

Alternative Medicine Ch 1: Like a Different Bedtime Hero

The-Boy-Who-Won woke with a blinding headache and a full bladder.

"He-ll-pp?" he rasped.

"Oh, Harry...you're awake...how wonderful!"

The young wizard tried to turn towards the familiar voice, but found himself immobilized from the neck down. Putting his own condition aside from the moment, he focused on what mattered most...the sight of his bushy-haired best friend dressed in Muggle shorts and a t-shirt, stretching out from a kip on a rattan sofa.

"Her...Hermione, are you okay?"

"I'm fine, Harry...thanks to you, of course," she replied. "I'm so happy that you're....so what do you need? What can I get you?"

"Erm...some answers would be nice, but first I need to use the loo."

Hermione's focus shot involuntarily down towards Harry's crotch.

"Oh, well...go ahead."

"What?"

"Go ahead and take care of your business, Harry."

"What? Erm...How?"

"Oh, sorry, I forgot," Hermione replied sheepishly. "You've got a partial paralysis charm applied to aid your healing, so you're wearing a magical bedpan."

Harry groaned. He'd run into this situation more times than he'd care to recall while under Madame Pomfrey's care.

"Would it be easier for me to leave the room?" Hermione asked.

With a sigh, Harry replied, "No...I mean...it's not like we haven't been in this situation before, and there is a sheet covering me, right?"

"Right now there is."

"Right now?" Harry asked with concern. "Does that mean there have been times when I haven't been covered with bed linens?"

"Not that you know," Hermione replied with a giggle, as she made for the door. "I'll go get the Healer."

With a giggle? Since when did Hermione giggle?

Harry shook his head as he relaxed control of his bladder. The therapeutic version of the paralysis charm allowed for that sort of thing, of course... wouldn't do to have heart muscles frozen and other bodily functions interrupted by magic. The resulting stream of yellow spray was instantly banished as it left his body by a device that actually looked like and functioned more like a magical nappie than a magical bedpan.

His business finished, Harry tried to recall how he got to be where he was. No great surprise that he was in hospital...he had met Voldemort on the field of battle for one final confrontation. He remembered slipping in an *Accio* amidst all of the heavy-duty curses...it was a spell that Voldemort missed, until it sent him sailing through the air towards the sharpened tip of the Sword of Gryffindor held in Harry's off-hand.

The last thing Harry remembered about the battle was planting his foot on the Dark Lord's chest, in an effort to pull the blade from his nemesis's impaled heart.

Not getting any further in his recollections, Harry took in his present environs. They were, quite surprisingly, new to him...located neither within the Hogwarts Infirmary nor St. Mungo's. The headache made looking about the room painful, but that didn't keep him from using his other senses. Neither Hogwarts nor St. Mungo's could have provided a private room with an opened window that allowed a warm gentle breeze to carry in exotic scents, or the sound of crashing surf.

Particularly in January.

Confirmation of these clues came when Hermione returned with a Healer. There were, of course, Healers of South Asian descent working in St. Mungo's, but none that dressed in saris, and none who worked in hospitals whose rooms overlooked a tropical beach.

The smiling elderly witch cast a spell that adjusted Harry's bed so that he was sitting upright. She then asked, "How are you feeling, Mr. Potter?"

Harry snorted, and looked down at his uncovered torso. He was shocked to see arms that were little more than twisted bits of flesh on bone, but focused on the immediate question.

"About all I can feel is a throbbing headache."

"Let me address that issue, then, before I perform my examination."

She walked to the opened door and called out a request using a melodious foreign language.

Harry made the most of his limited muscular control and arched his eyebrows towards his hairline when two young witches responded to the call.

"Padma? Parvati?"

The sari-wearing witches smiled as they approached Harry's bedside. Padma reached out and touched Harry's shoulder while her twin sister angled a straw tip into his mouth. The headache potion that the young wizard sipped through that straw was both effective and delicious.

"Now I know for sure that I'm not in Britain," Harry stated.

"Why is that, Harry?" asked Padma.

"There isn't a medicinal potion in the British Isles that tastes that good."

"Well you would know, having had need for most of them," Hermione replied. She stood on the bedside opposite of the Patil twins, and mimicked Padma's shoulder touch.

"So where, exactly... "

"You are an honored guest of the Kovalam Arya Vaidya Sala," the Healer replied.

"India, then?"

The older witch nodded. "Kerala State, close to Thiruvananthapuram City."

"Thiru-vana...."

"Easier to call it Trivandrum," Padma suggested with a smile.

"But how?"

Hermione and the twins explained while the Healer undertook a series of diagnostic charms.

"You see, Harry...just after you killed Voldemort, you got hit with a nasty hex."

"What kind...who?"

"Dolohov," Hermione replied. "And it was some type of withering curse that affected all of your extremities."

"A withering curse....on my extrem....you mean just my arms and legs, right?"

All three witches giggled.

"Yes, Harry...just your arms and legs," Padma offered.

Parvati lifted up the side of Harry's sheet and said, "Maybe I should double-check, just to be certain?"

The Gryffindor witch's efforts were thwarted when the Healer slapped her hand away from the bed and scolded her in Malayalam.

Padma's scolding was in English.

"Haven't you've checked out that appendage enough times since he's been here?"

"No, actually."

Harry blushed, and asked, "Erm...so how long..."

"Close to twenty centimeters, I would think."

"Parvati!" her sister exclaimed.

Harry's blush grew. "I meant to ask how long I've been in hospital."

"Three days here," Hermione replied, casting a disproving look towards her dorm mate. "Another three days at St. Mungo's before that."

"So why here?" Harry asked. When the Healer glanced up from her wand work, Harry got nervous. "Not that there's anything wrong with here...or that I don't appreciate it..."

"No worries, Mr. Potter," the healer replied with a smile.

"St. Mungo's was a zoo," explained Hermione. "We couldn't keep the press away, and the Ministry seemed more interested in taking credit than providing security."

"Why am I not surprised?"

"And then there was the issue of care," Padma added. "Neither Madame Pomfrey nor the healers at St. Mungo's could control the withering, so they had you under a stasis spell."

"So..."

"So we were with you that last day," Parvati stated. "I actually saw the spell cast on you...and it sort of reminded me of some of the more gruesome bedtime stories that our father used to tell us."

"Gruesome bedtime stories?" Harry asked.

"Well, not that gruesome," interjected Padma. "Sagas about battles between Indian wizards and the Nagas...that sort of thing. One of the stories involved a handsome wizard prince that was struck by a withering curse similar to yours."

"Really?" asked Harry.

Padma nodded. "So Parvati and I told our parents, who contacted our Auntie, here..."

"Auntie?" Harry asked. He turned his head towards the healer. "So you're their Aunt?"

The witch smiled and nodded her head. "Great Aunt, actually. I'm sorry, I should have introduced myself....Healer Patil, at your service."

"Aunt and Uncle run this Ayurvedic Hospital," explained Parvati. "They were more than willing to help, as was the Indian magical ministry, so..."

"So we kidnapped you from St. Mungo's and brought you here," Hermione said nervously. "Hope that you don't mind."

Harry snorted, and the room was quiet as he considered his response.

On the one hand, his hands (and, presumably legs) were useless to him. But on the other hand, he was alive, and Voldemort was dead. He frankly hadn't expected to survive the final battle, so he decided then and there to consider his glass half-full.

And that meant making the most of present circumstances.

"Let me see...instead of being held in stasis at St. Mungo's with a horde of pesky reporters and animagus beetles hovering over me, I wake up to a lovely room by the beach, attended by four of the loveliest healers a patient could hope for."

"Oh, Mr. Potter, such a flirt!" Healer Patil chided. The smile on her face and twinkle in her eye softened the admonishment. There was, in contrast, nothing soft about the deep blush on the other witches' faces.

"So," Harry continued. "I've got something in common with another bedtime story hero, huh?"

"Oh, Harry...stop!"

"What?" Harry said with a grin. "Maybe if I can't stop all of the fan-girl attention, I should embrace it? Ginny always tried to measure me against the stories she was told."

Hermione rolled her eyes and shook her head. "Yes, go ahead, by all means....embrace the horde of fan-girls. I'm sure that they'd be willing to reciprocate."

"Nah," Harry said with a roguish grin. "I'd rather stay here and be embraced by you lot."

"Really?" asked Parvati.

"Sure, why not?" Harry replied brightly. "Of course, I might have problems doing any kind of embracing."

"I think we could work on that," offered Hermione.

"So tell me more about this magical prince that shared my misfortune," asked Harry. "Did he get healed and live happily ever after with a harem?"

"Harry!" chided Hermione.

"What? I was just asking?"

"Actually, you're not far off, Mr. Potter," the Healer said. "The young Prince survived the attack, defeated his enemy, and lived a long and happy life with multiple wives and a large family, despite his injuries."

"Despite his injuries?"

Padma giggled. "Are you sure that you want to know?"

"Erm, sure....humor me."

"Well, according to the story, when the evil Naga king cast his curse, the young prince's arms and legs not only shriveled up...they fell off."

"Permanently fell off?"

Padma nodded.

"So how was this prince able to live happily ever after?"

This time it was Parvati that giggled. "The prince ordered his servants to remove his trousers, and to use a sticking charm to sit him upright on a magical carpet. He then flew into battle and cast the killing curse on the evil Naga king."

Harry pursed his lips. "So what was the point of taking off his pants?"

"It was the only way that the prince could wield his wand."

"But how did he...."

"He still had one appendage left, didn't he?" Hermione interjected.

Harry looked shocked. "So in this bedtime story, an armless, legless prince rides bare-arsed into battle on a flying carpet whilst holding his wand with his...wand?"

Shoulder shrugs and nods provided confirmation.

"But...but...his johnson didn't have an opposable thumb...or did it?"

The Patil twins giggled. "Of course not, Harry...he gripped it like an elephant uses his snout."

Harry gave the two witches a fish eye. "Sounds rather improbable...how long would his...wand...have to be to perform that kind of trick?"

"Twenty centimeters ought to be long enough," Parvati quipped.

Healer Patil muttered something in her native tongue that caused her two nieces to titter.

"What's so funny?"

"Nothing, Harry," the twins said in unison.

"Please forgive this old witch," their Aunt stated. "I merely suggested that my nieces wait for their wedding night before they seek answers to that question."

"That's right, Harry," Padma said with a grin. "She said nothing about the possibility that you'd find the answer under your sheet."

"As if you don't want to find out for yourself," Parvati whispered into her sister's ear.

"Ssshhh!" Padma admonished.

The young wizard shook his head.

"Not to criticize your parents, or your culture, but that seems like a rather...adult bedtime story."

"Actually, Harry," offered Hermione, "our own European cultures have children's stories that are just as graphic...in the original version of Sleeping Beauty the prince needed to shag her to wake her up...and let's not get started on what the wolf does to the original Little Red Riding Hood...."

"Okay, okay, I stand corrected," Harry replied. "At least I hope that I can stand...Healer Patil?"

The Healer looked up at Harry, who had pulled the bottom of his sheets part-way back to inspect his legs. "Well, Mr. Potter, all of your appendages are intact...and we've managed to keep the curse from progressing without keeping you in complete stasis. But whether we can remove the paralysis charm, or restore function to your limbs...it is too soon to tell."

"Oh," Harry replied glumly. "So this might be permanent?"

"I cannot discount that potential outcome," the Healer admitted. "That said, we employ a style of medicine that differs from what is traditionally practiced in Britain, and we offer, I think, a better chance for a successful outcome."

"They also allow use of magic carpets here, Harry," added Padma. "So worst case, we could suit you up like the Prince."

"You mean strip me down like the Prince?" asked Harry. He then added, "Might not be so bad, actually, so long as you volunteered to help me learn my new wand grip."

"Harry!" chided Hermione, as Padma replied with a blush. But the admonition was administered with a lilting voice and a smile, and the brown-haired witch then asked, "Healer Patil...would it be possible for me to stay by Harry's bedside during his recovery? I'd be more than willing to volunteer to help with his care, or help elsewhere in your hospital."

The witch gave Hermione a pensive look. "I'm afraid that my nieces have already asked for the opportunity to help nurse Mr. Potter back to health."

"Oh, Auntie, that's okay," Padma stated. "We'd have to curse Hermione to keep her away from Harry's bedside, and....perhaps all three of us can share?"

"You mean share in assisting in his recovery, correct?" asked the bemused Healer.

Hermione bit her lower lip. "Maybe we should ask Harry's opinion," she said softly.

Four sets of female eyes turned towards the patient.

Harry gulped nervously.

"Perhaps I'll let you young ones discuss this," the Healer stated.

Once the older witch left the room, Harry nervously asked, "When you three are talking about sharing...it is just sharing the burden of helping me recover, right?"

"Not a burden at all, Harry," Parvati said warmly, as she ran her fingers through his messy black hair.

"I agree," said Padma, as she lightly cupped the side of his face.

"Hermione?" asked Harry.

The brown-haired witch looked across the bed, and held a silent, but apparently decisive discussion with the other two girls. With nods all around, Hermione leaned over and surprised Harry with a brief kiss on the lips. She then tilted her face and whispered into his ear.

"I'd rather share, than be shut out."

Harry narrowed his eyes, and nudged Hermione's face so that he could reply with a whisper in her ear.

"Hermione, why would you think that I'd ever shut you out?"

Hermione bit her lower lip.

"Well, because....erm, well....they're twins, right? What heterosexual teen-aged male wouldn't pass on that opportunity?"

Harry frowned. "So...we are talking about more than just helping me make a physical recovery, huh?"

Hermione shrugged her shoulders, and spoke out loud. "Well, Harry...you defeated Voldemort, and have given us the chance to live our lives, and explore opportunities, and...."

"And you'd want to explore...opportunities with me?"

The answer came from the lips of all three witches. They each replied, "yes" as they planted a firm kiss on his lips.

And then they leaned over the bed and kissed each other.

"So what do you think of the idea, Harry?" Padma asked.

Racy thoughts ran through Harry's head that messed with his magic. Blood ran into his other head that messed with his embarrassment and produced a physical reaction that was both surprising and obvious.

Parvati gasped as Harry's erection lifted both the magical bedpan and the overlying bed linen up off of his body, creating a prominent tent. Her sister, in contrast, gave Harry a grin and trailed her hand down Harry's body.

"Oh my, what strong pelvic muscles," she cooed. "Do you work out like this very often?"

Harry snorted. "Only when pretty witches snog in front of me."

"Careful," Parvati said, as she reached up and tweaked Harry's bared left nipple.

"Hey!"

"Oh, Merlin, you just lifted the bedpan up higher!" gasped Hermione.

"Just think, Hermione what if I had pinched your naked breasts instead?"

"But...Parvati...but..."

"Sure, Harry," Padma said mischievously. She then slipped her hand underneath the linen and squeezed Harry's bare bum.

"Not that butt," Harry quipped.

Hermione's eyes traveled from Harry sheet-covered erection to Padma's half-covered arm.

"Can you feel her squeezing your bum?" she asked.

"Erm...yes," Harry admitted.

Hermione furrowed her eyebrows, reached down, and tweaked Harry's other nipple.

"Ouch! Not you too!"

"Healer Patil!" Hermione called out.

The twins' Great Aunt rushed back into the room.

"Yes, child?"

Gesturing towards Harry's mid-section, Hermione replied, "I think the paralysis charm might have worn off."

"Oh, my," the Healer replied, as she quickly pulled the sheet off of Harry's body. Paying no mind to the fact that Harry was sporting a full, and fully exposed, erection, or that her niece had her hand on his bum, she immediately began to cast a set of diagnostic charms.

After a few tense moments, she let out a sigh of relief.

"Well, Mr. Potter," the Healer pronounced. "While I am rather alarmed that you cast off the paralysis charm, I am pleased to note that you apparently aren't worse off because of it."

"So the curse?" asked Hermione.

"The curse is not progressing, despite the lack of paralysis charm," the older Patil replied. "How are you feeling presently, Mr. Potter?"

Harry frowned a bit in embarrassment, as he looked down the length of his torso.

"Erm, embarrassed, but I'm not feeling any pain, if that's what you mean."

"Absolutely no reason to be embarrassed about that wand," he heard Parvati mutter.

The Healer couldn't help but smile. "Padma, child, will you please remove your hand? Tactile response is more properly diagnosed with a wand tip."

"Yes, Auntie," the younger witch replied, as she pulled her hand out from underneath the patient.

"I'll need to do a more rigorous examination," the Healer stated. "If you girls would give Mr. Potter some privacy...."

Seeing the look of disappointment in the other teens's eyes, Harry closed his own eyes for a moment, and sighed.

"Healer Patil, I don't think I could be any more exposed or embarrassed than I already am, and if they really are willing to help with my care, then I don't mind if they stay."

"Really?" asked Hermione, a look of wonder on her face. She squealed, and bent over to plant another kiss on Harry's lips. Padma and Parvati followed suit.

Once his face was cleared of their affections, Harry nodded. "I think that I'll be in good hands, Healer Patil."

The healer snorted. "I should warn you, Mr. Potter, that some British healers would consider the kind of care provided under this roof as 'alternative'."

Harry gazed at the three witches, who each had hands caressing some part of his upper body.

"That's quite alright," he finally replied with a smile. "It'd be hard for me to think of a better alternative than this."

Healer Patil chuckled. "I hope that you still hold that opinion after a week's worth of treatments."

Alternative Medicine

Ch 2: Shared Constitutions

Having been held in stasis for four days, and unconscious for another two, Harry was rather hungry. Healer Patil was sympathetic, but cautious, and refused to allow him to eat until he answered a long list of questions that would help her determine his Ayurvedic body constitution. It didn't take too many questions about the consistency of his feces, or whether his dirty socks smelled, for him to rethink allowing the other witches to stay by his side. Thankfully, the Patil twins knew enough about Ayurveda to keep the giggling in check, and Hermione was too intent on helping Harry supply the correct answers to notice anything off within the questions.

The questioning and physical examination completed, Healer Patil looked up from her notes and smiled.

"So, my nieces, what is your opinion on the patient's constitution?"

The twins looked at each other, and Parvati non-verbally deferred to her Ravenclaw sister.

"Vatta-dominant, Auntie."

"Based on..."

"Based primarily on his undersized condition."

Padma waited for her sister to make a predictable comment about whether Harry was undersized where it mattered, then continued.

"Hermione's observation that the patient historically has tended towards cold hands and cold feet is also telling. As are the apparent bouts of constipation."

While Harry frowned at the frank assessment, the Healer allowed a small smile to form on her face and nodded. She then turned towards Hermione.

"Perhaps I should consider your constitution as well, Miss Granger...so long as you are to stay here for some period of time?"

"No need, Auntie," Parvati offered. "Hermione is definitely pitta dominant, just like us."

The elderly witch raised an eyebrow, and then nodded.

"There is enough in common, then, for you four to share meals. I'll make arrangements with the kitchen, and have dinner brought to the room."

The sound of Harry's groaning stomach protested this further delay. He apologized, but the Healer shrugged it off, and pointed her wand towards the window.

"*Accio* bananas."

A few moments later, a large bunch of tree-ripened bananas sailed through the opened window and into her hand.

"These are for the patient only," the Healer cautioned the younger witches. "Eating them will only aggravate your pitta dominant constitutions."

"Yes, Auntie," the twins dutifully replied, as the Healer handed the bananas to Hermione and left the room.

"So what do you think, sister?" Parvati asked. "Will Harry aggravate or pacify our body constitutions?"

"What?" asked Harry.

Hermione chuckled as she pulled a single banana off from the bunch and partially peeled it.

"I thought that Ayurvedic diets were vegetarian?"

Parvati smiled. "Oh, I wasn't thinking of eating Harry...more like swallowing."

"What?" Harry demanded once more, turning beet-red.

Padma adopted a rather studious pose as she stroked her chin and relished Harry's embarrassment out of the corner of her eye.

"Well...as semen supposedly has a salty taste, and salt is to be avoided for pitta-dominants, we really should avoid swallowing during fellatio."

Sensing that Harry was too gob-smacked to contribute to the conversation, Hermione decided to play along.

"But Padma, isn't it true than the taste of semen can be affected by your boyfriend's diet?"

"I'm afraid that I lack the direct experience to offer an opinion on that proposition...Parvati?"

"What...do you think that I would?" the Gryffindor witch chided. "Of course, Lavender was always quick to support that belief."

Hermione nodded, giving the twin sisters a knowing grin. "Yes, it was something to see. Years of me chiding Ron to eat a more balanced diet had no effect, but just as soon as Lavender dangled going down on his carrot as incentive, Won-Won was loading up on fresh fruits three meals a day."

As Padma and Parvati laughed at the comment, Hermione turned towards Harry and held the peeled banana close to his lips.

"And speaking of fresh fruit..." she said with a seductive, husky voice.

Harry's eyebrows couldn't travel any higher up into his hairline, and his cheeks couldn't get any more flushed. Too flustered to offer up a witty retort, and too hungry to ask about Hermione's intentions with respect to flavoring his ejaculate, it was all he could do to nod, lean forward, and bite down on the offered fruit.

oo000000oo

The charged sexual atmosphere lingered over dinner, making it hard for Harry to keep from occasionally choking on his food and drink.

Some of unresolved sexual tension seemed unintentional and unavoidable, at least to Harry. The meal had arrived on four individual trays that were devoid of silverware, and set with a banana leaf instead of a dinner plate. Upon this green leaf was a large mound of white rice, surrounded by a variety of brightly colored side-dishes. Padma and Parvati identified some of these pasty mounds as sambar, rasam, and kaalan. To Harry they all looked liked differently-colored vegetable stews.

Having won a quick game of rock-parchment-wand, Padma hopped up onto the bed and showed Harry how the meal was to be eaten. She grabbed part of the mound of potato curry on his leaf, glopped it onto the rice, and mixed the two together with her fingers. Once the rice was thoroughly coated yellow, Padma lifted some of it to Harry's mouth and instructed him to "open up."

Harry decided that there was a decided difference between being spoon-fed meals in the Hogwarts infirmary, and being finger-fed meals in South India. It was a very pleasant difference, especially when Padma encouraged him to lick and suck her fingers clean.

Of course, Padma's attire didn't help keep his libido in check. Both her sister and she were dressed in the Keralan version of the Indian sari. Simply described, it was a long white skirt, with a matching white shawl that loosely draped over a midriff-baring cropped blouse called a choli. This tight-fitting garment had a low scoop neck that exposed a fair bit of cleavage.

Harry hadn't noticed anything too out of the ordinary when the girls had entered the room dressed this way. It was relatively modest attire...so long as they stood up straight, the shawl that was draped over their left shoulders covered what the choli exposed. Even the left half of their midriffs was covered when they held their arm to their side. But when they bent over, or sat bedside, the white wrap did little to conceal their toned stomachs, ample cleavage, or the fact that they were both wearing cholis in the traditional South Indian manner...without brassieres.

The ogling opportunities were tempered somewhat by the dinner conversation...Hermione and he were interested in learning more about Ayurveda, and how it differed from "traditional" Muggle and magical medicinal care back in Great Britain. Hermione also wanted to know why Parvati considered her to be "pitta dominant." The ensuing description of the "typical" traits of a pitta dominant body constitution forced Hermione to agree with the assessment, for reasons both good and bad. She had reached puberty and gotten her first period relatively early...even before she started Hogwarts. Hermione also was smart, competitive, and (she was forced to admit) occasionally bossy and critical of her friends. She did challenge Parvati's assertions, however, that her soiled socks were any smellier than her dorm mate's were.

Discussing the differences in body constitution led to a description of the third type – kapha dominant. As soon as Padma described kapha-dominant people as "lazy arses who love to eat a lot, who fancy sweets, and who sit around all day and do nothing," Harry and Hermione burst out in laughter, turned to each other, and loudly pronounced, "Ron!"

A brief word-association game followed, as names were thrown out and off-the-cuff body compositions were assigned. This light-hearted discussion turned serious, though, when Harry began to ask how other students and staff had fared during the final confrontation at Hogwarts. He was relieved to learn that the "light-side" casualties had been relatively light (so to speak), but got very quiet when Hermione started to name names. Attempts to assuage Harry's guilt, and to have him focus on who was to really blame for the deaths, and how many lives he had saved were failing miserably when Healer Patil checked in on the four Hogwarts students.

"Was the meal not agreeable with you, Mr. Potter?"

"Erm, no it was delicious, actually. Tasted great, even after your nieces told me exactly what I was eating."

"Then why the long face?" the Healer asked.

"He's blaming himself for Voldemort's attacks, and for all of the casualties," Hermione stated.

The elderly witch frowned. "That is rather silly, I think...and counterproductive to the healing process. There will be no more of that talk tonight."

"Erm, yes, Healer Patil," Harry said glumly, his eyes still cast downward.

"Come now, girls," the Healer stated. "Clear these dishes... it is time for Mr. Potter's therapeutic massage."

Padma and Parvati's eyes lit up at this pronouncement, and they eagerly helped clear up after their meal and to prepare Harry for his therapy. They were a little less eager once their Aunt informed them that she would oversee their efforts, at least for the first few sessions. Hermione, for her part, just tried to be as supportive and proactive as she could for her best friend, and asked what the treatment program would involve.

Healer Patil informed Harry and Hermione that therapeutic massage was an essential part of Ayurveda, especially in cases of neuro-muscular damage. There were going to use a specially prepared salve that zeroed in on repairing muscle damage and restored neural connections. Any hopes that Harry might have had that the massage would be sensual were dashed when the Healer noted that they were going to use an especially strong salve, at least at the start...strong enough that those applying it to Harry's skin would need to wear long dragonskin gloves and thick leather aprons. He didn't even get to glimpse the girls changing into their protective attire...the Healer shoo'ed them out and into the next room during the swap out.

Harry's fear that any salve that required this level of protection would sting like hell were for naught...he felt nothing as the young witches kneaded the ointment into his gaunt, flaccid limbs. The Healer said this was to be expected, and that it would likely take a week of thrice daily applications before a positive effect would present itself.

Just what Harry had to look forward to was revealed when the masseuses reached the limit of curse-damaged skin, and his upper thighs and shoulders began to burn like a *Crucio* attack. Healer Patil was quick to have a second salve applied in these areas, and marked the limits of spell-damaged skin with lines drawn onto the skin with henna.

It was dark by the time this initial treatment was complete, though not all that late in the evening...Hermione told Harry that he could expect twelve hours of daylight even in the middle of winter, given their low latitude. Healer Patil suggested that Harry try to get some rest, and, noting that the treatment had been rather stressful, suggested that he have a relaxing soak.

"But Auntie," Padma noted. "Without use of his arms and legs, how will Harry sit up in the tub?"

The Healer said, "I will attend to my patient, and ensure that he keeps his head above water."

"Oh, that's okay, Auntie, we can take care of that for you," Parvati said with a grin, as she peeled off her leather gloves. I'm all hot and sweaty, and could use a wash-up myself."

"Absolutely not," the Healer stated firmly.

"But..."

"But nothing...I am your surrogate parent, so long as you are away from your parents."

"But we're of legal age, Auntie!"

"And Hermione?"

"Even older than we are," Parvati claimed.

"Hey, I'm only eighteen...you make me sound like I'm middle-aged, or something," Hermione chided.

"And see...it looks like the patient agrees with the suggestion," Parvati noted brightly.

Harry, who had been desperately trying to avoid getting entangled in the conversation, balked.

"But, I haven't said a word!"

"Non-verbals, Mr. Potter," quipped Padma. Following her line of sight towards his crotch, Harry was forced to admit that she had a point. He felt rather helpless not being able to gather more of his thin blanket around his mid-section to hide his erection.

"There will be no sharing of baths, or beds for that matter, between my nieces and my patient," the elder witch stated firmly. "Your support of his treatment will be professional, rather than promiscuous. At least not unless or until your father can discuss dowries with Mr. Potter."

"Dowries?" Harry squawked.

"Plural?" added Hermione.

The Healer shook her head, sighed, and spoke quite firmly to the Patil twins in her native language. Padma and Parvati both whined, said that it wasn't fair, and stormed out of the room (after giving Harry a good-night kiss, and informing Hermione that they were insanely jealous).

"Miss Granger, I have no authority over you...if you wish to help Mr. Potter bathe, the tub is just down the hall, or he could remain here in bed, and you could give him a sponge bath. I also could attend to his needs in either case."

Hermione chewed on her lower lip, and looked towards Harry. He, in turn, looked at Hermione, then glanced back at the Healer.

"I don't think that either Hermione or myself wish to cause strife or scandal under your roof, Healer Patil...perhaps a *Scourgify* spell would suffice?"

The Matron pursed her lips, took a closer look at the couple, and shook her head. "Your skin is too dry, and water must be integrated into your treatment program. And as for any scandal...such a thing is of no consequence for those whose karmas and are already so closely linked."

Sorry, I didn't catch that," Harry said.

Healer Patil smiled. "But I think your companion did, Mr. Potter."

Harry turned to find Hermione's face flushed, and eyes moist.

"Hermione?"

The young witch ignored the question and instead quietly asked one of her own.

"Healer Patil, is that a medical diagnosis?"

The older witch chuckled. "Child, one doesn't need to be trained in the healing arts to see something that is so obvious."

"Erm, and if it's not so obvious to me?" asked Harry.

Hermione smiled, and lightly touched Harry's shoulder.

"No worries, Harry...most boys are clueless about these sorts of things."

"Hmmprrh!"

Plans for responding to Harry's grunt with a kiss were put on hold as a thought came to Hermione's mind. She turned and asked, "Healer Patil, if our karmas really are linked, why did you tease your nieces with talk of dowries?"

The old woman smiled warmly. "As each portion of a chain is connected to more than one link, so too may the heart chakra connect along multiple pathways."

Hermione's eyes widened. "And you see such possibilities within his heart, Healer Patil?"

The witch nodded. "Not just his, but within yours and theirs, child."

As Hermione tried to absorb these words, the Healer looked over Hermione's shoulder and smiled.

"Perhaps a soak was not prerequisite to restful sleep, after all."

Hermione turned towards the bed in response to this comment, and sighed when she discovered that their patient had drifted off to sleep.

"Oh, Harry," she said wistfully.

Healer Patil smiled, and pulled the younger witch into a hug.

"It seems that your dharma is elsewhere tonight ...go to Padma and Parvati, and I will attend to my patient."

"But...thank you, Healer Patil."

The older witch laughed. "Please, child, call me Auntie, for it will be true soon enough."

Hermione nodded, kissed Harry on the forehead, and left the room.

oo000000oo

It was a short walk up two flights of stairs to the room that Hermione was sharing with Padma and Parvati in the residence above the clinic. Healer Patil and her husband had insisted that she was their guest just as much as Harry was their patient. Hermione's classmates had then insisted that she bunk with them, in the expansive guest bedroom that covered most of the building's top level.

If you squinted a bit, the room was similar to their dormitory in Gryffindor Tower. There were three large four-poster beds in the room, but mosquito netting hung from the canopy, rather than thick curtains. Large rectangular windows were found on three walls, but they looked out onto a sub-tropical beach and grove of fruit trees, rather than Black Lake and the heather and heath. And the room had an en-suite lavatory, but the magical loo was Asian-style, and forced one to squat, rather than sit.

The saris that Padma and Parvati had been wearing were draped on the chest that sat in front of the bed that the sisters were sharing as they sat in their cholis and slips behind the mosquito netting.

"Hermione?" asked Padma, as the brown-haired witch walked into the room. The black-haired witch poked her head out from the netting and added, "Already done rubbing Harry clean?"

"More like rubbing him off, I wager," snarked Parvati, as she pulled the netting fully aside.

"Neither," Hermione lamented. "Our patient fell asleep before I could lay a hand on him."

"And you let that stop you?"

"Now, Parvati...where'd be the fun in that?" Padma asked. She then patted the mattress next to her and added, "Come sit with us?"

Hermione considered the offer, but shook her head. “Maybe later. I’m going to take a shower and try to cool off.”

“Yeah, you were getting all hot and sticky down there, weren’t you?” asked Parvati.

Rolling the double (maybe triple) entendre around in her head, Hermione asked, “What...was I was leaking through my shorts?”

“No, I just extrapolated from your nipple hardness,” Parvati giggled. “So...need a hand with the wash-up?”

“Wouldn’t want to worry about your fingers getting sticky.”

“No worries, I’d just lick them clean.”

“Parvati!” gasped her sister.

Hermione laughed at Padma’s scandalized response all the way to the shower. She thought about their banter some more, after she stripped off her clothes and ducked under the spray of warm water. It was eerily similar to the rise that they could always get out of Lavender Brown as a defensive measure back in Sixth Year. Lesbian-laced innuendo had been the only thing that shut Lavender up whenever she started to blabber about how well hung “Won-Won” was, or how good he was with his tongue.

Funny thing was...by the end of that school year, both Hermione and Parvati were getting a little too good at the smutty witch-on-witch banter, and were enjoying it perhaps a little too much. The playful talk had progressed to playful touches, and “pretend” kisses that were designed to shock, awe, and shut up Lavender Brown. They had never talked about what they were doing, or progressed beyond what they did “on stage” and in Lavender’s presence, but the thought of doing more with Parvati had always stuck in the back of Hermione’s mind.

And not just with Parvati, but with her sexy, brainy, twin as well.

Of course, anything that was kept in the back of Hermione’s mind was well hidden, so long as thoughts about Harry and defeating Voldemort were very much in the forefront. But now that Voldemort was gone, and Harry alive, and awake, and with prospects for full recovery...

Erotic dreams of her walking naked in the surf with Harry had recently become more crowded, with Padma and Parvati taking turns holding Hermione’s other hand. Or sucking on Hermione’s other breast, and more.

Hermione Granger had a reputation for overthinking situations. But the fact was, while she did spend a lot of time analyzing things, once she attained a logical conclusion she was quick to act on it. What had been said downstairs about sharing Harry and sharing hearts pushed Hermione to a logical conclusion. And it was now time to act on it.

The brown-haired witch pulled fingers that had been idly caressing her lower lips away from her body and turned off the shower spray. She reached for the towel, and used it to quickly dry off. But rather than wrap that towel around her body, as she had over the past few days, Hermione wrapped it around her hair, mustered all of the Gryffindor courage she possessed, and walked naked back into the bedroom.

No comments were made as she made her way over to her bedside...at least none that she could hear above the tune she was quietly humming to hide her nervousness. But she could almost feel the eyes on her body as she sat on the edge of the bed and began to comb out her hair.

It was rather exciting, and it took a certain amount of effort not to drag the hairbrush from her wet curls down across her breasts towards her other curls, which were getting wetter by the moment.

Furtive glances using peripheral vision suggested that Padma and Parvati were now each in their beds, and staring at her unabashedly. But they weren’t saying anything, or doing anything.

Playing it by ear, Hermione turned, and nonchalantly asked, “You know it’s almost too hot to sleep in a nightie tonight. Would either of you be too terribly bothered if I didn’t wear one?”

She thought she heard an “Eep!” from Parvati’s bed in response to her question.

“Erm...I don’t mind...whatever makes you feel comfortable,” called out Padma.

“Yeah, it’s just us girls, right?” added her sister.

Hermione chuckled. “If only it were otherwise, and Harry was with us, eh?”

Padma nodded, as Hermione pulled back the mosquito netting, pulled down the linens, and slipped into bed.

“I think we’re all in agreement on that point.”

“Not much room for a fourth bed, though.”

“I’d share mine with him,” Parvati quipped.

“Who wouldn’t?” Hermione replied.

There was a lull in the conversation, as if each of the three were contemplating next steps. Hermione reached for her wand, pointed towards the room’s torches, and extinguished them. As her eyes adjusted to a moonlit illumination, she joked, “As long as I have my wand in hand, anybody need a silencing charm?”

Parvati snorted. "Would it matter? It's not like you couldn't see somebody wanking through the netting."

Hermione nodded, and plunged forward. "Well, then...do you want me to put one on my own netting?"

"Planning on an extra-loud rub, Hermione?"

"Maybe."

There was another pregnant pause.

Finally, from Padma's bed, came, "Don't bother on my account, Hermione."

A moment later, Parvati added, "Me, either...but maybe one on the room, so that we don't bother anyone else?"

"Fair enough," Hermione squeaked, failing to contain the excitement in her voice. She pointed towards all four walls and the floor, and cast the strongest silencing spell that she knew. Reflexively, she hid her wand underneath her pillow, within reach in case of emergency. But rather than place her head on top of that pillow, she remained sitting, and leaned back against the headboard.

The sheet had dropped down to her lap, exposing her breasts to the night (and, presumably to the Patil Twins' view). Hermione smiled as she compared her position to the one that Harry had been in earlier that evening. She imagined where she would have placed that sponge (and her hands), had he stayed awake. And then she placed her hands on those same places on her body, and began to rub. And caress. And probe.

A wimper from the other side of the room caught Hermione's attention. Through the dim light, she could see that it was Padma, who was watching her with one hand tweaking a brown-nippled breast, and the other buried between her thighs.

Hermione moaned softly, and smiled. Padma returned the smile, then they both glanced to the third bed, where Parvati was just as busy.

By unspoken agreement, the lights remained dimmed, and they stayed in their respective beds. But those silencing spells were tested, as they each loudly got off at being watched, and at watching others.

The musky scent of sweet release filled the room, overpowering the fragrance of sandalwood and sea. It lingered far past the time that they each drifted off towards satiated slumber. And the dreams that followed were all just as crowded and erotic as those experienced by a certain raven-haired wizard, sleeping two floors below.

Alternative Medicine Ch 3: Awed by the Extraordinary

The silencing charms that had contained orgasmic cries did little to keep out the blare of loudspeakers at precisely 5:03 the following morning.

"Wha...who's there?" Hermione cried out. She jolted up, pulled her wand, and promptly got caught up in the mosquito netting of her bed.

The recorded voice ignored Hermione's challenge as the two-minute long call to morning prayer continued on.

"Where is a wizarding camera when you need it?" asked Padma from her bed.

Hermione scowled as she extricated herself from the netting, pulled the top sheet from her bed, and wrapped it around her naked body.

"So now you decide to be modest?" teased Padma.

The bushy-brown haired witch frowned and shook her head as she made for one of the bedroom's windows.

"Wouldn't do to flash the faithful, would it?"

"I doubt they'd mind," Padma replied.

"Go back to sleep," offered Hermione. "I'll go check on Harry in a little bit."

"And flash him instead?" the Ravenclaw asked. "I'd really want a camera to capture that moment."

"Perv."

"And what color is the kettle, pot?"

"Hush!"

Padma followed orders, and drifted back off to sleep with a smirk on her face, allowing Hermione to look out the opened window.

During her first few mornings on the subcontinent, Hermione had used the first call to prayer as an alarm clock, and rushed to ready herself for a day spent by Harry's bedside. But with Harry now on the road to recovery, and with a lot on her mind, Hermione allowed herself the luxury of playing tourist for a few minutes.

Travelers making their first trip to the Indian subcontinent are often advised to take as many pictures as they can during the first week of their stay...after that, the other-worldliness of the place fades, and the extraordinary becomes mundane. It was the start of Hermione Granger's fourth day in India, so there was still a lot of wonders to behold within her field of view.

The Patil's clinic was located across from the smallest of three beaches that made up the resort area of Kovalam. Samutra Beach was also the least touristy. The minarets of the local mosque dominated the skyline, rather than the multi-story hotels that catered to European package tourists, and fishing boats were more often seen on the beach than bikinis. A dozen of these narrow wooden vessels were being pulled onto shore, as their owners brought in the night's catch from the Arabian Sea. Some of the fishermen were already negotiating prices with a local agent using animated hand gestures and Malayalam, the lyrical language of the majority of Keralan residents.

Hermione watched the back and forth for a few minutes, before a flash of color caught her eye and she began to follow a woman walking down the street with a huge stalk of bananas on her head. The vibrant colors of the woman's sari were something that she'd quickly come to associate with their location...bright hues not just in the clothing, but in the boats, and flowers, and lorries...even the mosque was painted with a rich palette of colors that would never been found on the walls of an Anglican church back home.

The sensory overload that her window perch provided wasn't enough to keep Hermione's mind from eventually drifting inward...back to Harry, and Padma, and Parvati. She smiled when she thought back to the mutual wank session...Parvati had been far less restrained in her mewling and moans than the few times that Hermione had eavesdropped on her solo nighttime rubs back at Hogwarts. And Padma...Padma preferred positions that made it easy to distinguish her from her sister. While Parvati was a "lie on your back and spread your legs" type of masturbator, Padma spent most of her time on her knees, and alternated between sitting up straight with her long hair thrashing about freely, or with her face on the pillow and her bum sticking high up in the air. The latter position had really revved up Hermione's libido...that she couldn't clearly see the exposed fanny through the dim light and gauzy nettings made the image that much sexier, and tested her resolve not to scamper across the room and bury her face into Padma's crotch. The memory still excited her hours later...enough so that Hermione had begun to grind her sheet-covered mound against the wooden sill.

"So what's got you so hot and bothered out there?" asked a voice from across the room.

Hermione froze. Had she been caught out like this a week earlier, she would have died of embarrassment. But after the shared kiss over Harry's bed, and the shared wank that night...well, combine those things with the romantic setting, her joy about Harry's semi-recovery, and the absence of a Dark Lord breathing down their necks, and Hermione frankly didn't give a damn. So she smiled, turned back towards the room, and sat on the window sill.

"Nothing...just thinking about last night," she admitted. Hermione smiled when she noted that Padma's choli had gone missing, leaving her toned light-brown breasts to swing free. Hermione nodded towards the dark brown nipples as Padma rose from her bed and saucily asked, "Are you thinking about the same thing, or just cold?"

The black-haired witch wagged her eyebrows as she stopped short of showing her breasts out the window. She then reached out and grabbed hold of the knot that held Hermione's sheet in place.

"I'm not the one fully covered, now...am I?"

Hermione shook her head as she followed the knot that Padma was pulling on and stepped further into the room.

"So," she asked. "About last night?"

"Yeah," Padma nodded. "About last night..."

The two witches stood silently and fidgeted, wondering what they should say, and if they should cave into the shared urge to pull the other into a crushing hug.

"Oh, go ahead and snog each other...get it over with," Parvati called out.

Tension broke between Padma and Hermione, as they smiled at each other.

"Or not," added a topless Parvati, as she casually hopped out of bed, untied the drawstring on her underskirt, and let it slip to the floor. Now fully nude, the witch yawned, then inspected the hand that she'd used to cover her mouth.

"Morgana, I wonder how my fingers got so sticky overnight," she snarked. "I need a good wash-up...anybody want to join me in the shower?"

Parvati didn't wait for an answer, pausing only long enough to pinch Hermione's bum on her way to the lavatory. After emitting a cute "eep," Hermione turned to Padma and blushed.

"So, Ms. Ravenclaw," she asked hesitatingly, "is that the next logical step for us?"

The brown-skinned beauty chuckled, allowing her uncovered breasts to bounce attractively.

"Asks the most brilliant witch in our class," Padma countered. "Probably ought to do more talking before we start touching, but that's just my brain talking."

