frustin."

Pomona released the charm that held her trunk in midair behind her, and the efficient house-elf snapped his fingers. Pomona decided it must be a "he" and the trunk disappeared. He snapped his fingers again and Disapparated, leaving Pomona alone in the front hall. Well, it wasn't as though she could get lost, after all. Headmaster Dumbledore had said that the meeting was at three o'clock in his office, and that the entrance to it was currently on the seventh floor. Easy enough, and she had plenty of time.

Twenty-five exhausted minutes later, Pomona leaned against a wall and sighed. Easy! Ha! She should have just given in and started calling for help twenty minutes ago. Maybe if she called for that Frustin, he would come. It had started out all right, but when she got to the third floor, she found that the main staircase didn't continue. She could see two other staircases nearby, though, both of them wide and sweeping, one on her right and one on her left. Which to take? Her choice had not been a good one. She thought perhaps she'd found an express staircase of some kind, because she climbed up past the fourth floor, where the stairs offered no way to step off onto it without taking a flying leap, which she was sensible enough not to do. She had continued up, pleased to see that there was a landing on the fifth floor at least she thought it was the fifth floor; it had seemed there might have been another one in between and then on up to the sixth floor. Before she reached that august height, however and only one story further to her destination the staircase ended abruptly with a wide landing that led . . . nowhere. Pomona could look up and see the sixth floor, tantalizingly close, but it was no use. So, being the wise witch she was, she walked back down to the fifth floor and determined that she would just walk down the hall to the other staircase that she had seen when she had arrived on the third floor. No point in walking all the way down to three then back up again, after all!

Unfortunately, Pomona couldn't find the other staircase that she had seen so clearly only yards from this one when she was two floors below. Which meant, to her orderly mind, that it could not have been the correct staircase, either, for surely the main stairway or the continuation of it would have passed through the fifth floor on its way to the seventh. Pomona resolutely walked down the fifth floor corridor in search of that elusive main staircase that would lead her to the seventh floor.

And now, several narrow stairways, a few wandering corridors, and about ten flights later, Pomona found herself leaning against a wall, wondering if she had, indeed, finally reached the seventh floor. By her calculations, this should actually be the eighth floor. But there was no eighth floor, unless you counted the towers, and she was fairly sure she had not got herself into a tower by accident. Pomona stood a little straighter, thinking that if she couldn't find the Headmaster's gargoyles in the next five minutes and without taking any more stairs she would just start yelling for help.

So preoccupied was she, that she didn't hear the tap-tap-tapping of small feet running down the narrow side hallway to her left, and so, when a little man in a bright green peaked hat turned the corner and ran right into her, Pomona was startled. And then when the little man went flying, skidding across the slippery stone floor on his back, his green hat likewise flying off behind him, Pomona was alarmed.

"Oh, my!" she cried. "Are you all right?"

She hurried to the fellow's side and bent over to look at him, concerned about the hard fall he had taken. This wizard, for she assumed he was one, was no longer very young; who knew what a fall like that could do? His soft, fluffy grey hair and muttonchop whiskers created a halo around his head. Her concern for him increased when she looked into his face and saw his dazed expression, unfocussed eyes, and vague smile. Poor fellow! He must be concussed! And now he was trying to say something. She bent closer.

"H Ha Hat."

"Your hat? Yes, yes, it's here, but are you all right?" Poor man must truly be concussed, to be so concerned about his hat when he'd just had such a bad fall. Pomona felt terribly. "I am so sorry! It was so foolish of me, just standing there like that!"

The little man still lay there, wheezing and gazing up at her with the same dazed expression. Perhaps she should do something. But what?

Pomona bent down and touched the poor fellow's forehead. "Are you all right? Should I call for the matron?" She had no idea how she would go about doing that, but she could just start yelling for help. Someone would be bound to come. She only hoped the wheezing little wizard didn't worsen before then.

"No, no," he protested feebly, grimacing and taking a deep breath. How brave of him! And now he was struggling to sit up. Perhaps she could just set him on his feet, see if he could stand on his own.

Used to toting forty- and fifty-pound bags of fertiliser, and even heavier items on occasion, lifting the little fellow and helping him upright was an easy task. Now to see to it that he didn't topple over again . . .

"You're sure you're all right? That was quite a fall there!" Pomona said, still not releasing her grip, unwilling to be the cause of his second fall in one day, and bending over to look searchingly into his dark brown eyes, wondering what she would see there if he were truly concussed.

