

Some Industrial Light and Magic

Harry Potter glanced at his wristwatch and shook his head. His Hermione had never been one to keep him waiting, yet there he was...nearly naked, alone in his room, and very impatient. If it hadn't been for the six-pack of beer and the view out his opened window, he might have already dropped his shorts and walked out starkers into the Common Room.

The eighteen-year old wizard snorted as he took another sip from his bottle, looked back towards the Quidditch Stadium, and wondered what the Headmistress might say...or do...if he had. Or any of his female year-mates, for that matter...Susan, say, or Daphne...or Padma?

"Let's see," he mused. *"What kind of costume would I'd be wearing...a porn star's, maybe?"*

The-Boy-Who-Won sighed, tore his gaze away from the pitch, and walked towards a mirror stuck against the inside of a wardrobe door.

He gave his body a good look-over, linking opponents and places to each of his many scars. "No chance anyone want to perv on this body," he muttered to himself. "Even if I was hung like a hippogriff."

"Who says that you aren't, Stud?" the mirror snarked.

Harry chuckled at the effeminate object's comment, and shook his head.

"Certainly not you, which is why you're kept on the inside of the wardrobe, Pat."

"But I've told you again and again, *Pat* can stand for *Patricia* !"

"Sure it can...*Patrick* !"

The mirror's muffled objections were lost as Harry quickly shut the wardrobe doors. He returned to the window and wondered yet again why, between the sexually ambiguous mirrors and the Quidditch bans, he had allowed Hermione to convince him to return to Hogwarts to complete their schooling.

"It'll be brilliant, Harry!" he falsetto mimicked. *"Nowthat Voldemort is truly dead and gone, we can finally relax at school!"*

Except that it hadn't at all been a relaxing experience.

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The Headmistress had secured special waivers allowing the Golden Trio and any of the other seventh-year students who had missed a year due to the war to return to Hogwarts to complete their schooling, but at a cost. The Board of Governors had barred returning "Eighth Years" from resuming their old Prefect positions. None of the special exceptions were eligible to be Head Boy or Girl, and (most importantly to Harry and Ron), none could play for a House Quidditch team.

The stated explanation had something to do with the Board giving Harry and the others the "opportunity" to avoid distractions as they prepared for their NEWTs and tried to catch up academically after their leave of absence. And the fact that those arguing most strongly for these restrictions were the parents of soon-to-be Seventh Year students who might have been competing with the Eighth Years for Quidditch team roster spots, or team captaincies, or the Head Boy/Head Girl positions?

Complete coincidence.

The restrictions involved more than just the lack of sports and leadership roles. When Harry and the other Eighth Years entered the repaired Great Hall for the Opening Feast, they were ushered to their own small separate table right in front of the Professors. The Head of the Board of Governors then showed up just before the start of the Sorting Ceremony, and made a few announcements while the Headmistress glared at him with pursed lips.

All of the returning Eighth Year students would live together in their own segregated dormitory, apart from their former Houses. And in honor of the sacrifice made by their former Headmaster, they would be known as "*Dumbledore's*," and would reside in "*Dumbledore House*."

As a round of tepid applause tried to fill the hall, the "G" on Harry's school robe patch morphed into a "D," and the crimson and gold trim turned bright purple.

Then pink.

Then orange, with blobs of green moving about in a lava-lamp pattern.

Somebody at the Ravenclaw table joked that they could shorten "The Dumbledores" to "The Dummies." He later swore on his magic that he only

meant it as a one-off joke, but the derisive nickname nevertheless spread throughout the school and stuck.

Noting the lack of a fifth jewel-filled hourglass on the wall, the Board Head subsequently announced that due to the special circumstances, Dumbledore House was not eligible for the House Cup. Its members could not earn or lose points for their house, though they could still be given detentions.

Headmistress McGonagall was quite apologetic, and took it upon herself to escort the "Dummies" to their new quarters after the Feast ended. Her hands had been tied by the Board, and had tried to make it up to the Eighth Years with some last minute alterations to their dormitory.

The good news was that each Eighth Year was given their own room (a perk that Harry and his former dorm mates were especially pleased with, since they would not need to endure Ron Weasley's snoring).

The bad news? Nobody could entertain guests of the opposite gender in their own rooms.

Protests that the Eighth Years were all legally adults within both the Wizarding and Muggle worlds fell on deaf ears. They weren't in the Muggle World...they were enrolled at Hogwarts...and the same could have been said for all previous Seventh Year students. Certain proprieties had to be maintained.