"Oh?" Hermione asked. "So what's your body saying?"

Padma smiled as she pinched one of her own nipples with thumb and forefinger.

"Isn't it obvious?" she asked.

Sucking up all kinds of courage, the Ravenclaw then reached out and undid the knot that gathered Hermione's sheet.

"So," she asked, "is your body telling me anything?"

The answer was just as evident as the sheet fell to the wooden floor.

"So beautiful," Padma whispered, as the back of her hand caressed Hermione's neck. Her fingers then trailed half-way down Hermione's exposed breast before she stopped herself.

"May I?"

Hermione's breath caught at the question. She reached up for Padma's hand, and dragged it down towards its target. With a hand now cupping her breast, Hermione leaned forward and shifted her weight, so that her nipple played against Padma's palm with small circles.

A look of wonder came upon Padma's face as her other hand reached up to attain some symmetry. Hermione closed her eyes and released her held breath with a low-pitched purr. Her own hands reached out for the drawstring of Padma's slip, and undid the knot. Thumbs grazed against the edges of a black-haired mound as Hermione pushed the garment over the Ravenclaw's hips. Those thumbs were tracing trails up and down bared thighs when Padma reached down to stop them.

Hermione quickly opened her eyes, and began to fret.

"Is something wrong...too quick...too, oh, Padma, I'm so sorry...."

"Hush," Padma cooed. Pulling Hermione into an embrace that bumped bits, she silenced Hermione's concerns with a tender kiss. The Ravenclaw then stepped back, and took one of Hermione's hands in hers.

"Let's go give my sister some company," she said. "You wouldn't want to leave her out, now...would you?"

Hermione's eyes widened as her mind overloaded with thoughts and images.

It was a race to the shower.

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The wash-up allowed Hermione and the Patil twins to explore each other's bodies with soap and hand linens. But there was more tickling than fondling, and more giggles than throaty moans, as they accustomed themselves to touching and being touch by others. Hermione noticed during all of this sharing that Padma and Parvati were far less touchy-feely with each other than they were with her...intimate touches seemed more accidental than intentional. She thought to add this to the list of discussion topics...might have even raised the issue during the towel down, had she not been distracted by smutty talk about the size of Harry's wand, and how it might fit in certain places.

As they dressed for the day, Hermione stood in bra and knickers in front of her trunk, and stated, "You know I'm rather jealous of both of you right now."

"How could that be?" asked Padma. "You won't be the one with an Auntie watching you like a hawk whenever we're within reach of Harry's wand."

"I'm also not the one catching Harry's eye with what I wear, either."

"As if it matters," muttered Parvati.

"I think it does," Hermoine quipped. She then walked over and ran her hand enviously down the length of fabric that was draped over Parvati's shoulder. "He still thinks of me as a best friend...and my clothing does nothing to remind him that I'm a woman like yours does."

"What, these simple things?" asked Parvati. "They aren't any more revealing than what is traditionally worn by Muggle Keralan women."

"Yes, those simple things," Hermione whined. "Don't tell me that either of you didn't see Harry staring down your shirt, or at your bared midriffs."

"Okay, we won't tell you," Padma said with a smile. "Should we talk instead about the glances that you were stealing?"

Hermione snorted, and reached out to tweak a nipple in *faux* protest.

"Never mind," she stated. "Do you two think that it'd be possible...well, what would you think if I were to dress that way?"

Parvati smiled. "I think that you'd look brilliant in a sari...what do you think, Padma?"

Her sister smiled as she walked up behind Hermione and unhooked bra straps.

"One way to find out," she replied, as she pulled the bra free from the brown-haired witch's breasts.

"Ooh, my turn," Parvati said brightly. She reached for her wand, turned towards Hermione and vanished her knickers.

"Hey!"

Padma smiled as she reached down and pinched Hermione's bared arse cheek. "No need for those if you're going native, sweetheart."

"What?" Hermione asked. "You mean it's normal not to wear undergarments underneath a sari?"

"Have you seen us wearing bras or knickers?" Parvati asked?"

"Well, no," Hermione admitted. "But I figured that you were just doing that for Harry's benefit...I mean, for when he woke up."

Padma leaned forward and rested her chin against Hermione's shoulder.

"But what if we were going commando for your benefit?"

A verbal response was stifled when Padma nuzzled against Hermione's neck. The light brown-skinned witch smiled, and murmured, "Parvati, go and fetch one of your slips and a choli."

"Why don't you do it?" Parvati whined.

"Because we're closer to your trunk," her sister responded.

Parvati reckoned it had more to do with the fact that her sister wanted to nibble on Hermione's ear lobe, but still complied.

Hermione yelped a bit when Padma's hands took hold of her hips and pulled her back against her body...she was standing there without a stitch of clothing, while they were fully dressed and acting as if they were her hand maidens.

"Relax," Padma whispered.

It was the desire that made it hard for Hermione to comply with this request. She was hot, and bothered, and moist. But was this really happening? Was she really attractive? Was she really desirable?

"I said relax, Hermione...we won't bite...much," Padma offered with a smile.

"Unless you want us to," Parvati added, as she retrieved a fresh set of undergarments from her chest.

Hermione laughed nervously as her dorm mate bunched the slip in her hands.

"Listen to my sister and relax, Hermione," Parvati instructed. "Let us prepare you for your lovers."

"Lovers...multiple?" she hissed.

Padma again nuzzled against Hermione's neck. "Are we foolish to dream of sharing our hearts and beds with both Harry and you?"

Hermione shivered in response to these words, and reflexively clenched her bum and pelvic muscles as Padma's left hand began tracing a lazy circle around her belly button.

"Erm....."

"Hush, my love, and let us dress you."

A jelly-legs jinx wouldn't have worked as well as these endearments, as Hermione leaned against Padma's embrace.

Parvati giggled. "Quiet, sister...we're trying to get her dressed for the day, not ready for bed."

"Says the wench who is presently caressing Memsahib's feet."

Hermione moaned. "Feels good, though."

"The slip?" Padma asked.

"Yes, sister," Parvati replied. She reluctantly pulled the foot that she held in her hands into the underskirt. Grabbing hold of the the drawstring waist, Parvati slowly drew the garment up Hermione's legs, dragging her fingers across bared flesh along the way. Hermione clenched her pelvic muscles in anticipation, and damn near orgasmed when Parvati's fingers reached their intended target.

The hope that those fingers would linger were dashed when Padma reached around Hermione's waist and slapped her sister's hands away.

"Behave, Parvati," she scolded, as she positioned the waistline low onto Hermione's hips and tied the drawstring into a knot.

"Oh, my," her kneeling witch whispered, as she reached out for Hermione's tummy.

"Do you see how deep her belly button is, Padma?" Parvati asked. "We'll have to beat back Uncle with a stick."

"What?" Hermione asked.

"Your innie is hot," Padma explained, stealing a glance over Hermione's shoulder. "Indian men fancy deep belly buttons...some more so than big breasts. And Uncle has been known to express those kinds of preferences."

The thought of the wizened old wizard lusting after Hermione navel was enough to make her reflexively cover her tummy with her hand.

"Should I keep it covered, then?"

Parvati pushed Hermione's hand away. "Of course not...Auntie can keep Uncle in line."

Hermione giggled when Parvati punctuated this declaration by giving her belly button a good lick.

"Later, Parvati," Padma said. "Hand up the choli."

Her sister reluctantly complied, and gave Padma an electric blue-colored cropped shirt.

"Good choice," she stated, as she helped Hermione snake her arms through the short sleeves. "This color looks great on her."

Parvati stood and buttoned the front of the shirt closed. Hefting the now-covered breasts in each hand, she added, "Too tight along the bustline, though."

"Yeah, it's perfect," Padma said with a smile, as she reached around and adjusted the neckline to accentuate the cleavage. "What do you think, Hermione?"

The brown-haired witch turned towards a wall-mounted mirror, and examined the expanse of bared flesh that stretched from just below her breasts to a line just above her pubes.

"I'm way too white," she decided.

"Are you kidding?" Parvati asked. "Most Indian girls would die to have your skin color."

"But they're not Harry...he'll think I look better with a tan."

"Yeah, right," countered Parvati, as she rubbed her thumbs against nipples that strained against fabric. "He's not going to be able to think at all when you show him these."

"But...are you sure that I'm not being too...obvious?"

"No more than we are," Padma replied, as she pulled a gold-trimmed, creme colored sari from her trunk. She wrapped one of the pieces of woven cloth one-and-a-half times around Hermione's hips and legs. Padma and Parvati then draped the second length of cloth over Hermione's left shoulder, and showed her the pocket hidden underneath the wrap that could hold her wand.

"Have a walk-about," Padma instructed Hermione, once the ensemble was complete.

The brown-haired witch complied, monitoring how the garment moved as she walked, bent over, and sat down.

"See, no nipple and navel gazing unless you want to let someone peek," said Parvati.

Hermione nodded. "I feel so exposed, though."

"Why?" asked Padma. "You're covering up far more now than if you were wearing shirt and shorts."

"But look how low the skirt is riding on my hips."

"Yeah, I'm so jealous," Padma replied. "The only way that I could get that much distance between my navel and waistline is to shave myself bald."

Hermione blushed. "That's the other thing...it feels weird to be walking about without knickers."

Padma snorted. "Go hike up those skirts and have a squat over the loo, then it will make perfect sense."

"As if being by Harry's bedside wasn't enough reason to go commando," Parvati added.

"Hush," Hermione chided.

A knock on the door interrupted the banter.

"Good morning, girls," announced Healer Patil, as she walked into the room. "Harry is up if you wanted to...oh, my."

"What do you think, Auntie?" Parvati asked. "Doesn't Hermione look beautiful?"

The older witch nodded as she walked up to Hermione and pulled the top piece of the sari to the side.

"You certainly do, child," she said warmly. "Although...with that belly button exposed, it would be best to keep my husband at arm's length."

"We already warned her about that," Padma said with a laugh.

Hermione blushed, and readjusted the fabric to cover her midriff. "You said Harry is up already? As it alright? I feel so guilty, I should have been down so much earlier..."

"Relax, Hermione," the Healer replied. "I assure you that he will consider the slight delay to have been worthwhile."

The older witch turned back towards the door and led the way downstairs.

"But what if he doesn't like the sari?" Hermione asked, as the three followed the older witch.

Padma chuckled. "Then he's a fool, and Parvati and I will be sure to properly console you tonight when we help you undress."

"Does that mean that we can't help her get naked if he likes how she's dressed?" asked Parvati.

"Parvati!" Hermione hissed.

"Is that a no, then?" Padma asked with a small smile.

Hermione looked at each twin's expectant face, then shook her head, and smiled.

"You two wrapped me up like a mummy...only fair that you help me get it off."

"You mean help you get off?" quipped Parvati.

Hermione blushed.

"That too, if you'd like."

The replies whispered into each ear made Hermione's nipples hard, which in turn made Harry's appreciation for her attire that much greater when the three aroused witches finally reached his room.

Alternative Medicine

Ch 4 Best Sponge Bath Ever!

Harry Potter had always tried to avoid whining to his best friend, but given present circumstances he felt more than justified.

"Hermione, you're killing me!"

The bushy brown-haired witch smiled as she draped the shawl portion of her sari over the back of a chair and reached for the wash basin and cloth.

"How so, Harry?"

Thankful that he still had control of his facial expressions, Hermione's patient rolled his eyes and nodded towards her tight-fitting choli. She followed his line of sight (which directly intersected her cleavage) and smiled coyly.

"What...you wouldn't want me to get Parvati's sari wet during your sponge bath, would you?"

Harry sighed deeply and shook his head. He'd never seen Hermione acting this way around him before. And he certainly hadn't seen her dressed this way, in a low-cut cropped shirt that left no doubt that his best friend has breasts. And cleavage. And perky nipples.

Parvati, who had just stripped off the dragonhide gloves and apron that had protected her during Harry's morning therapy, giggled.

"Well, Hermione, if you plan on splashing, then perhaps I should take my sari off as well?"

"That won't be necessary," intoned Healer Patil, as she entered the room. "I have need of Padma and Parvati's assistance with my other patients."

"Aww....Auntie!" Parvati whined.

"None of that young lady."

"Yes, Auntie."

Parvati's frown turned a bit mischievous as she whispered something into her sister's ear. Hermione couldn't hear what she was saying, but suspected the worst when Padma giggled, then leaned over to whisper something into Harry's ear. His cheeks turned bright red as his eyes darted involuntarily towards Hermione's waist.

"Something wrong, Harry?" she asked.

"Erm...no," he stammered.

Padma, whose lips were still next to Harry's face, smiled and kissed his cheek. She then leaned back and drew her fingers up the length of her skirt-covered thigh.

"And we aren't wearing any either, Harry," she hissed, using a stage whisper that all could hear.

"Padma!" Hermione chided.

The Ravenclaw ignored Hermione as she reached over and gave Harry's sheet-covered hip a squeeze.

"See you soon, Harry," she cooed.

"Not as soon as Hermione will see him," Parvati complained.

Healer Patil hustled her nieces out of the room, giving Hermione a wink as she followed. The young witch followed far enough to close the door, then turned back towards Harry.

He involuntarily let out a low-pitched moan...the independent sway of Hermione's breasts made it even more obvious that she hadn't bothered with a brassiere.

"Are you in pain, Harry?" she asked.

Her exasperated patient closed his eyes and shook his head.

"What's wrong, then, Harry?"

The-Boy-Who-Won opened his eyes, and then narrowed them turned his head towards Hermione.

"What's wrong, you ask?" he replied. "I woke up yesterday without the use of my arms or legs, but with the help of three beautiful witches who apparently forgot to pack their bras and knickers when they left England. And these witches, all of whom I consider to be friends, and one whom I consider to be my best friend, are kissing me, and kissing each other, and talking about sharing with me and with each other, only it sounds like they really mean shag instead of share. And now you've gone and dressed like they have, and all three of you are flirting with me, and hovered over my bare bits, and commented about how large they are, and....."

Hermione smiled seductively. "And what, Harry?"

"And what?" Harry asked incredulously. "And all of it's making my balls blue, and without the use of my hands there's not a damn thing I can do about it!"

The bushy-haired witch giggled.

"Harry...we've already told you that we're here to help your recovery. If you've got an itch, just let me know and I'll scratch it."

"Yeah, right," Harry muttered. "A response that just reinforces my belief that this is all a dream."

Hermione bit her lower lip as she sat the wash basin down on the table next to Harry's bed. She then reached out to cup his cheek with her hand.

"And why do you think that this is all a dream?"

"Because...well, just because."

Hermione nodded as her fingers reached up to tussle his hair.

"Harry, I like to think that you're my best friend. If you can't tell me..."

"And that's the problem right there...you are my best friend. I have no business dreaming of you being more than that for me."

"Why not?"

"Because it's...."

Hermione shook her head as she sat by Harry's side. "Let's put aside for now these silly notions that you aren't worthy of having good things happen to you. Why else would you think that this is a dream?"

Harry chuckled. "Because real Hermione doesn't giggle, much less wear cropped shirts that give me great views of her baps."

Hermione couldn't help but giggle.

"There...right there....do you see?"

"I'm sorry Harry, I just couldn't help myself," Hermione replied. She paused for a moment, and then added, "I could try to explain why I appear to be acting so out of character, but I have a better idea."

"What's that?"

"Go with the dream idea," Hermione replied.

"What's that mean?"

Hermione smiled. "Well, I don't think you are dreaming. But if you think that this is all a dream, let's run with it."

"And how would we do that?" Harry asked.

His best friend smiled as her hands made their way to Harry's bared chest. "What would you want to happen if this were a dream, Harry?"

The magical invalid snorted.

"I don't dare dream what I'd want, much less say it."

"Why not?"

"Because what if I'm wrong?" Harry asked. "What if this is real, and I say something so embarrassing that would make you hate me?"

Hermione shook her head. "That's true. Maybe, then I should tell you something that is equally embarrassing, so we'd be even...just in case."

Harry chuckled. "You'd be hard pressed to match me there, Hermione."

"You think so?" she asked. Taking a deep breath, she casually dragged her fingers down his chest and said, "More embarrassing then if I were to reveal that I've wanted to shag you silly for the past two years, or that I used these fingers to play with myself last night as I fantasized about a four-way romp that involved you, me, Padma and Parvati?"

Harry twitched in response...and it wasn't his facial muscles that responded.

Hermione smiled, and continued with the huskiest of voices. "So tell me, Harry...is what you're afraid to tell me more embarrassing then if I admitted that I'm so wet right now that it's begun to drip down my thigh because I'm not wearing knickers?"

Harry tried to talk, but only managed to get out a gurgle.

"More embarrassing, Harry, then if I were to say that it's taking all of my will power not to rip off that sheet, lift up my skirt, and impale myself on you wand?"

"R-R-Really?" Harry stammered.

Hermione smiled coyly as she played with the thin strip of black hair that trailed down from Harry's belly button. She then leaned down and planted a full, moist kiss on his lips. When Harry responded by lifting up his head and probing her lips with his tongue, she pulled back and smiled.

"Perhaps," she cooed.

"Hermione..." Harry groaned, turning her name into a growl of frustration.

"So what are you afraid to tell me, Harry?" she asked. "Is it that you fancy me?"

Harry's eyes flashed in fear. He then closed those eyes, dropped his head back onto his pillow, and let out a deep breath as he nodded.

"Yes," he whispered.

"There, now...that wasn't so hard, was it?" Hermione asked. "But maybe you're also afraid to tell me that you also fancy Padma and Parvati?"

Harry kept his eyes closed as he nodded in agreement.

"Nothing to be embarrassed about there," Hermione declared, "since I fancy them as well."

Harry's eyes opened, revealing dilated pupils that allowed a look of wonderment to escape.

"You're not just saying that, are you?" Harry asked.

Hermione shook her head. "Would you like me to tell you what the three of us did upstairs after you got us all rewed up last night?"

Harry groaned.

"Oh, there I go again," Hermione giggled. "What a bad healer's apprentice I am, causing my patient pain." Sneaking a hand back down under the sheet that was acting more like a tent, she added, "Would you like me to take care of your not-so-little problem, Harry?"

The-Boy-Who-Won gasped as the back of Hermione's fingers trailed down the length of his erection, and her hand settled into a loose hold of his balls.

Harry groaned again. "But that would end the dream, wouldn't it?"

Hermione cocked her head sideways. "What would, Harry?"

"You giving me a hand job," Harry hissed plainly. "If this really is a wet dream, it will end as soon as you get me off."

A giggle escaped from Hermione's lips as her hand began one long stroke up his length. "There's one sure way to find out, then...isn't there?"

The shutter that passed through Harry's torso caught Hermione by surprise. The shake of his head surprised her even more.

"If this is a dream, then I don't want to wake up," Harry explained.

"Oh," Hermione replied, keeping her lips pursed in a seductive pucker. "So it's worth prolonging the pain?"

Harry smiled, and picked his head up from the pillow. Hermione met his lips half way, then pushed him back down so that they could snog without muscle strain.

A few minutes later, Hermione pulled back to catch her breath.

"I have to say, Harry, that your technique is far better in real life then within my dreams."

"I thought the operating premise was that this was one of my dreams?" Harry asked with a dopey smile.

"Ah, yes, and in that dream I was nominally tasked with giving you a sponge bath," Hermione replied with a grin. She reached over to the sponge, and frowned at the water temperature.

"A bit to cold, given the wait," she replied, as she grabbed her wand and cast a warming charm on the water.

"I don't mind if you don't," Harry replied brightly.

Hermione turned towards her patient and smiled. "Now there's the confident, happy young wizard that I saw yesterday...good to see you back with us."

"Couldn't think of a better place to be," Harry replied.

Hermione nodded as she drained the sponge of excess water. Turning towards Harry, she coyly asked, "So are you ready for your dream sponge bath?"

Harry snorted. "Yes Ma'am...it's almost perfect."

"Oh...so you'd rather it were Padma or Paravati...or both...that were giving it to you?" Hermione asked.

Harry smiled and shook his head. "Oh, no...you are definitely the leading lady in the sponge bath of my dreams."

"So what's different?"

"Would you hex me if I said that you're wearing too many clothes for this dream to be perfect?"

Hermione chuckled. "Why should you be hexed for stating something so obvious?" she asked. She then dropped the sponge on Harry's bared chest and reached for the buttons on her choli. But then she stopped, and looked towards the door.

"Healer Patil will no doubt be back soon to check on you, and, well..."

"That's okay," Harry replied. "You wouldn't be my dream Hermione if you did something that you weren't comfortable doing, like getting naked just because I asked you to."

"Who says that I...?" Hermione asked, leaving her response dangling. She then smiled and said, "Time and place, Mr. Potter...it's not the nudity that makes me hesitate, but the chance of getting caught out by Padma and Parvati's Auntie..or more importantly, her Uncle."

Harry nodded. "I understand."

Hermione gave Harry a stern look. "Don't give up so easily, Mister...if I'm going to be the subject of your wet dreams, the least I can do is meet you halfway."

"Halfway?" Harry asked. "What would that look like...you letting one of your breasts dangle free?"

Hermione smiled knowingly and shook her head. She then took the sponge from Harry's chest and squeezed out the water as she rubbed it against her covered breasts.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Healer Patil," she said with mock sincerity, as she reloaded the sponge with liquid and gave her covered bits a bath. "It's the first time that I've ever given somebody a sponge bath, and well, the water it got everywhere..."

Harry looked on with shock and awe as Hermione glanced towards the closed door, then slipped her breasts out of her shirt one at a time, so that she could tease her taut nipples with the sponge. Once her breasts were pushed back into the wet, translucent garment, she grinned at Harry and added, "Guess I was a little clumsy and some of the water splashed."

"I guess so," her patient replied weakly, his gaze glued to her chest. "Best wet dream...ever."

Hermione snorted as she got the sponge wet and began to lightly wash Harry's face and neck.

"Wet certainly is an apt adjective," she replied, as she worked her way down the nearest arm. "I kind of like being your dream Hermione, Harry," she said, as she winked at him and pinched one of her nipples with her free hand. "It gives me the freedom to do things that I wouldn't dare do in

real life."

"So...in real life you wouldn't feel comfortable acting this way?" Harry asked.

Hermione smiled. "Well, I've always valued my real Harry's friendship, and hid my feelings for him, for fear that he'd push me away, and keep me from helping him defeat Voldemort," she explained. "Now of course, if my real Harry were to actually say that he fancied me, then I wouldn't think twice about snogging him, or bathing him, or helping cure his blue balls."

Harry lay silent as Hermione walked around to the front the bed to wash his legs and feet. Reaching a decision, he once more lifted his head from the pillow.

"Hermione?"

"Yes, Harry?"

"I fancy you....I've fancied you for the longest time, and was just too much of a clueless git to say so."

The young witch smiled, and pulled the foot she had been laving up so that she could kiss his big toe.

"Oh, I've wanted to hear that for the longest time," she admitted. "If only I knew that it was my real Harry saying that, and not just my dream Harry!"

Harry snorted. "Hermione...that's how I really feel about you!"

"But that's exactly what my dream Harry would say!" Hermione said with a pout. "And what if I really am just your dream Hermione?"

Harry rolled his eyes.

"So how am I supposed to convince you that this is more than one of my wet dreams?" he asked.

Hermione waggled her eyebrows suggestively as she walked to Harry's side, and slowly pulled on the sheet that covered his midsection.

"Well..." she purred. "You already noted one way to find out...think that it's worth the risk for me to rub you off?"

Harry snorted, and nodded. "I guess that it's just a risk that we'll have to take...so long as you're willing, mind you."

Hermione looked towards the door, then licked her lips as she pulled the sheet completely from the bed. She got the sponge wet, then used that sponge to play with her new toy.

The prevalence of stroking over scrubbing, and caressing over cleaning, released the pressure that had been building within Harry's scrotum in short order.

oo000000oo

Once Harry fell back to Earth and caught his breath, he focussed his eyes on a face that sported loving eyes and a wide grin.

"Feel better, then?" Hermione asked.

Harry chuckled. "Best wet dream...ever!"

Hermione snorted. "So it really was a dream, then?"

Harry shook his head. "I think I lost consciousness there, for a moment, but...no, I don't think that I was dreaming."

Hermione leaned down and kissed Harry on the lips. She then pulled back a bit and asked, "So, can you live with a best friend that fancies you, Harry?"

The-Boy-Who-Won smiled, and nodded. "Like I said yesterday, I can't think of any place that I'd rather be."

"Good!" Hermione declared, as she stood up further, and glanced at Harry's midsection. She then asked, "Isn't that supposed to shrink a bit after you...you know?"

Harry chuckled. "It does, usually...but then again, this is anything but a usual situation."

"That's true, I guess," Hermione replied. She then pointed her wand towards Harry resurgent erection.

"Hermione, what are you...."

"Don't you trust me, Harry," she replied.

"Of course I do...it's just that have a wand pointed towards your bits..."

"I'll need to levitate you and flip you over so that I can wash your back side," Hermione explained. "A well-placed sticking charm will make certain that your wand doesn't get bent when you land."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Alright then."

Once Hermione magically flipped him around and began to lovingly scrub his bum, she said, "Tell you what, Harry...once you get use of your arms back, you can point your wand toward my bits...fair is fair."

"Which wand?" he asked.

"Either," she replied with a grin. "Won't take much for you to learn the contraceptive spell...or a depilatory charm, for that matter."

Harry responded with a groan.

"What's the matter?"

"The sticking charm...cancel it!" he hissed.

Hermione quickly replied, and then asked, "What happened?"

"Your banter was making me even harder," he explained. "So it was pulling against the magical binding, and..."

"Oh, yes, that makes sense," Hermione replied. "Guess I'll have to learn these things."

"Yes," Harry said, managing to smile with his head turned to one side on his pillow. "I guess that you will."

"Confident, much?" Hermione replied, punctuating her question with a swat of his bum.

"Hey!"

"Oh, hush," Hermione gently chided. "Hardly left a red mark...unlike some of my wet dreams."

"Erm...really?" Harry asked nervously.

"No, not unless you fancy being a bottom," Hermione replied with a smile. "But speaking of dreams..."

"Yes?"

"Well, we managed to rule out the possibility of this being one of your wet dreams, right?"

"Yeah, I guess, so."

"But what if this was one of my wet dreams?" she asked.

"What?"

"What if I was the one sleeping, and you were my dream Harry? How are we to know?"

Harry thought for a moment, then blushed deeply.

"I'm afraid that I'm not really in a position to help you find out," he admitted.

"Yes, it would be much easier if you were lying on your back," Hermione said with a grin. "Still..."

"Still, what, Hermione?" asked a witch standing in the threshold of a now-opened door.

"Oh, nothing," Hermione replied, in response to Parvati's question.

"So who was the one getting the bath...you or Harry?" Padma asked, as she shouldered her way into the room.

"Hermione did a fine job of washing me," Harry said with a wink.

"I bet that she did," Parvati said with a pout.

The arrival of their Great Aunt nipped the banter in the bud.

"All done then, dear?" she asked Hermione.

"From the looks of it, she isn't done, even if Harry is," Parvati quipped.

"Hush!" Hermione scolded, as she used a drying charm on her choli and wrapped the top half of her sari over her shoulder.

"Come then, ladies," Healer Patil stated. "Your patient needs his rest."

"That's right, Harry...work on your stamina...you're going to need it," Parvati quipped.

She bounced out of the doorway before anyone could scold her for the saucy remark.

Hermione smiled as she pulled the sheet back over Harry's body. She then placed a kiss on his exposed cheek, then placed her lips next to his ear.

"Guess I'll have to figure out whether this is one of my wet dreams all on my own," she whispered. "Unless...."

Harry's eyes narrowed. "Unless what?" he hissed.

"Unless I asked one of the other witches to help me," she replied brightly. "Or would you rather I have both Padma and Parvati's fingers exploring my folds?"

"Hermione!" Harry moaned.

"Come now, Hermione," Healer Patil called out.

The Muggleborn witch snorted, then kissed Harry's cheek again.

"Not right now," she whispered. "But with luck maybe in a few minutes...you've already brought me more than halfway there, Harry."

Her patient closed his eyes and moaned once more as Hermione left the room with a grin on her face.

Alternative Medicine

Ch 5: A Lascivious Lunch

Hermione's racy comments and even racier sponge bath filled Harry's head with questions and idle fantasies.

To wit: his best friend, Hermione Granger, had just given him a hand-job.

Even though it had come after they'd admitted that they fancied each other, and snogged a bit, it was still something out of the blue. But they had each also admitted they fancied the Patil Twins, Hermione had suggested that she had acted, at least in part, on that attraction, and Padma and Parvati, in turn, were doing as much as they could to reciprocate and express their affections to both Harry and Hermione whilst under the close eye of their Auntie.

It was impossible not to see this, even if one was a clueless teen-aged male.

So what to do?

Since the magical salves that had soaked into his limbs drew on both his magical core and physical reserves, sleep came more quickly to the teen-aged wizard than any answers did. Pervy wet fantasies morphed into pervy wet dreams that were almost at the point of a sticky-sheeted climax... when Harry's survival skills kicked in and he woke to the sound of a door opening.

"Who is...fuck!" Harry growled.

"Erm...just us, Harry," Padma said cautiously, as she poked her head through the door. "We were just checking to see if you were awake and wanted lunch."

"Oh... come on in," Harry said with a sigh. "Sorry for my language...got frustrated at not being able to pull my wand."

"I thought Hermione took care of that for you this morning," Parvati commented, as she pushed in behind her sister with a tray of food. She then looked towards Harry's crotch and giggled. "Or maybe not."

"What are you..." Hermione asked, as she followed the twins. Following Parvati's gaze, she offered up her own giggle. "So they were sweet dreams, then, Harry?"

Harry looked down at his tented sheets, sighed, and leaned back into his pillow.

"Obviously."

"Hermione mentioned that you had doubts about whether you were awake or dreaming this morning," Padma observed. "Shall we determine whether or not you're still dreaming now?"

"And how would you plan on doing that?" Harry asked.

"Well...Hermione had a rather definitive test...didn't she?" Parvati asked, as she balanced the tray of food on Harry's legs, then climbed up by his side. "Maybe she should repeat the process as confirmation."

Harry snorted and arched an eyebrow towards Hermione. She read his thoughts, like she always could, and blushed.

"I'm sorry Harry, but...but they forced it out of me."

"They did? How?"

"Well...we were taking turns giving each other full body massages...as practice, of course..."

"Of course," Harry snarked.

Hermione shook her head slightly as she climbed up onto the bed on the side opposite to Parvati.

"So there they had me on the table, naked and with my wand out of reach, and they..."

"They did what you suggested they might do when you left me?" Harry asked.

Hermione blushed even deeper. "Well, yes...but that was later...after they stuck me to the massage table with sticking charms and hit all of my tickle points."

We weren't intentionally trying to tickle her into submission," Padma protested, as she joined the others on the bed.

"Right," snarked Hermione. "And the sticking charms?"

"Medicinally necessary," Parvati replied. "You kept squirming every time we laid a hand on you."

"Maybe that because of where you were placing those hands?" Hermione asked.

"Is that a complaint?" Parvati asked.

Hermione glanced towards Harry, then cast her eyes down towards her hands.

"Apparently not," he replied, a grin growing on his face.

"So have we decided if our patient is still dreaming?" asked Parvati.

Padma cast a furtive glance out of the doorway, then held her hand out and hissed, "Rock, parchment, wand to find out?"

"Padma! Behave yourself!" came a voice from beyond the threshold.

"Oh, Fudge!" Padma whined. "She always seems to know when to listen in."

Harry laughed. "That's alright...I'm quite certain that I'm not presently dreaming."

"Really?" asked Hermione. "And how do you know that?"

The-Boyfriend-Who-Worried decided that *Gryffindors go forward*, and threw caution to the wind.

"Because if I was still dreaming, you three would be naked, and we would be eating lunch on bared bellies and bits rather than on the backs of banana leaves."

The three witches stared at Harry, then at each other, and then broke out into a chorus of giggles.

"Sounds like fun," Hermione decided. "We'll have to see what we can do to make that dream a reality."

"Only after their father has had a talk with Harry, child!" shouted a voice from outside of the room.

"Merlin...you're right about her hearing!" Hermione whispered, generating a fresh round of laughter that only grew once Parvati made a show of trying to rest the lunch tray on Harry's covered tent.

"Here, let me take care of that," Hermione offered, earning her a wide-eyed look from Harry as she reached for his crotch. But rather than slip a hand under the distended bed linen, she slid the tray up onto Harry's chest, then pulled it back until it rested up against the base of his erection.

"Who needs fresh flowers to decorate a table when we've got that in full bloom?" Parvati whispered.

The giggles and grinning provoked by this observation died down only after their mouths were filled with finger foods. And fingers.

Harry noted with interest that Padma and Parvati were taking turns serving up the meal...when one was mashing up the rice and curry into a paste for Harry to lick clean from her fingers, the other was doing the same for Hermione. Hermione, in turn, made sure that Harry had opportunity to lick and suck on her own fingers, and was the first to volunteer to clean up the mess created when a dollup of food fell onto his belly.

She used her tongue.

Healer Patil's disembodied admonishments kept Padma and Parvati from doing the same, especially when a sticky morsel ended up stuck on the top of Harry's sheet-covered tent pole.

Hermione wasn't at all shy about cleaning that mess up either.

When the Patil girls weren't shamelessly testing the limits of their Aunt's sense of propriety, they teasingly congratulated Harry and Hermione for getting their respective heads out of their arses and admitting their feelings for each other. The conversation inevitably grew edgy...having Harry and Hermione come out and admit that they were now boyfriend and girlfriend didn't diminish any of the multivariate sexual equations that were being worked on within the room. There seemed to be a universal desire to clear the air and lay cards on the table between the four, but Healer Patil's sharp ears forced the conversation to stay on the near side of smutty, and her well-timed passes by the doorway kept hands from straying towards tempting targets.

During it all, Harry did his best to analyze and process information...even as he hid his confusion and self-doubts. He would have been the first to admit that that any powers that the Dark Lord knew not had nothing to do with girls. Or relationships. Of course, knowing that he didn't know the first thing about girls was a big step up from those (like Ron) who didn't know that they didn't know the first thing, but that self-awareness didn't do anything to help with present circumstances.

So what to do? On the one hand, it could be seen as a boyfriend test...Hermione pushing him towards the twins on the expectation that he would gallantly refuse their offered charms. But on the other hand was the fact that those charms were being displayed, dangled, and offered to Hermione on an equal basis...and she wasn't shy about accepting them.

It was a difficult situation...and when faced with difficult situations in the past, he had done well to reply upon Hermione and follow her lead.

So if Hermione was going to suck on Padma's or Parvati's digits when they offered her a mash of curry as finger food...then so would he. And if she was going to smile coyly and banter back when the sisters flirted, or stole kisses from her when their Aunt wasn't looking, then who was he to do something different? And if his girlfriend reached out and tweaked Padma's breast as part of a playful, yet erotic, rebuke...Well, Harry wasn't in a position to pinch anyone's bits...but it was something to aspire to.

"So what should we do now?" Padma asked, once the food was gone and the leafy green "dishes" set aside.

"How about a card game?" Parvati suggested.

Harry snorted. "Don't think I'd hold onto my cards all that well."

"Oh, sorry, forgot," Parvati replied. She waggled her eyebrows and added, "So maybe you can watch while the three of us play with each other?"

Harry laughed whilst keeping one eye on Hermione to ensure that she found the response just as humorous.

She did.

"So how did you know that I like to watch?" he bantered.

"Oh, a little lioness told me," Parvati replied with a grin. She looked over her shoulder and whispered, "Think Auntie would let us play strip poker?"

"Parvati!" Healer Patil called out.

"Didn't think so," she groused.

A *Lumos* spell lit up over Padma's head, and she leaned over to whisper something into her sister's ear.

"Merlin, why didn't I think of that sooner!" Parvati hissed. "But what about Hermione?"

Padma arched an eyebrow, then turned to Harry.

"Excuse me for leaning," she asked, as she got up onto her knees and fell over Harry's lap so that she could whisper something into Hermione's ear.

"No worries...no worries at all," Harry mumbled, watching as Padma's chest dropped ever so closely down towards his erection.

"No! You're kidding me!" Hermione exclaimed.

"I am certainly not," Padma replied with a smile, as she leaned back and sat on her haunches. "So what do you think?"

Hermione waggled her eyebrows, and then turned towards her newly-admitted boyfriend.

"Oh Harry?"

"Yes, Hermione?"

"You might not realize it, given the fact that you're barely wearing a sheet, but it's grown rather hot in this room."

Harry snorted. "If you can't tell that I've considered our lunch to be hot, then..."

"Yes, of course," Hermione replied. "So...Padma was wondering if it would be okay with you if we wore a more traditional style of clothing... something that's favored by the native witches."

Harry tilted his head in confusion, and bit his lower lip. "Erm, sure...if it makes you three more comfortable, then why would I have a problem with it?"

"Because it might make you a bit more...uncomfortable," Parvati giggled, as she reached underneath her sari shawl and unbuttoned the front of her tight-fitting cropped shirt. Two shrugs of her shoulders later, she pulled the undergarment out from under the shawl, and dropped it on the floor.

"W-w-w-wow...wha..what are you doing?" Harry asked, as the light-browned skinned witch exposed the full side of her torso to his gaze.

"She's going native," Hermione giggled, as she and Padma both followed suit and removed their cholis.

Harry sat gobsmacked as the three witches "helped" each other make certain that the shawls that draped from their left shoulders down across their chests were still correctly in place. "Correctly in place" apparently meant that their saris revealed nothing from the front...but when the girls leaned forward and reached to make adjustments on each other, they paid no mind to the fact that their movements gave Harry a clear view of the sides of their breasts.

Or it could have been that they were very mindful of their actions, because there was an awful lot of leaning and reaching going on in front of him.

"I must be dreaming again," he muttered.

Would you like me to test for it?" Hermione asked brightly.

Harry thought about his response for a few moments. If he said yes, then Hermione might follow through on the proposition, but then Healer Patil might show up and...

"Maybe later?" he asked.

Hermione bit on her lip, then reached a decision and smiled.

"Yes, I don't blame you...I'd want to see how this dream might play out as well."

"Really?" Harry asked.

Hermione smiled serenely at Harry, and then asked the twins, "Not that I'm complaining, but if this is really how the local women wear saris, then why I haven't seen more dressed like this outside?"

"Because they are Muggles," Parvati explained. "This was how saris were traditionally worn by both Muggle women and witches, up until a couple of centuries ago. And South Indian witches are just as far behind in fashion as robe-wearing witches are in Britain..."

"And because of the Muggles, too," added Padma. "It might be traditional magical fashion, but we'd stick out if we wore these outside just as much as we would if we wore robes and pointy hats in Muggle London."

"Stick-out would be the right description," Harry said with a headshake. "So if the analogy holds, you can wear witches garb so long as you're out of view?"

"Yes."

But...but if that's the case, then why haven't I seen your Auntie dress that way?"

"Would you like her to, Harry?" Padma asked with a grin.

"Erm, no, of course not, unless...unless she was just dressing differently for my benefit..."

Padma and Parvati both laughed in response. "Oh, Harry...once you've healed enough to get out of your hospital bed...Auntie wears a choli underneath her sari because the clinic admits both Muggle and magical patients. But once the work day is over and she walks upstairs to the living quarters..."

"She'll walk around like that?" Harry asked in disbelief.

Parvati and Padma both smiled and bobbed their heads in a way that meant, "yes" even if it more closely resembled a "no" amongst Europeans.

"You're having me on," Harry replied. "This has to be a prank...one of the nicest pranks I've ever experienced, but still..."

Padma giggled and wrapped an arm around Harry's shoulder. This motion brought the exposed side of her right breast up against his bared arm.

He moaned.

"What...am I hurting you?" she asked.

"No...I'm wishing that I could feel something in my arms right now."

"Oh, Harry...you know just what to say to a girl..."

"Thanks, but...I still think that...what would your Auntie think if she saw you two that way?"

"She thinks nothing of this, Harry."

"How could that be?"

"Think about it," said Padma. "Every time Parvati or I have come close to playing with your...floral arrangement...or something other that is risqué, she's conveniently passed by the opened doorway."

"So maybe she doing something other then secretly chaperoning us right now?" Harry asked.

"Hmmm...a valid hypothesis. Shall we test it?"

"How do you plan to do that?"

A predatory gleam in Padma's eyes as she casually reached down and fondled his cloth-covered crotch.

"Padma! Remove your hands this minute!" shouted a semi-distant voice.

"Yes, Auntie," the Ravenclaw replied, as she returned her hand to her lap in triumph.

Harry stared out towards the window for a moment, then snorted loudly.

"What's that, Harry?" Hermione asked.

"I was just thinking," he replied. "If this is how witches really dress when they're in the wizarding world here in India, then...Padma?"

"Yes, Harry?"

"Are their magical villages like Hogsmeade here, or shopping districts similar to Diagon Alley?"

"Of course."

"So if we were to visit these places, then all of the witches would be dressed this way?"

Padma smiled. "That's right, Harry...the shirts are worn just to placate the Muggles."

Harry shook his head. "Boy, wouldn't that make young wizards want to hang out at Madame Malkin's if it were the same in Britain!"

The four laughed, and then Hermione asked, "So I suppose that means that these are similar to the school uniforms worn at the Indian version of Hogwarts?"

When Parvati nodded, Harry quipped, "Well that would have to be a well-kept secret, or else all of boys in Hogwarts would be itching to make transfers."

"Not necessarily, Harry," Padma said with a sly grin.

"Why not?" Harry asked.

Parvati and Padma laughed out loud at the question, and shared some giggle-filled whispers.

"No...has to be less than five seconds...our Harry is a bright lad."

"What's all this?" their "bright lad" asked.

Padma turned and smiled. "We were making bets on how quickly the answer would make the flowers wilt."

"What do you mean?"

"Well," said Padma, "you asked why Hogwarts boys wouldn't want to transfer to a school where the female students all dressed this way."

"Yes, and?"

"And the answer is because the female professors all dress this way as well."

There was a moment of silence, and then Parvati started to count.

"One-Morgana...Two-Morgana...Three-Morgana..."

Harry's mind raced to link independent bits of thought...

"Professors dress like students...students display the sides of their breasts...professors do too...so McGonagall would dress that way...and Sprout would...and...Oh, Merlin!...Umbridge would..."

"Six-Morgana!" Parvati called out. Pointing towards Harry's suddenly "wilted" crotch, she added, "See, Padma...I was right!"

"No, you just counted fast," her sister countered.

"That was mean," Hermione stated, with a smile that appeared to belie the point.

Harry sighed, and shook his head. "No, I walked into that one all myself," he countered. Laughing at himself, he then asked, "Do I dare wonder what the local wizards wear?"

"About the same that you're wearing right now," Parvati quipped.

Harry frowned. "But I'm not wearing anything under this sheet!"

"No, I was including the sheet," Parvati replied. "They're called dhotis."