"Fine, the wind was in the fall. I mean, the wind knocked the fall out of me. I mean, the fall knocked the wind out of me," the small wizard said. "I'm fine. Um, my hat . . ."

Pomona was not particularly comforted by his reassurance. He certainly still seemed dazed and confused. And fixated on his hat. She let go of him by degrees, however, and was reassured when he didn't appear in any danger of tipping over.

"*Accio hat!*" The only hat in the vicinity, the wizard's bright green peaked cap, flew into her hand, and she passed it to the wizard and watched as he stuffed it backwards onto his head, his hair sticking out from under it rather willy-nilly.

"Thank you. I'm so very sorry! To have run into you like that," the wizard said politely. "Most rude of me. Very sorry! And you must be Professor Sprig!" He blinked at her and smiled.

Well, it seemed he had some idea of who she was, though he had her name wrong, Pomona thought, and, feeling somewhat foolish at having to admit that she was lost, she answered, "Sprout. Yes, I am looking for the entrance to the Headmaster's office. I haven't been back to Hogwarts in years, and I'm afraid that everything looks different. I'm not even sure I'm on the right floor."

"Yes, yes, you are! The seventh floor, it's right this way! If you might allow me to accompany you, Professor Sprig, I would be happy to show you to the gargoyles. I mean, lead you to the gargoyles."

Pomona thought the wizard sounded only somewhat more coherent than he had before; he was still calling her "Sprig," and he was repeating himself. If he was still incoherent when they reached the Headmaster's office, she could get him help.

"Sprout," Pomona said once more, gently. "Yes, I would like that . . . if you feel up to it."

"Oh, I'm up to anything, I mean, everything. I mean, I'm fine. Did you have a comfortable trip, Professor Sprig? Apparition or Portkey?"

Yes, still repeating himself, and still calling her "Sprig." Wonderful! Her first day back at Hogwarts, and she had concussed a fellow teacher.

Looking at him with concern, Pomona replied, "The Headmaster kindly provided me with a Portkey to the gates." They were approaching the end of the wide corridor. "Oh, there's the gargoyles! Thank you very much, Professor . . . ?"

"Flitwick. Filius. And you are very welcome. As I am attending the meeting, it would be discourteous of me to do otherwise."

Pomona was worried. The poor fellow was still having trouble breathing, it seemed, given the way he had exhaled so heavily just then, and yet still such a gentleman, worried about courtesy. Hopefully the Headmaster would know what to do.

"Well, Professor Filius, I am nonetheless grateful you came along when you did, although I am still somewhat concerned about you. That seemed quite a fall!"

"Oh, I'm fine, really, lingering licorice. I'm close to the ground, so it wasn't far!"

How plucky he was! Pomona thought. Scarcely able to complete a coherent sentence, yet trying to joke, and not blaming her at all!

"All right . . ." she said, following Professor Filius onto the moving stair, standing behind him ready to catch him if he had a sudden relapse.

"You know, we aren't well-acquainted, Professor Sprig, but if you would care to address me simply by my first name, why, I would find that quite collegial!" Professor Filius offered, still bravely cheerful.

"Sprout," Pomona tried again, somewhat hopelessly this time, but very moved by the generous invitation, especially as she was so new to Hogwarts. She would accept his offer graciously. It was the least she could do after concussing him.

"It is a kind offer, Flitwick, thank you," she answered sincerely.

As they rode the stair up, Pomona was glad it wasn't very far. Poor Flitwick seemed confused again, wrinkling his brow and scratching his head in its backward hat. She hoped she hadn't caused him to have amnesia or something dreadful like that! Not an auspicious beginning to her career at Hogwarts, if she had done, Pomona thought mournfully.

They finally reached the top of the stair, none too soon for Pomona, and the door opened. The Headmaster stood and greeted them. Pomona saw Professor Slughorn, a bit more corpulent than when she'd been a student, but otherwise unchanged, and Minerva McGonagall, dressed in green tartan, who was sitting in the chair by the open window.

"Ah, Filius, Pomona! I see you two have met! How wonderful!" the Headmaster said cheerfully. "Come in, have a seat, have some tea, and help yourselves to biscuits!"

Pomona wondered how cheerful he would be after she had told him she had just knocked over his Head of Ravenclaw and given him a concussion.