The gender lines forced all House socializing to take place in the Common Room, which was itself problematic. Old rivalries died hard, and there was more than a little bickering and squabbling between the melded group of teenagers. Some were still suffering from post-traumatic stress, while others mistrusted those whose families were suspected of being on the wrong side of the war.

They had tried to make the best of things over the first few weeks of term. Hermione and Padma Patil had figured out a way to deanimate the robe trim, and were now working on switching it to less-garish colors. Harry's contribution was to rebrand "Dumbledore House" as "The Ocho," in honor of their year, and the two witches had coaxed the "D's" on their robe patches into looking more like the number eight.

A coordinated response for the school's Halloween costume ball was the latest attempt to build some "Ocho" unity and have some fun. But planning for the event had caused a bit of stress all on its own, particularly when a house theme was decided on the night that the ball was announced....

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"Why should the entire house dress as Muggle movie characters?" asked Ron.

"Why not?" his bushy-haired friend replied.

"Maybe because some of us have never been to the Muggle cinema?" asked Padma.

Hermione shrugged. "So ask one of us Muggleborns for ideas."

Harry chuckled at the response.

"What's so funny?" asked Ron. "You've decided already?"

"Yeah, I think so."

"Your Aunt and Uncle took you to the cinema?" asked Neville.

"No, not at all," Harry replied. "But Ron and I spent some time with Hermione and her parents over holidays, and they have an amazing entertainment system and movie collection."

"True enough," agreed Ron. "So what are you thinking, mate?"

"Thinking that I've got dibs on Spiderman."

Hermione frowned.

"*Dibs*, Harry? I'm thinking that you've watch far too many American movies if you're tossing slang like that around."

"Fine," Harry sighed. He then poshly and crisply declared, "I wish to express my intention to wear a Spiderman outfit to this planned gathering, and ask that others kindly refrain from making a similar choice."

His bushy-haired friend rolled her eyes. "Oh, much better. Too bad the idea won't work."

"Why do you say that?"

Hermione chewed on her lower lip for a moment.

"Well, it *is* a good idea, Harry, but...well...I was thinking that it would be great if the three of us coordinated our costumes, and went as characters from the same movie."

"Oh."

"What's the problem, then?" Ron asked Hermione. "I could be the Green Goblin, and you could be an Octo-pussy."

Hermione's cheeks immediately flushed at the suggestion, leaving it to Harry to cuff his mate on the head and administer the scolding.

"Wrong movie, you dolt," he stated. "Octopussy is from one of the James Bond films."

"Really? But there was an Octo-somebody...wasn't there?"

"He was a male character," Harry replied.

"So?"

"So maybe I want to wear a female costume?" Hermione asked.

Ron frowned. "There was a girl in the Spiderman movie, though...wasn't there?"

"Yeah, MJ," Harry cheerily noted. "She was Spiderman's girlfriend."

"Oh...right," said Ron. "Sorry, mate, guess that Spiderman won't work then."

Neville piped in. "And why is that?"

Harry thought that was an excellent question, as his heart skipped at the thought of Hermione kitted out as his girlfriend. That heart then began to pump blood towards a potentially embarrassing location as he remembered the kissing scene...the one in the rain where Spidey was hanging upside down, and MJ was nearly hanging out of a very wet t-shirt.

Hermione pulled her best friend away from his pervy thoughts with an explanation that came out with just a tad too much force.

"MJ wears normal Muggle outfits...she doesn't really have a distinguishable costume," she stated. "And MJ also has long red hair and green eyes."

"And what's wrong with that?" asked Susan, while she played with one of her pigtails.

"Nothing...so long as I don't mind being more readily mistaken for Harry's mum than a comic-book heroine."

Her black-haired friend let out a deep breath of air and frowned.

"Erm, yeah...when you put it that way, doesn't seem like a good idea after all."

"Got any better suggestions, Hermione?" asked Ron.

A sly grin crept onto the young witch's face. "As a matter of fact, I do."

"So what do we need to do, then?" asked Harry.

The bushy-haired witch's smile broadened.

"Nothing ...you two just leave everything to me."

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And leaving everything up to Hermione was why Harry Potter still wasn't dressed for the pre-party gathering in the common room. She had promised that Dobby would deliver his costume in time, but he had yet to show up. Harry could have thrown on some robes and gone out looking for his friend, of course...but she had gotten progressively more excited...even giddy...as the event got closer. And he really didn't want to do anything that might bring her down. And at least he was in good company...several other Eighth Year witches had followed Hermione's lead, and decided that they would take care of outfitting most of the other Eighth Year boys.