"Maybe it's better to show, then just tell?" Padma asked.

"Excellent suggestion," Parvati replied. "And best be done now, so that we don't run the risk of catching his erection in the knot."

"What?" Harry asked.

Hermione, dear, would you please levitate the patient for us?" Padma asked.

Hermione looked at Harry, winked, and then pushed her shawl away from her breasts so that she could retrieve her wand from its interior sleeve.

As Harry gawked, Padma quipped, "With practice, Hermione, you should be able to pull your wand without unintentionally flashing your nipples."

"Who said that it was unintentional?" Hermione replied, as she hopped off of the bed and cast a *Boyfriend Leviosa* spell.

"There's no real need..." Harry protested weakly, as his body rose from the bed and the twins gleefully pulled off the cover sheet.

"Now hush, Harry," Padma stated, as she folded the sheet in half lengthwise and began to wrap it around his bared midriff.

"Be sure to leave plenty of room for expansion in the front," Parvati gleefully advised.

"And why would that be necessary?" Healer Patil asked, as she entered the room.

"Well, you never know..." Parvati replied.

"Yes, particularly with the two of you teasing my patient so horribly."

"Don't think that the patient thought it was horrible, Auntie," Padma offered.

"Hey...I am in the room, you know," Harry quipped.

"Yes, Harry," quipped Parvati, as she stared at his crotch. "The visual evidence of that fact is...enormously overwhelming."

"And you two best make sure that it doesn't become tactile evidence," their Aunt advised. She then looked at her niece's handiwork and said, "Best move the knot to the left of center, dear."

Parvati grinned as she complied with her Aunt's observation.

Harry snorted, then drew in a deep breath as he suddenly fell back down onto the bed dressed in something that resembled, at first glance, a droopy loincloth. The falling was caused by the fact that Hermione had lost her concentration on the levitation charm and broken out into laughter.

"Hmmp...glad somebody thinks that the situation is funny," he complained.

"Oh, Harry...you look quite handsome dressed that way," Parvati said with a giggle.

Healer Patil sighed. "I hate to break up the revelatory fashion show, but...a letter has arrived addressed to you, Harry."

The statement immediately put everyone on guard.

"How did it arrive?" Hermione asked.

"By a local Muggle messenger service."

Harry frowned. "Any idea whom it is from?"

The Healer shrugged her shoulders. "There's no magical signature attached to it that I found," she replied. She then looked at the witches who were now all close to Harry's side and said, "Not that it wouldn't be prudent for a second opinion or third opinion to be obtained?"

Hermione and Padma both nodded and cast diagnostic charms towards the letter that the older witch had pulled from a pocket.

"I've got nothing," Hermione replied, after performing her most sensitive magical detection spells.

"Me either," added Padma, once her spell casting was complete.

So...sometimes a letter is just a letter?" Harry asked.

Hermione shrugged her shoulders and nodded...not that it kept her from acting cautiously. She asked Healer Patil and Parvati to cast overlapping shield charms while Padma levitated the letter into to a remote corner of the room. Once positioned there, Hermione cast a nifty little spell that remotely broke the envelope seal and pulled the letter out (more than one cursing or kidnapping attempt had been foiled this way).

Harry thought that the spell was particularly nifty, in that the complex wand motion gave him a great side view of Hermione's gorgeous breasts.

Healer Patil's eyes went wide, not from Hermione's exposure or from any release of magic that the opened letter released, but rather from the markings on the expensive stationary.

"It's from the Maharajah's house!" she declared, pointing to a crest that held a conch shell on a field of crimson.

"Whose house?" asked Harry.

"The local prince," Parvati replied, as she dropped her shield and walked towards the letter. She plucked the letter out of midair, scanned the text, and added, "He's invited the four of us to tea tomorrow afternoon."

Harry immediately frowned. "Who is he, what does really want, and how does know that we're here?"

Padma chuckled. "Paranoid much, Harry?"

Harry had just enough range of motion to shrug his bare shoulders. "Sorry, but I don't have a very good track record with rulers and politicians."

Padma smiled. "Well that's true enough...but in this case, it might be no more than it seems."

Healer Patil nodded. "I have met the Maharajah on more than one occasion, Harry. I consider him to be a rather benevolent monarch."

Hermione frowned. "I thought that all of the heads of the Princely States gave up power when India was formed as an independent country?"

Padma nodded. "That was only for the Muggle parts of their kingdoms...it didn't affect their status as the rulers of India's magical states."

Hermione bit on the lip that was still frowning. "Are you telling me that there were parts of India governed under combined Muggle and magical regimes as recently as fifty years ago?"

Padma smiled, nodded, and shrugged her shoulders all at once.

Harry chuckled. "Oh, Hermione...don't tell me that part of the wizarding world's history isn't covered in *Hogwarts, a History* ...it would devastate me!"

Hermione scowled and punched Harry in the arm. Not having a normal senses of balance due to his injuries, he couldn't help but topple to one side. Fortunately, Padma was there to catch him before he toppled to the floor.

"Thanks for saving me," Harry said to Padma, as he flashed her a brilliant smile.

"Any time, Harry," she purred.

Healer Patil broke the "moment" by saying, "I have a copy of the Indian version of that book, if you're interested, dear."

Hermione's eyes lit up at the prospect as the other three teenagers laughed.

"If she's interested..." Parvati mimicked, as if there couldn't be any doubt on the matter.

When Hermione cast her former dorm mate a dirty look, Parvati responded by placing herself in between the bushy-haired witch and Harry's loincloth-covered lap.

"Go ahead, slug me if you must," she offered. "I'm sure that Harry will catch me."

"But he can't use his arms?"

"Then his lap will catch me...even better!" Parvati decided.

"Okay, so Hermione's going to get her curiosity satisfied," Harry stated. "How are we going to respond to the offer? It's not like I'm in a right state to chit chat with royalty, much less hold a tea cup."

"A fair point," Healer Patil replied. "If you like, I can send a reply offering your regrets, noting that your injuries don't allow for travel."

Harry nodded. "I like it...we don't say 'no' to the prince...we just say 'not now'."

"And that might give us time to determine if it's 'tea' or something more then that," Hermione added with a nod. She then looked towards the remnants of their shared meal, and added, "Well that was a delicious lunch, don't you think?"

Harry chuckled. "Never get in between Hermione and an unread book."

"Hey, I'm not that bad...am I?" she asked.

Harry, Parvati and Padma all looked at each other, then turned to Hermione and replied in unison.

"Yes."

"Well, then, no need for me to worry about making a graceful exit, then," she decided.

"Yes, by all means abandon your patient and go with Auntie to the library," Parvati replied, as she hugged Harry to her side. She then turned to him and loudly whispered, "Don't worry, Harry...I'll stay here and nurse you back to health."

"I didn't know that you were lactating, Sister dear," Padma quipped.

"I don't know that I am either," Parvati replied, "but I'm willing let Harry find out."

"Girls!" Healer Patil chided. "There will be none of that in this room."

Parvati frowned. "Can we take Harry outside, then?"

It was Hermione's turn to scold.

"Parvati!"

Healer Patil chuckled as she looked out the window towards the beach.

"There will be no attempts at lactating for Harry's benefit, either here or outside. That said...it is a lovely day, now that a breeze has picked up. Perhaps an hour or so fresh air would be therapeutic."

"A layabout on the beach?" Parvati asked. "Excellent...I've got just the right swimming costume to wear."

"That's fine, dear," her Aunt replied. "So long as it's worn underneath your sari."

"Awww....."

"I'll not have my nieces parading their barely covered bits out in public," the Healer declared.

"Who said Parvati was planning on covering them?" quipped Padma.

"Especially not in front of our hospital," the older witch added, ignoring her niece's catty comments. She then turned towards Hermione and said, "Now I can't expect you to do the same, dear, but..."

"I've no plans to wear anything less than Padma or Parvati," Hermione quickly offered.

"Thank you, child. I know that most European women choose to be scantily clad on our beaches, but..."

"I wager that it's more out of selfishness than respect," Parvati stated.

"How's that?" asked Hermione.

"Because if you wore one of those costumes with more string than fabric, you'd have Harry literally falling all over you."

"Don't tempt her, Sister," Padma cautioned.

"Hmmm," Hermione said with a smile, as she placed a "thinking" finger to her lips. "What would I prefer...a book in my lap, or Harry's head in my lap?"

There was a pause, as everyone waited for somebody else to offer up a quip. Then laughter erupted, as each derived amusement from unspoken, independent punch lines.

Alternative Medicine

Ch 6: On the Subject of Appropriate Beach Attire

Harry Potter quickly learned whether the knot tied into his dhoti would be constraining when Healer Patil reminded his three nursemaids that they needed to wear their cholis outside of his hospital room.

Parvati, in response, bent down by his bedside to retrieve her cropped shirt. When Harry let a sigh hiss through his teeth, she asked, "Is something wrong?"

Hermione leaned down to gain Harry's perspective and giggled at the full side view of her dorm mate's dangling breasts.

"Not from what I can see," she quipped, flashing Harry a wink. She then performed her own waist bend and asked, "Has anyone seen my choli? It might have been kicked underneath the bed."

"You two are such teases," Padma admonished, as she reached for her own garment, which had dropped onto a side chair. Accusations of pots calling kettles black were subsequently made when she turned her back to Harry and casually flipped her sari shawl off of her shoulder.

"What?" she protested, as she glanced back. "Do you hear Auntie complaining?"

Harry caught his breath at the sight of Padma bared to the waist. Or more specifically, the view of her bared back, combined with a reflected view of her bared front (as provided by a bamboo-framed mirror that hung from the wall).

"I'm certainly not going to complain," Harry whispered.

Parvati took her turn gaining Harry's perspective and chuckled at the reflection of the perky brown nipples that sat high on her sister's teardrop shaped breasts.

"I can see why you wouldn't," she quipped, just before she stole a kiss from Harry's cheek.

"Come, Hermione," she then said. "Help me help my sister before she gives our love a heart attack."

Hermione caught sight of the mirror, calculated reflection angles, and nodded as she followed Parvati's lead. She cast a furtive look out the doorway, then proceeded to provide "help" that did nothing to ease his heart rate.

It took a good two minutes for six hands to cover two breasts and fasten five buttons. And then Parvati slipped her shawl off of her shoulder, and the process was repeated. The care taken to maintain clear sight lines and reflection angles allowed Harry to determine that the identical twins had nearly identical torsos.

"Oh, darn," he said with mock disappointment. "I finally spot a definitive way to tell the difference between you two, and then you go and cover it up."

Hermione giggled, looked over Parvati's shoulder towards Harry, and gave him a reflected view of her fondling her dorm mate's covered left breast.

"Now Harry," she whispered, "how could you tell from there that Parvati has the cutest little mole at ten o'clock?"

"Ten o'clock?" Parvati asked.

"Sure," Hermione replied. She then tapped out a large circle centered on Parvati's left nipple.

"There's one o'clock, and two o'clock, and three..."

Parvati waggled her eyebrows as she reached up, pulled Hermione's shawl off of her shoulder, and pressed her now-naked shoulders back against the wall

"Oh, look, Padma," she said, "Hermione has two clocks, and they each need winding!"

"Parvati!" Hermione hissed, as she looked first towards the empty doorway, and then to Harry, who now had a direct line of sight towards her naked chest.

While Parvati's actions had come as a surprise, they didn't reveal more than what Hermione had herself exposed to Harry earlier that morning... and from a much closer distance. It was the fear that either of the Healers Patil might walk in and catch her that way that was offputting to Hermione.

Sensing this, Padma moved so that her body blocked the view from the door.

Now Hermione...you promised my sister and me that we would be the ones to dress and undress you, didn't you?"

The bushy-haired witch half-heartedly tried to mumble an affirmative response. Even the brightest witch in her generation found it hard to think when she was standing topless in front of Harry.

Harry's eyes were locked onto Padma and Parvati's hands and fingers as they fondled and caressed Hermione's breasts...the purple nail polish that contrasted with the darker pink of the areolas...the silver rings and bracelets that caused his girlfriend's breath to catch whenever they grazed or caught her taut nipples...the light-brown skin tones that complemented Hermione's paler flesh.

Hermione thrilled at his interest...and smirked when she realized he was holding his breath.

"Breathe, Harry," she cooed, in a seductive drawl that caused his crotch to twitch at irregular intervals.

Hermione's boyfriend let out a deep breath in response, then caught Hermione's gaze. There was a moment in which feelings of love, arousal and desire were shared. But then Harry smiled...and gave her an almost imperceptible head nod that Hermione took as an expression of understanding and...acceptance?

An insistent pair of lips that pressed against the corner of her mouth gave Hermione the chance to test the hypothesis. She turned and caught Parvati's mouth in a tongue-twisting snog. Giving up all pretense of helping Hermione dress, Parvati responded by running her fingers through Hermione's hair, and ground her skirt-covered crotch against Hermione's thigh.

Harry moaned at the sight of the two witches snogging, realized that he could hear Hermione's groan over his own, and then jerked his head towards the doorway.

Auntie Patil was quiet, suggesting that she was either ignorant of the situation (which Harry thought doubtful), or accepting of the situation (which Harry thought impossible). He snorted, returned his gaze towards the girls, and smiled when he caught Padma also minding the door. She turned at the sound, returned Harry's smile, and winked...just before she returned her full attention to Hermione's nipple and neck.

The next thirty seconds seemed like an eternity to Harry (he wouldn't have been that far off, had he projected out all of the times that he would replay this scene in his head over the balance of his lifetime). He watched with held breath as Padma and Parvati ravished the upper half of his girlfriend. It wasn't until Parvati's fingers began to slip inside the waistline of Hermione's sari that the moment was broken.

"Padma...Parvati...come and fetch the palki," their Great Aunt called.

"Oh, Morgana...now she decides," Parvati hissed.

Padma snorted as she broke her embrace and reached down for Hermione's shirt. "Are you surprised, Sister?" she asked as she stood up and slipped Hermione's arm through one sleeve.

"No...just...frustrated," Parvati replied, as she helped dress from the other side.

"You're not the only one," Hermione hissed, as she pressed her knees together and tried to catch her breath.

Padma followed Hermione's gaze and snorted at the size of Harry's tent. She then blocked Hermione's view and stepped in front so that she could button the front of the witch's shirt. As Parvati began to rewrap Hermione's sari top over her shoulder, Padma leaned forward, placed a kiss on Hermione's cheek, and smiled.

"Whether by coincidence, or design, Auntie is giving you the chance to discretely tend to our patient's needs...unless you're daring enough to take care of your needs at the same time?"

Hermione snorted, then shook her head as she looked over Padma's shoulders.

"I wouldn't want to rush that kind of therapy...would you?"

"Padma? Parvati?"

"Coming, Auntie," the twins replied. They quickly pecked each of Hermione's cheeks, gave Harry some giggles and grins, and padded lightly out of the room.

Harry and Hermione watched the retreating hip sways, then turned to face each other.

Harry chuckled to himself. "So..."

Hermione smiled, glanced at the doorway, and then bounced onto the bed.

"We've only got a few minutes," she whispered. "What do you want me to do?"

Harry chewed on his lip for a moment, then waggled his eyebrows.

"My choice?"

"Well...within allowable time constraints," Hermione said brightly.

"Then give me the chance to taste their lips on yours," Harry countered.

Hermione stared at Harry with disbelief for a fraction of a second...and then attacked him with a leg-straddling, fanny-grinding, spit-swapping snog.

When the two were forced to break for air, Hermione panted, "Tell me where you want my hands, Harry."

"Wherever you want them, love."

"No, Harry...really," Hermione gasped, as she nuzzled against his neck and trailed her fingers down his chest. "I want you...I need you...my hands are your hands...whether you need to itch, or rub...tell me what to do with them."

"Well then," Harry whispered slyly. "To be honest...if my hands were working right now...they'd be more eager to rub your fanny than mine."

Harry's admission caught Hermione off guard...enough to cause her to fling herself back into a sitting position on his bed.

"You...what...really?" she asked.

Harry tried to shrug his shoulders. "You asked, Hermione...if my hands worked and we were both worked up, I'd want you to...get off...before I did."

Hermione stared at Harry as she processed his logic. Upon reaching the argument's end point, she flashed him a brilliant smile and dropped down to snog him some more.

"Best...boyfriend...ever!" she exclaimed in between kisses.

Hermione then suddenly jumped off the bed and dashed to a front corner of the room, where something that Harry hadn't noticed before lay.

"What are you doing?" he hissed, as Hermione opened the worn flap of the bottomless rucksack that he'd carried for months on end.

"Ssshhh!" Hermione replied. She then added with a whisper, "Thought this might... So I... Yes!"

The shimmering fabric of the folded garment that Hermione pulled from the rucksack allowed him to fill in the blanks.

With eyes wide, he whispered, "I was only joking."

Hermione snorted as she slipped his invisibility cloak over her shoulders and leaned back against the wall, a few feet down from the open doorway. When she pulled the hood up her head disappeared, leaving visible the foot wide strip of skin and sari between her opened robe front. She then took a deep breath, told Harry that she wasn't joking, and reached down to take hold of her hemlines.

Harry shot a glance towards the opened doorway and then to Hermione as she began to pull up her skirts. Mindful of the opportunity she was presenting, and trusting in her ingenuity, he sat back and thanked his lucky stars.

His breath hitched as the hemline rose above Hermione's knees. He clamped his mouth shut when it reached her thighs, so fearful he was of saying something to draw attention. This didn't do anything to stop the gurgling from his throat when Hermione cleared her waistline, and proved visually that she hadn't been wearing knickers...and that she was just as curly and bushy-haired brown below as she was above.

"Shhh!" Hermione admonished with a sly grin (that Harry couldn't see). She then drew her wand and cast a sticking charm that tacked her gathered skirts up above her waist.

The "cone of silence" charm that Hermione cast on herself allowed her to moan openly when she dropped a hand and dragged her middle finger up the length of her mound. Then, as her off-hand took sentinel with a firm grasp of her robe front, Hermione spread her legs to shoulder width, bent her knees slightly, and began to show Harry (in a weird, beheaded, partially visible way) exactly where she wished his hands and fingers could be at that moment.

Hermione knew that she was on the clock, and didn't have much time as her fingers took up a frantic pace. But she also knew that she didn't need that much time...given Padma and Parvati's antics, the view she had of Harry's tent pole, and the look in his eyes as she provided a show. So she focused, and concentrated, and rubbed with a single-mindedness that kept her from hearing sounds from the hallway, or make sense of the wide-eyed frightful glance that Harry made towards the opened doorway.

It wasn't until Padma was through the door with the front half of the hospital's sedan chair that Hermione realized that she was in danger of being caught out. She quickly slammed the front of the invisibility robe shut, and took full advantage of her silencing charm to howl out expletives in frustration.

"Erm...Hey, Padma...what's that?" Harry asked nervously, as his eyes shifted from Hermione's position to the contraption that hung from both Padma's and Parvati's shoulders.

"It's a palki...the Indian equivalent of a wheelchair," Padma replied, as they set the chair down onto the floor. Ducking her head below the long poles that had been balanced on their shoulders, she asked, "Where's Hermione?"

"Erm...she stepped out, to...use the loo," Harry replied tensely.

"Did she, now?" Parvati asked, as she gave an obvious glance towards his crotch. "Well, that wasn't very nice, leaving you like that...without lending a hand."

Harry snorted, and muttered, "She had me almost there without using her hands."

"What's that?" Parvati asked with a grin.

"Nothing...nothing at all," Harry replied defensively. "So...the idea is for me to sit in that chair and be carried about like I was a sultan?"

"Well...I think that sultans did get carried here and there, but this is standard hospital issue."

Harry frowned. "Will you be able to carry my weight, though?"

Padma smiled, reached down, and effortlessly lifted the wooden device with one hand.

"Guess I should have clarified...with the featherlight charms applied, it's standard wizarding hospital issue."

"Oh," Harry replied. He frowned when he caught sight of a bent knee that briefly escaped his cloak before Hermione recovered it. She had apparently dropped into a full squat, and gotten back to work.

"So...I imagine Hermione will be back soon, if you two wanted to carry me out she could follow along, right?"

Padma followed Harry's eyesight, and began to ponder a puzzle. Her sister beat her to the solution, though, using one of the other senses.

"Sounds like a plan, Harry," she said brightly, as she drew her wand and levitated him into the chair.

"Mind the pole," Padma instructed.

"I'm looking right at it," Parvati quipped, having used Harry's lap as her spell's target.

Padma snorted, and helped position Harry's legs as he was slowly dropped down onto the seat.

"Well maybe Hermione can help with this when she's done," Padma offered with a smile.

"As far as I can tell, she just finished," Parvati quipped, as she scooted back underneath the rear poles.

"What's that?" Harry asked, as Padma did the same, and they lifted him up into the air.

"Oh, nothing...just thinking of an old saying."

"Which one?"

"The one that..." Parvati replied. She then leaned forward whispered into Harry's ear.

"Remind me to tell Hermione that *hear no orgasm* and *see no orgasm* doesn't mean that we can't *smell no orgasm*."

Harry caught his breath, and then let it out in a belly-laugh as the twins carried him out of his room.

oo000000oo

Padma's first attempt to lead Harry's litter across the narrow street that separated the Patil's ayurvedic hospital from the beach was brought up short by a noisy blur of yellow-painted metal and diesel fumes.

Beeeeep! Beee-eee-eee-eee-eeep! Beep Beep Beee-eee-eee-eeep!

"Bloody hell! What was that?" Harry asked.

"A bludger on wheels," Padma replied.

"What?"

"They're called auto rickshaws," Parvati explained.

"Beeeeep! Beee-eee-eee-eee-eeep!" called out the golf-cart sized vehicle, as it swerved to avoid a humped cow standing idly on the road.

"Is one hand always on the horn?" Harry asked.

Padma nodded. "Unless they disable the brakes and hook the horns up to the brake pedals." She then looked left, then right, then left again before venturing out into the dirt-covered street.

"Wonder how I never heard them through the opened window in my room," Harry mused, as they navigated two short steps from the road down to the back beach.

"Magic," Parvati replied. "The windows are charmed to filter out unwanted noise."

"Smart," Harry replied, as he tried to look back at the hospital. "Mind if you give me a full three-sixty?"

"Sure, Harry," Padma replied, as she began to slowly turn back towards the hospital.

The late afternoon beach-level vistas that Harry was provided revealed many of the same things that Hermione had spied from the top floor of the hospital earlier that morning. The fishing boats were beached, with a few of their owners about mending nets, or trading stories as they smoked foul-smelling hand-rolled cigarettes called "bidis." These men all wore long-sleeved open collared business shirts above their dhotis. The rolled-up sleeves revealed arms that were just as spindly and dark-skinned as their legs and faces.

The Patil's blindingly white three-level hospital stood in the center of the palm-fringed cove, with the pink-walled mosque anchoring one end, and a glass and concrete tourist hotel on the other. The one-story wooden shops and houses that filled in the gaps between these buildings blended into the lush foliage...which seemed just a little more lush, and a little more verdant on the hospital grounds (Padma explained that dragon dung fertilizer worked as well in India as it did in Britain).

While Padma and Parvati paused, Harry took a moment to study the large, hand-painted signs that announced the hospital's therapeutic services in English, Malayalam, Hindi, and Sanskrit.

"Why so many languages?" he asked, as they swung the sedan chair back towards the sea.

Padma replied, "Because there are so many different languages spoken in India, Harry. Malayalam is the local tongue, but Hindi is the official language of Muggle India, so everyone learns that as well."

"English is for the tourists, then?"

"Not necessarily," Padma replied. "There are political issues at play. Hindi is the primary language in the northern half of India, and many South Indians accused the Northerners of cultural imperialism when they tried to make Hindi the only official language after Independence. So as a result, English is more often a bridging language down here."

Harry thought that Hermione would have been far more interested in this than he was, but that didn't mean that he wasn't interested, or desirous of being polite.

"So what's Sanskrit, then?" he asked.

"It's the ancient language of India," Padma replied. "Almost all of the great ancient texts...poetry and drams, scientific and religious works...they were all written in Sanskrit."

"It's the equivalent of Latin in Western Europe," Padma chimed in.

"Are there people that speak Sanskrit, but don't speak Hindi or English?" Harry asked.

Parvati shook her head. "That's just a subtle code that announces it to be a magical hospital. Hardly anybody speaks Sanskrit any more, unless they're spell casting."

"So...does that mean that Sanskrit incantations are used instead of Latin?" Harry asked.

Padma nodded. "That's right."

"Sounds like something that Hermione is going to want to learn, then."

"Hey, you might want to as well, Harry...learning Sanskrit has other practical uses."

"Like what?"

"Well," Parvati was with a wink. "I've always thought that the *Kama Sutra* is far more informative and erotic when it's read in the original language."

"The *Kama Sutra*?" Harry asked. "Isn't that some type of sex manual?"

"That would be a coarse, but accurate summary," Padma replied.

Harry thought for a moment, then smiled.

"Well, then...perhaps we'll have to have a little book club, and have you two do the translation for us."

"Just the translation?" Padma asked with a pout. "Don't want us to help with the practical as well as the theoretical aspects of your study?"

"Erm..."

"Relax, Harry," Parvati said with a grin. She looked over the chair and spied a vendor with wares loading down the back of his bicycle.

"Are you thirsty, Harry?" she asked. "There's a tender coconut seller over there."

Harry strained to follow Parvati's gaze, and spied a sweaty young man who had a very big knife in hand as he stood next to two bunches of fresh green-husked coconuts.

"How do you drink a confection?" he asked.

"A confection?" asked Parvati. "You mean you've never tasted fresh coconut water...or coconut milk?"

Harry shook his head. "It's not exactly a staple on the Hogwarts menu, is it?"

"Well you're in for a treat, then, Parvati replied, as she stood and bounded out towards the vendor.

Tired of bending his neck, Harry remained facing front, and the waves that were breaking twenty feet away from his feet. He took in a deep breath of fresh sea air, then leaned back to let the sun warm his face.

"This is nice," he said.

"What's nice...the beach, or me finally having you all to myself?" Padma asked.

Harry turned and squinted at the Ravenclaw. "Both, actually...though can we truly say that we're alone with your Auntie's ever present eyes and ears?"

"She might be busy, you know," Padma replied.

"Want to find out?" Harry said with a grin.

"Is that a proposition, or a proposal to test a hypothesis?" Padma asked.

"Whatever you want it to be, Padma," Harry replied.

The black-haired witch smiled in response, then leaned forward, kissed Harry on the cheek, and aimed her hand towards his crotch.

"Padma, mind yourself!" called out Healer Patil from across the street.

"Yes, Auntie," her niece whined, as she leaned back and sighed. "You'd think she's rented out Mad Eye Moody's magical eye!"

"It's not that bad...all things considered she's been brilliant," said Harry. A more detailed assessment was held off by Parvati's return.

"Hey Harry, fancy my coconuts?" she asked, as she held two of the liquid-filled husks in front of her chest.

The-Boy-Who-Lived looked at each of the coconuts with curiosity. The vendor had used a machete to trim off the tops, and expose the white meat at the top. Just enough had been sliced off to allow plastic straws to be poked through, until they rested within the hollow, sweet water-filled interiors.

"Cheers, Parvati," Harry replied, as he leaned forward and caught the tip of one straw in his teeth.

The liquid that he drew into his mouth had a cool, slightly sweet and syrupy taste to it.

Parvati smiled when Harry pronounced fresh coconut water to be delicious, and set the other down in the sand.

"I'll leave that for Hermione, then. Shall I get two more, Sister?" she asked.

"None for me, thank you," Padma replied. She looked towards the sea and added, "I'd rather cool off with a bit of splashing."

"An excellent idea!" Parvati decided, as she pulled her sister up from the blanket. "Do you want us to carry you into the sea as well, Harry?"

The-Boy-Who-Lived shook his head. "No, I'll be fine here...you two go on."

"Okay, then...call if you need us," replied Padma.

Harry smiled, and assured them that he would.

Given the way that the twin sisters were dressed, Harry thought that the two would only go so far as to get their feet wet. He was therefore quite surprised when the two bounded into waist-deep water and began to splash about fully dressed.

Or almost fully dressed, that is...as the sea proved when it pulled back its water in between waves, and left behind skirts whose thin translucent fabric clung tightly to underlying skin.

"Oh, Sweet Merlin!" Harry whispered, as he watched what would clearly be winning entries into a "wet skirt contest," had such a thing existed.

"It is a rather sexy sight, isn't it Harry?" a voice whispered into his ear.

"What...who...Hermione?" he asked, turning his head towards the disembodied voice.

"Ssshhh," the voice replied. "Wouldn't want to arouse any suspicions, would you?"

"Erm, no," Harry replied. "So why are you still wearing the cloak?"

"Oh, I don't know," Hermione purred. "Never know when you might need to...scratch another itch...without attracting attention."

"Okay," Harry replied with a bit of uncertainty. He then nodded towards the coconut husk that sat in the sand and added, "Parvati left some coconut water for you, if you're thirsty."

"Oh, wasn't that nice?" Hermione whispered. A few moments later, Harry heard her ask, "Pay attention to the straw...let me know what you see."

"Sure," he whispered back. He then watched as the straw disappeared from view and the coconut began to wobble. A few seconds later, he heard the slurping sound of an emptied container.

"Well that's disappointing," Hermione stated, once Harry described what he had seen. "I was hoping that the straw wouldn't have disappeared when I put it in between my lips."

Harry frowned. "Funny, though...why did the whole straw disappear, rather than just the top bit?"

He heard a quiet giggle. "Who said that I didn't swallow the whole straw?"

"But why would you do that?"

"Why, to practice my oral sex technique, of course."

Harry choked on some spittle in response.

"You okay, Harry?" Padma called out from the surf.

The Boy-Who-Lived turned and called out, "I'm fine, Pad.....Parvati."

An invisible hand that had snaked its way into Harry's dhoti had provoked the stammering.

Padma looked back towards Harry and frowned. "Are you certain?"

Harry nodded, and let out a deep breath. "Couldn't feel better."

"I know that I couldn't feel anything better than this," an invisible Hermione hissed, as she sank her arm deeper into Harry's shorts and wrapped her fingers around his wand.

"What are you doing?" Harry whispered, as his girlfriend began to stroke.

"Providing a theraputic massage," Hermione replied with a giggle. "Just sit back, relax, and perv on Padma and Parvati for a few moments."

"A few moments is about all it will take," Harry hissed.

oo000000oo

The Twins were a little disappointed when Hermione seemed to appear out of nowhere, and to sit by Harry's side with a book in her lap. They were even more put out when they joined the couple and noticed that Harry's tent pole had gone missing.

"I thought you'd get off on the sight of us in wet saris," Parvati pouted.

"What...why...who says that I didn't...or that I'm not perving on you two right now?" Harry protested.

"It doesn't look that way," Padma pouted, nodded towards his crotch.

"Oh, sorry...that was my doing," Hermione said, as she looked up from her book. "Thought I'd practice my massage technique."

"Here on the beach?"

"I was discrete," Hermione protested.

"Obviously," Parvati snorted.

"I think that your swimming costumes are brilliant," Harry replied with a smile.

"Sure, you say that now...but will you think that the first time you visit Eve's Beach?"

"Eve's Beach?" Harry asked.

"It's just beyond that rocky point," Padma said with a nod. "It's where all the European female tourists sun topless."

"Really, now?" Harry asked, raising an eyebrow. He then shook his head and said, "Call me crazy, but the way you are dressed right now...it's far sexier than prancing about in just your knickers."

"You really think so?"

Harry nodded. "Of course, if you wanted to offer a direct comparison...one of you in a wet sari, the other in just your knickers...."

"You would like that, wouldn't you Harry?" Hermione asked.

"And you wouldn't love?" Harry teased. "Of course, you'd have to rummage through your luggage to actually find a pair of knickers..."

"Is that a complaint?" Hermione asked.

"Certainly not," Harry replied. He then turned to the twins and said, "Hey...if you two want to be my hands and feet, how about you drag Hermione into the surf so that all of my drip-dry angels are similarly dressed?"

"Oh, no," Hermione protested.

Padma snorted. "We best not, Harry...your girlfriend already has the natives restless. If we give them a glimpse of Hermione's nipple through wet fabric, they'd riot."

"What?" Hermione asked. "What do you mean? Who's getting restless?"

Parvati snorted. "You haven't noticed, Sweetheart?"

When Hermione shook her head no, the twin sisters pointed out the half-dozen men who were discretely (and not-so-discretely) watching them from the street and along the beach.

"They must be perving on your swimming costumes," Hermione replied in a low voice.

"No, they're definitely perving on you right now," Parvati declared.

"How can you be so sure?"

"There's a rather strident double standard here," Padma explained.

"But it's not like I'm wearing a thong, like all of the others on the tourist beach," Hermione noted.

"That's true," Padma noted. "But what you're doing is just as racy in their eyes."

"How can that be?" Harry asked.

Padma sighed. "European women are considered to be provocative sluts for the way they dress...or don't dress...on the beach," chimed in Parvati. "The local men sneer at them, and call them whores in the native tongue...even as they roam up and down the beach in packs shamelessly staring at their bared bits."

"So it's a Madonna-whore complex?" Hermione asked.

Padma nodded. "Sort of...if we wore even modest two-piece bikinis on the beach, we'd risk stoning for our brazenness. But when a European woman dresses in a sari..."

"And exposes an incredibly delicious belly-button like yours..." Parvati added.

"The men would think that they could have their cake and eat it too?" Harry asked.

Hermione snorted. "My, Harry...I'm impressed."

"Hey, I might be clueless, but that doesn't mean I'm daft...and what's this about a delicious belly-button?"

"Never mind, dear," Hermione replied, as she innocently patted Harry's thigh. She then looked warily towards the closest gawker and asked, "So

do I have reason to be worried?"

Padma snorted. "Are you not a witch?"

"Well, yes, but...secrecy statutes and all that..."

"No worries, Hermione," Padma said with a laugh. "The local men have been properly trained. Parvati and I have been visiting Auntie for years...and if you're with us, the protection extends to you."

"What kind of protection is that?" Hermione asked.

"The kind that causes painful boils on bits when they act inappropriately."

"Ouch," Harry replied. "I'd cross my legs in response, if I could."

The three witches laughed at what they assumed was a joke (even though Harry wasn't joking).

"So...if there's some sort of magic involved, why haven't I been attacked by boils and pestilence?" asked Harry.

Parvati giggled. "Auntie must be making some exceptions."

"Lucky me," Harry replied with a smile.

"I think we're all lucky on that count," Hermione added. She then looked back towards the hospital and asked, "So you often visit your Auntie, then?"

Padma nodded. "At least once a year, usually over Christmas hols. Mum and Dad wanted to make sure we keep in touch with our roots."

"I'd touch those roots too if it meant a couple of weeks of this weather in December," Harry quipped. "So if she's a Great Aunt, and a Patil, then her husband is your grandfather's brother?"

Padma nodded.

"Are your...are your grandparents still living, then?"

"Why the sudden interest, Harry?" Parvati asked.

"Well," he replied with a smile, "If what I keep hearing about your father arriving for a visit with marriage contracts in hand, I figure I might benefit from a head start on learning the names of my in-law's extended family."

"Oh, Harry," Padma said, swatting his thigh lightly as she blushed deeply. Parvati, whose cheeks were no less red, added, "You really shouldn't get our hopes up like that, you know."

Harry paused, wondering if the comment deserved a serious or humorous response.

Padma decided to fill in the conversation gap, and replied, "Those grandparents are still living, but we've never seen them much...father's father didn't approve of his decision to move to England right after we were born."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that," Harry replied. "It's good, then, that you two have an Aunt and Uncle that are good to you."

Parvati nodded. "Harry...you have an Aunt and Uncle too, right?"

Harry hissed, closed his eyes, and shook his head. "I did...Death Eaters got to them in August. Not that they were anything worth talking about... I would have given anything to have had Dumbledore drop me onto your Auntie's doorstep rather than theirs."

"Drop you off on their doorstep?" Padma asked.

Harry narrowed his eyes for a brief moment, before realizing that Padma and Parvati probably knew next to nothing about his childhood. He relaxed, and smiled when he decided that he felt close enough to the two girls to remedy that situation.

"So have either of you two ever heard the real story about the exploits of the Boy-Who-Lived?" he asked.

"No," Padma said with a headshake. "But I'd like to."

"Me to," Parvati chimed in. "Maybe you could tell them as smutty bedtime stories."

Harry snorted. "Can't say that there have been many smutty parts to my life story...at least not until recently."

"A situation that we're trying to rectify as quickly as possible," Hermione replied brightly, as she pulled Harry's head in for a kiss.

Padma snorted. "Any chance that those on-going stories would have more than one leading lady, Harry?"

The young wizard's eyes twinkled. "Erm, good question...you'll have to direct your inquiries to my casting director."

And that would be me," Hermione added.

Parvati giggled. "Guess we know whose bread we'll have to butter, then."

"Or whose cake we'll need to frost?" added Padma, as she reached out to scrape her fingernails down Hermione's arm.

"Padma!" Hermione chided. "As the daughter of two dentists, I forbid you to use sugar-sweetened comparisons in your pervy allusions!"

Parvati reached across Harry to squeeze Hermione's thigh. "Have you got a better one, then?"

Hermione put her thumb and forefinger to her chin and thought. "Hmmm...coconuts are way too obvious, and there have already been far too many jokes about lactation today..."

"Maybe they could munch on your mangos?" Harry suggested.

"Oh, that's terrible," Hermione chided.

"How about they mix your masala, then?" Harry asked. "Or boil your rice?"

"Stir her curry?" offered Parvati with a smile.

"Chew her chutney?" added Padma.

"Oh, you three..." Hermione said dismissively. "We're all adults, aren't we? Can't you just come right out and ask me if you need to provide cunnilingus to get to Harry?"

"Would they need an excuse to offer you cunnilingus?" Harry asked with a waggle of his eyebrows.

Hermione turned towards her boyfriend, not knowing whether she should blush or punch him in the arm.

So she did both.

"Wouldn't you like to know?" she admonished.

"Yes," was the reply provided, not just by Harry, but by Padma and Parvati as well.

Healer Patil's call for them to return Harry back to his room saved Hermione from immediately providing a reply.

Not that it really mattered, as the other three were already convinced of the answer.

Alternative Medicine

Ch 7: The Gushing Goddess of Knowledge

That afternoon's application of healing salve sent Harry Potter straight to sleep, as his energy levels were already partially depleted by sun and lust. He woke up several hours later within a room that was bathed in the warm colors of the setting sun. The orange and reddish hues splashed against the white walls were of secondary interest to Harry, however...or more accurately, of "quaternary interest," for his primary focus was on his three nursemaids as they brought the evening meal.

Padma led the way with the food tray in hand, which allowed Parvati and Hermione to unfasten buttons just as soon as they were inside the room.

"Okay, so I'm either awake, or my dreams have looped back to the beginning," he announced with a grin.

"Why is that, Harry?" Padma asked, as she set the tray in front of him.

Harry tipped his head to the other two witches, who were helping each other free their breasts from their cholis.

"Impatient, aren't they?" she said with a smile. "And I'm left with no one to help with my buttons...woe is me!"

"I could always bite them off for you," Harry offered.

"Was that in your dream as well?" Hermione snarked, as she walked up behind Padma and slipped her hands inside the Ravenclaw's shawl.

"No, but what you're doing now was," Harry quipped, as Hermione's hands strayed from Padma's buttons.

"I'd ask how your wet dreams ended, but it looks like they didn't get a chance to," Parvati giggled, as she nodded towards his crotch.

"Harry's loss is our gain of a table decoration," Hermione smiled, as she pulled Padma's cropped undershirt away from her body.

The black-haired witch turned her head and kissed Hermione's cheek in response.

"Thank you, sweet Saraswati."

"Hush, you!" Hermione admonished.

"Sara-wa-who?" asked Harry.

"Saraswati, the most brilliant goddess in her generation," Parvati quipped, as she sat next to Harry's side. "Uncle perfectly renamed our Hermione."

"Stop it, Parvati," Hermione hissed.

"Yes, Goddess."

"Oh...you...!"

"Have to admit that it fits you, love," Padma noted, as she popped a bit of curry into Harry's mouth.

"Only because you were both named after goddesses," Hermione shot back.

"Not totally," Parvati claimed. "Padma's only indirectly named for a goddess."

"I am not."

"Are too."

"Am not."

"Hold on, hold on," Harry explained. "Can somebody explain all this to me?"

"Sure, Harry," Hermione replied. "While you rested, I spent some time in the Patil's study with the book that Auntie lent me. Her husband came upon me, claimed that I was no less of a goddess than his nieces, and called me Saraswati incarnate."

"Though to be fair, he was focused on her belly-button rather than the book," Parvati added.

"Anyway..." continued Padma. "The three main Hindu deities are Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. Each of these

male gods has a corresponding wife or consort. Parvati is the wife of Shiva, and Padma *can be* another name for Lakshmi, who is the consort of Vishnu. Saraswati is the wife of Brahma, so Uncle obviously saw the potential for symmetry."

Harry snorted. "Well I think of you three as my goddesses, so I can't fault your uncle for his logic." He paused, and then asked, "So is there a Harry-wati? Or am I destined to be renamed as well?"

"Oh, we've got lots of nicknames for you, mister," Parvati said with a smile.

"Be honest, Sister," cautioned Padma. "Most of those endearments refer to his wand, and not the entire package."

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Actually, Harry, these two have been arguing over whether you are more like Padma's consort or Parvati's husband."

"Really?"

"You're obviously more like Vishnu, Harry," Padma asserted. "He sits on top of a snake and hates people with big egos. When good and evil get out of balance on Earth, and evil demons get the upper hand, the gods ask Vishnu to take human form and smack down the demons. And Lakshmi, his consort, rides around at night on an owl, and is the handmaiden of those with owls as familiars. So tell me...who has a closer relationship with their owl than you do with Hedwig?"

Parvati rolled her eyes. "Well, fair enough, but you'd have to be blind not to see Shiva's representation within Harry, and not just because he only wears a loincloth and can talk with snakes."

"I look like this Shiva?" Harry asked skeptically.

"Well, part of you, at least," Padma admitted coyly.

"A very big part," Parvati quipped.

"How is that?"

"The ligham of Shiva is a cylindrical stone phallus that is revered by his followers," Padma explained. "Ligham actually means 'mark' in Sanskrit, but the mark of Shiva is so ubiquitous that 'ligham' has become a synonym for the word 'penis'."

"You mean...there are...penis worshipers?"

"Oh, honestly, Harry," Hermione sighed. "Carvings of both male and female genitalia have been used in dozens of religions to represent the gods or goddesses of fertility."

"All Hail the Wondrous Ligham!" Parvati exclaimed, as she made bowing motions towards Harry's crotch. "And allow me to show my devotion!"

"I think it's your Auntie permission that you'll need before you can devote yourself to that," Hermione quipped.

Padma shook her head at her sister's antics, and noted, "But Shiva's throat is blue, Sister!"

"Blue?" asked Harry.