"You know, Professor Dumbledore," Pomona said, trying to be discreet in front of the other staff members, "I'm a bit worried about . . . Filius. He had a fall, and now he seems a bit . . . dazed. He said he was all right, but," she added in a whisper, "he kept calling me 'Sprig,' and he said some nonsense about languid licorice a little bit ago I'm afraid of, you know, concussion or something." Pomona looked at Professor Filius with concern and a bit of guilt for having caused his current state.

The Headmaster smiled kindly at her. Such an understanding wizard! "Well, I believe that if Filius could remember that my password was recently changed to 'Lingering Licorice,' he has recovered and has likely suffered no lasting harm. We will keep an eye on him, however. Perhaps you would care to sit next to him and do that?"

So that had been the password, not just a bit of nonsense! But why had he kept calling her "Sprig," she wondered. Perhaps she should keep an eye on him as the Headmaster suggested.

"Of course! I feel dreadful about it . . . it was all my fault that Professor Filius fell in the first place," Pomona said.

Such a kind wizard, Professor Dumbledore! He only raised an eyebrow when she admitted being the cause of Professor Filius's fall. Not one word of reproach. Pomona stepped toward the chair that the Professor had indicated she should take, and listened as he introduced everyone. Of course, she knew them all now, so it was a bit superfluous, but it was the polite thing to do, she supposed.

"Let us begin, then, with introductions. Pomona Sprout, I do believe you know Professor Horace Slughorn, Potions teacher and Head of Slytherin House. Next to him is Minerva McGonagall, Transfiguration Mistress, Head of Gryffindor, and the new Deputy Headmistress of Hogwarts, and, of course," the Headmaster said, looking at her with a bright smile, "you have met Professor Filius Flitwick, Head of Ravenclaw House and Charms teacher."

Oh, my word, Pomona thought, wishing she could sink into her seat. He may have been calling her "Sprig," but she had been calling him "Professor Filius," like some provincial who hadn't a clue but then, she didn't have a clue, did she? Why hadn't she simply said, "My name is 'Sprout,' not 'Sprig'"? He must think her not only clumsy, but rude and silly, as well.

Pomona made it through the meeting, keeping an eye on Professor Flitwick, as she had said she would. And she was glad she had an excuse to look at him, though she still looked away hastily whenever he turned his head in her direction. She wished she had told him that he had his hat on backward. Minerva had leaned over and whispered something in his ear, whereupon he had blushed, taken off his hat, and put it back on right way round. Flitwick Filius, she corrected to herself had the most beautiful brown eyes, very dark, like espresso, or like dark chocolate. When he had taken off his hat, Pomona found herself wishing he wouldn't put it back on again, covering up the soft, grey fluffy hair that she would love to touch . . . just as well he'd put his hat back on, she thought. And such a lovely smile, straight white teeth, sweet little dimples, and his nose would wrinkle when he thought something was particularly amusing.

Filius was a bit older than she all right, more than a bit, Pomona admitted to herself and rather obviously shorter than she, but there was something about him. He'd been so courteous and good-humoured, and now the Headmaster was asking him a question, and he answered it succinctly and clearly. Not at all confused now, but bright and in-command of himself yet a few minutes later, Filius caught Pomona looking at him, and he blushed. He seemed to blush easily, this sweet little wizard. How utterly adorable! When, ten minutes later, she deliberately caught his eye and he blushed, Pomona thought, well, either she had embarrassed him terribly with her silliness and her rudeness and her ignorance . . . or she simply embarrassed him. Which could be promising. Or not. But "nothing ventured, nothing gained" had been one of Pomona's gran's favourite adages, and it was now one of hers. Hence her long trek through the castle in search of the seventh floor. So she was determined to get to know this wizard a little better and right away, lest things become more awkward than they already were.

Deciding that the desire not to get lost again was a perfectly valid reason to request him to escort her to the main stair and if that went well, she might even ask him to show her all the way to the ground floor Pomona made up her mind that she would approach Filius immediately after the meeting, before the Headmaster or Minerva assigned someone else to show her to her rooms.

And when the little Charms professor blushed, smiled, dimpled, and agreed quite readily to her request, Pomona thought that seemed very promising, and she began to look forward to her first term at Hogwarts even more than she had when she arrived earlier that afternoon. Who knew what might lie ahead? This might prove to be a promising beginning, indeed.