So he sat in his crimson boxers, cracked open yet another beer, and continued to look out the window. The Gryffindor Quidditch team was presently hovering in a somewhat ragged mid-air formation around their animated captain.

Harry reckoned that the dressing down that they were receiving was due more to Ginny's frustrations with him than any poor play on their part. Ever since the war had ended and they'd returned to Hogwarts, she had been pushing Harry to get back together. But he was no longer interested in her, or in listening to those (like Molly) who had dropped anvil-sized hints about families that were big and happy.

That potential interactions were limited now that he was no longer in Ginny's house, or on her Quidditch team was a definite silver lining to becoming a "Dumbledore."

Hermione, of course hadn't been as lucky. Ron Weasley had heard those same anvil-sized hints from his mum, and had been following a step-by-step how-to guide for getting the witch that he wanted. Followed the guide religiously...right up to the day that Hermione found out about the book, and fed it to one of the carnivorous plants in the Greenhouse #6. She then informed Ron that "they" were through, and that if he didn't immediately start to treat her with genuine respect that she'd next be feeding his bits to those plants.

He had smartened up quickly to the threat.

Harry was trying to decide whether it'd be better to cast a sobering charm while he was still was coordinated enough to do the right wand movements when Dobby finally showed up. The house-elf dropped a large white box on Harry's bed, bowed low, and disappeared before the black-haired wizard could even say hello.

There was a small note fixed to the top of the box, written in a familiar neat script.

"Yes, Harry...Dobby delivered the right box."

The black-haired wizard chuckled as he set the card to one side.

The chuckles sounded more like a choking cough when he opened the lid and spied what was sitting on top of the tissue paper.

It was a DL-44 heavy blaster pistol...a blaster pistol that sat in a brown holster that sported both a leg strap and a silver octagonal buckle.

"Does this mean that..."

As there was nobody in the room that could answer his half-voiced question, Harry chose to rip open the wrapping rather than complete the thought.

What he found confirmed his suspicions...

- A black cotton-twill vest that had flap-covered cargo pockets on the front and back;

- A white polo shirt with a deep placket down the front and an inch-tall collar that stood up straight;

- One pair of blue cotton twill Calvary trousers with wide red bloodstripes down the sides;

- A black belt with three holes going all the way around, and a buckle whose two prongs lined up with the holes at the outer edges; and,

- One pair of calf-length black leather boots.

And suddenly, this costume party had gotten a whole lot more interesting.

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Harry was fully dressed and arguing with his pervy mirror about parting his hair down the middle when somebody knocked on his door.

"Who is it?"

"Luke Wizardwalker."

Harry flashed an in-character lopsided grin towards his reflection, then walked over and opened the door. Ron was on the other side, wearing an ivory-colored tunic and his own goofy grin.

"May the force be with you, Hans."

"It's Han, you idiot," Harry snarked, dragging his best male friend into the room.

Ron ignored the dismissive tone of voice, and focused instead on the three unopened beer bottles still cradled in their cardboard carrier.

"Brill," the red-haired wizard declared. "I could use a beer right about now."

Harry shook his head, and was just about to inform his mate that Jedi Knights probably didn't drink, when he remembered that Luke had ordered a beer at the Mos Eisley Cantina. So he bit his tongue as Ron sat down on the bed and propped his puttee-covered feet up on the desk top.

The red-haired wizard looked over his best friend's outfit and whistled his appreciation.

"Looks like she got your kit spot-on as well."

"Yeah, she did, didn't she?" Harry replied. "So does the lightsaber work?"

Ron pulled the weapon off of his belt, pressed a button, and grin maniacally as he sliced a beam of blue light through the air with a pitch-perfect "woosh".

"What do you think?"

Harry grinned. "Hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a good blaster at your side, kid."

"Oh, sod off!"

"Tried slicing something other than air, yet?"

"Nope."

"Really? Well, that's not like you mate."

Ron shrugged as he turned off the light beam and hooked the lightsaber grip back onto his belt.

"Yes, well...thought about it, but then decided to wait and ask Hermione if it was safe first."

"So when did you decide to start acting all adult and cautious-like?"

"As soon as I realized why Hermione chose these outfits."

"And why is that?" asked Harry.

Ron snorted. "Don't you see, Mate?" he asked. "This is a clear signal that she's forgiven me about the book, and wants me back as her boyfriend."

Harry tilted his head and furrowed his brow.

"What's that?"

"She wants me," Ron cheerfully declared. "And the outfits are the proof in the pudding."