"Do blue balls count?" Hermione asked with a smirk.

"Harry has blue balls, Hermione?"

"Not if I can help it."

"Be that as it may," interrupted Padma, "There is a story that minor gods and demons once churned the oceans for a hundred years, using the king of the snakes as a spoon. In the middle of this stirring, the snake's one hundred heads all spit out venom that was poisonous enough to destroy the world. Shiva saved the Earth by swallowing this poison. It didn't kill him, but it did leave his throat blue."

Hermione let out a small gasp. "Harry!"

He imitated her reaction and replied, "Hermione!"

"Stop it," Hermione chided, as she swatted his arm. "You don't see the parallels?"

"Erm...not really...last time I checked my throat was the same color as the rest of me."

"But handling the king of the snakes...and taking in its poison?"

"Yes, and?"

Hermione shook her head, covered her mouth, and coughed up the word, "Basilisk!"

"Oh...right."

"What's that she's talking about, Harry?"

"Second Year," he replied. "But that story should come after First Year and the Philosopher's Stone."

"Philosopher's Stone?" Padma asked.

"I guess it's your turn to tell some stories, Shiva," Parvati suggested.

"Vishnu!" Padma hissed.

"You're forgetting about Padma's devotion to Shiva," Parvati noted.

"Yes, well...as much as I love Harry, don't expect me to be lopping off my bits for him."

"What?" Harry hissed.

Padma sighed. "When Lakshmi popped out of the oceans during the snake stirring, she was so incredibly beautiful that each of the three male deities desired her. But since Brahma and Shiva were already married, Vishnu got her by default. Lakshmi still fancied Shiva, though, and every day she ordered her handmaidens to collect a thousand lotus blossoms that she would then offer to an idol of Shiva in the evening."

"In other words, she worshiped a stone penis that she kept hidden in her bedroom," Parvati quipped.

"Just like you worship the charmed dildo that you keep hidden in your trunk, Sister?" Padma asked.

"Nah...I skip over the flower collecting part," Parvati said with a grin.

"Anyway...." Padma continued, "One night Lakshmi counted up the flowers and came up with only nine-hundred ninety-eight. It was too late to collect more, and she really thought it best to make offerings in round numbers, so she decided to cut off her breasts and use them to make up the difference."

"Ooof," Harry hissed. "We're back to those gruesome bedtime tales, aren't we?"

Padma shook her head. "No, it's actually rather romantic. When she cut off the first breast Shiva recognized her devotion to him, and came to her asking that she stop. He then took the cut breast, turned it into the bael fruit, and sent it to Earth with his blessings. And that is why bael trees are so common around temples that worship Shiva."

Harry snorted. "So there really is something called bael fruit?"

Padma nodded. "It's got a good many medicinal properties...its unripe flesh cures diarrhea, while its ripe fruit is a laxative."

"Yeah, that's really romantic, Padma."

"Hush!"

Harry frowned. "So did Padma ever get her breast back?"

Padma smiled. "Well...every statute or depiction I've seen of her shows four arms, four hands, and two breasts."

"Four hands, huh?" Harry asked. "That must come in handy when you've got more than one itch to scratch."

"Or more than one lover," added Parvati.

Harry smiled. "So that means that I can worship your divine fruits while Parvati is busy bowing down to Shiva?"

Hermione snorted. "Did you just give a nickname to your penis, Harry?"

Harry laughed. "Who, me? I was just paying attention to the dinner conversation."

Parvati snorted. "Well, if Harry is going to worship any pair of baps, it ought to be Hermione's."

Padma smiled. "She does have delicious breasts, doesn't she?"

"Hush!" Hermione hissed.

"No argument here," Parvati said with a grin. "Lost count of how many times my fingers drifted inside my knickers when she dropped her towel and changed into her nightclothes back in Gryffindor Tower!"

"You...hush yourself too!" Hermione chided.

Harry shook his head and laughed. "That makes me insanely jealous, you know...I've only just seen Hermione's bare baps today, and my fingers couldn't go anywhere to find relief."

Hermione snorted. "Oh, you...guess we'll just have to work on that, then?"

"Work on what, Hermione?" Parvati snarked. "Flashing him your baps, or providing him relief?"

Hermione smiled at Harry and leaned in to plant a quick peck on his lips.

"Yes."

"Sounds like a winning response to me!" Harry exclaimed.

"But is that his only response?" Parvati asked.

Parvati grinned. "Definitely not," she declared, gesturing towards Harry's crotch. She then turned to Hermione and asked, "And do you really expect me to believe that you've never gotten off while you watched me get dressed?"

Padma giggled. "Well it sure looked that way to me this morning!"

"Oh really?" Harry asked with a grin. "That sounds like something I'd like to hear more about!"

"Maybe later," Hermione said sheepishly.

"Oh, come now," Harry replied. "You've already said that you've told them about what we did this morning...fair is fair, right?"

"I suppose," Hermione replied, glancing at the twins. "But it would still be best left for later."

"Why is that?" Harry asked.

Hermione snorted, and leaned forward into a hug that placed her lips to his ears.

"Because we're certainly within Auntie's earshot, Harry," she explained. "And I'm afraid that your balls might turn blue again if I start to describe how Padma hugged my naked body from behind and played with my nipples, or how Parvati's fingers dragged through my pubes when she helped dress me this morning."

Harry moaned, which only encouraged Hermione to go farther.

"And to think what would happen if I were to describe how we watched each other play with ourselves last night in our bedroom, or who screamed the loudest when they buried their fingers up themselves and came..."

Harry broke out into a sweat, and mumbled something about evil witches that deserved tongue lashings.

Hermione snorted, kissed his cheek, and replied, "Promises, Promises!"

Her boyfriend decided that it would be good to change the topic, and asked what she had learned from her afternoon reading.

"Oh, all sorts of interesting things," Hermione declared.

"Well did any of those things give you any clues as to why the Maharajah would want to visit with me?" he asked.

Hermione nodded. "Background information...sure. But it should be these two that tell about the history of magic in India, not me."

When Harry indicated that he was interested in the topic, Padma took the lead.

"The two most important events with respect to the magical governance of the Indian subcontinent were the conversion of Ashoka the Great to Buddhism in 263 B.C. and the adoption of the Secrecy Statutes in 1692," she began.

"Ashoka the Great was India's greatest, and most powerful ruler," Parvati noted. "His Maruyan Empire stretched over the entire subcontinent."

"Except for our little bit down here," Padma added.

Her sister rolled her eyes. "Details, details...the important thing to know is that Ashoka converted to Buddhism in 232 B.C., on the day after his last and bloodiest conquest, and then used the power of his throne to spread his new found religion across the subcontinent."

"But isn't Buddhism a Muggle religion?" Harry asked.

Padma shrugged. "They say that Siddhartha was a wizard, although there isn't proof of that fact. That said, Buddhism has always been a far more compatible belief system with magic than the other great religions."

Harry frowned. "So was this Ashoka a wizard?"

Padma shook her head. "No, but many of the monks that he supported financially were, and they established several monasteries that were devoted to the study of a shamanistic style of magic that was particularly compatible with their faith."

"They were called viharas," Hermione noted. "They carved caves into rock faces, and excavated multi-storied structures that were huge...a few as big as Hogwarts!"

"And this is the same type of magic that is taught here today?" Hermione asked.

"Yes," Padma replied. "It's actually very similar to what happened in Europe about the same time...many witches and wizards within the boundaries

of the Roman Empire learned a common style of magic that utilized Latin-based incantations, even if Latin wasn't their native language."

"And even though he didn't directly control the Southern-most tip of India, Ashoka sent missionaries here and beyond," said Parvati.

"So how does this relate to wizarding governments?" Harry asked.

"It was a unifier, Harry," Padma replied. "It didn't matter if you spoke Malayalam here on the coastline of the Arabian Sea, or Kannada in Mysore, or even Nepali up in Nepal ... they all learned the same type of magic that used Sanskrit incantations and were taught in the Sanskrit language. That made it easier for those within the wizarding world to find commonality with others across the subcontinent."

"So even as empires came and went, and borders changed this way and that over the next two thousand years, that common thread remained," Parvati added.

Hermione nodded. "It was the same in Britain, Harry...remember that at the time of the Four Founders, there wasn't a common language amongst the students. It was more like Durmstrang is now...students arrived at Hogwarts speaking not only Old English, but Middle Irish, Cornish, Welsh, and even Norse."

"How do you know that, Hermione?" Parvati asked.

Harry chuckled, and did his best vocal imitation of his bushy-haired friend. "Well, Parvati, if you ever bothered to read..."

"Hush, you," Hermione chided, punching Harry in the arm. Caught off guard by her actions, he yelped, and fell onto his side.

He would been more cross with Hermione if his head hadn't landed in Padma's lap.

Harry looked up into the Ravenclaw's chocolate brown eyes and winked.

"Thanks for breaking my fall, Sweetheart," he said.

Padma responded with a brilliant smile, and a hand that gently tussled his hair.

"Your head is welcomed onto my lap any time, Harry," she replied brightly.

"Which one?" Parvati snarked.

"Either, of course," Padma replied.

"And facing which direction, Dear Sister?"

Harry shook his head, and tried to thank Padma by leaning up to kiss her lips. But could only make it halfway, and Padma (whether intentionally or not), assumed that Harry's lips were exactly where he had wanted them. And so she cupped the back of his head with her hand and leaned forward until her cloth-covered breast covered his mouth.

"Hey!" Parvati whined. "That's not fair."

"Yeah, Padma," Hermione added. "I want my turn!"

The Ravenclaw grinned in response, and asked, "Your turn where, Hermione...in my position or Harry's?" She then cupped the breast that wasn't mashed into Harry's face and added, "Because if it's his, I do have a spare."

"Such cheek!" Hermione said with faux protest, as she pressed her hand against one side of her face.

"More like such baps," Parvati observed.

Harry didn't know what he should do during this exchange. He didn't want to be too forward, but Padma had practically pushed her breast into his mouth and held it there. Thinking that Gryffindors go forward, he opened his mouth and gently clasped her covered nipple with his teeth.

"Padma?" her Aunt called out.

"Yes, Auntie," she called back, reluctantly propping Harry back up into a sitting position. She then added, "Sorry, Harry...she won't let us play right now."

"Does that mean maybe later?" Harry asked, with a tone of voice that matched the saucy grin on his face.

"Not as far as you know," she replied with a wink.

Harry arched an eyebrow in response, but decided not to ask a follow-up question.

"Okay, my turn," stated Parvati.

"To do what?"

"To break his fall the next time Hermione slugs him," she replied. "Switch places."

Padma snorted, and said, "Forget it."

Hermione rolled her eyes.

"So moving back on-topic..."

"I thought that playing with Harry was the main topic," Parvati pouted.

Hermione sighed. "Back to politics, Parv...Harry really should be up to speed when he does visit the Maharajah."

"You're no fun, Hermione!"

"I bet Harry would argue that point," Padma chimed in, as she idly dragged a finger up Hermione's thigh.

"Jealous much, Sister?"

"Of course! Aren't you?"

"Let's deal with your sexual frustrations later, ladies," said Hermione.

"Is that a promise?" Padma asked as she toyed with Hermione's skirt hem. "Because I could really use one of your sponge baths right about now."

"Padma..."

The reply to this lament took the form of a tongue sticking out Padma's mouth.

"Don't stick that out unless you're willing to use it," Hermione quipped.

"Who says that I'm not, love?"

"Promises, promises."

"Yes, actually...they are," Padma cooed, leaning over to peck Hermione on the lips.

Hermione blinked, then made a note to remember this conversation that night.

"So...the Secrecy Statutes?" she asked.

"Yes, well...where were we?" asked Padma

"I don't know about the rest of you, but my mind was in the gutter," Parvati stated.

"It had company there," Padma admitted.

"Okay...right, erm..." Hermione stammered.

"The Shagging Statues, love?" Padma asked coyly.

"Right, the...erm, no...the Secrecy Statutes," Hermione replied, trying to regain her composure.

"Oh... my bad," said Padma.

"Had it right as far as I'm concerned," Harry said with a wide smile.

"Well that's pretty obvious," said Parvati, as her eyes bore down on his twitching, sheet-covered bulge.

Hermione followed Parvati's gaze. "Oh my," she said slyly. "Looks like he'll need another bath."

"Sponge bath or tongue bath?" asked Parvati.

"Yes."

Harry snorted. "Do I have any say in the matter, girls?"

The three witches looked at each other, then shared a smile.

"No."

Harry paused and processed this unison response.

"Okay, just checking," he finally said with a grin.

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The conversation continued on for another thirty minutes, as Harry eventually learned how the Secrecy Statutes were enforced within India.

Since the time of Ashoka's reign in the Third Century B.C., Magical India had been governed by a loose collective of regional districts, each centered around one of Ashoka's thirty-seven magical monasteries...not that different from having the Headmaster of Hogwarts also be head of the Wizengamot in Britain. They pretty much ignored the comings and goings of Muggle kingdoms, and stuck to themselves. So when it came time to enforce the Secrecy Statutes, not many Indian witches or wizards were interested in creating a Ministry of United Magical India. At the same time they didn't want to create thirty-seven different ministries to enforce the Statutes, so they took a middle path, and formed eight regional ministries whose boundaries were roughly based on the 300 mile practical limit for travel by apparition.

The Ministry of Magical South India had jurisdiction from its southern tip 300 miles north, and combined the areas of influence for the magical monasteries that Ashoka had built in the cities of Mysore, Madurai, Hyderabad, and Thiruvananthapuram. Each of these four cities were the cultural centers for the four regional languages spoken in South India...Malayam on the Western Coast, Tamil to the east, Telugu in the northeast and Kannada in the northwest.

When Harry asked if this would have been the equivalent of smaller versions of Hogwarts located in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Dublin, Padma agreed, noting that there was nothing small about these institutions of magical learning. Hermione then reminded Harry that South India was more than twice the size geographically as the British Isles, and had a population that was five times larger.

The district within Magical South India where Malayalam was the primary language covered lands ruled by the Muggle kingdoms of Travancore and Cochin (roughly correlative to where the modern muggle province of Kerala stands). The royal families in both of these princely states included a fair number of witches and wizards, and while the Muggle kingdoms remained separate, the combined magical district was ruled by whomever was the oldest magical member of either royal family. This arrangement had lasted for more than four hundred years, and survived both British colonial rule (in which the Muggle maharajahs were in nominal control of their kingdoms), and the creation of the modern state of Muggle India (in which they were not). The current ruler of the "Malayalam District" was the younger brother of the last Muggle maharajah of Travancore State. Young, of course, was a relative term...the ruler who had asked Harry and the girls to join him for tea was a sprightly eighty-two old.

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Harry considered the history lesson to be far more captivating than any to have been delivered by Professor Binns, although, to be fair, the ghost had never delivered his lectures while partially exposing his bits to the class. But it wasn't just Harry who was getting a little squirmy by the end...each of the four were wondering what might happen at night's end, when Hermione, Padma and Parvati would retire to their upstairs bedroom to engage in activities much less closely monitored by their Auntie than what transpired at ground level.

Healer Patil set the stage when she came into Harry's room and shooed her nieces off to bed, as she had the night previous. There was no talk of a second sponge bath, but merely the recognition that Harry and Hermione deserved a few minutes of "alone time." And that it was only to be a few minutes time was something Healer Patil emphasized, insisting that Harry needed a full night's rest.

Hermione expressed her disappointment that she couldn't spend the night (in between snogs), but Harry would have none of it, noting that he wouldn't think it fair to demand all of her time when there were two others to consider. This didn't keep him from expressing his envy, of course, and a desire to view a pensieved memory or three sometime down the road.

Harry's willingness to share didn't ease any of Hermione's nerves as she departed after one final snog 'n grope for the night. As she climbed the steps to the shared quarters, she replayed what had transpired over the day....with Harry...with the twins...and with the twins in front of Harry. She certainly was ready to push forward on both the physical and emotional sides of all three relationships, but didn't know what the twins thought, or had planned. It was therefore with a mixture of curiosity and trepidation that she opened the door to her bedroom.

What was waiting there for her replaced the curiosity with lust, and the trepidation with exhilaration.

And then.....Padma and Parvati learned that there was another reason why Hermione's divine nickname was so appropriate.

Sarawati, the goddess of knowledge, is also the goddess of springs and rivers, and her name literally means "the one who gushes."

Alternative Medicine Ch 8: Unsuppressed Urges

Madhura Patil woke a little more than two hours before the next day's sunrise. There was no alarm clock to turn off, or charm to cancel, as she had long become accustomed to rising at such an early hour. Her husband, on the other hand, still needed some encouragement.

"Wake up Devak, it is time to start the day!"

"Fifteen more minutes, *sri bharya* ?" the elderly wizard asked, as he covered his head with his pillow.

"Don't you try to *sri bharya* me," replied the Healer. "It is your turn to harvest the lotus blossom petals, and you know full well that they must be picked before dawn."

Padma and Parvati's great uncle said something unintelligible into his pillow. His wife replied with a swat of her hand and a wave of her wand that banished the blankets to the dirty clothes bin.

"Alright, alright, I'm up," the wizard replied, as he stood and shuffled off to the loo.

His wife did a quick check on her patients...they were all resting, although Harry Potter's sleep was troubled, and light. Desiring to complete her morning exercise before tending to his needs, Padma and Parvati's Auntie returned to her second level living quarters and stripped down to her slip.

Healer Patil stepped into a yoga pose with a smile on her face...she could sense that the feminine sides of the love quadrangle that she was nurturing had strengthened quite significantly overnight. And the link between Hermione's and Harry's chakras? That was almost blinding in its strength. It was the link between her nieces and their shared male soul-mate that still gave her cause for concern. It was all a matter of timing...of keeping his lingham a respectable distance from their yonis, while love was given time to match the magnitude of their lust.

So how much longer a leash should the girls be given that day? How much more of a blind eye should she give to their kissing, and touching, and revealing?

The Healer pondered that specific question as she shifted from one yoga position to the next. She had allowed the four unmarried teenagers to travel well past any traditional bounds of propriety whilst under her roof. Yet it was far less than they could have done whilst attending the British boarding school unchaperoned, and had they grown up and been schooled in India they would have already been married. That Hermione's parents were Muggles, that Harry had no surviving parents, and that bonds between witches were involved complicated these issues all the more.

The detection of a quiet moan from the young wizard's downstairs room cut both these musings and her exercise routine short. The Twins' Auntie shook her head with disappointment, for there would be no time to meditate on these issues before she was needed by his bedside. She did a quick wash-up, dressed, and quickly made her way upstairs to the girls' room.

Madhura smiled at the sight that greeted her...bodies and limbs were so intertwined within the shared bed that they almost blended into a single, six-armed naked goddess.

"Girls?" she called out softly.

Hermione's eyes immediately flashed open and she sat up from the middle of the pile, earning moans of protest from those whose hands were pulled along for the ride. Paying no heed to the compromising position in which they'd been found, she rubbed her eyes and breathlessly asked, "Is something wrong with Harry?"

The elderly witch smiled and shook her head in an indeterminate figure-eight motion. "He is about to wake from a troubled dream. I am going to him now, but thought that you might want to soon follow."

"Oh, thanks...just be a minute," Hermione replied, as she pulled back the netting and crawled over Parvati's protesting form. Half-way towards her wardrobe, Hermione froze, realizing that she was just as naked as the two she'd left behind in bed. Casting a furtive glance back towards the Twins, she then turned to the older witch and said, "It's not what you..."

The Healer nodded, and waved Hermione's concerns away. "It was a warm night, and is common for those who have survived traumatic experiences to suffer from bad dreams...that you three were consoling each other as friends and siblings is the easiest explanation, is it not?"

Hermione arched an eyebrow, then let out a small snort as she nodded her head.

"Yes, that would be the easiest way of explaining things," she replied slyly.

"I'll see you downstairs, then," the older witch replied.

Once she left the room, Padma and Parvati both rose up from their feigned sleep.

"Do you think that Auntie really believes that story, Hermione?" Parvati asked, as she stretched out her arms.

The bushy-haired witch smiled and shook her head as she walked back and sat on the side of the bed.

"Oh she believes that it is the most convenient explanation," she replied, placing a hand on Parvati's bared hip. "But I am certain that she also knows that it isn't the correct explanation."

Parvati's eyes lit up as she leaned forward and pulled Hermione towards her. "Well, if she isn't going to fuss about it," she said demurely.

Hermione shook her head, and held her hands out to brace against some breast-on-breast contact.

"That sounds good," she admitted, as she watched the witch beneath her lick her lips, "But, I'm feeling rather guilty right now about Harry having slept all alone."

Parvati grinned as she reached up and tweaked a dangling nipple. "Plan on remedying that by hopping into his bed like this?"

Hermione giggled as she lightly batted away the offending fingers. "Might not be able to wear that much more, unless you plan on helping me wrap my sari."

Padma rolled over and added her two knuts to the conversation. "I don't think that Harry would mind," she quipped, as she dragged her fingernails down the full length of Hermione's back.

"Neither would your Uncle, though," Hermione replied, as she turned and planted a kiss on Padma's cheek. Hermione then grabbed Padma's arm and pulled her onto her feet.

"Come, my love," she cooed, dragging the Ravenclaw towards the wardrobe. "It's your turn to lend me something to wear."

Padma smiled. "You know that my choli will be just as tight across your chest as Parvati's was yesterday."

Hermione nodded. "I'm counting on it."

"Why bother?" Parvati asked, as she rose from bed and walked towards her own wardrobe. "It's early enough for the Muggle patients to still be sleeping."

Padma looked back towards her sister, then turned to Hermione and reasoned, "It might be a good way to test limits."

"Whose limits?" Hermione asked. "Auntie's or Harry's?"

Padma snorted, and then replied, "Yes."

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The hand placed on Harry Potter's shoulder was older, but no less comforting, than any of the six that he might have wished had woken him.

"Relax, child...it was just a bad dream," the elderly witch said softly.

Harry turned his head towards the sound of the voice and immediately relaxed.

"Good morning, Healer Patil," he replied, as he tried to blink the sleep away.

"Good morning, Harry," the elderly witch replied. "Here, allow me," she added, as she dipped a cloth into a small bowl of rose water and wiped his eyes.

"Thank you, Healer Patil," said Harry.

"How long will it be before I can convince you to call me Auntie?" she asked, as she expanded her ministrations to Harry's face.

The-Boy-Who-Won wanted to say "Not soon enough for your nieces," but didn't want to raise the topic, so he acquiesced.

"What time is it, Auntie?" asked Harry.

"Just before five-thirty," she replied.

"I hope that you didn't get up early just for me," Harry stated.

"Not that I wouldn't have," the witch admitted, "but I always rise before the sun does."

"Why so early?" Harry asked.

"It is the freshest time of the day," the witch replied. "The air is crisp and clear, and full of *sattva* ...it is the best time to listen to what our bodies are telling us."

Harry chuckled. "And it's easier to hear what's being said without all of the traffic and autorickshaw horns?"

The healer smiled as she helped Harry sit up in bed.

"Oh, Merlin," Harry muttered, as his cheeks flushed red.

"What, child?" the Healer asked. She then followed her patient's line of sight towards sheets that had become sticky overnight.

Clearly not all of her patient's dreams had been troubling.

"Please, Harry, there is no need to be embarrassed by your body's natural functions," she stated. Offering him a glass of water, she added, "And on that point, drink this...it will help you eliminate waste."

Harry looked at the fluid suspiciously.

"Is that a liquid laxative then?"

The healer smiled and shook her head. "Just warm salt water...although the goal is the same. Ayurveda teaches us that it is best to purge your body's waste products as early in the day as possible, lest they build up and turn toxic."

Harry frowned just a touch, but didn't refuse when the lip of the glass was placed to his lips.

"Might want to get a bed pan in place then," he admitted.

The Healer nodded, and followed his suggestion after banishing his sticky sheets to the laundry.

As an immediate use wasn't made, she left the magical nappie in place and covered Harry with a summoned clean sheet. The Healer then pulled out a toothbrush and tongue scraper from her bag and started in on her patient's oral hygiene.

"Still an unhealthy coating," the Healer tsked-tsked, as she scraped his tongue clean. "Although it is to be expected, given what passes for food in England."

Harry's protests couldn't be verbalized, as the Healer had his tongue in her hand. And so it was left for his bowels to voice their opinion with a passing that was announced by a trumpeting blast from underneath the sheets.

The magical nappie did nothing to mute the embarrassing sounds.

"Erm, sorry about that," Harry said, once his tongue regained its freedom.

"What did I say earlier?" the Healer asked. "You must not apologize for your body's natural functions."

Harry nodded as the witch banished the bedpan and transfigured the sheet into a dhoti that covered his midsection. He then asked, "So I'm supposed to feel good about blasting in front of you?"

The witch shook her head. "No more than you should feel good about breathing," she replied. "It is 'vega'."

"Vega?" asked Harry. "That makes sense...that potato curry we had for dinner last night was a little spicier than I'm used to."

Healer Patil laughed. "It is pronounced vee-gaa, and is not an shortened form for vegetable, Harry," she replied. "Vega are the body's urges...the natural acceptance of what our bodies need, and the purging of what it does not need. It is essential for your good health not to suppress these urges, as they present opportunity to initiate the disease process."

Harry arched an eyebrow. "So here in India, it's allowable to pass gas in polite company?"

The Healer smiled and gave him an ambiguous shake of the head. "While ayurveda does not recommend either the forceful creation or the suppression of urges, neither does it necessarily trump social conventions. So no, Harry, ayurveda is not an excuse for public flatulence."

"But I just..."

"Did what you would have done in private, had you not been injured?" Healer Patil asked. "Just as you would bathe in private, or accommodate your other urges in private?"

Harry arched both eyebrows in response. "Dare I ask what other types of Veggies..."

"Vega."

"Sorry....what other types of urges shouldn't be suppressed, then?"

"There are twelve types," the healer replied. Counting on her fingers, she added, "Hunger, thirst, belching, sneezing, coughing, vomiting, gas in the abdomen, urine, feces, semen, tears and dyspnea after exertion."

There was one item within this listing that caught Harry's ear more than the others, but he wasn't big on the idea of discussion the suppression of semen release with Padma and Parvati's aunt. Thinking it might be possible to learn through tangential questioning, he asked, "What's dyspnea?"

"A shortness of breath," the healer replied.

"So, if I exercised...and my body needed more oxygen, but I suppressed the urge to breathe more rapidly, bad things would happen?"

"Yes."

"Well that seems rather straight forward," Harry stated. "Bad things would happen if I suppressed the urge to drink if I were thirsty...and coughing is the body's way of dislodging unwanted things in the throat, right?"

Healer Patil nodded.

"So...it's not healthy to keep urine, or...erm...semen...from being released?"

The Healer arched an eyebrow. "My husband should be back within the hour, if it would be easier to ask him these questions?"

Harry stared at Padma and Parvati's Auntie for a few moments before he shook his head and chuckled to himself.

"Unless the discussion makes you uncomfortable, Ma'am..."

"It's Auntie, Harry," the witch corrected. "And that need not be a concern for you...I am a professional, you know."

Harry nodded. "Madame Pomfrey said as much when she realized that I'd never been given 'The Talk' by an adult."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, I was mortified...until, of course, I realized that she only had my best interests in mind....more so when I realized what a disaster it would have been had I relied upon the Twins' tutelage."

Healer Patil caught her breath at the comment. "Am I to understand that my nieces instructed you on sexual issues whilst at school?"

Harry's eyes narrowed, until he understood what was asked and let out a hearty laugh.

"No, no, Auntie...it was the Weasley twins. Older brothers of my mate Ron."

"Well, that's a relief," the witch said with a smile.

Harry didn't bother to inform the Healer that her nieces hadn't held back on that kind of tutelage over the past few days. The Healer didn't bother to inform Harry that she was well aware of that fact.

"So, then...you had questions regarding certain...urges that you have recently experienced?" she asked.

Harry blushed just a bit. "Thought that was obvious from the bed linens."

The Healer smiled. "Has the production of excess semen caused any pain or discomfort in your testes, Harry?"

"Erm....yes, it was rather painful yesterday."

"Are you suffering any pain currently, then?"

Harry bit his lower lip. "Well, not after ..."

"I see," the Healer replied, as her brown eyes sparkled. "The body has ways of dealing with this specific urge while you sleep. But as for daytime pain...do you have any concerns regarding the methods that were employed yesterday to accommodate these urges?"

Harry snorted. "No...they were brilliant."

"And the person providing that care?"

"Are you kidding? Hermione was bloody bril...." Harry stopped in mid-sentence when he realized what he was saying. He blushed, and tried a more tactful response.

"No concerns there, either, Auntie," he said sheepishly.

The elderly witch smiled, and once again placed a comforting hand on Harry's shoulder. "I will admit that it is not a treatment routinely provided in this hospital. Most of the patients facing these symptoms are capable of...shall we call it self-medication?"

Harry considered this response, then closed his eyes and sighed. "I feel so bloody useless...can't feed myself, or clean myself...and even have to ask for that kind of help."

"It was my understanding that...that kind of help...was freely offered?" the Healer asked.

Harry's eyebrows traveled towards his hairline. "Were you...were you consulted about that help?"

"No, no...not at all," the Healer replied quickly.

"Oh," Harry replied. "So it was your spidey-sense kicking in, like it does any time Padma or Parvati's hands start to stray?"

"Spidey-sense?" the Healer asked. "I am not familiar with that term."

Harry chuckled. "Neither was Poppy when I accused her of the same thing."

When the elderly witch gave Harry a confused look, he explained.

"Over the years, I've probably spent more time in the Hogwarts Infirmary than anyone else save the Nurse. Didn't take long for me to realize that she had an amazing ability to know exactly when her presence was required in the ward...whether it was to provide aid, or to prevent me from sneaking out before she was ready to release me. It was like she had an extra pair of eyes glued to the ward's walls."

"Really?"

"Yes, really," Harry replied. "And you, Healer Patil, seem to have that same kind of extrasensory ability."

The elderly witch looked down at Harry and smiled. "Well you've found us out, Harry. Any decent Healer will develop the ability to keep a magical eye on their charges."

"Literally?" Harry asked, afraid to know the answer.

"Not in a voyeuristic sense, if that is what you are concerned about," the Healer offered.

"Oh, so it's not like you can see what Hermione and the twins are up to in their room?"

"Would you like to know, Harry?" the witch asked teasingly.

The patient blushed again. "Erm, I was speaking hypothetically."

The Healer smiled, and patted Harry's arm. "Perhaps it would be best if you asked them yourself."

"Ask us what, Auntie?" Hermione asked, as the twin sisters and she entered Harry's room.

"Ah....speak of the *devis* , here they are," replied the Healer.

"Good morning, Harry," Hermione said warmly, as she walked bedside and leaned forward to offer a tender kiss. His lips almost failed to make contact, as his eyes were drawn to her attire.

"Erm...good morning," he stammered. Harry then angled his lips towards her ear and whispered, "What happened to your undershirt?"

Hermione smiled, and whispered back, "Is that a complaint?"

Harry snorted, and shook his head. As he leaned back into his pillow, his eyes darted reflexively towards the doorway, where Padma and Parvati were showing similar amounts of skin.

They stepped forward and offered slightly more chaste morning kisses before joining Hermione as she sat on the side of his bed.

"Expecting a particularly warm day, ladies?" Healer Patil asked.

"Oh, Auntie," Padma said with a sly smile. She leaned forward to lightly grab the Healer's hand, intentionally providing Harry with a full view of her right breast and added, "All of the Muggles are still sleeping, and once you said that Harry was suffering we rushed to be by his side, not thinking that we should waste time putting on our cholis."

"I see," the Healer said with a nod. "So now that your patient is feeling better, you may return to your room and dress properly before the Muggle patients wake up."

"Aww...Auntie!" Parvati whined.

"I'll hear none if it, you two," the elderly witch replied. "And since you are so concerned with my patients, you will help me attend to their eliminative needs once you return from your room."

Hermione chuckled to herself as she patted Harry on his thigh. "We'll see you later then."

"There is no need for you to leave, Hermione," the Healer said with a smile. "Harry needs another hour or two of rest, as well as the kind of post-traumatic therapy that you benefited from last night."

Hermione's eyes went wide at the unspoken message that she thought was being conveyed.

"That's a big job, Auntie," Parvati offered. "Don't you think that Hermione might need our help?"

The Healer snorted and shook her head. "Tell me Parvati...did you have any bad dreams once Hermione invited you into her bed last night?"

When the black-haired witch's eyes darted towards Hermione's she couldn't stop a giggle from escaping her lips.

No, Auntie," Parvati admitted.

Harry choked on a bit of spittle in response. Hermione immediately turned towards him and rubbed his back.

"The girls will come around with breakfast in a couple of hours," the Healer told her, as she pushed her nieces out the door.

Hermione nodded absently, her mind still puzzling out the Healer's intent. Noticing the bulge that was growing in Harry's loose shorts, she asked, "Is there any fresh linen or blankets, Auntie?"

The older witch smiled and shook her head. As she left the room she called back over her shoulder, "Did you know that there is close to five meters of fabric in your sari, dear?"

The Healer's melodic laughter and Padma's and Parvati's whining drifted in from the hallway until Hermione used her wand to shut and silence the door.

"So....." Harry said a bit nervously.

"Yes...so," Hermione replied brightly, as she slipped her sari shawl off of her shoulder. "Let's see if I have to widen this out to make a proper blanket."

Harry stared for a moment at the full breasts that Hermione had exposed, then lifted his eyes up to her face. Feeling guilty about his staring, he said, "You don't have to do that."

"Now Harry, Auntie suggested it, and she is a Healer, you know," Hermione replied with a grin. Throwing the unfolded length of fabric over Harry's body, she coyly asked, "Is that warm enough, Harry, or do you need another layer?"

The-Boy-Who-Won was about to reply that he was getting rather hot, but reconsidered as Hermione reached for the hem of her skirt. After checking that the door was still closed, he replied, "Well, if you don't mind?"

"Of course not," Hermione replied with a wink, as she unwrapped the skirt pulled the loose fabric away from her hips.

Harry choked on some more spittle when he realized that she hadn't taken time to put a slip on underneath her skirt either.

"Are you okay?" asked a now-naked Hermione, as she patted Harry's back.

Having been caught speechless by Hermione's actions (and the fact that they weren't being stopped by third parties), it was all Harry could do to nod affirmatively. Once Hermione converted her skirt fabric into a second blanket, she spread it out, sat on top of it by Harry's side, and asked, "How's that?"

"Erm, brilliant," he stammered, finding it impossible to keep his eyes away from Hermione's bared bits.

"Oh," she replied, with a bit of disappointment in her voice. "Because if you were still cold....well, I've obviously run out of blanket material, but...there's always shared body heat, right?"

Harry arched an eyebrow. "Erm, right...now that I think about it, I am still a bit cold...as long as you don't mind?"

"Of course not," Hermione replied, flashing a dazzlingly-white smile. In no time at all she was under the covers and stretched out on top of Harry.

"Better?" she asked, as she nuzzled against his neck.

"The best," he replied, relishing the feeling of Hermione's bare chest pressed against his own. "But it can't be all that comfortable for you, though, with the..."

"With that big bump in my bedding?" Hermione asked brightly. "I don't mind at all."

Harry groaned as his girlfriend punctuated her response by grinding her crotch against his tent pole.

"Keep that up and you'll have a big wet bump to deal with."

"You make it sound as if that would be a bad thing," Hermione replied with a giggle. "Besides, I'd hardly be in a position to complain, given that I'm making that bump wet all on my own."

Harry moaned once more, and turned his head so that he could nibble on Hermione's ear, and whisper into it.

"So, Hermione," he asked. "What's this therapy program for Parvati that Healer Patil was talking about?"

Hermione smiled and raised herself onto her elbows, one on either side of Harry's shoulders. As her breasts dangled and swayed a few inches away from his lips, she huskily replied. "Well, it was...a rather comprehensive treatment."

"Comprehensive, you say?" Harry asked. "And there weren't any...interruptions while his treatment was administered?"

"Not by Healer Patil," Hermione admitted.

"But by somebody else?"

"Erm, well...Padma was rather insistent on getting equal amounts of...treatment."

"Oh," Harry said softly. "And...not that you have to tell me, but....did they give you some treatment in return?"

Hermione's eyes dilated as she nodded her head and blushed. "Multiple times."

"But they didn't treat each other....or did they?"

Hermione snorted, and shook her head.

"Well, you must have been one busy witch, then," Harry said with a smile. "And now you're here...do you think that Healer Patil would interrupt us if we did some...treatment?"

With a shrug of her shoulders, Hermione replied, "She didn't pay much mind during the sponge bath, did she?"

Harry shook his head.

"So what do you want to do, boyfriend?" Hermione asked shyly.

Harry's eyes darted down towards Hermione's breasts. Expecting him to lift up his head and to catch one in his lips, she was instead disappointed when he let his head drop back onto the pillow and sighed.

"I want to wrap my arms around you and squeeze you tight," he admitted.

Hermione immediately fell back down onto his chest and pressed her cheek against his.

"Oh, Harry...you've got to give this alternative medicine some time...it's only been a few days..."

"Yeah, I know," he replied. "It's just that...I'm so jealous of Padma and Parvati...that they have the use of their hands...that they can rub you, and caress you, and fondle you..."

"Hush, now," Hermione ordered. "Even without the use of your hands, you've got something that they'll never have...at least not without polyjuice."

"What's that?"

Hermione responded by grinding her crotch against his.

Harry groaned. "Hermione...."

"What do you want me to do, Harry?" she asked breathlessly, as her mound traced figure-eights against the thin fabric that was covering his erection.

"I want...I want to give you the same kind of pleasure that you've given me," he replied.

Hermione's breath caught in her throat. "Oh, Harry...but what if..."

"What if what?"

"It's just that...well, sometimes I squirt when I get excited."

"Really?" asked Harry. "You mean that you soak the sheets when you come?"

Hermione flushed red with embarrassment and leaned down so that she could bury her head in his shoulder.

"I can't help it," she muttered. "I try not to make things so messy, but when I go over the top, it's like I can't hold it in, and..."

"Ssshhh," Harry replied. "It's nothing to be embarrassed about."

"But it's not normal!"

"Now, Hermione," Harry replied. "I have it on good authority that it's the suppression of that type of urge that's abnormal."

"Whose authority?" Hermione asked.

"Healer Patil's," he replied with a smile. "If it's unhealthy for men to suppress the release of excess semen, then surely the same can be said for your situation, right?"

Hermione raised her head and looked at him cross-eyed.

"Are you just saying that to make me feel better?"

"No, I'm saying what was said to me so that you can make yourself feel better with a good rub."

Hermione bit her lower lip as she considered Harry's comments.

"So this really is some type of therapy?" she asked.

"If you don't believe me, ask Healer Patil about 'vega' and the evils of suppressing urges," Harry replied. When Hermione's eyes drifted towards the door, he added, "Ask her later this morning, I mean."

Hermione snorted and leaned forward to give her boyfriend a kiss.

"Well, as long as its considered medicinal," she rationalized, as her pelvis ground down hard.

oo000000oo

Five minutes and four drying charms later (him, her, his dhoti and the bedding), Hermione plopped down onto Harry's chest, pulled the ersatz blankets up, and asked, "So now what, loverboy?"

"So maybe...maybe right now...we could sleep, and...I don't know....do some therapeutic cuddling?"

Hermione let out a small squeal as she nodded and kissed Harry's cheek.

"That sounds perfect," she admitted. "And once we're both rested, and you need another sponge bath..."

"Merlin, Hermione," Harry said with a hiss. "So would that be addressing your urges, or mine?"

"Yes," Hermione replied with a happy yawn.

Harry nodded, and listened contentedly as his girlfriend's breathing evened out. If Healer Patil was going to allow Hermione to provide "therapy" to not only himself, but Padma and Parvati, then she was going to need all of the rest that she could get.

Alternative Medicine Ch 9: Incremental Steps

When Hermione woke for the second time that morning, the corners of her lips crept up into a content smile. She was draped naked over Harry's body, with her head resting against his chest, and her inner thigh resting against his bits. The fabric that had originally served as her sari now covered them both, acting as thin blankets that kept at bay a cool offshore breeze coming in through an opened window.

"Oh look, Parvati," Hermione heard somebody whisper. "Sarawati looks rather pleased with herself."

"You'd be smiling too if you'd just shagged Shiva," Parvati quietly snarked back.

Hermione decided not to immediately correct the record. She opened her eyes, and hissed, "Sssh...let him sleep."

"No worries there," Padma replied. "He's been snoring with that goofy grin on his face the whole time that we've been here."

"How long..."

"Geez, Hermione...if you don't know that by now..." quipped Parvati.

"Hush...what time is it?"

"Brekks," Padma replied as she nodded towards a tray filled with banana leaves and bowls of food. "As soon as you two decide to get out of bed."

Hermione smiled. "Then come back in twelve hours and we can call it dinner."

"Oh, you little minx," Parvati cooed. "So did you ride facing him, or reverse?"

The brown-haired witch shook her head. "No riding...just rubbing."

"Really?" Hermione's dorm mate asked with disappointment. "You didn't shag?"

"Not yet."

"Well, get to it then, girl," Parvati ordered. "I want to cross that off the list and see how far that brings us up behind."

"What?" asked Hermione. "What list?"

Padma chuckled as she held up a parchment scroll.

"Parvati and I were compiling a list of...activities...in an effort to determine whether there was rhyme or reason to our Auntie's behavior."

"What do you mean?"

"It's a checklist for sex," Parvati said plainly. "We're comparing how far you're getting with him with what we've been allowed."

"And also documenting how much fun we three can have without raising a flag."

Hermione grinned, and waggled her eyebrows.

"Didn't we establish that there aren't any constraints between the three of us last night?" she teased. "I mean, if she didn't intervene when we transfigured Parvati's dildo into *Three-headed Harry* and rode each other..."

"Yes, yes...but we couldn't do that here, in Harry's room, could we?" Parvati replied. "Our little show while dressing you yesterday was stopped just as I was about to slip my hand into your skirt."

Hermione nodded. "So that seems like a fairly clear line in the sand."

"Ah, but maybe that line moves each day," Padma said with a smile. "The first time we changed into dragonhide for Harry's treatments Auntie made us leave the room. But now it's fair game for us to sit with him without our cholis on, and to show him our breasts while we change clothes."

"Ah...that's it," Hermione said. "You two are hoping that if I can snog Harry, you can kiss; if I grope, you can snog...and if I shag, then maybe you two can..."

Exactly," Padma hissed, her breathing as she put images to Hermione's words.

"Well that's an interesting hypothesis," Hermione purred, as her eyes twinkled with delight. "It's also a testable hypothesis."

"Yes...yes it is," Padma purred.

"Assuming, of course, that Harry is on board with that test."

"Do you...do you think that's the case?" Padma asked.

Hermione thought for a moment, then nodded. "Things are still new, and fresh, and...might take a while for him to wrap his head around the idea of a quadrilateral relationship..."

"I know what I want to wrap around his head," Parvati quipped.

