

The Waking Potion

Sam Huffer

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The banging on the door roused the old wizard from his nap. "Coming," he called out, then grumbled as he got up from his favourite chair. Opening the door, he found his young apprentice standing there, dishevelled and stifling a yawn. "No, I already told you I will not be giving your cat wings," he scolded. "He's enough of a menace to the local birds already."

"What? No, that's not why I'm here," his apprentice replied, rubbing her eyes. "I've got a test tomorrow that I need to study for, and I need to memorise transmogrifiwhatchamacallit inside and out, or I'll get kept down a year again, and I'll get teased and everyone will think I'm stupid when I'm really not and it'll be humiliating and awful and I'm so tired and stressed—" she paused to take a breath "—and I can't keep my eyes open." She looked up at the old wizard pleadingly. "Do you have a potion or something for that?"

"Do I— what?" The wizard sighed, then opened the door fully. "Come inside and start again. I didn't understand a word you just said."

The wizard guided the apprentice to a chair, and she repeated her request again, but slowly. "Do you have a potion like that? If I leave it until the morning, I won't have enough time and I'll fail, I know it."

"Not made up already, but that'll only take five minutes to fix," the wizard said as he heaved himself to his feet. He waved his hand as he walked to his ingredients cupboard, and the cauldron in the fireplace jumped out and onto the mantelpiece above, a smaller pot darting down to take its place. "Boil some water, would you, please, and bring it over when it's done."

The apprentice yawned and nodded as the wizard pulled out a mortar and pestle. She approached the fireplace and waving her wand over the pot. Water sprang up from the bottom as if pouring in from a hidden valve, quickly filling the pot. She stirred it with the tip of her wand as the wizard ground something crunchy up between his marble implements. Soon, the water was bubbling and steam swirling up and mixing with wisps of smoke.

The apprentice waved her wand again and the pot gently floated over to the wizard as he set down the pestle, and sat in an iron stand of just the right size. The wizard poured a black powder from the mortar into the pot, and then unsealed a jar and tapped a couple of teaspoons of white powder in as well. Putting the jar away, the wizard stirred the brew with his wand, then, once he was satisfied it had mixed together, guided the hot liquid into a goblet with a flick of his wand, which he handed to his apprentice. "This should do the trick. No need to drink it all at once."

The apprentice took the goblet, blew on it to cool it down, then took a small sip. "Ugh." She grimaced. "Can't say much about the taste. It's all bitter and gross, like—" She paused, stared at the goblet, then took another sip. "Hold up. This is just coffee."

The wizard nodded and yawned, shuffling back over to his favourite chair. "Exactly. You'll be awake for hours. Now, if you please, I'd like to go back to sleep. Goodnight."