The Boy-Who-Won shook his head in disbelief.

"Let me get this straight...I'm Han Solo and you are Luke Skywalker?"

"Yep...just like in that Star Wars movie."

"And you expect that Hermione will be dressed as Princess Leia tonight?"

"Makes sense, doesn't it?" asked Ron. "She wanted the three of us to wear costumes from the same movie."

"Yeah, so it makes sense that she's going to be Leia," Harry replied. "But why is that some secret signal that she fancies you?"

"Well, it's not her costume that matters," Ron admitted. He paused to suck down some beer, then added, "What matters is that I'm Luke and you're Hans."

"Han."

"Same thing."

Harry stared at his best friend for a few moments, trying to make sense of what he'd just said.

Only it didn't make sense.

So, he opened yet another beer, pulled back his desk chair, and sat with his feet propped up on his bed.

"I still don't get it," he declared. "Care to elaborate?"

"What?"

"Can you explain some more?"

"Sure," Ron replied with a grin. He then drained his beer bottle and claimed the last of the six-pack before laying out his argument.

"Okay, so first thing I thought was that Dobby had mixed our kits up," said Ron. "Because when you think about it, you're the obvious choice to be Luke."

"How is that?"

"Luke was taken to live with his aunt and uncle as a baby, just like you."

"Ok, but.."

"And Luke was raised normal-like...his aunt and uncle didn't tell him about him having Jedi powers...just like you didn't know about magic until you went to Hogwarts."

"Except that..."

"But then Luke finds out that he was a Jedi that could control The Force, just like you found out you were a wizard that could do magic. And he had Obi-wan to train him, just like you had Dumbledore."

"That's not quite..."

"Close enough, though," Ron stated. "Then there's the fact that Luke's two best friends are a guy and a girl. And his mate is handsome, and funny, but kind of a berk at times, just like..erm...well, just like me."

"True enough," Harry chuckled. "And this guy and girl who are his best friends, they bicker a lot, don't they?"

"Yup."

"And when it comes time for Luke and Leia to help the Rebel Alliance fight Darth Vader, Han abandons his two friends...does a runner, doesn't

he?"

Ron bit his lip, not liking the truth behind that comparison.

"He comes back at the end, though, doesn't he?"

Harry nodded in agreement as he tipped his bottle towards his mate.

"And I suppose Voldemort was just like Darth Vader, and Luke and I both had destinies to live up to."

"There you go...and don't forget that Luke was a really good flyer, just like you," Ron added.

"Okay, so I agree...if you just look at those points, I ought to be Luke, and you should be Han Solo," Harry summed up. "But the fact that Hermione switched them means that..."

"It means that she wants me to be Luke, because she's Leia and she fancies me, just like Leia fancies Luke."

"What?" asked Harry. "But how can you say that since the two of them are..."

"The hero and the heroine?" Ron interrupted. "Look, mate...I didn't get to see that many movies at Hermione's house, but it was Batman that got to bag that looker, not Robin...right?"

"Erm, right."

"And Belle fell in love with the Beast, instead of that silly clock or the candlestick...and Snow White falls in love with the prince, not the Seven Dwarfs?"

"It's just that..."

"C'mon, mate...every one of those videos. Who gets the princess...Aladdin, or his monkey?"

"Aladdin?"

"How about that Little Mermaid...is it the Prince, or the lobster?"

"So we watched a lot of Disney cartoons. But they can't...they don't..."

"Yes, I know, Luke and Leia don't actually get together in the movie, or do anything more than kiss, but that's only because of the war they're fighting in," Ron patiently explained. "Once they win, then...well, it's just like now, right?"

Harry stared at Ron for a moment. Then he took a swig from his beer. And then he stared for another few moments.

"Still not convinced?" asked Ron.

"No...like I said..."

"So what do you think of her?"

"Who?"

"Princess Hermione."

Harry grinned. "I'm trying not to, kid."

"Good."

"Still," Harry said slyly. "Have to admit, she's got a lot of spirit. So what do you think...a princess like her and a guy like me..."

"No."

"Oh..guess that's settled, then?" Harry asked brightly.

"Yep, it is...Hermione fancies me," Ron declared.

And it was at that moment that Harry understood the basis for the fatal flaw within his friend's argument.

It was just after that moment that they heard a knock on the door.

The Jedi-costumed red-haired wizard cheerily called out, "C'mon in, Princess Leia!"

"Ron...you know I can't come into Harry's room!" a voice called back.

"Oh, right...hold on."