"Well that's a given...so where do we stand?" Hermione asked rhetorically. "You two are being allowed to stay in Harry's room and talk with me while he sleeps and I drape my naked body over his."

"Ha! I knew you were starkers under those covers!" Parvati replied in quiet triumph.

"Right, then...the next incremental step would be what?" asked Padma.

Hermione's eyes twinkled even more brightly as she considered the possibilities.

"Well...from my perspective...we can either wake Harry up and see if that makes a difference, or...we can make our sleeping lover a fixed variable, and see what...what we can get up to ourselves."

Padma pursed her lips and let out a deep breath.

"Do you have anything...specific...in mind, Hermione?"

The bushy-haired witch wagged her eyebrows as she slowly dragged the inside of her leg up the length of Harry's erection. She stopped once her mound hit his hip bone, and a quiet purr escaped from her lips when a bit of strategic positioning brought her most sensitive spot into direct contact with his warm bare skin.

Hermione lifted her head from Harry's chest just high enough to allow her to steal a glance towards the closed door.

"So far, so good," Parvati whispered, as she too noticed the lack of her Auntie's intervention.

"So far, so fucking brilliant," Hermione hissed, as she dropped her head back down to Harry's chest, hugged his torso a little tighter, and began to grind down upon his hip.

Padma's breath caught in her throat as she watched the cloth-covered wet-hump unfold. She slipped her right hand underneath her sari top and began tease her left nipple between thumb and forefinger. Her focus on her female lover's show was so intense that she failed consider whether her actions were adding an unconstrained variable to the equation, or to notice that her sister was mirroring her actions.

Hermione, however, didn't fail to notice.

"That's right," she cooed. "You know I love to watch...love to watch you both...as much as you love to watch me..."

The prone witch's words sent a shiver down Parvati's spine. She sighed, and pressed against her skirt-covered mound with the heel of her opened hand.

"Show me more," Hermione hissed. "Show me that you're both as excited as I am right now."

Parvati's eyes went wide and she immediately glanced towards the door.

Hermione chuckled. "What's the matter, Parv...don't have '*Padma and her sister flash their fannies and bring themselves off with their fingers while Harry sleeps in the same room and Hermione humps his hip*' written down on that checklist?"

The light brown witch snorted, and shook her head.

"So do you want to take the time to write that scenario down now...or fill it in after the fact?"

Padma snorted, and whispered, "Your question assumes fanny flashing in either case, doesn't it?"

Hermione smiled a Cheshire Cat-like grin in response, and picked up the pace of her grinding attack upon Harry's hip.

"But if Harry wakes up, and sees us diddling ourselves?" Parvati asked.

"That's...that's something you wouldn't want to happen, then?"

"Well, no...I wouldn't mind..."

"We wouldn't mind," Padma corrected.

"But...but Auntie?"

"Has already demonstrated..." Hermione replied in between pants, "a keen ability...to know when Harry is asleep or awake... Not to mention...a fair idea...of what we're doing...in this room...at any point in time."

"So...", reasoned Padma, "if he stays asleep, it's no different than what we've done upstairs, and if he wakes...either Auntie will stop us in advance, or she won't."

"So test those limits, already," Hermione hissed fervently.

With one last glance towards the closed door, Padma nodded, reached down, and grabbed her hemline. The strategic shifting of weight allowed her to gather the garments up above her hips without getting up from her spot on the sofa. The light-brown skinned witch then scooted her bum forward, leaned back against the cushions, and lifted her left leg up and over the arm of the sofa. Her sister mimicked these fanny-exposing steps, and added one more when she draped the leg not resting on the sofa arm over top of her sister's leg.

Hermione groaned as the Twins, with eyes firmly focused on the bed (instead of each other), reached down and exposed themselves even more. Half-realizing that their play hadn't yet been interrupted from parental surrogates, the bushy-haired witch pushed forward.

"Oh, you naughty girls," she smirked. "What would Harry think if he were to wake and see you like that?"

The touch of a twitching penis against Hermione's inner thigh immediately suggested that her question might be more than hypothetical. She immediately stopped her grind and looked up, only to find Harry's eyes still shut.

Sensing a different type of game now afoot, the bushy-haired witch scooted up Harry's torso and dropped her shoulder onto the bed on the side opposite the twins. This action provided an ideal position for Hermione to reach down and take Harry in hand.

"It would be quite the dilemma for Our Harry if he were awake right now," she cooed. "He might be afraid that this was a dream, and that if he opened his eyes that the show would end...or that your Auntie would intervene. But if he didn't open his eyes...then he wouldn't be able to see Padma run her fingers through her silky black short and curls...or see Parvati's cute little pink nub peeking out from its hood..."

A second twitch led Hermione to conclude that her play had a wider audience than first thought. She replied by giving Harry's shaft a light-gripped stroke that ended with her thumb covering its bulbous crown.

"Yes, it probably would be best all around, were Harry now awake, for him to keep his eyes closed, and pretend to be asleep," she declared.

Padma snorted. "And just imagine what the three of us are doing in the meanwhile?"

"Not necessarily," Hermione replied brightly. "He certainly would know what I was doing, just by touch...and as for you two, well...maybe it would be even more exciting if he were to listen to my commentary?"

"What?" Parvati hissed.

"He might enjoy me describing what you two are doing," Hermione explained. "He might get off on my dirty talk...on me describing how Padma just rested her head on your shoulder and is presently working in inserting a second finger past the second knuckle. Or how you just reached down and grabbed your arse cheek, and placed the tip of your middle finger just a fraction of an inch away from your back door..."

A confirmatory twitch kept Hermione following down this verbal pathway.

"Or he might just get off by you giving him a hand-job?" Padma observed, using a huskier-than-normal voice.

"Yeah...show us, Hermione..." Parvati hissed.

Their bushy-haired lover smiled. "Hmmm...no, I think not," she decided, as she gave Harry's shaft another loose-gripped stroke. "If he can't watch you two rub your buttons, then it's only fair that you don't get clear views of me giving him some...vega relief."

"So that's what you're calling it now?" Padma teased.

"What?"

"You know...." Padma hissed in response.

A more detailed retort was lacking, as the Ravenclaw chose to focus more on buffing and less on banter. As the twins got closer to their releases, Hermione toned down her running commentary, and allowed the pants and mews and moans to speak for themselves.

The smartest witch in her generation tried to line up her male lover's release in time with those of her female lovers...as they picked up their pace, and their cheeks flushed, and their toes curled...she grabbed hold a little tighter, and stroked a little faster. But the clenching of Harry's stomach muscles and a barely audible grimace suggested that either her sense of timing was off, or her smutty talk was more exciting than she had anticipated. She tried to ease off, and slow down, but Harry's bits had other ideas, and released their load into Hermione's hand.

The bushy-haired witch's sense of failure was quickly overshadowed by lust, as the Twins followed Harry in short order. Not feeling a compelling urge to get herself off, Hermione was content to drop her head down next to Harry's, drop her hand back underneath the sheets, and to whisper

what she was witnessing while she gently cupped his bits.

When Padma and Parvati caught their breath and opened their eyes, they turned towards each other and began to giggle as they considered what they'd just done.

"I guessing that Harry will be awake soon," Hermione stated. "You two better cover your bits."

Parvati snorted as she lightly dragged her fingernails up her inner thigh. "Why don't we see what happens if he wakes up while we're still like this?" she asked.

Hermione grinned. "Because we need to test your hypothesis in incremental steps."

"But...he's already seen your bits, hasn't he?"

Hermione grinned as she sat up in Harry's bed, and scooted her bum back until she could rest her bare back against the head board.

"Yes he has...but not while you two have been with us," she replied. The bare-breasted bushy-haired witch waited until the Twins readjusted their saris, then reached down and cupped the face that was resting against her bare thigh.

"Harry?" she sweetly asked. "Time to get up."

The-Boy-Who-Won groaned, yawned, then slowly opened his eyes, giving an acting performance so convincing that Hermione wondered whether he really had been asleep the whole time.

"Hey," he said groggily, as he looked up at Hermione's face.

"Hey yourself," she replied, as she pulled his glasses from the nightstand and put them in place.

Harry grinned as Hermione's nipples came into focus.

"I just had the most amazing dream."

"Yeah, we can tell," Parvati snarked, as she stood and walked to Harry's bedside.

Harry did a doubletake, shifting his gaze between the two brown-skinned witches and the two light-skinned breasts.

"Ready for some breakfast, Harry?" asked Hermione, as she magically adjusted the bed and brought him up into a sitting position.

The black-haired, bare-chested wizard snorted, then glanced down at the material that was gathered at his waist.

"Could you help me with a little...clean-up?" he asked with a slightly-guilty grin.

Parvati tried to be "helpful" by pulling out her wand, and pulling down the sheets.

"I can clean you up, stud," she purred.

A voice from outside the room shouted, "Parvati!"

The Gryffindor witch pouted.

"Incremental steps, indeed," Padma noted, as she brought the breakfast tray over to the bed.

Hermione smiled and nodded her head as she pulled out her own wand and lifted the sheet away from Harry's body so that she could employ a discrete cleaning charm.

Once she dropped the material back down, she reasoned, "Well, if you two can't see all of Harry, then...I guess we need to keep these sheets on...and if these sheets are really my sari, then I guess I can't get dressed for breakfast, can I?"

Parvati snorted. "We could always go and get you a different sari, you know."

"I suppose," Hermione replied with a sigh. She then turned towards their patient and asked, "What do you think, Harry?"

The-Boy-Who-Won chuckled, and shook his head.

"Don't feel like you have to get up just because of me," he replied.

Padma giggled as she stared at Harry's crotch.

"Why you're just a little hypocritical aren't you?"

"What?" Harry protested.

"So...she doesn't have to get up because of her, but even after your...amazing 'dream'...you've gotten up because of her."

Harry looked up at his resurgent cloth-covered erection, then at Hermione's bared breasts, and then, finally, back at Padma. He smiled, and asked, "Well, can you blame me?"

The black-haired witch's eyes lit up as she shook her head slightly, leaned forward and pulled Hermione into a snog.

Harry watched the two witches go at it over his limp body, and shook his head in amazement.

"Didn't think so," he muttered.

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The Boy-Who-Won woke that afternoon to the sounds of crashing waves and giggling girls. It wasn't as physically stimulating or revelatory as his morning waking...but how could one top that experience? Of pretending to sleep while Hermione rubbed him off, and rubbed herself off on his hip, and described Padma and Parvati rubbing themselves off?

Harry smiled contentedly and slowly opened his eyes. He was sitting upright in his sedan chair on the beach. Parvati sat on his left side, stringing flower petals into a necklace, while Padma and Hermione leaned against the right side of his chair and held hands while they huddled over a book.

"Hey...what's so funny?" he asked.

Hermione turned, and looked over her shoulder. "Oh, sorry, Harry...we didn't mean to wake you."

"S'alright...so what are you reading?"

"The *Kama Sutra*."

"Really?" Harry asked, as he angled his head. "Giggling over the dirty pictures, then?"

Padma snorted, and held the book up, revealing opened pages that contained only Sanskrit text.

"We're being good, Harry...wanted to save review of the instructional illustrations until you were awake and able to...help us with the practical."

The black-haired wizard wagged his eyebrows. "Well, I'm awake now."

Hermione glanced down at Harry's crotch and snorted. "Yes you are, aren't you? But...we're in public...and Auntie's no doubt watching us through the window..."

"And we left all of our gourds up in our bedroom...." Parvati snarked.

"Gourds?" Harry asked.

The question provoked a fresh round of giggles.

"Padma was just translating instructions for harem members," Hermione explained.

"Harem members?" Harry asked, as he arched his eyebrows. "They've got instructions like that...in there?"

"Oh, yes, Harry," Padma replied. "There are all kinds of guidelines for day-to-day life. Everybody thinks it's just a how-to guide for shagging, but there's a lot more to it."

"I see," Harry replied. He grinned, and asked, "So what kind of instructions are there for...harem members?"

"Well, there's an entire section that describes how a harem could sneak men into their quarters by dressing them in women's clothing," said Padma. "A rather risky practice, actually...if the men were caught they were given the necessary job qualifications for becoming harem guards."

"Foxes allowed to guard the hen house?" Harry asked.

"Not unless the foxes were neutered," Hermione quipped. "Harems were traditionally guarded by eunuchs."

Harry's eyes narrowed, and he winced.

"Oh, man...if my legs could move I'd be crossing them right now and covering my bits."

"Here, let me help," Parvati quipped, as she reached over and protectively cupped Harry's dhoti-covered crotch.

"Parvati!" a voice called out.

The witch in question rolled her eyes and withdrew her hand.

"Can't see how Auntie can even attend to her other patients when she's always got an eye on us," she whined.

Harry snorted, then turned towards the other two. "So what had you all in giggles when I woke up...the thought of lopping of some bloke's bits?"

Padma responded with a pretty blush, and a shake of her head.

"They were a different set of..instructions."

"Oh, go on, don't play like you're the shy one," Hermione chided. "Read it."

"Yes, Memsahib," the Ravenclaw replied with a demure smirk. She then turned back to the printed page, and began to translate from Sanskrit to English.

"The women of the royal harem cannot see or meet any men on account of their being strictly guarded, neither do they have their desires satisfied, because their only husband is common to many wives."

Hermione interrupted with a secondary translation.

"So, Harry...what that means..."

"That only the husband can shag the harem, and since he's being spread around between all of his wives he can't keep all of his women satisfied?" Harry asked.

Hermione's eyes twinkled. "Exactly!" she replied. She then turned to Padma and instructed, "Continue on with the lesson, luv."

The black-haired witch smiled, and nodded her head.

"For this reason, among themselves they give pleasure to each other in various ways as now described. Having dressed the daughters of their nurses, or their female friends, or their female attendants, like men, they accomplish their object by means of bulbs, roots, and fruits having the form of the lingam, or they lie down upon the statue of a male figure, in which the lingam is visible and erect."

Harry lost his eyebrows to his hairline. "So that's where the comment about gourds came from?"

Parvati nodded, and leaned over to give the wizard's cheek a kiss.

"You're so smart...and smart is so sexy, Harry..."

"And that's why you and Hermione are...what did you call it, Padma...'*accomplishing your objects*'?"

All three girls tittered at the question.

"It is a rather awkward metaphor, isn't it, Harry?" Hermione asked.

"Oh, cut the authors some slack," whined Padma. "The text is thousands of years old...can't expect them to be plain spoken on the subject."

The bushy-haired witch waggled her eyebrows. "No, but maybe you could provide Harry with a more...modern...interpretation of the text?"

Padma blushed. "But you're the one that likes to talk dirty, Hermione," she protested.

"Moi?" the brown-haired witch teased. She then glanced at Harry, leaned forward towards Padma, and loudly whispered, "That's supposed to be a secret between us girls."

"Shouldn't have provided this morning's over-by-over accounting, then," Parvati quipped.

Harry snorted. When all three witches turned towards him, he wiped the grin off of his face and innocently asked, "Erm...did I miss something this morning, girls?"

"Not bloody likely," Padma said softly.

"So," Harry said loudly, "about that modern translation?"

"You...you really want to hear something like that?"

Parvati pointed towards his crotch. "Of course he does Sister...he's already anticipating it."

Hermione snorted. "Oh, Parvati, that's hardly definitive proof...he's always hard."

"Is that a complaint?"

"No, merely an observation."

"Nothing *merely* about that wand," Parvati snarked. "You should know, given how closely you like to...observe it."

"I am right here, you know," Harry interjected in false protest.

Hermione turned, and gave Harry a kiss on his cheek.

"Yes, and we're all the luckier for that...so, Padma...quit stalling."

The Ravenclaw rolled her eyes. "Don't need me to read between the lines."

"Perhaps, but there's a difference between what we need, and what we want," said Harry.

Padma turned towards the wizard and asked, "And so...you want me to?"

"Of course...unless it makes you feel uncomfortable."

The light brown-skinned witch smiled coyly, and nodded as she turned back to the opened page.

"Okay, then...from the top...the women within a harem are sexually frustrated, and always horny, because their dickless guards keep them from shagging any man other than their common husband. Even if their husband is a stud, and always hard, and has a huge...lingam..."

"Lingam?" Harry teased. "Is that a modern translation, then?"

Padma rolled her eyes. "Right, so...one penis shared by many vaginas creates a lot of sexually frustrated women. These women are allowed to relieve this frustration by shagging each other with cucumbers or fat carrots while they wait their turn to warm their husband's bed."

"And what about the statue with an visible erect lingam?" Harry teased.

"Or they can get off by bouncing up and down on top of a male blow-up doll," Parvati quipped.

There was a moment's pause, as each of the four waited for the others to ease the unresolved sexual tension with another joke. When no *bon mots* came to mind (because the minds were filled with far more images than words at that moment), Harry decided to push forward like the good Gryffindor that he was.

"Right, well...don't want to seem critical of your culture, Padma...Parvati...but...those instructions are rather...erm, sexy....but aren't they also sexist?"

Hermione arched an eyebrow. "How do you mean, Harry?"

"Well, I'm just a guy, so what do I know...but...that seems to be saying...that the only way a wife within a harem could get off is when she's either with her husband, or with another woman who is pretending to be her husband."

Light danced with the eyes of all three witches as Hermione encouraged Harry to continue.

"And that's sexist?"

"Erm...maybe...I mean, it might not be if all of the wives were straight...but why do they need to pretend to be the husband? What if the wives were attracted to each other...as themselves...as women...as their wives, too?"

Harry's question earned him several kisses from three different sets of lips.

"Oh, Harry...you're such a...you mean you don't mind that..."

"I'd be a fool not to," the black-haired wizard replied matter-of-factly. "Not that I'm entirely certain of what you three do upstairs, or what you do when I'm pretending to be asleep..."

"I knew it! You were pretending!" Padma admonished.

"Erm...that was what you wanted me to do...wasn't it?" Harry asked.

"Yes, but...still..."

"So, Harry, dear...would you like to become certain of what we girls like to do upstairs at night?" Parvati asked.

Harry blushed, and stammered, "Erm...well...sure..."

"I'd rather hear Hermione tell those stories, sister," Padma quipped. "She does, after all, have a much more...colorfully descriptive vocabulary." She then turned to Hermione and false whispered, "Just don't tell him about the anatomically correct stone statue of Harry that's stashed under your bed."

"Or the life-sized strap-on latex Harry that you like to pound us with..." Parvati gleefully added.

The Boy-Who-Won coughed loudly as Hermione's cheeks turned bright red.

Fortunately for her, a motorized confrontation behind them put an end to the bantering.

An autorickshaw and its tinny little horn was going head-to-head with the deeper and more resonant horn of a four-door sedan. The car horn blared for only a few short beats, but that was enough to gain the right of way, and to continue down the road.

"So the bigger the vehicle, the briefer the horn?" Hermione asked, as the four watched the street scene.

"Yes, it would seem so," Padma replied. But then she took a closer look at the car and added, "It also helps that the sedan's passenger outranks the autorickshaw's fare."

Harry snorted. "So it's someone rich or important on their way to the mosque, then?"

Padma shook her head as she stood, closed her book, and brushed the sand from her skirt. "Well, it's someone important alright, but...do you know the saying about the not being able to bring Mohammad to the mountain?"

"Yes, why?"

Hermione snorted in realization as the car came to a stop just outside of the hospital. She then turned to Harry and ran her fingers through his bangs in a futile attempt to tame them.

"Time to go, mountain," she said with a smile. "The Maharajah has come to pay you a visit."

Padma nodded as she placed the *Kama Sutra* on Harry's lap and stepped behind his sedan chair. "I've got the back poles," she announced.

"I've got the front poles, then," Hermione replied.

"Guess that leaves me the middle pole," Parvati announced with a grin, as she reached for Harry's crotch.

"Parvati!" called out her Aunt.

"Yes, Auntie....we're coming, Auntie," she whined. She sighed and then added quietly, "I wish."

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Alternative Medicine

Ch 10: A Plot Appears, Then Pretends to Thicken

By the time that Harry and the three witches packed up and crossed the street, the Maharajah and his one-man entourage had walked into the hospital and disappeared behind the closed doors of the business office. One of the Healer's aides shooed the four teenagers towards Harry's room, whispering that the monarch would soon be given a tour of the facility, and that all of the Hospital's patients should be in their beds at that time.

"This might just be a ruse," Hermione reasoned, as they carried Harry's palki through his room's doorway. "We are supposed to be keeping a low profile, after all."

Padma nodded as she set the sedan onto the floor and picked up a pair of trousers and shirt that had been placed on top of Harry's bed.

"Auntie must want him dressed and presentable," she noted.

"I think that Harry is far more presentable undressed," Parvati snarked, as she leaned over and placed a kiss on the top of his head.

"What's that sister? Just a fluffy chaste kiss?" Padma teased. "Where's that Gryffindor spirit?"

"Temporarily beaten down by Auntie's sixth sense," Parvati whined.

Hermione snorted. "Take the book from his lap, Parv," she asked. "It'll be easier to dress Harry while he's still in the chair."

The black-haired wizard in question sighed deeply as he looked down at his limp arms and legs.

"Not that I don't appreciate all the help, but...this invalid business is getting old."

Parvati smiled as she leaned over and lightly dragged her fingertips down the Boy-Who-Won's bare chest.

"Does that mean that you won't want our help dressing you...and feeding you...and relieving your...*urges* ...once you've recovered?"

"So much for being 'temporarily beaten down'," Padma wise-cracked, as she kept one eye on her sister's hands. "It's *your* urges that are a more immediate concern."

"Perhaps we should let Harry decide if my urges are a concern," the Gryffindor cooed, as she put her lips to his ear and began to whisper.

A blush began to color the sitting wizard's cheeks, and travel down his neck, but it was impossible for the other two to determine whether this was caused by what was being said into his ear, or what was being groped within the tight gap between lap and book.

"Parvati!"

The young woman hissed as she glanced back over her shoulder towards the closed door.

"You would think that Auntie's attention would be focused more on the Maharajah than my hands," she whined, as she pulled the bound copy of the *Kama Sutra* from Harry's lap.

Harry snorted while Hermione pulled his torso away from the seat back so that Padma could slip the shirt around his shoulders. Noting the placement of the book on a bedside table, he then asked, "Merlin, Parvati...can't you find someplace a little less...conspicuous?"

"What's wrong with a little bedtime reading?" the grinning witch asked. "A little cultural exposure?"

"It's what's exposed in the illustrations that's the problem," Harry replied. "Might just as well have copies of *Playwizard* laying about."

"But it's classic text!"

"Yeah," Padma snorted. "The same way that your vibrator is classic representation of Shiva."

"We don't have time for this banter," Hermione stated briskly, as she straddled Harry's thighs and began to button up his shirt. When she felt a twitch at the point of contact, she winked at Harry and said, "Don't have time for that either."

"Quit wiggling, Hermione," Padma hissed. "It'll be hard enough as it is to stuff him inside of these trousers."

"But is it hard enough to stuff it inside of her?" Parvati snarked.

Hermione giggled in response as she flattened the front of Harry's shirt with her hands and stood. She looked down at his lap and said, "Perhaps it would be best if he keeps the dhoti on...wouldn't want our patient's blood flow to be restricted."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Just prop me up in bed like this, please...we'll save the...stuffing...for another time."

"Promises, promises," Parvati muttered.

The Boy-Who-Won ignored the comment, and accepted the magic-aided transfer from chair to bed with a bit less self-pity than on previous occasions, perhaps distracted by the purpose of the Maharajah's visit.

"So what do you reckon he wants?"

Padma shrugged her shoulders as she covered his bared legs with a bed linen. "Well he did have a role in our travel arrangements," she noted. "Perhaps he's just checking to see that things are working out."

"Could have squared those concerns away with a telephone call," Harry noted. "He's got to want something in return for his help...they always do."

A knock on the door kept the Boy-Who-Won from elaborating. Hermione and the twins quickly stood by Harry's bedside and faced the entrance as Auntie Patel entered the room with two men.

"And here, Your Highness, is an interesting case," the Healer stated. "May I introduce you to Mister....Jones, along with three of my trainees....Miss Chawla....Miss Kapoor, and Miss...Poppins."

Hermione's shock at being introduced as a Disney character was quickly tempered by the realization that her role in Harry's transport might require an alias. Padma and Parvati, whose fake names had been taken from the Muggle Bollywood cinema, were just as quick to catch on.

Harry's reflexively cynical attitude towards political leaders (and magical governments in general) was immediately challenged when one of the two men stepped forward. The white-haired wizard, who was barely five-feet tall and eight stone in weight, placed his hands together in front of his chest and bowed his head.

"Namaskaram," (*I recognize the divinity within you*).

Padma and Parvati were quick to reply with the same words and movements (the only difference being that their bows were a little deeper, and held a little longer). Hermione was close behind, once she saw the appropriate response.

"Erm...good afternoon...Your Highness," Harry replied, after bowing his head in acknowledgement.

Hermione couldn't help but smile at the cinematic references. Harry turned, gave his Muggleborn girlfriend a wink, then turned back and added, "Sorry that I can't offer you my hand, or..."

The old man waved away the Boy-Who-Won's concerns. "It is perfectly understandable, Mr. Jones...better that the intent is there, than to be faced with someone whose heart isn't in tune with their gestures."

"Erm.....yes, of course, Sir," Harry replied (thinking that "one whose heart isn't in tune with his gestures" was the perfect definition of a politician).

Healer Patil took a step forward and began to describe her patient's symptoms and treatment regimen to both the monarch and the other man, who was introduced as the Maharajah's medical attendant. The slightly younger (and much more heavysset) Healer looked rather skeptical as the case was presented. He stepped forward and rolled up Harry's sleeves, then turned down the sheets for a look at his legs, all the while asking pointed questions about his care.

The twins' Auntie didn't shy away from providing plain-spoken, pointed responses, and this self-confidence was bolstered when the Maharajah's Healer finally (if a bit reluctantly) declared that he concurred with both her diagnosis and treatment plan.

"Well, then...we have a few more patients to see," Healer Patil announced, as she raised an arm towards the opened door.

"Good, good," replied the Maharajah. "Ravi, why don't you continue on the tour...I would like to chat with Mr. Jones for a few minutes about the state of Quidditch in Britain."

The monarch's Healer bowed his head in acknowledgement, and followed his colleague out into the hallway. The Maharajah then closed the door, and cast some wandless magic against the door, all four walls, and the window.

"Privacy charms," Hermione whispered to Harry, although he had already assumed that the case.

Once the white-haired wizard had completed his circuit of the room he turned back towards the bed and asked, "So, how are you really feeling, Mr. Potter?"

Harry chuckled, and provided an honest response.

"I'm...I feel lucky to be alive, Your Majesty, and...I feel fortunate to be here receiving treatments by the Patils. And I want to thank you...and the Indian Ministry...for your help in bringing me here."

The Maharajah replied with the enigmatic horizontal figure-eight head nod that usually means "yes," or "I understand," even if it looks like a head-shaking "no."

“You are very welcome, young man,” he replied. “Although I must confess that my role and the central government’s role in bringing you here was very limited. It was the Patil family...and, I might add, your three lovely attendants...who were critical to the process.”

Harry stared at the ruler for a moment, trying to wrap his head around the concept of a monarch or governmental leader who would dress so simply, or be so quick to distribute praise and thanks. Wondering if it were all an act, he decided to probe his guest’s intentions.

“I also wanted to thank you for the invitation for tea,” offered Harry. “I hope that our response was both respectful...and explanatory?”

“Of course, of course,” the ruler replied, waving away any concerns with a hand wave. “I must apology for requesting that you visit me so early in your...treatment program...and for interrupting your afternoon with this unannounced visit.”

The black-haired wizard turned towards Hermione and the Patil twins and waggled his eyebrows just enough for them to notice.

“That’s okay, Sir...I was just resting on the beach with my...three lovely attendants.”

The Maharajah smiled at the blushing witches and replied, “Then I must apologize doubly, for time spent in their presence must surely be integral to your healing process?”

Harry chuckled, and nodded his head.

“Yes, Your Highness, I can’t imagine living without their healing touches.”

“Harry!” a blushing Hermione whispered, as she tried to discretely nudge his shoulder.

The-Boy-Who-Won grinned at his bushy-haired girlfriend, then returned his focus towards his guest.

“So, I don’t mean to be rude, Your Highness, but is there something that I can do for you?”

The elderly wizard smiled, and nodded his head to acknowledge Harry’s question.

“Mr. Potter, while you were under medical stasis, a number of decisions were made on your behalf...decisions that ultimately brought you to the here and now. Despite my near-certainty in your concurrence with those decisions, I must formally ask you some questions...questions whose answers will be used by our central government to respond to those who consider your lady friends to be criminal fugitives.”

The young wizard’s internal warning radar flashed brightly with this response, and his eyes narrowed. Hermione tried to calm his emotions with a hand placed on his shoulder.

“Harry, we told you that the British Ministry had taken a dim view of our bringing you here.”

“But what about the living will that I signed when I turned seventeen, Hermione...or the durable power of attorney?” he protested. “Those documents should have made it clear that you had the authority to make medical decisions for me if I was unable to make them myself!”

“They do, Harry...they do,” the bushy-haired witch gently replied. “And they *were* used to secure the visas, and the Indian government’s help in transporting you here.” She then looked up towards the Maharajah and asked, “Has there been a change in the government’s position, Your Highness?”

The older man shook his head. “No, my child, nor in mine. But as the British Ministry of Magic has identified the two Miss Patils and yourself as fugitives from the law, and petitioned the ICW to have extradition treaties enforced should you be discovered in a foreign country...Mr. Potter’s blessings on your decisions will firm up the resolve of my country to offer the four of you sanctuary.”

Harry snorted. “Well that’s easily done, Your Highness. I trust Hermione utterly and completely, and support any and every decision that she made on my behalf.”

The brown-haired witch couldn’t resist leaning down and pulling Harry into a brief hug. She then pulled back, smiled, and asked, “You really don’t need to know the details?”

“Of course not.”

“So...whatever I agreed upon, in order to get you out of Britain...you’re okay with that?”

Harry cocked his head slightly.

“Okay, Hermione...now you’ve got me curious.”

“Sssshh!” Padma hissed. “I thought we weren’t going to tell him yet about those signed marriage contracts!”

There was a moment of silence, during which time Harry’s eyes grew as wide as saucers, and Hermione’s lips puckered as if she’d just sucked on a lemon.

But then the dam burst, and the three witches all broke out into giggles.

“Gotcha, Harry!” Padma said brightly.

Harry snorted, and shook his head in disbelief. He looked up towards their guest and was pleased to see a smile on the old wizard's lips... Fudge's or Scrimgeour's reaction to the interruption of their pompous blatherings would have been far different.

"Allow me to clarify my blanket assurances, Your Highness," he stated. "I agree with every decision Hermione made for me, unless that involves a marriage contract with anyone other than the three lovely ladies by my side...and anything less than a total of three separate contracts if it does involve one of them."

The Maharajah chuckled as Harry turned the tables back upon the blushing witches.

"If that is a request, Mr. Potter, then I would be happy to arrange for the appropriate number of contracts to be filed with my office."

Harry, now turning as red as the others, stalled for time. "Thank you for the offer, Your Majesty...but perhaps I should talk first with the three ladies and their two fathers?"

"A wise decision, Mr. Potter," the older wizard replied brightly. "So, to be clear, you do not object to having been removed from the care of British Healers and the British Government, nor do you object to having been transported from Britain here to India, nor to receiving medical care from the Patils once you arrived here?"

"No, not at all...they've been brilliant, and I couldn't imagine a better quality of care than what I've received here."

"That is good to know, Mr. Potter...thank you for your cooperation," the Maharajah replied. "Which leads to the next topic...the safety and visibility of both your caregivers and yourself while receiving treatment here in Kovalam."

Harry frowned. "Is there a reason to fear for our safety, Your Highness?"

The old man replied with that enigmatic head wiggle.

"It is my understanding, Mr. Potter, that there are still terrorists loose in Britain that would welcome the opportunity to bring great harm to you...or to the ones that you love."

"That I don't doubt," Harry replied crisply (totally ignoring the last part of the statement as he focused on the first part).

"And while these so-called Death Eaters were not active on the Subcontinent, and their views not widely shared by many here...it would be wise for you...and your caregivers...to keep a low profile. At least until you have recovered from your injuries."

"Should we be worried our...profiles, Your Majesty?" Hermione asked.

"Nothing wrong with your profile from where I'm standing," Parvati teasingly hissed.

"Hush," Hermione shot back, wishing that her brown-skinned lover was within arm-swatting range.

The Maharajah snorted as he pulled an envelope from his shirt pocket.

"I'm afraid, Miss Granger, that a local photographer shares your friend's assessment," he stated, as he removed a magical picture from the envelope and held it out for their view.

Harry's heart rate shot up and his bloodflow shot down towards his crotch as he watched a scene play out within the charmed photograph...a scene in which the three witches frolicked in the surf wearing very wet...and very revealing...saris.

"Wow...I don't remember you joining them in the water, Hermione...although I wish I did."

"It was...must have been...yesterday afternoon," the embarrassed witch stammered. "We went back to the beach after your afternoon treatment...you were asleep at the time."

Padma, who was almost as unnerved by the image as Hermione, had the presence of mind to ask, "Forgive me, Your Majesty, but...where did this photograph come from?"

"It was taken by the local newspaper," the old wizard explained. "Their subscription rates have been falling over recent months, so they have been looking for ways to boost their circulation. The beaches are a fertile hunting ground for this sort of thing"

"Well you have to admit, Hermione," Parvati observed. "That picture would boost the circulation within a dead man's veins." She then turned towards the Maharajah and asked, "Doesn't she have the most amazing belly-button?"

"Parvati!" Hermione hissed (and slugged, as she was now within arm's reach of a shoulder).

While the older wizard agreed completely with the young woman's observation, he had enough reserve (and strength of mind) to keep his response to himself.

"Has this photograph been published, then?" Harry asked, finding it hard to tear his gaze away from the photograph...and from the wet saris that revealed everything, even as they nominally covered everything.

The older wizard shook his head. "It was slotted to appear on the front page of this morning's edition. But I have...well, let's call them friends...who work for the newspaper, and provide my office with pre-print copies of each issue...so that my government may comment and request certain

changes, as the situation demands.”

Hermione’s first reaction was to rail against what was obviously governmental interference with a free press. Her second reaction was to thank the Heavens that that kind of interference was at work in this instance.

“So...this picture won’t appear in the newspaper, Your Highness?”

“No it won’t, Miss Granger,” the Maharajah replied. “In fact, this is the original photograph, and all other copies have been destroyed.”

“Good,” Hermione said with a head nod. She then turned to Harry and apologized. “I’m sorry, Harry...last thing we need is for me to be spotted, and to be linked to you...”

“Hey, no worries,” her boyfriend replied. “I’ve been out in full view as well...they could have just as easily taken my photograph if their intentions were to shoot something other than three incredibly...photogenic...witches.”

“Don’t sell yourself short, Harry,” Parvati snarked. “Your photograph on the cover of *Teen Witch Weekly* always guaranteed a sold-out print run back home...and if you were caught out wearing wet white boxers that clung tightly to your huge...”

“Yes, yes, your point is made,” Hermione interrupted, trying to keep Parvati from maintaining some sort of decorum within the presence of the Maharajah. She then turned back towards the monarch and asked, “So it would be best if we were to stay out of public areas...not just to keep Death Eaters from learning of our location, but to help your government maintain positive diplomatic relations with a country that considers the three of us criminals?”

The old man nodded. “A very cogent, plain-spoken analysis, Miss Granger.”

“So no more trips across the street to the beach, then,” Harry stated.

“I’m afraid not, Mr. Potter,” the Maharajah replied. “And in fact...given the popularity of this resort area, and your room on the street level of this hospital...it might be best to have you all move to a more secure, and less public, location.”

“We could always move him upstairs into our bedroom,” Parvati offered with a smile.

Harry rolled his eyes, then asked, “Did you have a specific location in mind, Your Highness?”

The older wizard nodded. “I would like to extend an invitation for you to visit my home...all four of you, of course. The Palace and its grounds are quite secure, and my Healer and his staff maintain an Ayurvedic facility there that could provide continuity of your care.”

The Boy-Who-Hated-Politicians pursed his lips, as the apparent structure of the Maharajah’s scheming began to take form in front of him.

“Thank you very much for your concern, Your Highness, and for the invitation. It is a very generous offer, but...you’ve already helped so much, and I couldn’t impose on you and your Healer to do more.”

“Oh, it wouldn’t be an imposition at all, Mr. Potter.”

Harry stared at the wiry old man for a few moments. He then let out a deep sigh, and while hearing Hermione’s objections in advance for his impropriety, asked, “What do you want from me, Sir?”

“Harry!” hissed his girlfriend.

“No...I’m sorry if it is a rude question, Your Highness...but all my life I have been manipulated by people in power who have claimed that they are acting in my own best interests when in fact they are much more concerned about their own.”

The Maharajah acknowledged Harry’s concerns by nodding his head and briefly closing his eyes. He then opened those eyes, and fixed them upon the patient’s defiant gaze.

“There is no need to apologize, Mr. Potter...I understand your position...perhaps far more than you might think.”

Harry kept eye contact with the Maharajah as he replied with a slight head nod.

“I don’t want to sound ungrateful for the help that you’ve provided us,” he stated. “I would just like to know why that help was provided.”

The white-haired wizard gave Harry that enigmatic head wave, then pointed towards the front corner of the bed.

“May I have a seat?”

“Of course, Your Highness,” Hermione quickly replied, as she placed a comforting hand upon Harry’s shoulder.

The Maharajah sat down on the bed corner, looked back over his shoulder towards the door, then tried to honor the Boy-Who-Won’s request.

“As you may or may not know, Mr. Potter, the government of Magical India is a rather diverse, loosely-knit coalition of local and regional governments. My responsibilities here in Magical Travancore also make me a member of a body which is similar to your Wizengamot, and it was necessary for me to obtain the consent of the majority of my colleagues there, in order to bring you here.”

Harry digested these comments as the older wizard stopped and asked Hermione to pour him a glass of water. The brown-haired witch quickly

complied, all the while apologizing for not having immediately offered their guest something to drink. Once the Maharajah waved away Hermione's concerns and quenched his thirst, he continued with his story.

The messy-haired wizard wasn't at all surprised to learn that many British witches and wizards had, for hundreds of years, displayed a high level of paternalistic arrogance towards the rest of the world. The self-appointed heirs of Merlin always considered their homeland to be the center of the magical universe. And while there was no direct link between the Magical and Muggle Governments of Britain, this arrogance was on particular display when it came to interacting with the sovereign independent Magical governments of countries and regions that were formerly part of the Muggle British Empire.

In short, the British Ministry of Magic, and the bureaucrats that worked within the Department of International "Cooperation", treated their Indian counterparts like crap, and the resentment that these attitudes generated made the Maharajah's efforts to come to Harry's aid an easy sell.

Harry was quick to appreciate these motives and sentiments, but wondered if there was something more to the story being told. When he expressed this wondering in a plain-spoken question, Hermione quietly gasped at the impertinence, but the Maharajah merely smiled, and explained, "I must confess, Mr. Potter, to having my own selfish reasons for helping you recover from your injuries, and to ensuring that you have a positive experience here in Southern India."

The older wizard took another sip of water, then added, "Simply put, I wish to make you a job offer."

Eyebrows rose towards Harry's hairline as he considered this response.

"What sort of position did you have in mind, Your Highness?" he warily asked.

"One that would capitalize upon your unique talents."

"You mean as the defeater of Dark Lords?"

The Maharajah smiled. "Oh, no...although your skills on the battlefield might come in handy. I was speaking instead of your ability to speak with serpents."

Padma's eyes flashed in recognition.

"The Naga?" she asked.

The older wizard smiled, and nodded his head. "Mr. Potter, within the magical forests and wild grasslands of Travancore are three separate colonies of snake-like sentient beings known as the Naga."

"I've...heard of them," Harry replied, recalling the story he had been told about the prince who defeated the Naga king with a penis-held wand.

"Yes, well...the Naga are rather an independent sort...similar in customs and sentiments to the centaur herds in your country?"

"Your Highness...what would I be doing, then...working as your ambassador, or something?" Harry asked.

The monarch's eyes twinkled. "That is almost exactly right, Mr. Potter. The Naga settlements are located within lands held by my family...although they would never recognize that ownership...and there are times...there will always be times...when the ability to speak their language would greatly facilitate cordial, non-violent relationships."

"And Parseltongue is similar enough to the Naga language for that level of communication?"

The older wizard wagged his head. "There are ancient texts that claim as much, although it has never been directly tested."

"So this job placement would be conditional on my fluency in Naga?"

"Oh, no...whether or not your language skills come into play, I could use someone like you to act as my...what would be the right term...royal warden, perhaps? One who would manage my magical land holdings?"

Harry voiced a quiet "Hmmm" as he considered his guest's words. He then looked down at his arms and legs and sighed.

"Can't see how I could do that sort of job given my present condition, Sir."

"Which is precisely why I am eager to ensure that you have every opportunity to complete your treatment program," the Maharajah replied. "Also to see that you and your lovely friends have the most enjoyable stay here in Travancore."

After a few moments of silent consideration, Harry decided that he had no reason to doubt either his guest's motives, or his sincerity.

"Thank you for your candor, Your Highness," he then replied. "It really means a lot to me."

"It is not a problem, Mr. Potter."

"Which brings us back to where we can safely stay while I receive that treatment," Harry concluded.

"I can certainly appreciate your desire the continuation of your treatment program with Healer Patil and her...assistants," the Maharajah stated. "As my own Healer has concluded that you are on the right path...perhaps it would be possible for Healer Patil to make house calls during your visit to the Palace. Although..."

The old wizard's words trailed off as he caught sight of the magical wet sari picture that now rested on Harry's lap. He then looked up at the three witches who stood by Harry's side, and then turned to gaze out of the window, and towards the beach.

As a smile slowly formed on his face, he asked, "Mr. Potter, would you say that this hospital's proximity to the sea is beneficial to your recovery?"

Harry looked down at the picture and snorted at the sight of Hermione's wet sari clinging tightly to the cleft between her bum cheeks as she grabbed Padma's waist and tried to dunk her into the water.

"Couldn't think of a better location, Your Highness."

"Well, then," the Maharajah replied, "that would present a challenge for hosting you at my Palace, as it is located within the foothills. That said, I do have a very modest beach home that could easily be made available for your use, should its facilities and location be acceptable to both yourself and to your caregivers. It should only take a few days to sort out these extradition requests, and to clear your names."

Harry raised an eyebrow as he considered certain possibilities. "That sounds like a very generous offer, Your Highness."

"Not at all," the monarch replied. "As it is located on an island that my family owns, your stay could easily be passed off as a trial-run for the job I wish to offer you."

The black-haired wizard nodded, then turned to his companions and asked, "What do you girls think?"

The three witches looked at each other, and wondered whether they were sharing the same thoughts about certain...possibilities.

"Sounds brilliant," Hermione decided.

"Excellent, then," the Maharajah stated, as he slapped Harry's leg and stood. "I shall immediately discuss the situation with our respective Healers."

"Thank you, Sir," replied Harry. As the monarch made towards the door, the black-haired wizard thought of one last question.

"Your Highness, would you mind if...if I kept this photograph, then?"

The older wizard's eyes twinkled in delight.

"Of course, Mr. Potter, of course," he replied. The monarch then nodded towards the bedside table and mischievously added, "I dare say that the image would be a most appropriate supplemental illustration for your training manual."

A small gasp escaped from Hermione's lips as she followed the wizard's gaze towards the copy of the *Kama Sutra* that Parvati had left opened on the nightstand.

Still possessing a clear recollection of what it was like for him to be a teenager, the Maharajah then quickly turned, and left the room before the blushes on the faces of its occupants became too intensely pigmented to ignore.

Alternative Medicine Ch 11: Stones

Healer Patil's sixth sense was given an unexpected holiday in the hours immediately after the Maharajah's visit...not once was she forced to raise her voice to keep her nieces' roaming hands in check, and that afternoon's medicinal massage and sponge bath were completely chaste and professional. When Padma and Parvati's Auntie entered Harry's room after dinner, they (and Hermione) were still wearing cholis underneath their saris, and the *Kama Sutra* lay unopened and untranslated on the bedside table.

"If you are finished with dinner, I wish to examine my patient prior to his travel," the Healer announced. She waited a bit, expecting Parvati to wisecrack about wanting to perform her own examination...but her niece remained silent.

The Healer arched an eyebrow, then added, "Why don't you ladies run upstairs and pack?"

That the teenagers quickly complied with this request and left the room without so much as a kiss on Harry's cheek only added to the list of uncharacteristic behaviors.

As Madhura Patil approached her patient's bed and began to visually inspect his bare arms, she asked, "So what has been happening this afternoon, Harry?"

"Nothing...nothing at all."

"Exactly my point, young man," the Healer stated. "It is as if you've had a 'randy witch repelling charm' applied to your person."

"Is that a problem?"

"No, just...unexpected," Madhura replied, as she pulled down the thin sheet and moved the focus of her examination Harry's bare legs.

A chuckle escaped from Harry's lips.

"What was really unexpected was your acceptance of the Maharajah's plan to move us to his island tonight," he admitted.

Auntie Patil's eyes twinkled a bit as she began to understand the situation.

"So they're on their best behavior, to keep me from reconsidering the wisdom of leaving the four of you to your own unescorted devices?"

The black-haired wizard shrugged as he watched the Healer poke the soles of his bared feet.

"Or you could think of it as a demonstration that your faith is justified in their...erm...."

"In their ability not to turn your copy of the *Kama Sutra* into a shag-by-numbers guidebook?"

Harry closed his eyes and sighed.

"I was going to say 'discretion', but...yeah."

It was the Healer's turn to chuckle.

"I'm afraid that I've set the four of you up for some disappointment, then," she admitted. "And I hope that any supervisory presence isn't taken as an indication of my lack of trust."

"So...you will be staying with us on the island, then?" Harry asked.

"Oh, no...as much as I might fancy a few days in Paradise, I've got patients here whose needs can't be ignored. I'll be using a reusable two-way portkey for my house-calls."

"Somebody else will be staying with us, then?"

When the Healer nodded, Harry asked who that person would be. The elderly witch shook her head slightly in response.

"You'll find out soon enough...despite their status as legal adults in the wizarding world, I can't allow my unwed nieces to be unchaperoned while they share a house with a non-relative male.

"Even if that non-relative male is bedridden, and incapable of forcing himself on these young maidens?" asked a bemused young wizard.

Especially if the youngest young man in question is temporarily disabled,” Healer Patil replied. “You are a very stationary target.”

Harry tried to push the “knew it was too good to be true” thoughts towards the back of his head, so that he could change the topic of conversation towards his stationary status.

“So how am I doing, recovery-wise?”

“Much better than you were a few days back,” the Healer replied. She held Harry’s left leg up in the air and added, “As you can see, the treatments have done a good job of restoring muscle mass and skin tone.”

“I still can’t feel anything, though?”

“True, but it’s still early in your treatment program, and neural pathways take longer to restore than muscle tissue.”

“But they will eventually be restored, right? So that I won’t need the hand feedings, and help using the loo, and...well...vega relief.”

Healer Patil arched an eyebrow, causing Harry to babble a bit as he tried to recover from what he thought was a serious bit of mis-speak.

“Not that I don’t appreciate all of the care...and help....and the way those three have been there for me...in a professional...and, erm...therapeutic....way....”

The Twins’s Auntie smiled, and patted Harry on the shoulder. “Relax ...I understand your... frustration. And with the situation regarding my nieces....if only their father could be here to address the issue directly...”

Harry furrowed his brow, then glanced out the opened door to his room. Not seeing or hearing either Padma or Parvati, he looked up at their Auntie and asked (using almost a whisper), “I know we’ve been joking and dancing around the issue...and I don’t want to risk losing what we have by being plain-spoken...or by asking awkward questions. So I’m sorry for asking, but...what’s really going on with this talk of their father, and dowries...and marriage contracts?”

Healer Patil gave her own glance towards the door, then gathered her thoughts and looked at Harry straight in the eye.

“It is a rare occasion when my obligation to family comes into potential conflict with either my personal beliefs, or my obligations to my patients. This is just such an occasion, Harry, and it limits my ability to provide the kind of plain-spoken answers you not only seek, but deserve.”

“Oh...well...I’m sorry...didn’t mean to put you in a spot, Auntie...”

“No, no...it is not your fault, do not apologize for asking,” Madhura quickly replied. “What I can say is...hmmmm...well.....certain facts.”

“First, off...in this country, arranged marriages are not only socially acceptable...they are the norm. Especially in the wizarding world...notions of marrying for love are practically considered subversive.”

Harry nodded. “I’ve heard that it’s not as bad in Magical Britain...it’s only certain pureblood families that make those kind of arrangements.”

“Indeed,” the Healer replied. “The second fact...within Magical India, it is the typically the Patriarch of a family or clan that negotiates betrothal contracts...and the third fact is that...Padma and Parvati’s father is not the patriarch of the Patil clan.”

“So...not only does Padma and Parvati not have a say in who they marry, but neither do their parents?” Harry asked incredulously.

His Healer nodded. “Their great-grandfather Patil is currently Patriarch...has been for over fifty years.”

“So their great-grandfather gets to decide?”

“As long as Padma and Parvati are here in India, then...yes.”

“But if they were to return to Britain?”

“Then....not so much.”

“But they can’t go back to Britain, because they helped bring me here, so it’s my fault?”

“No, no...oh, my...even certain facts get me into trouble,” Harry’s healer said with a sigh. “A few more facts, then....where was I?”

“Erm...four or five, I think?”

“Really? Oh, well...sixth, then...dowries are an accepted part of any marriage contract negotiations, and seventh...the money that Padma and Parvati’s father would use to provide that dowry is presently in Britain, and contained within vaults that have been legally frozen by the British Ministry of Magic.”

“What? Why?”

“Some gibberish about potentially aiding and abetting wanted fugitives,” Madhura said with a smile. “This effectively prevents any marriage contract negotiations to take place, whether it’s with the Potter Patriarch, or with some balding, middle-aged oaf from Mysore.”

A frown formed on Harry’s lips. “But...if the Maharajah takes the statements given today, and clears up the legal issues for Padma and Parvati...

then those accounts will be unfrozen, and they'll have to get married?"

The elderly witch nodded. "There are some intermediate steps, but..."

Her patient waited a beat for his Healer to finish her sentence, and then asked, "So when would that kind of decision be made for them?"

Madhura sighed.

"Had my nephew not moved his family to Britain when the girls were five years old...well, let us just note that it is rare for a seventeen year old witch to be unwed, unless they or their family are an unusually poor match."

"And Padma and Parvati are unusually good matches, aren't they?" Harry guessed.

When Healer Patil nodded, Harry shook his head. "So there's the simple choice....either they remain wanted fugitives and their family is kept from their vault, or they're forced into a loveless marriage?"

The elderly witch shook her head. "Not necessarily, Harry...if the legal issues are resolved, the Twins could return to Britain, and make a life there...or...they could stay here and fall in love with a wizard whose match would benefit the entire Patil clan."

"Ah, so if...just as an example...they were to fall in love with me...then I would need to convince their great-grandfather that I'm a good match for their entire clan?"

"It would be the patriarch of the Potter family that would need to make that case," the Healer replied.

"Which, in this case, *is* me," Harry said with a sad smile. "So, speaking hypothetically...hold on...would I need to choose one or the other...or...."

Madhura Patil smiled. "Polygamy is still legal within Magical India. It was legal in Muggle India up until thirty or forty years ago...and still is if a man is Muslim...and it is often the case that twin witches are betrothed to the same wizard."

"I see," Harry replied, as the cogs turned inside his head. "And still speaking hypothetically... what would a wizard need to do to convince a patriarch that he would be a good match for his great-granddaughters?"

"Twin hypothetical magical great-granddaughters?"

"Erm....yeah...sure...hypothetical twin witches..."

"Ah, well, in that case...the usual things matter," the Healer stated. "The ideal potential husband would come from a respected family, and have a job, and strong magic, and a strong body. Financial and political considerations also come into play."

"Oh," Harry said, with no small amount of dejection in his voice. "So if the potential husband is a foreigner with no political connections, and isn't fabulously wealthy, and is an invalid...."

"Hush, now," the Healer admonished. "If you were to seek a bride...or brides...here in India, you would be an outstanding match for any family. Because you *will* recover from your injuries, and you already have a job offer from the Maharajah...can't get any more politically connected than that..."

"So...Merlin, I don't know what to do...or what I could do...."

The Healer nodded. "It is a lot to take in, all at once...and again, I am not really at liberty to offer an opinion, but...here is one final fact. Before he left, the Maharajah stated that it would take at least a week for any legal issues to be resolved with the British Ministry...and not less than a month's time for the Twins' father to regain control of his vaults. That is time that could be spent getting to know someone...or more than one...better. Time that could be spent exploring possibilities...and options...and well...."

Madhura reached up and tussled Harry's hair with no small amount of affection.

"I have been told that you are permanently affected by a 'saving people thing,' and that this 'thing' might cause you to do something brave, and selfless, especially if it is for someone or some ones...that you feel obligated to help."

The Healer shushed Harry's protests, then continued.

"Nothing would please an old witch like myself more than to see my nieces spend their life with the one...or ones...with strong ties to their heart chakras. And also...that those that do share my nieces' lives do so more out of love than obligation. Does that make sense?"

Harry sighed, and then nodded in agreement. "No decisions need to be made right now, and I should use the time that is given....we should use the time that is given....to get to know each other better...to explore possibilities....and dreams....and desires..."

The Healer giggled in a girlish way that shed years from her face.

"So I'm to believe that you and the others haven't already begun to explore your desires?"

"Of course you are, Auntie," said a voice from over her shoulder. Both Harry and Healer Patil turned towards the door as Hermione and the Twins entered with bright eyes and bright smiles.

Madhura began to waggle a finger towards Parvati, who had made that innocent claim, then thought better of it.

"Good that you are here...all packed then?"

"Yes, Auntie."

The Healer turned towards Harry, and held his gaze with her eyes for a moment...trying to divine whether their conversation had done more good than harm. A slight smile and head nod from her patient gave her enough hope to leave the discussion...at least for now...where it had ended.

"Then I will use the time remaining to show you the next part of our patient's therapeutic program," the older witch then announced. She then walked over to a small cabinet on one side of the room, and removed two small cloth pouches.

She opened each pouch, slipped their contents out onto Harry bed stand, and stated, "These are neuro-stimulative healing stones."

The four teenagers examined the two fist-sized stones that now sat on the cover of their *Kama Sutra*. Each was round, flat, and highly polished; one was predominately dark green in color, with coarse-grained crystals of black orthopyroxene and dark red garnet, while the other was more whitish, with stringers of dark-colored micas and hornblendes.

"Neuro-what, Auntie?" asked Parvati.

"Neuro-stimulative," the Healer explained. "They are used to treat disorders of the nervous system, by providing a flow of healing magical energy from one stone to the other."

"I've never heard of anything like that," Hermione stated.

"I'm not surprised," Healer Patil replied with a grin. "It is local magic, and the local rock quarry that both stones were taken from has a unique combination of composition and location...it sits on top of intersecting magical ley lines."

Hermione frowned as she picked up the green stone and examined it. "They don't teach geology at Hogwarts, but...isn't it odd to have such different rock types in the same quarry?"

Madhura shrugged. "I am a magical Healer, not a Muggle rock doctor...but I have visited this location, and seen the two different colored rocks right next to each other on the quarry wall. The white magically becomes the green...just as a caterpillar become a butterfly. And when each rock type is quarried from close proximity...and the quarried stones cut and polished by magical means...the magic imbued with each rock comes out."

Hermione innocently reached for the second polished stone so that could make a comparison, only to have it quickly pulled away from her reach.

"These stones require careful handling," Healer Patil explained. "The magical link between the two is quite...invigorating... and manifests when they come into contact with the same flesh."

"So she can hold one, or the other, but not both at the same time without establishing the connection?" asked Harry.

"Yes."

"What exactly happens when they are held at the same time?"

"There is a transfer of energy that flows from one stone to the other through the flesh," the Healer explained. "This energy flow is therapeutic where there is nerve or muscle damage, but when the connection involves healthy tissue, the effect is rather...well...these stones are supposed to be used for only *therapeutic* reasons. Am I clear?"

"Yes, Auntie," the three witches droned in unison.

Parvati caught Hermione's eye and winked at her, suggesting that she considered her Auntie's explanation all too clear. Her former dorm mate shook her head and furrowed her eyebrows.

"Knay!" she hissed.

Parvati's pursed her lips in an unvoiced, "Doh!" and nervously glanced towards her Auntie, who was pretending that she didn't understand Pig Latin. Instead, the Healer proceeded to instruct the three witches on how the stones were to be used, so that they could provide this treatment to Harry in her absence.

"The green stone must be placed on healthy tissue, as close to the affected area as possible," Madhura explained. "Use the same inked boundary lines that were drawn for salve applications."

"So for the arms, that would be at the edge of his collarbone," Hermione reasoned.

Parvati's focus was, unsurprisingly, elsewhere.

"And for Harry's legs, it would be right next to his...Auntie...you said that the stone needed to be placed on bared skin, didn't you?"

Healer Patil nodded seriously. "Ladies, it is important for me to trust that you will perform these tasks in a strictly professional manner. This is your patient's health we are talking about, and if you aren't able to act professionally, then perhaps the Maharajah's healer....at the Maharajah's Palace...."

“No worries, Healer Patil,” Hermione interjected. “I’ll make sure that Parvati handles any medically necessary...treatments of Harry...in an appropriate manner.”

The sound of a feral cat marking her territory with a “Meowwww!” caused Hermione to whip her head around and frown at Padma, who was sporting her best “sweet and innocent” look.

Healer Patil once again displayed some selective hearing, and pushed on with her lesson.

“Once the green stone is in place, you rub the white stone up and down the length of the treated limb. All parts of the arm and leg must be covered with this movement, so you will need to turn the patient onto his stomach at some point, to treat the backs of his arms and legs.”

“And we’ll need to balance the green rock on each bare bum cheek?” asked Parvati mischievously.

Her Auntie snorted, almost as loudly as Harry did.

“The green rock must be placed on healthy flesh, as close as possible to the treatment area,” Madhura reiterated, with a stern tone of voice that conflicted with the amusement shown in her twinkling eyes.

The Healer then treated Harry’s left arm as a demonstration, then closely monitored the three witches as they took turns working on his right. After indicating her satisfaction with their efforts, Auntie Patil announced that she needed to attend to other patients, and asked the three teen-aged witches to carry on with the treatment of patient’s legs.

Looks of disbelief followed the Healer as she left Harry’s room.

“She’s going to let us...I can’t believe it!” Padma hissed.

“Shush!” Hermione hissed. “She’s obviously testing us.”

Harry snorted. “Seeing if you three can do this treatment without mucking it up?”

“More like seeing if we can do this treatment without jumping your bones,” Hermione replied quietly. “Right then...need to focus...eyes on the prize, girls...”

“Yes, Ma’am!” Parvati said smartly.

Hermione rolled her eyes when she noted that the black-haired witch’s eyes were presently focused on Harry’s crotch.

“Parvati!” she hissed.

“What?” her dorm mate replied.

“Stop it!” Padma hissed.

“Fine,” Parvati countered. “I was only trying to see if we could treat Harry’s legs without removing his dhoti.”

“Sure you were,” replied Hermione. She then looked up at Harry’s face, which bore a look of extreme amusement.

“Sorry, Harry...but we’ll have to remove your dhoti to do this right.”

“Why are you apologizing?” he asked. “It’s not like you haven’t...”

“Erm...you’re right...aren’t you?” his bushy-haired friend replied brightly, risking a glance back towards the door.

“And since you two each have a stone in hand, mine are free for the job...aren’t they?” asked Padma.

“You can have the silly stone, then,” replied her sister.

“No thanks...I’ve got this,” replied Padma, as she began to unfasten the knot in Harry’s dhoti.

Eyes darted about, as each tried to wordlessly divine intentions and acceptance in the others. Padma got grins from both the patient and the patient’s girlfriend, and didn’t hear any protests (either from within the room, or from outside of it), so she kept going, and pulled off the thin cotton trouser/skirt.

There was a moment of silence...as the three witches stared at Harry’s semi-erect penis, and he stared at them staring at him.

“Oh, come on,” Harry snorted. “It’s not like you haven’t see my Full Monty before.”

“Is that what you nickname it?” Padma wisecracked.

“I’m starters during the salve application...twice a day,” Harry noted. “And then there’s the peeks under the sheets, and the gropes...”

“Is that a complaint?” Hermione asked with a smile.

Harry snorted. “So what’s different?”

Padma glanced over her shoulder towards the doorway, then shook her head.

“Check this one off the list, sister,” she said.

“What list?” Harry asked.

“Oh...never mind,” replied the Ravenclaw with a wink. She then quietly added, “Harry...while it’s true that Parvati and I have seen you naked before, it’s almost always been when our Auntie is in the room.”

“And only for a quick glance when she hasn’t” Parvati added. “So...does it make you uncomfortable Harry? Because if it does...maybe if we got naked too it would be more comfortable for you...”

Harry snickered. “I thought you three were trying to be on your best behavior for the trip.”

“Erm...right,” Parvati decided, as she balanced the green stone that she’d been holding on his hip bone. Her fingers started to stray towards his penis, before they pulled back sharply, as if she’d been close to a flame.

“And so we shall be....Hermione?”

“Erm...right...thanks,” replied the bushy-haired witch, as she placed the white stone against Harry’s toes and began to rub.

The-Boy-Who-Won couldn’t feel a thing as the three witches took turns stroking the round rock up and down his leg. But he could see how they reacted when the stone approached his crotch, or when they pushed his legs apart to gain better access to his inner thighs. And their poorly-disguised excitement got him excited, which brought his wand to full-length...which made the three even more excited.

The positive feedback loop caused the three to occasionally lose focus...a condition most prominently displayed when Padma lost her grip on the white stone and it slipped in between his thighs. The polished rock came to rest against his scrotum...which was definitely *not* part of the curse-affected area of treatment.

Harry instantly knew this to be the case when a jolt of stimulation passed from his hip bone straight to his balls.

“Oh...fuck!” he hissed.

“Oh, no!” Padma exclaimed as she snatched the stone away from its point of contact. She stared at Harry’s penis, which had hardened fully and begun to twitch.

“Did that hurt?” she asked.

Hermione snorted when she spied the wide smile on Harry’s face.

“More like it hurts so good,” she whispered.

“Is everything okay in there?” Healer Patil asked from a distance.

Harry opened his eyes and tilted up his head.

“No worries, Healer Patil,” he called back. “They’re doing a fine job.”

“Sorry, Harry,” Padma whispered.

“No apologies needed,” he replied. “While I wasn’t expecting it...that jolt of...whatever...wasn’t unwelcomed.”

“Are you sure?” Parvati asked. She stepped forward and added, “Maybe we should do a close-up inspection?”

Harry arched an eyebrow. “Thought you three were trying to stay on best behavior?”

“Oh, well...it would be purely for medical reasons,” Parvati explained.

“Stop, Parvati!” Padma hissed. “Tropical island?...no chaperones?...giving Harry the full treatment?...remember?”

“Erm...right. Sorry.”

The patient did his best not to laugh at how the three witches were reacting to the situation, and to their misconceptions.

Not that he didn’t wish that they’d guessed correctly...especially as he admired the way Parvati’s hardened nipples pushed against her choli.

“Better wrap this up, ladies,” he snarked, “before you need to self-administer some vega relief.”

“Oh, you’d love to see that, wouldn’t you?” Hermione quipped.

Harry snorted. “Well as much fun as it was to listen to your play-by-play this morning...”

“Behave,” his girlfriend hissed. And then, seemingly contrary to that command, she said, “Time to turn you over so that we can do your back side.”

“Oh, that sounds so....naughty,” Harry replied. “When can I do your backside, Hermione?”

“Maybe later.”

“Promise?”

Hermione snorted. “Let’s get you to Fantasy Island first, okay?”

Harry smiled and wondered just how many fantasies would be fulfilled over the next few days.

The answer seemed in doubt a half-hour later, when the four teen-agers discovered just whom they’d be sharing Paradise with.

Alternative Medicine Ch 12: Fawltly Island

The sharp sweet sting of a brisk headwind buffeted Harry Potter's cheeks as he flew over the moonlit Arabian Sea. He couldn't help but smile and laugh out loud...and hope that Hermione and the Twins weren't too upset that he was enjoying his first love.

The situation reminded Harry of another moonlit night a few years previous, when his escape from Privet Drive was facilitated by a wild broomstick ride. He realized not soon after that it would have made much more sense (from a security standpoint) to simply use a portkey to travel to Grimmauld Place. But was he going to point that out?

No more than he would point out that portkeys would have provided quicker access to the Maharajah's island than a flotilla of flying carpets.

There were a dozen, flying in formation along a northwesterly bearing. Harry was sitting in the middle of the group, belted into a palki that was stuck to the center of a room-sized carpet. There were six others on board. The pilot sat furthest front, upon a small charmed seat cushion called a "kazipu" that translated his slight shifts in body weight into changes in course, or elevation, or speed (without that focus the carpet would have had to work through the competing movements of a pilot and his passengers). Standing behind Harry was the tall, handsomely dressed military man who commanded this squadron of flying carpets as a member of the Maharajah's magical air corps. And on either side of Harry were the four witches who were going to be joining him on a island getaway...Hermione, the Twins...and the surprise chaperone who had arrived at the Patil's hospital along with their rides.

Parvati and Padma had been more than a little put out, but tried to hide their reactions as their childhood nanny smothered them in hugs. Just as their Auntie had hinted to Harry, somebody up the Patil family tree had insisted that the elderly witch, named Aya, accompany the Twins in order to protect their virtue. And to protect them from just about anything else, as well, if the way the witch began to dote on them as if they were five-year olds was any indication.

Six smaller carpets flanked the one that Harry and the witches were riding on (one in front, one behind, one above, one below, and one on each side). If the big carpet was roughly 8ft x 12ft in size, these were more like 6 by 8's, with room enough for a pilot and a "weapons officer" whose wand was always out and eyes always looking for potential threats. And zigging and zagging outside of this protective buffer were the 3x5 single-seaters...or "single-stomachers" as it were, because these fastest of carpets were flown prone, with the pilot lying face-first. A couple of these solo pilots served as scouts, and always flew at least a couple hundred yards in front of the rest of the formation.

They were heading towards Lakshadweep, a loose archipelago of islands stretched out parallel to and a few hundred miles west of India's southwestern coastline. Their specific destination was an island called Kalbitra, on the northern side of the chain. This allowed the squadron commander to bend down over Harry's shoulder and shout out a running travelogue as they passed over the other islands.

When the military man pointed towards a well-appointed palace in the center of one of the relatively larger islands, Harry thought that they had arrived at their destination. But they kept going, and began a gentle descent towards a much smaller spot of land about ten miles beyond.

All of the passengers got a much better look at the island of Kalbitra as the carpets went on final approach. There actually wasn't that much to see. It was an uninhabited atoll...a ring of coral that almost completely encircled a shallow lagoon that reflected the moonlight more brightly than the deeper surrounding waters. Most of the reef was submerged...only a small, thin sliver of land rose above sea level on the south end. The island was barely fifty yards long, and hosted exactly twenty-four coconut trees, a short rickety dock, and a hut with a very big hole in its roof.

The protective escort of carpets broke off as they reached dry land (such that it was), leaving the big passenger carpet on a solo approach towards a hole in a roof that didn't look nearly wide enough to allow them to pass through. But Harry had come to accept the fact that seeing isn't always believing in the magical world, and sure enough, they dropped down through the opening with nary a scratch.

Just like the magical tents used during World Cup, the insides were much nicer (and much bigger) than the outsides. The hole in the roof was actually the airspace above an interior courtyard, and an open-air garden filled with fruit trees and flowering shrubs. When the carpet landed, a diminutive man wearing a black mustache, black bow tie and white tuxedo jacket appeared. He immediately began to buzz about the carpet in an insistent effort to help each of the four witches up their feet, babbling the whole time in thickly-accented English.

"Hello...you are most welcome...Good evening, Memsahib...Welcome...Good evening..."

Were it not the fact that this person was twice as tall as a house-elf, had human-sized ears, and a thick black mustache, Harry might have mistaken him for Dobby...or at least Dobby's cousin. He smiled at the thought...and this smile only grew when he noticed that Hermione was practically giggling at the man's antics.

Not everyone was equally enamored, however. The squadron commander cuffed the manservant on the back of his head when he strayed within arm's reach.

"Manuel! Bring the luggage to their rooms!"

"Yes, Boss!"

Hermione couldn't decide whether to express outrage at the display of physical violence, or to laugh out loud as Manuel scampered around the carpet in an effort to gather shrunken down trunks. When the tuxedo-wearing servant disappeared down a hallway, she turned to their escort, arched an eyebrow, and asked, "Manuel?"

The squadron commander replied with a shrug of his shoulders.

"The Maharajah enjoys Muggle television comedies," he explained. "When this...manservant...came upon His Majesty's videotape collection, he mistook them for instructional videos on how a proper servant should act."

"So his real name isn't Manuel?"

"No, Memsahib."

"And he's not really from Barcelona?"

"As much as he wishes it was so...no."

"And nobody chose to let this bloke in on the joke?" asked Harry.

The escort chuckled. "His Majesty tried, but the man is so earnest...and so convincing in the role...and it does amuse the Maharajah greatly whenever he stays here."

"Manuel it is, then," Hermione replied. "So is there a Polly somewhere about? Will we be taking our meals with The Germans? Should we not mention The War?"

The military escort frowned. "I'm sorry, Memsahib, but if you are making a joke, I have never seen these television shows myself."

"Oh, no worries," Harry interjected. "I haven't either...too bad, actually. Don't imagine that there is a working television and videotape collection here?"

"As a matter of fact, there is," the officer replied.

"Harry Potter!" Hermione gently chided. "You've just arrived on a secluded magical island hideaway with your three girlfriends and you are scheming to waste your time in front of a television?"

The Boy-Who-Won chuckled, shook his head, and gave a slight nod towards the matronly chaperone.

"Are you three expecting to be able to do much more than watch the telly given... circumstances?" he whispered.

Hermione glanced towards the nanny, then turned backed to Harry and shrugged.

"We'll find out soon enough, I imagine."

When Manuel returned to the courtyard and announced that he would be pleased to show everyone to their rooms, the squadron commander and carpet driver lifted Harry's lightened palki off of the carpet and followed the servant and the four witches into a magically enlarged master bedroom. The teen-aged wizard's protests that he didn't need such a large space were quieted once Padma noted that the room was divided into thirds. A large four poster bed was flanked by a massage table on one side, and a sitting area on the other. Within that sitting area were two rattan chairs, a love seat, a low table...and a cabinet chock full of electronics.

Hermione immediately scowled at the set up (even though she was curious about the power source and magical interference). And she certainly wasn't about to complain about the free accommodations. Padma and Parvati's nanny lacked those kinds of reservations, however, and began to rant just as soon as she opened the cabinet doors and read some of the videotape titles. A small pile quickly formed as she yanked individual tapes off of the shelf and dropped them onto the floor.

Manuel the manservant shouted in dismay, and rushed over in a futile attempt to resshelf what the nanny was binning, all while arguing with the old witch.

"What's going on?" asked Harry.

Parvati shook her head and sighed. "Sounds like the Maharajah has a rather racy collection of foreign movies."

At this point the military escort waded into the argument in a futile attempt to mediate. The three-way discussion became quite animated, until the old woman's voice carried the day. The uniformed escort nodded his head, then cuffed Manuel on his head. Under the nanny's watchful eye, the manservant dropped to his knees and quickly gathered the censored tapes into his arms. This allowed the uniformed military man to return to the group of teenagers and roll his eyes.

"It has been decided that certain films will be housed in a separate area for the duration of your stay. My apologies for any inconveniences."

Harry chuckled. "No worries."

"Speak for yourself," Parvati pouted. "If a movie is good enough for the Maharajah, then it's got to be good enough for the little people, no?"

“Your nanny thinks otherwise.”

“She would,” Parvati muttered.

Her comment drew an animated response from across the room.

“Yes, Aya...of course Aya...no need to worry Papa, Aya....”

“Guess we’ll just have to find some way to entertain ourselves?” Harry quipped.

Padma snorted.

“Don’t get your hopes up.”

Hermione shook her head, and pulled out her wand.

“Right then, let’s get you into bed, Harry.”

The squad commander’s hand flew out and pulled Hermione’s arm down to her side. He then apologized, and asked that they all minimize the use of magic on the island. He explained that there were magical sensors in place that covered the archipelago. And while the Maharajah controlled the local government (and the office that monitored magical use), it would be a huge red flag if spells were detected that had Latin-based incantations, so long as they were quasi-fugitives.

A brief lesson was then given (at Hermione’s insistence) on what magical sensors could and could not detect. A levitation charm that employed a Sanskrit incantation did exist, of course, and the sensors, when operating at “normal” levels of sensitivity, couldn’t tell which words were used to cast the spell. But there were more than a few spells in the repertoire of the Hogwarts-trained witches and wizard that had no local equivalent, and would easily be spotted. And if the sensor operators chose to focus in on a specific area and monitor magic at high surveillance levels, they would be able to tell that Hermione’s levitation charm wasn’t cast using the local language.

Why there would be an enhanced level of interest on any magic performed on the island was easily explained...it was the Maharajah’s retreat, and near the much larger island that hosted his “official” Lakshadweep residence. The island hideaway was only staffed when he was there, and that was usually only during the day. Any magic use at night would stand out, especially if it were done by more than one person.

The squadron commander and carpet driver manually lifted Harry into bed, then stepped to the side so that the nanny could closely monitor the delivery of three completely chaste bedtime kisses. Harry would have been disappointed had he not spied Hermione’s wink, and seen her mouth the word “LATER.” So he cheerfully thanked the men for their help getting the group to the island, and bade his girls good night. He fell asleep just about the time that the squad commander and pilot flew back off into the night.

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Harry kept his eyes shut when he woke the next morning, hoping to once again gain by feigning sleep. But as he more fully regained his senses, he realized that there hadn’t had any overnight visitors, and that anyone visiting him at present time was more interested in the Maharajah’s telly than in him.

The teen-aged wizard opened his eyes and slowly turned his head towards where Padma and Parvati’s nanny was standing in front of the telly, watching some kind of Indian musical. Her arms were raised, and she swayed from side to side in time with the movie’s musical soundtrack. Which wouldn’t have bothered Harry half as much if the elderly woman wasn’t dressed for the magical world, and giving him an unobstructed view of her saggy breasts.

A groan escaped from his lips, catching the nanny’s attention. She flashed a smile that was short a few teeth, and babbled in her native tongue as she approached his bedside.

Aya’s refusal to speak English, even though Harry knew that she at least understood English, was incredibly frustrating to the black-haired wizard. Especially when she pointed towards the morning condition that was tenting his sheets.

Harry had never felt so helpless as when the old witch shook her head, stripped off his bed linens, and pulled his loincloth/dhoti down around his ankles.

“No really...thanks...I can wait...don’t need to....”

These concerns fell on deaf ears; the old woman continued to chat away as she placed a magical bedpan over his crotch. Harry’s cheeks flushed with embarrassment...the way she was handling both the bedpan and his body made it seem as if she were changing a nappie.

Once he managed to put the bedpan to its intended use, the nanny pulled up and reknotted his loincloth as if he was a dress-up doll. Or a helpless baby boy...which is how Harry took it.

Aya walked to the far wall once Harry’s bits were covered, and slid three large door panels to the side. Bright sunlight, a gust of fresh air, and the sounds of a gentle surf spilled into the room. Something disagreed with the old witch as she poked her head out one of the openings. Whatever the concern, the remedy involved dragging large wooden screens in front of each doorway, so that Harry’s views out (or no doubt more importantly, all views *in*) were at least partially obscured.

When the old witch opened Harry’s bedroom door and called out, he hoped that “his” girls would respond. But it was Manuel who appeared,

wishing the younger man a "Very good morning, Sir." Aya and the manservant then dressed Harry in a long-sleeved button-down shirt, and covered his bare legs with something akin to a full-length skirt. It was only then that the three young witches were allowed to enter the room.

"Good morning, ladies," Harry said cheerfully.

"Could be better," Parvati muttered, as she approached the young wizard and kissed him on the cheek. Her old nanny began chattering away, and the much younger witch responded in kind.

"What's going on?" asked Harry.

Hermione approached the bed and gave her boyfriend a measured kiss of her own.

"No breakfast in bed today," she whispered. Padma then took her sister's place on the other side of the bed, offered a grazing peck on the cheek. All three helped Manuel lift Harry out of the bend and onto the palki. The manservant then dashed away to make sure that the breakfast table was set, and Aya ordered the Twins to carry Harry into the main dining area, located on the far side of the courtyard.

Detachable poles allowed Padma and Parvati to push the palki up to the table's edge, as if it was a dining room chair. A traditional European table setting was before them, with silverware and a silver dome covering the plate (as if they were being served by a hotel's room service). Once the four witches were in their own seats, Manuel rushed around the table and removed each plate covering.

An array of warm, inviting aromas drifted up towards Harry's nose, and he moaned in appreciation at the sight of a full English breakfast.

"All right!" he exclaimed.

Unfortunately, the nanny's response wasn't quite as favorable. She stood, began to yell at Manuel, and (taking her cues from the night previous) cuffed him on the side of the head.

The manservant understood the nanny's complaints far better than Harry did, and ducked as he quickly removed the full plates of food from the table, apologizing the whole time. Aya continued her scoldings as she followed the poor man back into the adjacent kitchen.

"What's that all about?" Harry asked.

"Not exactly an ayurvedic-compatible meal," Padma sighed. "And that bacon smelled so-o-o-o good..."

"Back to the banana leaves and curry?"

"Afraid so."

"Least we've been given a few minutes free of supervision," Hermione noted.

"Got something in mind, sweetheart?"

The bushy-haired witch clamped her legs together and shook her head.

"Yes, I do, unfortunately...but in mind is where it has to stay for now."

Harry glanced back towards the kitchen door, where the elderly witch was still complaining in a loud voice.

"Think she'll at least let me suck on some fingers while I eat?"

Padma chuckled. "What do you think, Harry?"

"A bloke could dream, couldn't he?"

"Well, dreaming might be all you get to do over the next week," Hermione commiserated. "And not just about the meal plans."

Harry nodded, and thrust his chin towards his girlfriend's outfit.

"So the nanny is insisting you wear cholis under the shawls, even if she isn't?"

"I'm afraid so," Padma replied. "Although, even if she didn't...Manuel isn't shy about staring."

"And I thought I heard something rustling in the bushes outside the lavatory's window this morning," Hermione added.

"Think he was playing the Peeping Tom?"

"Dunno...could've been a bird, I guess," the brown-haired witch admitted. "But then Manuel was trying to be helpful, pointing out that we didn't need to wear cholis under our sari shawls because there aren't any Muggles on the island."

"Did you complain about it?"

"What could we say?" Hermione whispered. "He was only stating the truth."

Harry, shook his head, sighed, but couldn't help but grin.

“You do realize just how ironic it will be if the only breasts I get to see over the next week are the pair attached to the nanny?”

“Yes, well...not for lack of trying,” Parvati hissed.

“How’s that?”

Manuel and the nanny burst back into the room before the Gryffindor witch could elaborate. He carried a tray filled with the same kind of finger foods that Harry had enjoyed during his recovery.

Eating those same finger foods wasn’t nearly as enjoyable, though, when the nanny insisted on feeding Harry herself.

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Harry was carried back into the Master Bedroom after breakfast, and placed on the massage table rather than the bed, in anticipation of a portkey-facilitated house call. Healer Patil arrived right on time. Manuel greeted her, and insisted on providing a two-minute tour of the magically-expanded house. The visiting witch agreed, then did a bit of insisting of her own, and shooed both the manservant and the nanny out of Harry’s room.

Aya protested the whole way.

Harry whispered to Padma, “What’s she so unhappy about? Your nanny doesn’t want to leave the telly?”

“More like she doesn’t want to leave my nieces in the same room with you,” the Healer called back, as she firmly closed the bedroom door.

“Finally,” Parvati hissed, as she began to unbutton her top.

The teenagers all glanced back towards Healer Patil, wondering if she was going to object.

Instead, she laughed, and said, “Don’t forget that Harry needs his shirt off as well for the examination and treatment.”

The three witches were quick to acknowledge the point, and pulled their cholis off from under their shawls. They were most of the way past unbuttoning their patient’s shirt before anyone realized that Healer Patil had done the same.

“Auntie!” Parvati hissed.

“What?” the older witch replied. “Are there some Muggles that I didn’t know about on this island? Or perhaps I’m making my patient uncomfortable?”

Harry snorted, and quickly considered potential responses. If it was no big deal that the three younger witches were following wizarding world fashion and shedding their cholis, then how could he object?

“Whatever makes you comfortable, Ma’am.”

“Ma’am?”

“Sorry...Auntie,” Harry corrected.

The Healer smiled, and followed through on her question as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

Harry, in turn, tried to act as if it were the most natural thing in the world for the Healer to expose the sides of her breasts to him.

It wasn’t such an easy task. Not because he was repelled by the view. Almost the opposite...at least when Harry thought about the nanny’s similar attire.

Admittedly, Padma and Parvati’s Great-Aunt was far better looking than their nanny, with a fitter body, firmer breasts...and a full set of teeth. The Boy-Who-Won was quick to realize, though, that it mattered much more how the two women had treated him...the nanny acted as if he were a helpless baby, while the Healer thought of him as a temporarily-incapacitated adult male...an adult male that could even get her to blush a bit when she thought she spied him angling his head for a better view of her baps.

The patient tried to keep his cool, and to keep the tenting down. Parvati and Padma weren’t helping things, though, as they gleefully pulled their shawls to the side and flashed him behind their Auntie’s back.

“That better, Harry?” Parvati teased.

“What’s that, dear?” Healer Patil asked, looking over her shoulder.

The shawls and the grins both dropped back into place.

“Nothing, Auntie.”

The Healer rolled her eyes, and continued with her examination.

“So,” asked Harry. “I couldn’t understand what was said, but it seems that Aya doesn’t trust you to chaperone us, Auntie?”

Madhura chuckled. “Something like that... I asked that she remember that the girls are seventeen, rather than seven.” She then turned back

towards Parvati and added, "Last night didn't help, of course."

"Sorry," the Gryffindor replied. "How was I to know that Aya's tethers were still in place?"

The older witch rolled her eyes, and patted Harry's leg. "Right. Things are moving along well, I think. Get started with the salve, girls...I've not that much time here. Unless you would rather have Aya monitoring your work?"

"Yes, Auntie," the Twins droned.

Harry watched with interest as the Healer turned away from his bed and walked towards the sitting area. She stopped in front of the entertainment console, found a videotape that she fancied, popped it into the machine, and pulled up a chair to watch.

The black-haired wizard arched an eyebrow, and turned his head towards Hermione.

"Allowing us to keep our conversations private?"

"Makes sense," she admitted. "As much as anything we say within a mile of her ears could be considered private."

The teen-aged wizard nodded, then glanced over to admire Padma and Parvati's fully exposed breasts as they swapped out sari shawls for dragonhide aprons and gloves.

"Harry?" asked Hermione.

He turned and pursed his lips as a blush covered his cheeks. "Sorry...got distracted."

"I noticed," the bushy-haired witch replied with a sly grin. She reached down, tweaked one of Harry's nipples, and added, "Something to be said for continuity of care, eh?"

"Ouch!....So...what did I miss last night?"

"You'll have to ask Parvati," Hermione quipped, as she lovingly stroked Harry's chest with the back of her hand. "She was the one caught trying to slip into your room wearing nothing more than your cloak and a smile."

"Really?" asked Harry. He then turned his head towards their house mate, who had returned to his bedside with an opened jar of salve in her hand.

"So, Parv...what did I miss last night?"

"Don't ask," the dark-haired witch replied. As she began to massage the healing salve into the arm closest to her she added, "You'll just get as frustrated as I am right now."

"Frustrated...or revved-up?"

"Yes."

"How did..."

"I won the rock-parchment-wand," Parvati explained. "Waited until I thought our nanny was asleep, and was all set to wet your dreams. Didn't get more than a step past our bedroom door before she caught me."

"Damn," Harry muttered. "So you said something about a tether?"

"Leftover magic from when we were little girls," Padma explained. "A parent or nanny can charm jewelry that links themselves to their children with something like an invisible leash. It can be used to either keep the children out of certain rooms, or gives them set a distance to run around free."

"And if the children try to go out of bounds?"

"Then Aya's bangles are set off and my ear stings like a bitch!"

"Language, Parvati!" Healer Patil called out, without turning away from the television screen.

"Yes, Auntie, Sorry Auntie," Parvati droned.

"Your ear?" Harry asked.

The brown-skinned Gryffindor nodded, and turned to show him the gold band that hugged the top of her left ear in a cartilage piercing.

"I've got one too," Padma noted. "We've had them for as long as I can remember."

Hermione frowned. "Sounds like the shock collars that Muggles put on their dogs."

"Pretty much," said Padma. "You get used to it...and get used to paying heed to the boundaries that are set."

"Of course, it helps when you are actually told how long the leash is," Parvati muttered.

Well, she did tell us to stay out of Harry's room last night, didn't she?"

"Yes, but..."

"Did you two know that these tethers were still in place?" asked Harry.

"Forgot, actually," Parvati admitted. "Been years since Aya has been our minder."

Hermione asked, "So she reactivated the charm last night?"