Harry took hold of Ron's off-white sleeve.

"Hold on there, Skywalker...my room...I'll get it."

Ron nodded, and adopted a chest-out-fists-on-hips heroic pose while Harry moved towards the door.

The-Boy-Who-Won checked his reflection along the way.

"Oh, give up...you've got the grin down, but the hair is hopeless, Stud," the mirror snarked.

Harry's chuckling at the mirror's comment kept that grin on his face as he opened the door. But it was a grin that hid his own fears and uncertainties over whether he'd misread meaning into the costuming as badly as Ron had.

What he saw on the other side was more than enough to immediately add warmth to the rakish smile...and add tension to the front of his red-striped trousers.

It was Hermione, looking every bit the princess, with two buns in her hair and two knee-high white leather boots on her feet.

Harry gave his best friend's long-sleeved white fitted floor-length tunic a good look-over, with his gaze stopping at the top of the tunic's leg-baring, thigh-high slits.

He'd never seen that much leg on Hermione...although that rub-worthy periwinkle blue dress back in fourth-year came close.

"Eyes up, fly boy!"

The black-haired wizard immediately raised his gaze, and was about to apologize when he realized that Hermione's eyes were sparkling. There was a wide smile on her face that allowed him to relax just a bit, and stay in character.

"Okay, Your Worshipfulness, let's get one thing straight. I take orders from just one person...me."

"It's a wonder you're still alive."

Harry grinned at the matching movie quote.

"Erm...yes, it is...and now I know it was worth all that effort."

"Oh? Why is that?"

"To see you standing here...so beautiful...and dressed like that, and you dressing me like this..."

"Really? You think it means something?" Hermione teased.

"Damn, I hope so!" Harry hissed.

"Oi! Solo! Open the door so I can see my Princess!"

Harry snorted, looked over his shoulder, then did as he was asked.

Hermione looked into the room, and frowned.

"Your Princess, Ron?"

"Don't you mean Luke, there, Princess?"

"Erm...right...Luke."

The teen-aged witch gave her best friend a "What's up?" arched eyebrow.

Harry smiled, and said, "Ron figured it out...he's the hero, and the hero always gets to be with the heroine."

Hermione cocked her head in confusion. But then, a *Lumos* spell lit up over her head.

"Ah...I see," she declared. Then she smiled, and added, "So Luke, the house-elves have got a dinner buffet set up out here...if you're hungry."

"If I'm hungry?" Ron snorted.

He gently pushed his way through the doorway, mumbling, "Thought you'd finally figured me out, Princess."

Harry followed Ron just far enough out of the door so that he could be by Hermione's side. The two friends smiled, but not at each other, so that nothing might be gleaned into the fact that Harry's hand had snaked its way around her waist.

Hermione leaned into the half-embrace.

"Ron only got to see the first Star Wars movie, didn't he?"

"Yup."

"He thinks that I've made him Luke because I secretly fancy him?"

"Afraid so."

"And he doesn't know that Luke and Leia are brother and sister?"

"It's that, or else he's into incest."

Hermione winced.

Harry gave her hip a squeeze, and then asked, "So were you sending a secret signal, Princess?"

A low-pitch chuckle escaped from Hermione's lips. She turned, and asked, "Are you hoping that I was?"

"Maybe."

Hermione spun around and faced Harry, placing her own hands on his hips.

"And why is that, fly boy?" she asked coyly.

Harry looked into his best friend's beautiful eyes, and surrendered to the inexorable Force behind his feelings. Giving Hermione his best imitation rakish grin, he declared..."

"I love you."

Hermione's eyes went wide as she caught her breath. She smiled, and slowly leaned forward until her lips were a fraction of an inch away from his. The she brushed her lips along his cheek and whispered her reply into his ear.

"I know."

The Boy-Who-Won grinned, and buried his nose against one of Hermione's hair buns. But then she pushed back and turned so that they were side by side again.

"What?"

"Throttle it back, fly boy...we've got a long night ahead of us."

Harry snorted as he surveyed the rest of the room.

"And it matters that we've got an audience as well?"

"Maybe."

The black-haired wizard smiled and nodded his understanding while he checked out the other students' costumes.

"Wow!"

"Wow, what?"

"Looks like more than one witch decided to signal their intentions with their costume choices."

"Either that, or you've been so clueless that you haven't noticed who has already paired up?"

Harry shrugged.

"Well, I knew about Neville and Susan at least." He nodded in the other couple's direction and added, "Who are they, then?"

"She's Anna, and Neville is Yul Brenner."