"The charm was never deactivated, Dear," Healer Patil called out, as she rose from her chair and walked back towards Harry's bedside. "According to custom, a parent or nanny keeps hold of their child's tether until their wedding day. And if it is a female child, the control is then transferred to the husband."

"Really?" asked Hermione. "That's..."

"A cultural tradition?" the Healer preemptively asked. She then answered her question with, "Yes...exactly."

"Oh," Harry said with slight grimace. "Does the husband at least have the option of cancelling the spell?"

"Yes, Dear," Madhura said with a wry smile. She then nodded to the Twins. "Nicely done, girls...clean up and you can start with the stones."

Parvati and Padma's moods instantly brightened as they stepped away from the bed and began to strip off the protective dragonhide. Hermione asked, "So how many husbands choose to keep their wives on a short leash?"

"A good many," Madhura admitted. "But it's not quite what you think."

"What do you mean, Auntie?" Padma called out.

The Healer looked over her shoulder towards the closed door, then gave the four teens a conspiring smile.

"Excuse us for a moment, Harry?" she asked.

"Erm...of course."

Healer Patil smiled her thanks, then took Hermione by the arm and guided her to where her nieces were re-wrapping their sari tops.

"You do know that the tethers can deliver more than just a sharp sting, right girls?"

"Yes, Auntie," Padma replied. "Sometimes, if Aya wanted a gentler reminder, our earrings would just vibrate."

The older witch smiled. "When I married your Uncle, I allowed him to keep me tethered, so long as it was kept to that particular setting."

Hermione frowned. "So it's okay for your husband to keep you on a magical leash, just so long as it doesn't sting when he tugs on it?"

"I get to decide when I'm wearing the tether-charmed jewelry, Dear...and it's more than okay when my husband uses that tether to provide me pleasure, rather than pain."

Padma pursed her lips, then gave the older witch a skeptical look. "Are you telling us that you are into submissive role play, Auntie?"

Madhura laughed melodically, and shook her head. After glancing back over her shoulder at Harry, she leaned forward, smiled, and casually formed a ring by joining the tip of her index finger and thumb. She then rested this ring against the front of her sari skirt.

"What I'm telling you is that the charm doesn't have to be applied to an earring," she whispered, "Other types of piercings work just as well."

There was a pause as the three younger witches glanced down at her fingers and considered this response.

There were three sets of blushed cheeks, once those witches cottoned on.

"Oh, Auntie...that's so *naughty*!" Parvati hissed.

"What's that?" Harry called out from across the room.

"Erm, nothing, sweetheart," Hermione called back.

Healer Patil squared up her shoulders, rested her hands at her side, and recast her expression into something that was far more professional.

"I've just got a few more minutes, ladies," she quietly stated. "You may wish to combine the patient's sponge bath with the paired stone treatment."

Hermione's eyes bugged out. "Really?" she squeaked.

"It's up to you," the Healer replied. "The stones are a priority. I don't have to be here for his wash up, but...I wouldn't be surprised if Aya insisted on holding the sponge herself in my absence."

Hermione and the Twins glanced at each other, not quite believing the situation as it was presented to them. It was Padma who had to ask for some clarification.

"So, Auntie, you'll be supervising as we...work?"

Healer Patil chuckled. "You've done these steps without my help right?"

Three bodies were frozen in response, as the possibilities raced through the fronts of three brains.

Healer Patil therefore took some initiative, and pulled one of the privacy screens away from an opened doorway, dragging it back into the room until it sat in between Harry's bed and the telly.

"Just make sure you have the patient's consent, ladies," she called out, as she ducked behind the screen and took a seat in front of the screen.

The four teen-agers stared in equal measure at the opening in the wall and the privacy screen that shielded Healer Patil from view.

"Reckon that Manuel is going to find a hiding spot to watch from outside that door?" Hermione whispered.

Parvati grinned. "Reckon it's worth the risk, all things considered."

All four were quick to agree.

"Take care to keep those saris dry, Dears," Healer Patil called out from her chair. "Don't want to overdo on using magic and drying charms while we're here, right?"

All four teens craned their heads towards the other side of the room, but failed to see the older witch staring back at them through one of the many small carved openings.

"Un-fucking-believable," Parvati hissed.

"Language, Dear!"

"Erm, yes, Auntie...sorry, Auntie."

The three teenaged witches all looked down at Harry.

"So, I guess we have to ask for your consent?" Hermione snarked.

Harry snorted and grinned at the same time.

"Figured as much," his bushy-haired girlfriend replied, as she pulled her top over her head. The Twins quickly followed suit, leaving all four teens bare-chested.

The shared state of undress lasted only for a moment, until Parvati and Padma were able to undo the knots in Harry's dhoti and pull the tented sheet off of his lower body.

The Boy-Who-Won had been naked in front of the three witches more than once before...but Healer Patil's inattention (whether feigned or real) was definitively raising the bar. And the three sets of bared breasts was definitively raising his erection.

"So...stones and sponging at the same time?" he asked.

The question caught the three teen-aged witches staring waist-high, and they blushed with no small amount of embarrassment as they each grabbed a stone or wash cloth.

"I'll do your front top half first, Harry?" Hermione asked.

He grinned. "While they do my bottom?"

The four thought they might have heard someone snort on other side of the room, but without a matronly admonishment, and with the loud television volume, probably not...right?

"Hush, Harry," Padma whispered. "Don't want to spoil things, do you?"

A snarky response instantly came to mind, but her "patient" thought better of it as he felt Parvati nudge the side of his erection with the back of her fingers as she balanced one of the paired healing stones high on his thigh.

Trying to make the situation at least sound less sexually charged than it really was, the teen-aged wizard asked, "So, Parvati...got caught with my cloak, then?"

His house mate nodded sadly. "Sorry, Harry. She slept in the same room with us, and had the tethers on a short leash. So Aya's got your invisibility cloak now, along with the Kama Sutra, and my..."

"Religious devices?" Padma interrupted.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "No devotionals to your lingam, then?"

"Not unless their nanny was worshipping last night," Hermione muttered.

"Oof!" winced Harry. He then whispered, "Trying to head off the need for vega relief with that erection-killing image?"

Hermione chuckled, and couldn't help but glance down the length of her patient's torso.

"Failed miserably if I was, eh?"

Harry rolled his eyes.

"So I've got three incredibly sexy half-naked witches giving me a rub-down while they joke about confiscated sex toys," he whispered. "It's going to take more than the thought of a masturbating nanny to put me off."

"Now, now...none of that," Hermione teased. "We are just providing therapeutic services...and nothing more, understand?" She then leaned across Harry's face so that she could rub down his far-side arm.

"Might be easier for him to agree with you if your tittle wasn't dangling in front of his mouth," Parvati quipped.

"Language!" Healer Patil called out.

Parvati snorted at her Auntie's choice of concerns, but promptly apologized, recognizing that she could easily need to reach across like that once they swapped stations.

When Harry lifted his head up to take a nip, Hermione teasingly pulled her dangling breast just out of reach. He responded by hissing out her name in frustration.

"Something hurts, Mr. Potter?" she asked innocently. "Need me to give you a helping hand?"

Harry groaned, and turned his head away. Healer Patil was, amazingly, still out of sight, pretending to be watching the telly on the far side of the screen.

"You're joking, right?" he whined.

"Oh, no, I newww-er joke about the health of my patient," Hermione solemnly replied. "And we can count on my supervising Healer to object if she felt the need, right?"

Harry took in a deep breath, then expelled it, causing the polished oblong stone that was balancing on his thigh to nearly wobble off. Parvati's fingers darted out to stabilize it, but grabbed more erection than rock.

Healer Patil called out, "That's Hermione's job to do today, Parvati."

"Yes, Auntie."

Padma waggled her eyebrows at her sister. "Notice she said 'today'?" she whispered.

Parvati grinned and nodded her head. Both Twins then watched with great interest as Hermione reached down, and began to wash and worship her own favorite lingam.

"Focus, you two!" a voice called.

"I am focusing!" Parvati hissed, her eyes intently tracking Hermione's handiwork.

"Focus on your stone work!"

"Yes, Auntie," the Twins whined.

It took a few more tries before an arrangement was reached that was agreeable to all. Padma was in charge of rubbing the white stone on Harry's left arm while Parvati held the green against his collarbone. Padma then held the green stone while Parvati rubbed down the right. It wasn't all that hard to hold a stone still against Harry's shoulder, so there were plenty of opportunities for at least one of the twins to watch what was going on below.

Opportunities that weren't always taken, though.

When it was Padma's turn to hold the healing stone still, she decided to stand at the head of the massage table, so that she could watch and run her fingers through Harry's hair at the same time. When he closed his eyes and groaned with pleasure, Hermione teasingly shushed him. And Padma decided that she ought to help Harry keep quiet by leaning down and covering his lips with hers.

The lack of complaints from across the room about the snogging emboldened the Ravenclaw. She broke off the kiss, and offered up a breast instead.

The offer was quickly taken up.

A jealous sister hissed, "Why didn't I think of that?"

Padma smiled, both at the question, and from Harry's gentle nibbling.

"I'm sure you were, Parv," she quietly replied. "You just didn't show the kind of Gryffindor courage necessary to follow through."

Parvati gave a mock scowl. It would have been easier to look upset if she hadn't been grinding up against Harry's limp hand.

The rubbing, and stroking, and grinding, and nibbling carried on without complaint, and in no time at all Harry broke off of his suckle and hissed, "*Going to...*"

Padma lifted Harry's head up so that he could watch as easily as she could. Hermione was paying the others no mind, so focused she was on her technique....one hand holding the wash cloth just above the head while the other stroked the length.

But at the moment of truth....she blocked the other's view of the fireworks.

Not with the cloth...but with the back of her head, as she bent down and caught Harry's release with her mouth.

"Holy Shit!"

"Language, Parvati!"

"Language?" gasped Padma.

Harry was gasping too, but was too shocked to add voice to the emotion.

Hermione continued to stroke, and to cover, until she felt Harry's body relax. There was a massive closed-lip grin on her face once she pulled back. The brown-haired witch made sure that she had the attention of the other three teen-agers before she visibly swallowed, and gave them a look of smug satisfaction.

Parvati's gaze bounced from Hermione's lips to the wooden screen hiding her Auntie, and then back again, as if she were watching a tennis match.

There'd been no objections.

Padma leaned over Harry's body and said, "Come here, Hermione."

The brown-haired witch chuckled and leaned towards her Ravenclaw girlfriend, expecting a kiss.

What she got instead was a lick on the corner of her mouth.

Padma made her own show of swallowing, then smiled.

"Missed some," she explained.

"Need to finish up," called Healer Patil.

"Yes, Auntie."

"At least somebody got to finish off," Parvati pouted.

Hermione glanced down at Harry's crotch and smiled. "Doesn't look like he's finished yet."

"Is that a complaint?" Padma teased.

"No, it's another opportunity."

"Ladies?"

"Yes, Auntie."

Hermione shook her head. "Sorry Harry...have to turn you over."

"No worries," he grinned. "That was....that was brilliant!"

"No, it was medicinal," Hermione shot back.

Her waggling eyebrows suggested otherwise.

The three witches rolled Harry over onto his stomach, and quickly set themselves to finishing their assigned tasks.

Hermione was rubbing down Harry's back when Parvati whispered, "What made you think that you could do that?"

The bushy-haired witch giggled.

I was....erm...minding the Healer's instructions."

"What?" Harry snorted. "She told you to..."

"She told all of us to limit our magic use," Hermione glibly interrupted. "And if I'd gotten the cloth all sticky...then how could I have scrubbed Harry's back?"

"With the luffa?" he asked.

"Why are you offering up viable alternatives?"

"Erm, right. Never mind."

"So there were perfectly logical, therapeutic reasons," Hermione concluded with a wink. "Didn't have anything to do with checklists, or moving lines drawn in the sand down the beach..."

"Or with fulfilling your pervy fantasies?"

"Hush!"

Harry shook his head in disbelief.

"So," he asked, "When do I get to play doctor and provide some relief?"

Parvati grinned as she ground against Harry's heel.

"What makes you think that you aren't?"

Healer Patil appeared from behind the screen before her niece had opportunity to elaborate (or finish off).

"Time for me to return home," she announced.

"Awww...Auntie...just a few more minutes?"

"Sorry."

"You'll be back tonight, right?"

The Healer smiled, and gave Parvati a sympathetic one-arm hug.

"At six this evening...plenty of time for you three to refine your therapeutic techniques?"

"With Aya around?" Padma asked. "Theory perhaps...but not the practical."

"Ah, yes...Aya," the Auntie replied. "Speaking of which...your nursing attire, ladies?"

The three younger witches looked down, and realized that they were still topless.

"But what about Harry?" Parvati asked, dragging a hand up the back of his leg.

A now-sleeping patient replied with a snore.

Madhura shook her head and smiled. "Let us assume that this is the result of the medicine working, and not the typical male response after sex."

"Sex?" Hermione asked. "There wasn't any sex here, Auntie...it was all therapy."

The older witch shook her head and smirked. "Ah, yes. Of course, Dear. Therapy. Thank you for correcting me."

The Healer volunteered to dress their sleeping patient, giving the three teen-aged witches just enough time to throw shawls over shoulders before a highly-suspicious nanny was allowed back into the room.

oo00OO00oo

Hermione and her girlfriends found themselves pushed out the door of the hut just as soon as the Healer's portkey activated. They had expressed a desire to return to their bedroom for a "nap," but the nanny was insistent on the three getting some fresh air.

They thought it more likely the old witch just wanted Manuel to mind them while she sat in front of the telly. And minding the three witches was something that the manservant was more than happy to do.

"Please, Memsahib, come this way," he instructed, gesturing towards the beach.

"Not many other ways to go," Parvati snarked.

It would have been hard to argue otherwise, given the postage stamp size of the island.

A few steps away from the hut placed them on a pristine white-sand beach that ringed the light-green lagoon. A large canopy was set up on the edge, where flowering vines anchored the sand under the shade of a coconut tree. But Hermione's immediate focus was closer to the water line, where a long fiberglass board sat on the beach next to a rigged sail.

"Brilliant!" she exclaimed, running towards the board. "Haven't been on one of these since I holidayed with Mum and Dad in France."

"What's that?"

"It's a sailboard...Muggle cross between a sailboat and a surfboard."

"What's a surfboard?" asked Parvati.

"And how do you fly it?" asked Padma.

"You don't fly, silly...you float," Hermione replied, as she grabbed the boom and pulled the mast up off of the sand. "Hold the sail with your hands, like this...and lean back, and let the wind carry you across the water."

"Oh...so you need wind, then?" asked Parvati.

Hermione nodded as she looked up at the still fronds on top of the handful of trees.

"So much for that idea," she decided, letting the uphaul rope slip through her grasp.

"Looks like you'd need something to wear other than a sari," Padma added.

Manuel stepped up and gestured back towards the four-cornered canopy.

"Eeef you please...very good selection of bathing costumes available for your use."

The three looked at eager man, then shared a skeptical look.

"Might as well have a see?" asked Parvati.

The other two agreed and they followed the manservant up to the canopy, where several wooden chests sat on the edge of a non-flying woven ground cover. Manual enthusiastically dashed towards one of the chests, dropped to his knees, and began to rummage around inside.

"Yes, please, just one moment...very good choice, please.....ah! Si! Si! Si!"

The pseudo-Spaniard jumped up in triumph, holding three small bits of fabric in his hands.

"If you please, Memsahibs..." he nearly shouted, turning back towards the three witches. He stopped in front of Hermione, dropped to his knees, then pressed one of the bits of fabric in string against the front of her sari skirt.

"Blue is looking very good color," he declared, pushing the "garment" into Hermione's hand. And before anyone could say anything, he hobbled on his knees over to the twins and offered up bits of pink and black material.

Padma held Manuel's offering up to her skeptical eye.

"Manuel?"

"Si?"

"This is a swimming costume?"

"Si!"

"So where's the top part?"

"Que?"

"The other half?"

"Que?"

"The bra?"

"Que?"

"Never mind the top," Parvati chimed in, giving her own present a look-over. "This is supposed to be a bottom?"

"Si!"

"The bottom part of a swim costume?"

“Si, si!”

Parvati held the triangular piece of fabric against her front.

“So where’s the back?”

“Que?”

“The back of these bottoms?”

“Que?”

“The part that covers your bum?”

“Que?”

But then Manuel’s eyes lit up. “Ahhhh! Si, si, si!”

Then he pointed down to the dangling thinnest corner of the triangle, barely half a centimeter wide, and smiled.

“Aqui!”

“What...that’s what covers your bum?” Padma asked incredulously.

Hermione, who had been chuckling during the entire dialogue, finally decided to help explain.

“They’re a kind of Muggle swim costume called a thong,” she stated. “Or at least I think they are.”

“Si! A thooooong!” Manuel agreed. “Very beautiful swimming costume for very beautiful ladies.”

“Very skimpy costumes, too,” said Padma. “Let me guess, then...there is no top?”

“Nope.”

“And it’s just this bit of floss to cover your bum?”

“Ah, yes...at least I think so.”

Hermione turned to Manuel and asked, “So where’s the waistband?”

“Que?”

“The top part?”

“Que?”

The bushy-haired witch rolled her eyes. “How do you put it on?”

“Ah.....Si, si, si!”

Manuel then took Hermione’s bit of fabric, and held it against the front of his black pants (which he thankfully kept on during the demonstration).

What followed was a very funny scene that involved Manuel trying to figure out how to tie the thong around his waist. He twisted and turned like a cat chasing his tail without being able to get the thing to stay in place. It really was much funnier to watch than read about it, though.

Padma used this time to look at her own bit of fabric, and managed to figure out how it worked.

“That longer piece of string is the waistline,” she declared. “It goes around one hip, through the loop at the end of the triangle, and then around the other hip, where you tie it to the shorter piece of string on the other side of the front.”

“How?” Parvati asked. “Why don’t you show us?”

“Erm...because I’m wearing a sari?”

“So take it off, Sis.”

“In front of Manuel?”

“Then help him put that one on, Little Miss Ravenclaw.”

Padma frowned.

“Does it really matter?” she asked. “Are you going to wear it once I do?”

“Good point,” Hermione decided. “Manuel, do you have any other swim costumes that are more...conservative?”

“Que?”

“Right...didn't think so.”

“Not to worry, Memsahib...there is most excellent magic working for you.”

“Really?”

“Yes, please. Very much no worry about showing me your lovely bum.”

“What!” Hermione yelled, barely resisting the urge to cuff him herself.

Manuel flinched away from Hermione's raised hand.

“Si! Si! Is because of my job, Memsahib...dees-cretion from what I see.”

“You mean discretion?”

“Yes, Memsahib,” Manuel replied taking two steps away from the witch. “Eef you show me your most lovely bits...I see, but I no remember what I see.”

“What are you on about?” asked Parvati. “Some kind of memory charm?”

“Yes, Memsahib. During the day, I see. And eef you wish...I could touch...and rub oil on your lovely bodies. No problems. I no remember. I would be most pleased to assist you.”

“Yeah, I bet you would,” Padma muttered. “But there is some memory charm at work, right?”

“Yes, Memsahib.”

“When exactly does it work, then?”

The mustachioed manservant frowned in thought.

“I am not certain, Memsahib,” he admitted. “I forget sometime between the rubbing of the lovely lady bits...and the time when I am alone in bed and wish to rub myself.”

“You're having us on,” Padma skeptically declared.

“No, no! Ees true!”

Hermione was unconvinced.

“Maybe something we can independently verify,” she decided. “Ask Auntie about it tonight?”

“Alright,” Padma replied. “In the meantime, we can at least lose the shawl tops, right?”

The other two agreed, and slipped the upper half of the sari off of their shoulders.

“Oh! Very Good!” Manuel exclaimed, taking in a sharp breath.

“What?”

Parvati chuckled, and pointed towards Hermione's bared middle.

“Remember just how sexy your belly button is, sweetheart?”

Hermione rolled her eyes, turned away from the man, and looked inside the opened trunk.

“Hopefully that's something Manuel will soon forget. Right, so what else is there to play with...hey, are these flying carpets?”

Parvati walked over and nodded. “Looks like it...there's the kazis.”

“Fancy another ride?” asked Padma, glancing over Hermione's shoulder. She frowned when she saw the stack of extremely narrow two-foot wide, three-foot long woven rugs. “Oh, but they're all runners, aren't they?”

“Ah, like those lay-on-your-belly models we saw last night,” Hermione stated. “Wonder what they're for, then?”

Manuel stepped up and announced, “The Maharajah has a most enjoyable time playing Beach Quidditch, Memsahibs.”

“Beach Quidditch?” asked Parvati. “On carpets?”

“Yes, Memsahib...please, if you wish to see...the rings, they are hidden in the trees on each side of the lagoon.”

"So you play over the water, instead of a pitch, and use these instead of brooms?"

"Yes, Memsahib."

"Sounds like fun," Parvati declared.

"Sounds like a good way to break your neck," Hermione replied.

"It ees very safe," Manuel stated. "Memsahibs already knowing how to fly, yes?"

"Only on a broom," Hermione admitted.

"We've flown a bit on carpets," offered Parvati. "But just the bigger steer-with-your-bum models."

"I would be most pleased to teach," said Manuel. He grabbed one of the small circular cushions and positioned it in front of his crotch. "It is much the same...to turn left you turn this way...to turn right you turn that way. Spread your legs to climb, bring them together to dive."

"Dare I ask how you control the speed?" asked Hermione.

"Yes, Memsahib," grinned Manuel. "Thrust and clench the buttocks to accelerate...draw back and relax the buttocks to brake."

Hermione snorted at the sight of the small manservant dry humping the seat cushion.

"Thrust.....relax...thrust...relax....thrust...."

"Yes, thank you, Manuel...I get it."

The grinning manservant nodded his head. "Very good, Memsahib...so you will try, yes?"

Hermione chewed on her lower lip and look back towards the hut.

"I'd rather be trying to ride something else, but..."

"Wouldn't we all!" Parvati exclaimed.

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A/N: Once upon a time, twenty years and four stone ago, I actually wore one of those string thong thingies on the beaches of South India. Seemed only fair, since that's all most of the women were wearing at the time.

Alternative Medicine

Ch 13: They Call Me Mem-Sahib!

The lagoon's warm waters and gentle drop-off were just forgiving enough to convince Hermione and the Patil twins to give carpet piloting a go. Manuel was disappointed that they chose not to wear the thongs he had selected for them during this effort...until the first time each witch fell into the water and climbed back onto their carpets in their wet, clingy undergarments.

And fell they did. The small circular pillows called "kazipo" that were used to steer the magic carpets were incredibly responsive to the slightest shift in weight...a good thing when you were chasing the snitch in a pick-up game of carpet quidditch, but not so good when you were just strting out.

Through trial and much error, Hermione and the Twins finally figured out on their own how to keep their carpets steady as they hovered a few feet over the water. They built upon this success by drifting out to the mouth of the lagoon, where the shallow jade green waters met the darker, deeper blues of the open sea.

"I don't dare look over my shoulder," said Hermione, as they hovered in an inward-facing three-pointed star. "Am I giving Manuel a look up my slip?"

Padma lifted her head for a glance back towards the beach and smiled.

"No worries, Luv...your slip is clinging too tightly against your legs and bum to offer him a view of your yoni."

"Thanks, that makes me feel so much better."

"We could always head back to the beach and put our saris back on," Parvati offered.

"And give Manuel an even closer look?" Hermione asked.

"There's always those thongs," Padma teased.

"Oh, right...let's leave nothing to his imagination."

"Okay, so we'll hover out here until our clothes dry," Parvati replied, as she reached back and pulled the clinging fabric of her own slip away from her skin. She glanced back towards the beach and shook her head. The manservant assigned by the Maharajah to look after them while they dodged the MoM's international arrest warrant had a wide smile on his face...and a noticeable bulge in black trousers.

"I'm surprised that Manuel hasn't applied a notice-me-not charm and pulled it out for a tug," she complained.

"Can't hardly blame him," Padma snarked. "The way that that you can see the color of Memsahib's nipples through her wet choli."

Hermione scowled, and risked losing her balance by releasing a white-knuckled grip on her carpet fringe just long enough to reach down and splash a handful of water towards Padma.

"Notice-me-not's might not be such a bad idea," the target said with a smile. "With the way that Aya is minding and monitoring, could be the only way any of us finds relief."

"No wand use on the island, remember?" Hermione asked. "And as for any of us getting off...how many hours is it until Auntie's next house visit?"

"Too bloody long," Parvati pouted. "But that just means that Harry gets some relief."

"Patience, Parv," Hermione advised. "Who knows what she'll let you two get away with now that I've raised the bar."

"You mean swallowed the bar?" Padma teased.

"Hush!" Hermione hissed, sending another splash of water towards her lover.

"So how should we choreograph Harry's next treatment?" Parvati asked.

"Imagine Auntie will have a say there," Padma replied. "Not to say that Harry shouldn't have a say as well."

"You're assuming that he'll have a chance to speak, in between Aya stuffing her fingers in his mouth," Parvati pouted. "Her treating all of us like children is going to get really old, really fast."

"For a good cause, though...isn't it?" Hermione asked. "If suffering under your nanny's eye is the only way your parents will let you two stay here?"

What's your excuse, then?" Parvati asked Hermione. "She's not your nanny, is she?"

The Muggleborn witch shrugged. "No, she isn't. But that doesn't mean that I have anything to gain by ignoring her, or by disrespecting her position and her culture."

Padma sighed, and started to challenge Hermione's viewpoints.

"Actually, I don't think that you are considering her position..."

"Padma! Parvati!" a voice called out from the beach.

The three teen-aged witches turned towards the call, and spied Aya waving them back towards shore.

"You were saying, Love?" Hermione sighed.

"We could always pretend that we can't hear her?" asked Parvati.

"No, let's head back," said Hermione, "before she tests the range of your tethers."

Padma nodded in agreement, as she reflexively grabbed the charmed silver band that rested snugly against the cartilage in her left ear.

Of the three, Parvati had had the most success flying her carpet "by the front of her pants" (even though she wasn't wearing any at the time), so she took the lead back to shore, slowly tugging the other two as they each held onto an ankle.

"I am going to be so happy on the day that Aya loses control of these charmed earrings," Parvati said.

"Depends on who she hands the tether too, though...doesn't it?" asked Padma.

"Not to mention where you decided to wear it," Hermione added with a thin smile. "Honestly...let's set aside the issue of clitoral piercings for now. The idea of my husband having that kind of control over me..."

"Like you said, Sweetheart...depends on whom she gives it to," Padma replied. "Auntie doesn't seem to have suffered."

Parvati waggled her eyebrows and said, "So what about you, Hermione? You're so concerned with respecting cultures...will you get a charmed piercing if the two of us move ours down there?"

Hermione snorted. "Not unless Harry gets a matching ring and gives me control of it."

"Now that would be an interesting wedding ceremony," quipped Parvati.

"Settled on Harry, then?" Padma teased.

"Haven't we all?" Hermione said with a smile.

"I don't think I could settle on Harry," Parvati said seriously.

"What?" her sister asked.

"I said that I don't think I could settle on him," Parvati repeated. "Bounce up and down on him? Sure, no problem. Or grind on him, or rub on him..."

The laughter that this joke generated carried the three witches into shore.

Aya had a very scolding tone to her voice as she tossed Padma and Parvati their saris. The haranguing didn't let up until they had both rewrapped their skirts and draped their shawl tops over their wet cholis. The Twins took this in stride, until their nanny grabbed them each by hand and tried to drag them inside the hut. Their insistence that they be allowed to help Hermione dress was met with grudging acceptance.

Hermione shook her head. "You two...you don't have to help if she wants you inside."

"Are you going to have Manuel help wrap your skirt, then?"

The manservant in question quickly stepped up. "I would be very much pleased to be of assistance to Memsahib!"

Aya rewarded Manuel's eagerness to please with a cuff to the back of his head.

"I bet he would be pleased," Padma muttered.

Parvati used the momentary distraction to explain to Hermione that their nanny wanted them to practice their needle work...a task that Aya insisted (in Malayalam) that she need not share. The twins were ready to protest this exclusion, but Hermione held them back, whispering that she wanted to ask Manuel a few questions outside of the nanny's earshot.

As the Muggleborn witch watched the other three women walk back inside the hut, she wondered what exactly the nanny was saying as she scolded in her native tongue. Hermione decided to add language lessons to the wish list of things to do while they lay low on the island.

"Eef eet would please Memsahib?" Manuel asked, in his mock Spanish accent.

Hermione glanced over her shoulder towards the manservant, who was now standing in the shade of a canopy that was supported by over four bamboo corner poles. Manuel had somehow managed to pull a small rattan table and a much larger cushioned rattan chair out from the magically-enlarged container of beach gear, and had positioned the chair so that it faced out towards the lagoon.

“Memsahib would be most comfortable here?” he asked, motioning for Hermione to have a seat.

She would have rather there had been two seats so that they might talk on more equal terms, but Manuel would have none of that suggestion. Hermione sank into the thickly-cushioned chair, adjusted her skirt, and tried to make herself as comfortable as possible, given the way that he was hovering over her.

The tall, iced-filled, lime-garnished glass that he conjured (literally?) from the box offered the possibility of making the task of getting comfortable just a bit easier.

“Cool drink, Memsahib?”

Hermione nodded her head in thanks as she took the glass in hand and sipped from its straw. With the Ayurvedic diet regimen that they had been following, she had assumed that she had been offered the South Asian version of a “kiddy cocktail.”

The distinct taste of juniper berries and the burn in the back of her throat tested that assumption.

“Is that...what...a gin and tonic?”

“Is it pleasing for Memsahib?”

Hermione thought about chiding the manservant for answering a question with another question, but it really was pleasing, and she was eighteen and legal to drink alcohol, so did it really matter? She took another long sip, then rested the glass on the small side table and smiled.

“That was very pleasing, Manuel. Thank you.”

“You are most welcomed, Memsahib,” he replied. Then he looked towards the sun and shook his head. “The sun will be strong today...Memsahib should have proper protection.”

Hermione shook her head, wondering if he was going to push the idea of oil rubbing again.

“The sunscreen salve should still be working,” she noted. “And so long as I am here, and in the shade...”

Hermione’s reply dropped off when she notice that Manuel wasn’t listening...that he couldn’t listen to her so long as he was leaning over the edge of the magically-enlarged box with his head and arms completely inside.

She watched with increasing amusement as he frantically searched for what he was certain she needed most. One object after another was retrieved, then tossed aside...a full set of snorkel gear, a tiger-skin rug, a badminton set, all twenty-two volumes of an old Muggle encyclopedia...

“Ah, yes, yes!” Manuel declared, as he pulled a steamer trunk out of the box and set it down on the sand. He opened the heavy brass latches, pushed open the top, and let loose a small mountain of vintage women’s clothing.

Hermione frowned at the pile of pretty petticoats, corsets, and stockings.

“I’m quite happy wearing a sari, Manuel.”

“Yes, Memsahib,” he replied, totally ignoring the meaning behind the statement as he continued his search.

As Hermione watched Manuel push aside one Victorian-era outfit then the next, she shook her head, and wondered how any of the “real” Memsahibs of the British Raj had been able to stand the heat with all of the layers, long sleeves, and high-necked collars. Not to say that the skirts and blouses and undergarments weren’t beautifully tailored, or made from the finest of fabrics...because they were. A wistful smile grew on Hermione’s lips as she imagined how much fun she would have had as a child, playing dress-up with the contents of the trunk. That smile grew as she imagined how much fun a bushy-haired, green-eyed daughter might have in some future game of dress-up...especially if that game was played with her black-haired half-sisters...

A shout of triumph brought Hermione out of her daydreaming. She looked up at Manuel, and arched her eyebrows over what he was proudly holding in his hands.

“A sola topi, Memsahib,” he declared. “Proper protection for Memsahib and her most beautiful skin.”

“Looks more like a pith helmet to me,” said Hermione.

“Yes, Memsahib.”

“Yes it is a pith helmet, or yes I hear what you are saying?”

“Que?”

“Oh, never mind. It’s, erm...lovely, Manuel. Very practical, I’m sure...dead useful if we were on safari.”

Yes, Memsahib."

"But we're on the beach, aren't we?"

Manuel's shoulders slumped.

"So, sorry, Memsahib...one moment, please."

The manservant tossed away the khaki-covered helmet and dove back into the trunk. He emerged holding a lilac-colored hat that had an eight-inch wide floppy brim. It was possibly straw-woven, but it was hard to see any of the straw that was hiding behind the burst of oversized flower blossoms that nearly completely covered the hat.

It was the kind of hat Hermione imagined Augusta Longbottom might wear to Ascot, if only there was a vulture perching on its oversized brim.

"Very, erm...regal, Manuel. I could easily see the Queen Mum wearing that kind of hat."

"Yes, Memsahib!" he replied brightly, not catching the left-handed compliment.

"But so long as I'm in the shade, is there really a need for me to be wearing any kind of hat?"

Manuel frowned. "Every memsahib must be wearing a hat when the memsahib ees out in the sun," he said quietly.

"Except when you're encouraging her to wear nothing more than a thong?"

"Que?"

"Oh, nothing," Hermione quickly replied. Not wishing to review the entire contents of the trunk, she leaned towards it and spotted a simple, wide-brimmed, creme-colored straw hat whose only adornment was a three-inch wide gold silk band.

She pointed, and asked, "How about that one, Manuel?"

The man's eyes went wide. "Of course, Memsahib! A most excellent choice!"

Hermione smiled, and allowed Manuel to set the selected hat down upon her mass of bushy-brown hair (ignoring the fact that this might allow him to look behind her shawl top and down the front of her choli top). A wide smile formed on his face as he took a step backwards.

"Ees most appropriate that Memsahib be selecting Memsahib's hat," he declared. "Eet was once worn by the Maharajah's Auntie."

"Really?" Hermione asked. "This was fashionable to wear in Travancore?"

"Yes, Memsahib. Very popular style for all of the memsahibs. So beautiful," he gushed. "But still...one moment, please..."

"Oh, now what?" Hermione muttered to herself, hoping that Manuel wasn't going to pull out a parasol and expect her to carry it around the island. She was pleasantly surprised when instead he retrieved a pair of quite-fashionable (and quite modern) Muggle sunglasses.

"Would Memsahib wish something to read?" Manuel asked. "The day's newspapers, perhaps?"

"They can be delivered out here?" she teased.

"Yes, Memsahib," was the serious reply.

Hermione chewed on her lip for a moment. Her eyes drifted towards the beached sailboard, and she sighed.

"If only there was a bit of wind," she lamented.

"Right away, Memsahib!" Manuel declared, as he rushed back towards the charmed box and dove back into it.

Hermione snorted.

"I suppose you have an eight-knot breeze hiding in that box?"

"Yes, Memsahib, I have very, very many knots for you!"

The proof soon followed, when Manuel pulled out a long wooden handle. Dozens of overlapping peacock feathers were tied (with knots) to the end of that handle, splayed out to form a fan fit for a sultan.

Or a Maharajah. Or, apparently, a memsahib.

Hermione tried not to giggle as Manuel began to wave the feathered fan in her direction.

"I was talking about sailboarding, Manuel."

"Que?"

It's a lovely gesture...but I don't think your arms are strong enough to create a breeze that could fill the sail."

"Que?"

"So it was just a bit of confusion...you really don't have to do that for me."

"Yes, Memsahib," the manservant replied, as he continued to slowly wave the oversized-fan.

"I'm serious, Manuel."

"Yes, Memsahib."

Hermione sighed, frustrated by the selective comprehension gap. He was acting so much like a house-elf...so insisting on pleasing her...

The comparison drew any potential admonishments over servitude up short. It had taken a long time for her to understand why her campaign to free the Hogwarts house-elves had been so misguided and so unwanted by those she was claiming to help. A long time...and a lot of pushing before Dobby was willing to bravely set her right over the need for house-elves to bind themselves to the magic of the families they served (or to the castle itself, in the case of Hogwarts). This was obviously something different...Manuel was not a house-elf. He did not need to be bound...as far as she knew. Or assumed?

"Manuel, you've been brilliant this morning...I'll be fine just sitting here on the beach, sipping my cool drink. You don't need to fan me, or serve me."

"Yes, Memsahib."

"Yes, you understand me, or yes, you do need to serve me?"

"Eet ees my job, Memsahib."

Hermione shook her head, and took off her sunglasses, hoping that looking directly into the servant's eyes would help convey the seriousness of her beliefs. "You really don't have to work that hard, though," she said.

"Yes, Memsahib."

"You do take breaks, and days off, and have vacation time...right?"

"I am very happy to be serving Memsahib. Eet ees not something that requires me to take days off."

"Why not?"

Manuel shrugged (while still slowly pumping the fan in Hermione's direction.)

"Eet ees what I do, Memsahib. Eet ees my station...my purpose."

Hermione frowned. "You mean it's something related to caste?"

"No, Memsahib...eet ees...magic can bless those born in any caste. Being Manuel...Eet ees being related to something that I very much enjoy, and eet has always been that way."

The thought of enjoying getting smacked on the head led Hermione to wonder whether there was a streak of masochism at work here.

"So you don't mind being cuffed when someone that you're serving is displeased?"

Manuel smiled. "Eet ees no problem, Memsahib."

Hermione sighed, giving up the argument...for now.

"Well, again...I just want to say how brilliant you've been...if only Aya acted a bit more like the way that you do."

Manuel frowned just the slightest bit.

"Eet ees not right how Aya ees acting, Memsahib, but...Aya ees also behaving as Aya should."

"What? It's wrong, but she's acting right? I'm confused."

"Yes, Memsahib...Aya ees also confused."

"Confused about what?"

The manservant stopped fanning, and thought for a few moments. Hermione's hopes that this might be the start of a serious discussion were dashed when he then shook his head and asked, "More cool drinks, Memsahib?" The question was rhetorical, though, with the glass replaced by a fresh gin and tonic before she could reply.

Manuel smiled, and said, "Memsahib will be very much happy and Aya be very much acting as she should when Memsahib ees acting as she should, Memsahib."

Hermione winced as she sipped the new drink and mulled over the manservant's extensive use of the third person...it was far too similar to the way that Dobby spoke. And then there were the continued references to Raj-era women of the British Empire. When Padma or Parvati teasingly called her "Memsahib," they did so with heavy doses of playful irony. She wondered if he was actually serious.

"Manuel?"

"Si, Memsahib?"

"When you say I am a memsahib...is it because I am female and English?"

"Si, Memsahib," he replied, starting to fan her once more.

"Just like the English women who lived here before Independence?"

"Si, si."

"Does that mean that every female Brit that holidays in India is a memsahib, then?"

"Oh, no, Memsahib...these others, they are not...they are not memsahib."

"Why not?"

"Because...they are...as Memsahib says...they are making their holidays, and dancing, and acting as prostitutes as they lie almost naked on the beach. They are not making a proper home for their sahib."

Hermione frowned. "So you are saying that Harry is my sahib? My Master?"

"Eet ees not true, Memsahib? You did not come to India to be with your sahib, and to care for him?"

"Yes, but..."

"And you will be staying with your sahib eef he becomes the Maharajah's royal warden, no?"

"Well, we haven't made any long-term decisions, but...and it's not as if we're married, Manuel."

The manservant grinned. "Yes, Memsahib."

Hermione sighed. "So you're saying that the only way to keep Aya from treating Harry and me as if we were children under her charge is to treat Aya as if she was a servant?"

Manuel's eyes lit up. "Exactamente, Memsahib!"

"And for me to treat you like a servant as well, Manuel? You want me to be Sybill?"

The manservant frowned. "To be running Sahib's household like Sybill? Si. Pero...to be Sybill? No, Memsahib...ees no good eef Sybill be wearing Memsahib's beautiful bathing costume."

"Don't see any good if I wore it either, Manuel."

"Que?"

"That thong you gave me."

"But Memsahib would be looking very beautiful!"

"I'd also be looking like all of the English girls on holiday here...didn't you just called them prostitutes for how they dressed for the beach?"

"Si, Memsahib."

"So why would I want to show that kind of disrespect and make you think of me that way?"

"No ees disrespecting because Memsahib ees so very beautiful."

"That doesn't make any...those girls on holiday are beautiful, not me."

"Memsahib ees very beautiful."

"But you would still be thinking I'm acting like a beautiful prostitute if I wore that thong, right?"

"No, Memsahib...ees very much different," Manuel claimed. "This ees very much a private island, and you would be wearing your swim costume to please your sahib."

"You're saying that it's okay to act like a whore, so long as I'm Harry's whore?" Hermione asked with a raised voice.

No, Memsahib...I am very much sorry that my explanation...my English...eet ees so poor..."

"No, Manuel...I'm the one that should be apologizing...I just don't understand...just trying to be respectful of your country and your culture..."

"Memsahib is very much appreciated for wearing her most beautiful sari, and eating our food with her fingers, and for trying to be the same as her most beautiful female lovers, but..."

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked with a blush. "Padma and Parvati are just good friends."

Manuel replied with an enigmatic smile.

"Yes, Memsahib...and Memsahib be doing very good for her sahib by bringing her most beautiful lover friends into his household."

Hermione snorted.

"So you're saying that it's perfectly acceptable for me to walk around here in a thong, so long as it's for Harry's benefit?"

"Yes, Memsahib."

Hermione still wasn't convinced.

"So what would Healer Patil say?" she asked. "She's already told me that she appreciated the fact that I chose to wear a sari on the beach."

Manuel considered the point for a few moments.

"Memsahib was covering her most beautiful bits on the public beach in Kovalum, si?"

"Si," Hermione replied, smiling after catching her fall into Manuel's Spanish-speaking shtick.

"Memsahib ees being respectful, then, by not showing her most beautiful bits to all of the men there. Here...ees no problem."

"But you're a man, right Manuel?"

"Si, Memsahib."

"So why isn't that a problem?"

Manuel chuckled. "Ees no problem, because I no remember how beautiful your bits are, Memsahib."

"But you would still perv on them now, though...right?"

"What I am thinking or dreaming ees of no consequence, Memsahib. I am just Manuel, the manservant. I see, but I do not see."

"You mean you perv, but you do not perv?"

"Que?"

"Never mind...still don't think Auntie would approve...even if I did claim it was for Harry's benefit. He's not even out here right now."

A wide grin formed on Manuel's face. "Si, Memsahib, but I think...that eef you tell him about your most beautiful swimming costume, and how you warm your most lovely bum een the sun...the idea will be pleasing to Sahib?"

"So would walking around starkers," Hermione snorted.

Manuel's breath caught in his throat. "Ees no problem warming *all* of Memsahib's lovely bits, eef Memsahib decides eet ees making Sahib happy."

"What if I decide that sharing a bed with my Sahib would be best?" challenged Hermione.

"Ees no problem."

"Really? And Auntie would think the same thing?"

Manuel shrugged. "Healer Patil ees not making problems for Memsahib this morning, when Memsahib be worshiping and kissing Sahib's lingam and swallowing Sahib's seed, no?"

"I wasn't worshiping his...but how did you..."

"Que?"