"Who?"

"From The King and I," Hermione explained. "He's the handsome Siamese King, and Susan is the English school teacher that the King falls in love with."

Harry chuckled as he gave Susan's plunging neckline and petticoats a thorough inspection.

"Wished that I had English school teachers who dressed that way."

"Harry?"

"Erm, right...so...is that a charm, or did Neville really shave his head?"

"Susan really did shave his head."

"Didn't realize that Nev was whipped enough to let her do that to him."

Hermione giggled.

"Oh, from what I hear, it was a fair trade."

"What do you mean?"

"Right after she shaved Neville, he got to shave her."

Harry frowned as he looked at the long soft curls on the former Hufflepuff's head.

"So she's wearing a wig, or something?"

"No."

"Then what...?"

Hermione smiled. "I didn't say where Neville did the shaving, did I?"

"Oh...Ohhhhhh!"

There was a lull in the conversation as Harry tried to spit out an intelligible comment. He finally managed to point towards Hannah Abbott and Seamus Finnegan, who were both dressed in dark sunglasses and black leather trench coats.

"So...Neo and Trinity are together, then?"

"Yup."

"And over there...Captain Jack Sparrow and his pirate wench?"

"Well not yet...but Padma is hoping that she's Ernie's wench before the night is over."

"Ahh...so...looks like the only bloke who hasn't been paired up is Ron."

"No, he's all set."

"What do you mean?" asked Harry.

The bun-haired witch pointed towards the steeply-sloped mountain on their friend's plate.

"Food has always been his first love, hasn't it?"

Harry chuckled. "True enough...but is the buffet line going to be distracting enough to keep him from doing the jealous git routine and ruining the evening for us?"

"No worries, fly boy...I've got back-up."

"Really?"

Hermione nodded, and gestured towards a blue-skinned brain-stemmed witch who had just emerged from the girls' lavatory, and was presently adjusting the ridiculously-thin strap of leather that was nominally covering her breasts.

"Whoa.....so who is the Twi'lek?"

"Whom do you think it is?"

Harry looked around the room and used the process of elimination. He then looked back at the blue-skinned witch, who had just "accidentally" swung one of her artificial lekku and caught Ron on the side of the head.

"Heh, heh, heh...so Miss Bustrode was able to combine some Muggle costume prostheses with animation and illusion charms?"

"Well...she had a bit of help from me," Hermione admitted. She then glanced at "Luke," and frowned when she caught him blatantly staring at the ex-Slytherin's baps.

"Flashy bits of string and foil..."

"Distracting enough to leave us be for the night?"

"Longer than that if Millie gets her way with him."

"And you're okay with that?"

Hermione turned towards Harry and flashed him her own lopsided grin.

"At last we will reveal ourselves to the Jedi. At last we will have revenge."

Harry laughed. "I already love the way that you've revealed yourself, Your Worshipfulness."

"Is that Han speaking, or Harry?"

"Yes."

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Later that night, Harry and Hermione left the Great Hall hand-in-hand and headed towards their dormitory. They passed by enchanted paintings that were just as gossipy as giggly as many of the broken-hearted witches had been during the Ball. The two lovers were far too wrapped up in each other to notice, however, as they stopped wherever they could squeeze behind a suit of armor or disappear into a hidden alcove for a snog.

Hermione let out a content sigh as they emerged from the third broom closet on their tour.

"I'm rather pleased with myself, you know?"

"You are, huh?"

"Absolutely. Couldn't have planned out a more brilliant night."

Pause.

Pregnant pause.

Embarrassingly long pause.

"Harry?"

"Huh?"

"That was your cue to agree with your brilliant girlfriend."

"Oh, right. Sorry."

"So...you don't agree?"

Harry chuckled.

"Well it was brilliant...but the most brilliant night possible?"

Hermione stopped, swung Harry around, and scowled.

"And what exactly, Han, would have made it more brilliant?"

Harry gave her the one-hundred and thirty-second rakish grin of the evening. He placed his hands on her hips and replied, "Well, Princess...I really love your outfit. Really, really love it. Especially with its easy two-handed access..."

Hermione reached down and stopped Harry's hands from demonstrating where exactly those thigh-high access points were located.

"But?"

"Well, it's just that..." Harry replied, giving his girlfriend his best puppy-dog eyes.

"You wish that I'd worn a different costume?"

"Nah...well, okay...your buns are cute, 'Mione..."

"You are talking about my hair, right?"

"Those too," he replied, flashing number one-hundred thirty-three.

"Harry...."

"Okay...just teasing...I really love your hair when it's down."

"Down loose?" Hermione asked with a thin smile. "Or maybe in a long single braid?"

Harry's eyes flashed, and he sucked in a short breath.

"And maybe a costume that has a little more gold?" Hermione purred, "And shows a lot more skin?"

"Mmmmm..."

Hermione playfully pushed her boyfriend away.

"So you fancy the idea of Slave Leia more than Princess Leia?"

"I suppose that 'yes' is the wrong answer?"

"For anyone but you, Harry....perhaps."

"Really?" asked the gobsmacked wizard.

Hermione smiled. "What if I told you that I was wearing a slave outfit under this one?"

Harry let out a breath through pursed lips. The he shook his head and said, "I'd be thrilled...except that we established what you were wearing under that tunic two broom closets back."

"You think so, Mister?"

"Well, I wish it were so."

Hermione took in a deep breath, then slipped a hand underneath each thigh-high tunic slit and yanked upwards. Hidden bits of Velcro gave way, until her hands reached her neck and the front panel of her tunic fell loose and dropped to the floor. Hermione then shrugged her shoulders and slipped her hands up out of her sleeves, allowing the rest of the tunic to drop as well.

Harry stared at amazement at the pile of white fabric gathered around his girlfriend's ankles, and then risked shifting his gaze farther up her legs.

He frowned at what he saw. Or more exactly, what he couldn't see.

"Hermione?"

"Yes, Harry?"

"Are you really wearing a slave outfit?"

"Can't you tell?"

"Erm...no."

"Good," Hermione giggled. "That means that the *Notice-me-not* charm is still working."

"Really?" Harry asked. He then stepped forward and pulled his girlfriend into a tight embrace.

"Hmmpf," he intoned. "Can't feel a metal bra."

"Well, Sweetheart...if you could feel that I was wearing a bra, then you'd have noticed it, wouldn't you?"

"Makes sense," Harry replied. "Of course, it could also mean that you aren't wearing anything right now either....except for those boots, of course."

"Oooh, now there's a naughty thought," Hermione teased. "Me walking around Hogwarts, naked except for my FMB's."

"FMB's?"

"Fork-me-boots," Hermione explained. "Except the 'F' doesn't stand for fork."

"Hmmm...now that is a very naughty thought, you naughty girl."

Hermione arched an eyebrow as her boyfriend pulled his wand from a vest pocket.

"What are you doing, Mister?"

"Thinking about a well-aimed *Finite* spell, Miss Naughty Girl," he quipped.

"But what if I really was starkers?"

"Except for your FMB's, you mean?"

"Yeah, except for my FMB's."

"Then, I guess you'd learn real quick whether those boots are good for more than eff-emming."

"You wouldn't dare."

"I wouldn't?"

"Well," Hermione added coyly. "At least not until we were back in the dorm."

He looked at her.

She looked at him.

And then she gathered her torn tunic and began to walk briskly back towards The Ocho.

"Holy..."

Hermione stopped, and looked over her shoulder.

"Something wrong, fly boy?"

"Erm, no...not a thing."

His girlfriend flashed a brilliant smile, then turned and began to walk again.

Harry followed behind her a few paces, wondering whether Hermione had intentionally missed applying the *Notice-me-not* charm to that portion of her skimpy, diaphanous costume that covered her bum.

Not that he wouldn't have enjoyed the view any less if she had.

The near-running pace adopted by his girlfriend proved that her boots were indeed made for more than just "eff-emming." And suggested that she was just as anxious as he was to get back to the dormitory.

Had Harry been paying less attention to the sway of Hermione's hips he might have noticed when they reached their common room.

Had he not been admiring so intently how the see-thru silky fabric stretched across her bum, he might have noticed that Susan and Neville were snogging in the common room, or that Neville's trouser zipper was undone and the front of Susan's dress had been pushed down.

And had he not been wondering whether the front of Hermione's harem pants were just as transparent as the back, he might have realized that she didn't stop walking until she was inside her dorm room.

Harry began to realize these things when Hermione turned around and smiled at him. He realized it a whole lot quicker when he ran into the invisible gender line on her threshold, and was thrown back with a mild electrical shock.

"Owww!"

"Ooops," Hermione teased.

"Why did you..."

"Because Neville is out there, silly."

"He is?" Harry asked. He turned around, then wished that he hadn't.

"Oh...erm...sorry!" he hissed, using an opened hand to block a line of sight that connected his eyes to Susan's bared breasts.

Hermione giggled as she leaned forward.

"She either didn't hear you, or didn't care."

"Doesn't matter," Harry muttered. "Still shouldn't..."

"Would you like me to step back out there?" Hermione asked. "Maybe we could snag the other side of their couch?"

Harry's breath caught, but then he wisely considered the possibility that this was a boyfriend test.

"I don't want to do anything that you'd be uncomfortable doing, Hermione."

His girlfriend smiled and leaned out the doorway far enough to reward her boyfriend with a tongue-twisting kiss. When they broke for air, she stepped back into the room and said, "Get your wand out, Mister."

Harry waggled his eyebrows as he once again pulled the Elder Wand out of his vest pocket.

"You mean this one?"

"Maybe," Hermione teased. Then she spread her feet apart and raised her arms out straight, presenting the largest possible target.

"*Finite* me, Big Boy," she purred.

The black-haired wizard gave his girlfriend what she asked for, and then caught his breath at the result. An even bigger breath was caught when Hermione cupped the front of her ridiculously low-cut gold bra top in her hands, then picked up the now-visible metal chain that was fastened to her choke collar and began to stroke its length suggestively.

"Hermione, you're killing me!" he whined.

"Is that a complaint?"

"Erm...not if you're willing to cast a *Notice-me-not* charm on the front of my outfit."

"But then I couldn't watch."

Harry sighed. "Right, how about you change into something you wouldn't mind anyone else seeing you wearing, and I'll go to my room, and then we can meet back out here in a few minutes?"

"Hmmm...that's a possibility. Although...why would you need to go to your room, Harry?"

"To, erm....to change into something too?"

"But you're not wearing anything revealing or embarrassing, right?"

Harry looked down towards his waist and snorted.

"Hermione...if you can't see that I'm revealing something embarrassing right now..."

"I don't think that you have *anything* to be embarrassed about, Harry."

"Erm, thanks. But still..."

"So you only need a few minutes in your room, then?" Hermione teased.

"Might only be a few seconds, at this rate," Harry muttered.

"Well, then...how about this," his girlfriend replied seductively. "You join me, and I'll try to help you with your not-so-little problem."

"Oh, sure, no problem," Harry snarked.

Hermione flashed Harry a cute pout. She then turned, walked towards her window and pulled open the curtains.

When she began to sway her hips in a slow, seductive dance, Harry hissed, "Hermione!"

"What?"

"Erm, nothing. Except, well...if you can do that in front of an opened window, what's the difference out here?"

Hermione licked her lips, unlocked the window, and pushed it wide open. Then she turned around, walked back towards the door, and grasped the handle.

"You're right, Harry," she whispered. "With the window open, why...anyone looking up from The Forbidden Forest, or any Fly Boy on a broomstick could see me...or maybe even fly straight through..."

The black-haired wizard thought about what Hermione was intimating. When he figured it out he flashed her number one-hundred thirty-five, glanced at the window, and noted, "I don't know Princess...that looks like a tight fit."

Hermione waggled her eyebrows, and dragged a finger down the front of our outfit.

"The approach will not be easy," she noted. "You are required to maneuver straight down *this*trench...and skim the surface to *this* point."

Hermione's graphic flight instructions then became the nicest thing ever to happen to Harry just before a door was slammed in his face.

"You okay, there, mate?" a voice called out.

The black-haired wizard turned back towards the common room, where a concerned couple used a very tight embrace to preserve most of their modesty.

"Erm...yeah, no worries, Nev...Susan..."

"So...you and Hermione...finally?" asked the former Gryffindor.

"Yeah."

"But...things didn't end so well?" asked Susan.

Harry shook his head. "No, things are brilliant."

"But you're out here, and she's in there?"

"Yeah, but that's okay."

"You sure?"

"Absolutely. In fact, they're so great that I think that I'm going to go out for a late-night fly."

Harry then walked across the room to his own bedroom door. Before entering, he turned and asked, "Neville, you've got a broom in your room, right?"

"Yeah, mate."

"And Susan...you have a big window in your room that can be opened to the outside of the castle?"

"Yes."

"Right then," said Harry. "You two ever wonder if they were smart enough to place gender lines on the window sills?"

The Boy-Who-Won disappeared behind his bedroom door before they could give him a reply.

Twenty seconds later he reappeared in front of Hermione's window.

And twenty-one seconds later, they discovered that there wasn't a gender line on her window sill that would keep Harry from spending the night in Hermione's bedroom...or from sleeping with her every other night of their suddenly brilliant Eighth Year.