"Oh, Merlin," Hermione sighed. "But...yes, you're right. She didn't interfere because it was therapeutic."

"Si, Memsahib."

Hermione let out a deep breath that was filled with exasperation.

“So what if I decided that it would be best for my sahib if Padma and Parvati joined us in bed?” she challenged.

Manuel frowned. “Sorry, Memsahib, but eet would be a more difficult issue,” he replied. “Eet ees they who are being minded by their Aya, not Memsahib.” He shrugged, then added, “Perhaps eef the Healer...she decides that eet ees necessary for Sahib’s recovery?”

“Yes, well...it does sound like I need to have a rather frank discussion with the Healer this evening,” Hermione decided. “So in the meantime... what?”

Manuel nodded towards the Muggle snorkel gear that he’d earlier tossed aside. Then he set down the long-handled fan, reached into his pockets, and pulled out a bottle of sunscreen salve and the royal blue thong he’d picked out for her use.

“I would be most pleased to assist Memsahib in the hour before lunch,” he declared with a smile. “The reef is beautiful to see, and eef Memsahib wishes my help putting on her lovely swim costume to swim in the lagoon, or for me to be rubbing the sunscreen on her most beautiful body?”

Hermione rolled her eyes, then glanced towards the hut.

“Excuse me for a moment, Manuel.”

“Of course, Memsahib.”

When the Muggleborn witch walked into the magically-expanded interior, she found Padma and Parvati toiling with embroidery needles in hand under their nanny’s watchful eye.

“Harry still asleep?” she asked.

“Yes, Aya just checked a few minutes ago,” Parvati replied. “Nice hat.”

“Oh...thanks. And right, then. Could I borrow one of you for a few minutes?”

“I’ll go!” the Twins said loudly, and in stereo.

Their elderly minder clamped down on their enthusiasm with a scolding in Malayalam.

“Is there a problem?” Hermione asked.

“Aya is quite insistent that we need to practice our needlework to have any hope of being proper wives,” said Padma.

Hermione drew in a deep breath, and held it while she considered her response. Deciding that maybe it was time to test out Manuel’s opinions about reining in the nanny, she walked resolutely towards the other three and grabbed Padma’s wrist.

“I need you to attend on me **now**, Padma,” Hermione said quite firmly. She caught the nanny’s gaze and held it as she added, “Unless Aya thinks it proper that a manservant help a memsahib with her dress?”

The nanny muttered something under her breath as she rose from her chair.

“Thank you Aya, but I need a handmaiden, not a nanny,” Hermione said, shaking her head. Channeling a bit of Malfoy, she sweetly added, “Perhaps after I begin bearing my husband’s children?”

The elderly woman held Hermione’s gaze for a moment, then sat down and waved her off with another muttered comment.

Hermione smiled. “Parvati, what did your nanny just say to me?”

The brown-skinned Gryffindor’s eyebrows rose towards her hairline. She glanced over at Aya, then looked back to Hermione and gave her a sly smile.

“Well, Aya certainly didn’t say anything bad about you, or how you might be corrupting Padma and me, because that would be very disrespectful to *Memsahib*, who is, after all, not her charge, and is a guest of the Maharajah...right, Aya?”

The older witch shook her head dismissively. Not bothering to look up towards Hermione or Padma, she instead turned her focus on Parvati’s embroidery work.

“Ah, good that we’re all agreed on that point,” Hermione replied with a sly smile. “Thank you, then, Aya...I’ll have your charge returned shortly.”

Padma decided to wait until Hermione led her outside to offer up her own comments. She had to wait a bit longer than that though, once they caught Manuel spying into the opened doorway.

“Most excellent, Memsahib!” he declared, clapping his hands together with delight. “Ees exactly correct for Memsahib’s station!”

“What station is that, Hermione?” Padma asked.

“Just...not here,” Hermione asked, pulling Padma away from the hut.

“Who are you, and what have you done with my girlfriend?” the Ravenclaw whispered.

“Shush!” the bushy-haired witch replied, trying to keep the giggles under control. Once they arrived at the canopied area, Hermione turned towards Manuel and smiled.

“You can set the costume and oil down on the table...Padma will help me with the thong.”

The giggles threatened once more when Hermione spied Padma’s reaction out of the corner of her eye, and noted the look of excitement on Manuel’s face.

“Very, good, Memsahib!” he exclaimed. He placed the thong and sunscreen that he’d been holding down onto the table, and then took one step backwards, as if waiting for a new request.

Hermione chuckled. “I’ve all the help I need, Manuel...you can go now.”

He smiled, and did the figure-eight head bob thing again.

“I will be very pleased to be watching for dangers as Memsahib ees doing her snorkeling.”

Padma choked on a bit of spittle as Hermione picked the thong up off of the table.

“Yeah, I bet you’ll be pleased,” she muttered.

Hermione shook her head. “Be nice, Padma,” she whispered. As she lifted her shawl off of her shoulder, she raised her voice and added, “You can just as easily be watching from over there by the hut, Manuel.”

“Yes, Memsahib,” he replied with a smile.

Hermione stared at him as he still stood in place, and cursed her imprecise language. Of course Manuel was capable of watching by the hut...he just didn’t want to.

Getting into the spirit of Manuel’s role-play, she grabbed one of the flippers and swatted his shoulder.

“**Now**, Manuel!”

The tuxedoed man ducked away from a potential second strike and began to giggle as he walked briskly away from the two witches.

“Yes, Memsahib!” he declared. “Very good, Memsahib!”

Padma watched in shocked silence as the manservant scampered back towards the hut. When he was halfway there, she hissed, “What the fuck, Hermione?”

“Language, Padma!”

“Answers, Hermione!”

“Well...don’t want to make it too easy for Manuel to perv on me, do you?” the Muggleborn asked, as she dropped the flipper onto the rattan table and picked up the thong.

“So you’re really going to wear that thing?”

“That’s the plan, at least,” Hermione replied brightly, as she pulled her sari shawl off, then stuffed the swim costume down the front of her choli top.

Padma’s eyes went wide. “I thought that was supposed to cover your other bits?”

Hermione followed Padma’s gaze and smiled. “Just tucking it away for a moment. I’d have asked you to hold it for me, but I need you to grab that peacock feather fan and hold it in front of my bits.”

The Ravenclaw looked nervously over her shoulder towards the smiling manservant. Hermione shrugged with indifference as she undid her skirt and let the fabric drop to the sand.

“Or don’t help,” she stated. “Guess he wouldn’t be seeing that much more skin than if you did.”

“Just a second!” Padma whispered, as she quickly retrieved the fan and held it in front of Hermione’s slip.

“Thanks,” the bushy-haired witch said. She leaned forward and stole a kiss from Padma’s lips.

“What are you doing?” the brown-skinned witch demanded, trying to keep the fan moving in tandem with Hermione’s hips.

“I’m going snorkeling in the lagoon,” Hermione replied, as she hooked her thumbs underneath the waist band of her slip and pushed it down towards her ankles. “This would just get in the way.”

Padma gasped at the sight of Hermione’s bared, bushy mound, and nervously rechecked the height of the feathered fan.

“So the answer is swimming bare-arsed naked?”

"I won't be naked...although...guess it's fair to say that I'll be essentially bare-arsed," Hermione quipped. Then she pulled the bit of fabric and string out of her cleavage and added, "I'll keep my choli on, though, and still have my fanny covered...as long as I figure out how this straps on again."

"Merlin!" Padma hissed, as she struggled to keep the concealing splay of feathers where they needed to be as Hermione stepped into the thong. "And it doesn't matter that Manuel will be perving on your arse as you splash around?"

"Ooh, you're so fanciable when you're jealous, Luv."

"No, I'm serious?"

"So am I," Hermione replied, double-knotting the waistband of her new swim costume. She teased Padma with a bit of bum wiggle as she reached back and adjusted the thin bit of fabric that was pressed in between her cheeks.

"Does it look good on me?" Hermione asked, spinning around in a pirouette.

"Damn it, girl...keep doing that and I'll be the one giving Manuel a show."

"Oh, relax, he says that there's magic that will keep him from remembering what he sees, right?"

"And you believe him?"

The bushy-haired witch shrugged as she reached down and adjusted the front of her swim costume to cover a bit of wayward hair. "Doesn't make that much of a difference does it? Besides, if this was a beach in France I'd be going topless as well."

"Well, if it hasn't escaped your notice, Hermione...we are in India, not France."

The Muggleborn smiled as she reached up and cupped the other witch's face with her palm.

"Now, Padma, you really shouldn't be talking smart to your memsahib, should you?"

The Ravenclaw snorted. "And that's the other thing...what was with you going all alpha bitch on Aya?"

"Moi?" Hermione teased. She toned down her playful expression just a bit, then added, "I just had a very informative chat with Manuel, who basically told me that if we're going to have any fun on this island outside of Harry's treatments that I had to start acting like the memsahib that I am."

"And you're okay with the idea of treating people as servants? Of having servants? What happened to the founder of S.P.E.W.?"

"She grew up a bit, and recognized that I can't expect everyone or every being to conform to my occasionally misguided and myopic viewpoints."

"So when in Rome, act like the Romans?"

Hermione sighed and shook her head. "Just the opposite, actually...when in Rome, stop trying to act like you are a Roman and accept the fact that you'll always be an English girl in their eyes."

"So no more saris...it's all proper English behavior and proper English knickers, then?"

The Muggleborn smiled. "I didn't pack any knickers...did you?"

"You know what I mean," Padma replied. "And hurry up, my arms are getting tired."

"So drop the fan, then," Hermione replied. "You'll have to at some point so that you can rub sunscreen on my bum."

Padma gave yet another glance over her shoulder. "Are you sure, Hermione?"

"What's the matter...my arse too ugly to be seen?"

"Merlin, Luv...as if you and your cracking arse need to fish for compliments...I'm talking about flashing that arse at Manuel over there."

Hermione decided to put the issue to rest by stepping away from the peacock feathers and waving towards the hut.

"Hey, Manuel. thanks!" she called out. "I love this shade of blue...you were spot on with your color selection."

"Very pleased to have pleased Memsahib," he called back.

There was only a moment's hesitation before Hermione turned towards Padma and gave Manuel a much better view of the business side of her swim costume.

"Seriously, Padma," she said. "I really don't want a sun-burned bum...unless you'd rather I ask Manuel to cop a feel?"

The Ravenclaw witch rolled her eyes as she reached for the salve.

"Come here, then...I imagine that this is all part of the show as well?"

It's not a show...I really do want to check out the lagoon."

"And Manuel really does have a stiffie, now," Padma snorted.

"Ah, but would you, Luv...if you had the right plumbing?"

Padma chuckled as she squeezed a dollop of lotion into her hand, then slapped it onto Hermione's right cheek.

"Shall I show Manuel just how much you're rewiring me up right now?"

Hermione giggled. "Incremental steps, love...don't want to give the poor bloke a heart attack."

"At least he'd die with a smile on his face," Padma replied, as she began to spread the sunscreen across her lover's flesh.

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It was Padma's sister who was dispatched from the hut forty-five minutes later to deliver the news that Harry had woken from his morning nap and was eager to eat lunch.

Parvati smiled, and shook her head in disbelief as she looked out at the lagoon. Hermione was floating face-down on the water's surface, breathing (apparently) through a tube as she slowly kicked her flippered feet. The thin strip of dark blue fabric that snaked in between the Muggleborn's exposed bum cheeks contrasted brilliantly against her exposed pale white flesh.

Parvati's smile faltered when she realized that she wasn't the only one enjoying the view. Manuel was standing by the canopy, holding a large fluffy towel out in front of him for Hermione's eventual use. He either was too enraptured to notice, or too randy to care that the bottom edge of this towel was perched on the bulge in the front of his towels. Parvati suspected it the former, as he didn't seem to notice when she snuck up on him from behind.

"Owww!" Manuel howled, after Parvati slapped the back of his head.

"Quit perving on Memsahib's bum!"

"Yes, Memsahib!"

"And quit calling me Memsahib!" Parvati added. "Only makes it worse for my sister and me."

"Yes, Mem..."

A raised open hand caused Manuel to reconsider.

"Yes, Miss Parvati."

"That's better," the Gryffindor witch declared.

Manuel nodded. He turned back towards the lagoon, exposing the back of his head to another blow.

"Owww!"

"Eyes this way!"

"But I must..."

"Sahib is awake and hungry," Parvati declared. "Aya wants you to start in on lunch."

"But...I must watch over Memsahib, in case..."

"I can guard her bum just as easily as you can."

Manuel shook his held towel to make a point.

"But I must be ready to help Memsahib with her shower!" he insisted, nodding towards an oversized shower head that now hung in the center of the canopy's shade.

Parvati snorted, both at the man's plans, and at the lack of any kind of privacy screening.

"I can do that job as well," she declared.

"Que?"

"Don't start that 'que' nonsense with me, Manuel!"

"Yes, Memsahib....oof!"

"Get going!" Parvati chided, yanking the towel out of his grip. As he lunged forward to retrieve it, she twisted her body and used that momentum to

pull Manuel past her. She then added to the manservant's momentum with a swift kick in the arse.

"Now!"

The manservant stumbled forward a few steps, then caught his balance. He turned to face Parvati and smiled, deciding that a potential glimpse under Parvati's raised skirts was worth another arse kicking. But he reconsidered when she appeared to be lining up at a different target, and scampered back towards the hut with his hands protectively covering his bits.

The teen-aged witch looked seaward, towards the teen-aged witch who was floated gently on the water's surface as she slowly kicked her flippered feet. Parvati rather liked the idea of helping Hermione rinse off...so long as she didn't have to do it out in the open.

The teen-aged witch looked up at the position of the charmed shower head, and estimated both the height of the canopy and the distance between the bamboo poles that were supporting it.

"Might just work," she said to herself. "Manuel?" she shouted.

"Yes, Miss Parvati?" the manservant called, running back towards the canopy.

"Do you have any spell-o-tape?"

"Yes, Miss Parvati, inside the house."

"Then fetch it for me please," the teen-ager replied. "Along with another sari from my trunk."

"Que?"

"Surely you don't expect Memsahib to wear that one?" Parvati asked, pointing towards the sari that Hermione had been wearing (which was now hanging neatly on the back of the rattan chair).

"Ah, yes, Miss Parvati," the manservant replied, as he stepped towards the chair.

"Leave it...and go!" the teen-ager instructed.

The manservant frowned. The teen-ager raised her hand in warning. The manservant scampered away.

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Hermione was getting much better at not aspirating seawater...it had been hard resisting the temptation to smile at the amazing reef structure below (and loosen her suction on her snorkel mouthpiece). She had gone ten minutes straight without accidentally breathing water into her lungs...right up to the point where somebody decided to give her bum a hard slap.

"Hey...*gurgle...spit...gasp*...what the hell?" she shouted, once she'd raised her head above water, pushed the snorkel's mouthpiece away from her face and spit out a bit of saltwater.

"Our boyfriend is awake...thought you might want to know," Parvati said playfully, as her carpet hovered just above the water's surface.

"A simple tap on the shoulder would have worked," Hermione stammered.

"But you were giving me a much easier target to reach," the prone witch teased.

"Oh, you...give me a hand, then?" Hermione asked.

Parvati didn't need to have been sorted Ravenclaw like her sister to fall for that trick. She darted out of Hermione's reach and giggled.

"Sorry, only one person per carpet. See you back on shore, Memsahib Mermaid."

Hermione kept her head above water and her bum below it during the swim back to the beach...making it that much easier to growl at her old dorm mate. Once she was close enough to shore, she slipped the flippers off of her feet and waded the rest of the way.

"You know you look sexy as hell coming out of the water like that," Parvati said with a smile.

"Guess I'll have to work on my angry pout, then," Hermione replied, as she tossed the snorkel gear back towards the canopy. "What's with the hanging laundry?"

Parvati grinned as she followed Hermione's gaze towards the canopy. Sari skirts and shawls were stretched between the support poles on three sides, forming a fabric-screened enclosure that was opened only towards the lagoon.

"Memsahib needs to shower off the saltwater."

Hermione rolled her eyes...then rolled them again when she spotted the shower head.

"Right here? Out in the open?"

Parvati giggled. "Could've been worse...Manuel didn't have any of these saris rigged up when I got here."

“Where did he go, then?”

“Preparing lunch, supposedly.”

Hermione snorted as she walked into the shade and touched one of the walls. There were two pieces of fabric per side that screened views from a foot off the sand to a height just above their heads.

“Were one of these mine?” she asked.

“Yes, Memsahib,” Parvati replied. “Manuel says that there are plenty of beautiful dresses for Memsahib to wear in that trunk.”

Hermione shook her head as she glanced over at the box of vintage clothing.

“I will if you will,” she muttered.

Parvati frowned. “As much as I’d like to...Aya won’t let me.”

“Let you do what?”

“Wear any Western clothing.”

Hermione arched an eyebrow. She wanted to ask why, but she also wanted to get back inside now that Harry was awake.

“So let’s drag the trunk behind these screens, and you can at least try some of the outfits on while I shower. And if Aya comes out to complain... well, we’re about the same size. You can just tell her that you’re seeing what might fit me as I wash-up.”

Parvati’s eyes lit up at the suggestion.

“Yes, Memsahib!”

Once the trunk was brought behind the fabric walls, Hermione slipped out of her wet choli top and thong and slipped under the charmed shower head’s warm spray of water. Parvati rushed with delight over to the trunk, and quickly pulled out a purple whale-boned corset. Hermione thought about telling her girlfriend that corsets were typically worn over chemises and bloomers...but then thought better when Parvati slipped off her choli and slip and shimmied into the vintage garment.

Resisting the temptation to wrap her female lover in a wet, naked bear hug, Hermione turned away and reached for the bar of soap that Manuel had left for her use on the rattan table.

Parvati frowned as the untied corset slipped down to the ground. She pulled it back up, then turned towards Hermione to ask, “How do you fasten this...?”

The question died on Parvati’s lips when she spied Hermione bent at the waist, waving her bum (and more) as she washed the tops of her feet.

The untied corset dropped to the ground a second time, as a second naked witch walked under the warm spray of water.

“Please, Memsahib...this is my job,” she cooed, as she stole the soap out of Hermione’s hand and dropped down to her knees.

Hermione caught her breath, and cast a nervous glance towards the opened side of their makeshift enclosure.

“But...you said that Harry is awake?”

“And I’m sure that Padma will be more than willing to keep him entertained for a few more minutes,” Parvati replied.

Hermione moaned as her lover ran the soap bar up the inside of her thigh.

“But what if...what if Aya comes out here and sees us...?”

“Then she’d run the risk of Padma taking the opportunity to worship a certain lingam.”

“But...Manuel...”

“Will come out here and insist that he help you with your shower if I don’t,” Parvati replied, as she got up from her knees and stood face-to-face with Hermione under the shower spray.

Hermione giggled. “Well, we mustn’t let that happen,” she replied, tracing a finger down the other witch’s neck.

“Yes, Memsahib,” Parvati grinned, rubbing the soap bar across Hermione’s lower belly. The bushy-haired witch stretched her arms out to pull her lover into an embrace, only to have that lover duck under her arm and spin behind her. Parvati pressed her breasts against Hermione’s back, reached around, and pressed the soap bar against her lover’s fanny. The brown-skinned witch thought she had pushed too far when the bar was snatched away from her grip. But then Hermione snapped the soap into two pieces, spun around, and pressed half of the bar back into Parvati’s opened hand.

“Did you rinse off the salt water from your skin after all of that falling off of your carpet?” Hermione asked.

The brown-skinned witch smiled and shook her head.

Hermione waggled her eyebrows and licked her lips.

“Then there’s more than one carpet that needs cleaning…isn’t there?” she asked, dragging the remaining half of the soap bar through her lover’s pubes.

The low-pitched moan that escaped from Parvati’s mouth was interpreted as an affirmative response.

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“Memsahib must let her humble handmaiden rub her dry!” Parvati declared, all too few minutes later.

“After you just rubbed me wet?” Hermione quipped, as she toweled off the inside of her own thighs. She then nodded towards the choli and slip that Parvati had already put on. “Take down your sari from the poles …we really should be getting back inside.”

“But if I do that…Memsahib is still naked!”

“So I’ll slip on my slip and choli as well.”

“Yes, Memsahib.”

“And will you stop it with the Memsahib business?”

“Yes, Memsahib,” the brown-skinned witch grinned, as she poked the corner of her own towel into Hermione’s belly-button.

“Parvati…”

“It is proper that you allow your handmaiden to dry you off, Memsahib,” Parvati teased. “Otherwise this might be misinterpreted as two very close friends playing naughty games on the beach.”

“So there might be advantages to you doing a bit of role-play as well?” she asked.

Parvati nodded, and bowed her head submissively.

“Yes, Memsahib.”

A smile formed on Hermione’s lips as she pushed Parvati’s hand away and stepped towards the trunk of clothing.

“Come on, then,” she said. “Let’s see if we can find something proper for your memsahib to wear that isn’t too hideous or too hot.”

Parvati thought that was a brilliant idea, and immediately reached for the purple corset.

“Not that!” Hermione declared.

“Yes, Memsahib,” her lover replied, as she began to press one dress after another against Hermione’s naked body.

“And is it too much to ask for something that dates from this century?” the Muggleborn asked, pushing aside yet another set of petticoats.

“Yes, Memsahib.”

Hermione sighed.

“So, Parvati…just to be certain…there will be no need for this Memsahib business when it’s Auntie who is chaperoning, rather than Aya?”

“Yes, Memsahib. Then we change roles, and we both become Harry’s nursemaids.”

“And instead of naughty fun on the beach, we’ll call it therapy?”

“It’s worked so far, hasn’t it, Memsahib?” Parvati asked, as she dug towards the bottom of the trunk.

“Whoa…here we go,” she exclaimed, pulling out a daring low-cut dress.

“Oh, my,” Hermione giggled. “Is that a dress, or a slightly larger thong?”

“Exactly,” Parvati replied brightly, as she bent down and held the dress open for Hermione to step into.

The Muggleborn chewed nervously on her lip as Parvati pulled the slinky bit of gold silk fabric up over her hips. The material clung to her curves almost as well as her wet slip, although the hemline was modest enough, covering her knees. But calling the dress modest flew out the window once she reached down and grabbed what was supposed to cover her chest.

“This is it?” she asked, pulling the halter straps up and holding the ends behind her neck.

A wide smile was on Parvati’s lips then helped tie the ends together.

“It looks gorgeous on you!” she declared, dragging her fingers down Hermione’s uncovered back.

“Manuel must have slipped this one on purpose.”

“Would have had to slip this in as well” Parvati noted, placing the creme-colored straw hat on Hermione’s head. “They match, and they’re both closer to the 1940’s than 1840’s.”

Hermione shook her hat-covered head as she stepped away from Parvati’s fingers and stared down the front of the dress.

“There’s no way I can wear this!” she declared, trying to stretch the luxurious fabric across more of her exposed flesh.

“But it looks brilliant! Harry will go bonkers over it!”

“Like you aren’t perverting on it as well, what with the way that my baps are exposed!”

Parvati snorted as she moved to Hermione’s side.

“You can’t see any more than when you’re just wearing a sari top,” she noted.

“There’s a difference, though.”

“Why?”

“Because it’s a Muggle dress,” Hermione replied. “It’s expected that you’ll have the sides of your breasts exposed when you’re wearing a sari without a choli underneath.”

“I’m quite certain that the Muggle who made this dress expected the sides of your breasts to be just as exposed,” Parvati quipped.

“But…”

“And when you think about it, this is actually more conservative than a sari.”

“How do you figure that?”

Parvati grinned. “It covers your sexy belly-button, Luv.”

“That’s about all it covers,” Hermione muttered, as she shimmied her shoulders and watched how poorly the fabric kept pace with the sway of her breasts.

“Let’s ask Harry’s opinion,” said Parvati.

“Yeah, we know what he’ll think.”

“Okay, then Manuel.”

Hermione snorted.

“Okay, okay, that’s just as pointless,” Parvati teased. “But who is to say…somebody had to have worn this dress at some point, right?”

“Fine, then…let’s find something just as revealing for you to wear!”

“Now that…like I said, that can’t happen,” Parvati said with a deep sigh. “At least so long as Aya is around.”

“But you are still wearing a choli under your shawl? Is it because of Manuel?”

Parvati shook her head. “No…Manuel’s too busy perverting on your bits to care about the sides of my baps.”

“Then why…?”

“Aya insisted that it was proper.”

“Then why is she showing off the sides of her saggy breasts?”

“Because she’s just our nanny…she apparently doesn’t count.”

“Count for what?”

“Count as someone who Harry might perv on,” Parvati replied.

“That doesn’t make sense, if it’s Harry who she’s worried about.”

“Yeah, we tried to explain that he’s seen us wearing just the shawls, but Aya wouldn’t budge…maybe you could reason with her?”

Hermione frowned. “No, you’ve already tried that.”

Maybe you can insist that we need to go without cholis as part of Harry's treatment?"

"Auntie might be the one to help on that point," said Hermione. A sly smile formed on her face when an idea came to mind. She reached out, and hooked a finger down the front of Parvati's top.

"Take it off, baby."

Parvati grinned. Assuming that her incredibly bright girlfriend had a plan in mind, she was quick to comply with her Memsahib's demand.

"Right then...just need to find you the right pair of knickers..." said Parvati.

"No need," said Hermione.

"Really?"

"And we'll leave off on shoes and accessorizing."

"Awww...you're no fun."

"Who is no fun, Parvati!" Hermione asked, as she slipped on her sunglasses to complete (in her mind) the outfit.

Parvati cocked her head to one side, before figuring out the question. She submissively lowered her eyes and replied, "Yes, Memsahib."

oo000000oo

By the time that Hermione walked back inside the hut and entered the dining room, Harry had been transferred from bed to palki and carried to the head of the table.

"Oh, my....wow!" he exclaimed.

"Do you like the dress, Harry?" she asked, taking off her hat and sunglasses while trying to appear far less nervous than she really was.

"It's...brilliant!"

"Absolutely brilliant!" Padma added, from her spot at the table. She enjoyed it even more when Hermione leaned down to kiss Harry's cheek.

"I feel so underdressed now," he complained.

Hermione ran her hand down Harry's bare chest. "Enjoy your nap, Sweetheart?"

"Not half as much as I'm going to enjoy lunch!"

"Good," Hermione purred. She started to pull out the chair next to Harry's palki, only to have it ripped away by Manuel.

"Allow me, Memsahib," he said with a grin, as he offered her a seat.

Hermione smiled at the offer.

Harry didn't smile at the way that Manuel leaned in between his girlfriend and him, or the way that he was staring down his girlfriend's dress as he pushed the chair up to the table. He wanted to cuff the manservant for his cheek, but without use of his arms he had to settle for pushing Manuel away from the table with a well-placed head butt.

"Ow!" Manuel yelled, as he grabbed his arm and dashed back into the kitchen.

"Be nice, Harry," Hermione chided.

"I'm the only one who gets to look down your dress," Harry declared.

"The only one, Harry?" Hermione asked.

He stared at her for a moment, wondering why she had challenged his claim. Then he heard someone loudly clearing her throat on the other side of the table and chuckled.

"Sorry, Padma," he said. "How about I'm the only *bloke* that gets to look down the front of Hermione's dress?"

"I'm willing to share," the Ravenclaw said with a sly smile. She glanced towards the entrance frowned. "Speaking of sharing, where is my sister?"

"Should be here momentarily," said Hermione. "We were using our saris to block the view of our shower."

"Our shower?" Padma asked.

Hermione smiled. "Saltwater isn't good for the skin, Luv. Maybe I'll help you rinse off after lunch."

"Well, alright, then," Padma replied.

“Definitely sounds alright to me,” Harry quipped. “So you three went swimming in the lagoon?”

“More falling than swimming,” Padma quipped. “Except for Hermione, of course...so how uncomfortable was it to swim with that thong on, Memsahib?”

“Thong?” Harry wheezed.

Aya’s entrance into the dining room kept that question from being answered. The old witch gave a disapproving look towards Hermione’s dress, but didn’t say anything about it.

The nanny had plenty to say, though, when Parvati entered the dining room with only a sari shawl covering her chest. She said it very loudly in her native tongue.

Hermione frowned, and leaned across the table towards Padma.

“Is there a problem here?”

Padma snorted at Hermione’s question.

“Our nanny thinks that Parvati is dressed too casually for the dining room,” she quipped.

“Really?” asked Hermione. “Aya?”

The older witch was still too busy dressing down Parvati to respond.

Harry leaned over and whispered into Hermione’s ear.

“Are you two trying to stir up trouble on my account, Sweetheart?”

Hermione nodded and whispered back, “Will it bother you if the Twins and I did pack away our cholis? Or if I did wear dresses like this so long as we’re here on this island?”

Harry snorted. “Are you kidding me?”

“Trust me, then?”

“Of course.”

Hermione smiled warmly, and kissed Harry on the cheek. Then she turned and insisted on Aya’s attention. The nanny rolled her eyes and said, “*Oh* , Memsahib?” (Yes?)

“If we were eating lunch in a restaurant in one of the magical districts of Travancore, would the women sitting at the other tables be wearing cholis under their sari tops?”

Aya shrugged and shook her head.

“Translate the question for her, Padma.”

“She understands English, Memsahib.”

“Perhaps, but I don’t want there to be any possibility of misunderstanding.”

The Ravenclaw nodded, and did the requested translation. Aya sighed, and waved her hand dismissively.

“She says that we’re not in a magical district right now...Memsahib.”

“Aren’t we in a magical household, though?”

Padma translated, then translated the response.

“She says that that cholis are appropriate for young Indian ladies so long as Harry is at the table, Memsahib.”

“I see,” Hermione replied. “Ask her if she is aware of the fact that the Maharajah has made Sahib a job offer.”

“You mean me?” Harry whispered during the translating.

“Of course,” Hermione whispered back. “I’ll explain later.”

“Okay.”

Padma said, “She knew about the job offer, Memsahib, and I took the liberty of reminding her of that fact.”

“Good,” said Hermione. “This job will require Sahib to visit Travancore’s magical districts, and interact with other witches and wizards, don’t you think?”

Aya sighed. It was clear she understood Hermione's English, and was only pretending not to. Hermione didn't need help translating the eventual response.

"*Oh* , Memsahib."

"Then Padma and Parvati should dress as you are right now...and prepare Sahib for how witches dress in these magical districts."

Aya scowled. Hermione ignored the scowl, and turned towards her translator.

"Padma, if you don't mind...would you help prepare Sahib for the Maharajah's employment?"

The Ravenclaw grinned.

"Yes, Memsahib!" she replied, reaching for the buttons of her choli.

The smile on Harry's face was just as wide as he watched Padma slip out of her choli right there at the table, giving him an "accidental" nipple slip. Hermione was smiling too, although her gaze was divided between Padma's nipple, Aya's scowl, and the "thumbs-up" signal that a giggling Manuel was giving her from the kitchen doorway.

"Manuel!" Hermione called.

"Yes, Memsahib?"

"Less giggling, more lunch!"

"Right away, Memsahib!" he replied, rushing to remove the domed silver covers to their plates.

Aya ignored the vegetarian meal in front of her and reached towards Harry's lunch plate. Hermione pushed Aya's hand away before it touched any of his food.

"From now on I will help Sahib take his meals," she said sternly.

The nanny protested in Malayalam, but Hermione didn't back down.

"Are you the Twins' nanny or Sahib's nursemaid?" she asked.

The older witch held Hermione's gaze for only a moment before backing down.

"I am Padma and Parvati's nanny," she declared in Malayalam.

Once translated, Hermione nodded in agreement. "And I am Sahib's Memsahib...right?" she asked, as she picked a mixture of curried vegetables off of Harry's plate and held it out in front of his lips.

Aya nodded.

Hermione smiled in triumph, then turned towards Harry.

"Well?" she asked, nodding towards the food on her fingertips.

He grinned, and tried to do the figure-eight head nod response.

"Yes, Memsahib," he teased, before lunging his opened mouth towards Hermione's fingers.

The smile on Harry's face as he sat for that noontime meal was not that much brighter than the smiles on the faces of the other three teens. Or Manuel's, for that matter...although Harry was trying not to think about that too much. The stories told as they ate their meal did a good job of holding his attention...from the humorous descriptions of carpet flying attempts, to an accounting of the contents of the trunk of clothing and box of beach gear, to Hermione's vivid descriptions of the reef and all of its colorful inhabitants.

"You should have seen it, Harry!" she exclaimed. "Dozens of different types of tropical fish, and Moray eels, and lobster, and giant sea turtles...."

"Don't think you'd have gotten him to look at anything other than your swim costume, Hermione," Padma teased.

Harry arched an eyebrow.

"So should I see this swim costume as well?"

Hermione glanced towards Aya and shook her head.

"Maybe later," she muttered.

Harry smiled at the way Hermione's cheeks were blushing. He leaned towards her, and whispered a question into her ear. She gasped in surprise, both at the question, and the fact that Harry had asked it.

"Well?" Harry asked.

Hermione looked down at her plate, and shook her head.

Harry leaned towards her and whispered a second request into her ear.

“Maybe later!” Hermione whispered back.

“Promise?”

Hermione snorted, and replied, “Yes, Sahib.”

oo000000oo

When lunch was over Manuel and Padma carried Harry’s palki into the sitting room...the Twins had talked about the embroidery project that Aya had them doing, and he wanted to watch their work. This allowed Parvati to pull Hermione aside.

“So what did Harry ask?”

The Muggleborn witch looked around, then whispered conspiratorially into Parvati’s ear.

“He asked me to prove that this dress is the only piece of Muggle clothing that I’m wearing right now.”

Parvati snorted.

“You promised to show him later, then?”

Hermione shook her head and smiled.

“I promised to fulfill his second request.”

“And....?”

Hermione chuckled.

“Do you know how we’re rationalizing certain acts by saying that we’re acting with Harry’s hands?”

Parvati giggled.

“He wanted you to rub one off right there at the table?”

“No ...he wanted me to ask if you would be his hands.”

A breath caught in Parvati’s throat. “So he wanted *me* to rub one off right there at the table?”

Hermione laughed and shook her head.

“Of course not, silly,” she replied. “Harry wanted you to do what he can’t right now...to reach under the table, drag your fingers up the inside of my thigh, and push my skirt up high enough to show him that I wasn’t wearing Muggle knickers.”

Parvati’s eyes dilated.

“He actually asked that?”

Hermione snorted.

“Our Sahib is a randy little bugger, isn’t he?”

Parvati giggled. “Oh, he’s randy alright....but little?”

Hermione joined in the gossipy giggling.

“Certainly wasn’t little sitting there at the table...did you see how hard he was?”

Parvati snorted.

“Oh, right,” Hermione teased. “Silly question.”

Alternative Medicine

Ch 14: By the Book

oo00OO00oo “When a woman reproaches a man, but at the same time acts affectionately towards him, she should be made love to in every way.” oo00OO00oo

Sun and sea held Harry’s attention when he woke from an afternoon nap, but only until the cobwebs cleared and he realized that there was a mostly-naked witch still asleep by his side.

Hermione had been explaining the changes in her attitudes and attire, before Harry had dozed off. But she had fallen asleep as well, and was now curled up on a lounge chair that was parked next to his palki. Her floppy-brimmed hat rested at an odd angle on her head as she lay on her side facing away from him, with her knees pulled up to her chest. Her daring gold dress left little to his imagination...even less now that a breeze had flipped up the back of her skirt.

The view wasn’t *that* explicit from where he sat...it included the full curve of her left breast, but no nipple. The view featured an unbroken stretch of flesh from toe to left hip, but just a suggestion of crack. Given her sleeping position and the way her legs were pulled up, Harry could imagine that her cheeks were being warmed by the sun as much as his (facial) cheeks were...but he could only imagine that, given his affliction.

He sat quietly, smiled, and considered just how lucky a bastard he was, even when all things were considered.

“Cool drink, Sahib?”

Shit.

“*Shush!*” he hissed, as he looked up and glared at Manuel.

“Yes, Sahib,” Manuel whispered.

“And stop calling me Sahib!”

“Yes, Boss.”

Harry scowled at both this response and at how close the manservant was to Hermione’s lounge.

“Go back inside. I’ll call if we need your assistance.”

The manservant wilted under Harry’s “*Don’t mess with me, I’m the bad ass that killed the Dark Wanker*” glare, and dashed behind a makeshift privacy screen that had been fashioned from sari fabric stretched between tree trunks.

Hermione opened her eyes and stretched out her arms. She set her hat to the side, looked over her shoulder, and smiled.

“What’s up, Boss?” she asked teasingly.

“Your hemline and my heart rate.”

“What? Really?” Hermione reached back and fished for the back of her dress. A look of pretend-shock formed on her face when she found it bunched up over her lower back.

“Oops,” she said sweetly. “Didn’t realize...”

Harry snorted as his girlfriend rolled over onto her back and spread the front of her dress out in a display of *faux* -modesty.

“So my sexy little Sloanie didn’t notice that the sun was warming her fanny?”

“Hey!”

“Sorry,” Harry said with a smile. “I’m only guessing that the sunlight got that far.”

“No...it did,” Hermione replied matter-of-factly. “It was you calling me a Sloane that I didn’t care for.”

“Yes, Boss.”

“I’m serious!” Hermione protested, folding her arms over her chest. “There were plenty of pint-sized Sloane Rangers in my Primary School, and I didn’t care for them one bit.”

“Ah...so your acting performance was based on more than you just channeling your inner Malfoy?” Harry teased.

“Keep talking like that and you can forget about having a Potter in my inner channels.”

“D’oh!”

“D’oh is right!”

“Sorry...was just trying to joke about how you put Aya in her place.”

Hermione chewed on her lower lip for a moment, then nodded her head, leaned forward, and placed a quick kiss on Harry's lips.

“You're forgiven,” she declared. “Even when you are looking down the front of my dress.”

Harry's gaze shifted up. “Oops...sorry.”

“Just don't make a habit of it while others are around,” she said.

He snorted. “Planning on wearing that to dinner, then?” he teased.

Hermione dropped her head back against her seat cushion and sighed.

“Too much, then?” she asked.

“Too much what?”

“Too much skin? Too much attitude? Too much out of character?”

Harry thought about his answer for a few moments. He would have squeezed her hand if he could, but he couldn't, so he had to use his eyes to augment his response with some non-verbal reassurances.

“It's up to you how much...or how little you wear around here, or what Manuel can see,” he stated. “As for the posh attitude...you've explained it as a means to an end.”

“So you really aren't bothered by how I'm acting?”

“If it means that I get to lick your fingers instead of Aya's? Hey, no worries...of course I'm not the one you're treating as a servant. I mean...how are Padma and Parvati taking it?”

Hermione smiled, thinking of how Parvati “took it” in their canopy shower earlier in the day.

“No complaints yet,” she replied, as she reached for the gin and tonic that had been sitting on a side table and took a sip. “Hmmm...still cold! These ice cubes must be charmed.”

Harry chuckled. “Better finish up that drink then...Auntie will be here soon enough and I don't think alcohol is part of an ayurvedic diet.”

Hermione giggled and shook her head. “No, I don't think it is either,” she replied, glancing at the drink. “But I better pace myself, before I start sleeping as much as you do.”

“Can't have that,” Harry teased. “There'd be no fun time for Mistress Hermione and her submissive handmaidens.”

“Hush!” Hermione chided, giving a light swat on his arm.

“Erm...guess that I should pretend I felt that and say ‘Ow’?” Harry asked.

“Oh, Harry...”

“Oh, Hermione....”

The bushy-haired witch sighed, deciding that her boyfriend needed some cheering up...and that she needed to take another incremental step or two.

oo000000oo *“When a woman gives a man an opportunity, and makes her own love manifest to him, he should proceed to enjoy her.”*
oo000000oo

Hermione stood up and peaked around the edge of the fabric screen. Satisfied that that they were alone, she then walked in front of Harry's sedan chair and turned to face the sea.

“Want to check how well Padma applied sunscreen salve this morning?” she asked.

Harry's breath caught in his throat when Hermione flipped up the back of her dress and wiggled her bare bum. Once he freed that breath, he smiled, and said, “You'll need to give me a closer view.”

“What?”

“I don't have my glasses on,” Harry explained. “Your bum is too fuzzy for me to tell.”

"I do not have a fuzzy bum, thank you very much."

"No, I don't think you will, once you get it closer to my face."

Hermione dropped her hemline, turned to face her boyfriend, and clucked her tongue in mock-disapproval.

"Aww, now how am I going to do that inspection?" Harry pouted.

"What ever happened to the shy boy who turned beet red and ran away that time he accidentally walked in on me while I was in my bra and knickers?"

"I think that boy was left behind in Britain," Harry teased. "You know the place? Britain? The island with cold dreary weather and women who actually wear bras and knickers?"

"Is that a complaint?"

"Oh, hell no."

"Language, Harry."

"Yes, Dear."

"So tell me, Harry...would you rather be on that dreary island where women wear bras and knickers?"

"If you're living on that dreary island, then sure," Harry replied. "Would you rather be with that shy boy who turns beet red at the drop of a blouse?"

Hermione smiled, then shook her head.

"I rather like the sexy confidence of the boy that's here with me on this island right now, thank you very much."

Harry smiled, then waggled his eyebrows.

"If that's the case, then...we were in the middle of a sunburn inspection?"

The roll of Hermione's eyes was tempered by the sly grin on her lips. She spun around again, took a big step closer towards Harry's palki, and lifted her hemline again.

She waited a moment. Then another. The breeze brushed against her bared flesh, raising goose bumps where they'd seldom been raised before.

"Well, Harry?" she finally asked.

"Erm...right. Sorry, I was, erm...guess I'm more near-sighted than I thought."

"Ah...I still have fuzzy bum, then?"

"I'm sure it isn't fuzzy, or burned, for that matter, but...if you wouldn't mind...might help if..."

"You want me to give you a closer view?"

"Up to you, but..."

Hermione giggled, and another took a step back. The back of her knees brushed up against the front of his knees.

"How's that?"

"A little less fuzzy. Still..."

Hermione spread her legs wide enough to straddle the outsides of his knees, then took another step backwards.

"Almost in focus," said Harry. "Just a few steps closer..."

He wouldn't have been the least bit surprised if the game ended there. He was therefore more than a little surprised when Hermione freed up her hands by tucking the back of her dress into the waistline, then bent down to rest those hands against his knees.

More than a little surprised...and more than a little excited when she took another step backwards and closed the gap between their bodies to a scant few inches.

"Still fuzzy?" Hermione purred.

Harry shook his head. "All clear," he hissed.

"Your focus is clear...or my bum is clear of fuzz?"

"Yes."

No sunburn?"

"None that I can see."

Hermione looked over her shoulder and caught Harry's lust-filled gaze. He was sitting fairly straight in the palki chair...high enough for her to see his entire face. High enough that if she backed up any further she'd run into his Adam's apple, instead of someplace more...interesting.

The Muggleborn glanced back towards the privacy screen, then looked down in between her legs. The tent in Harry's dhoti/loincloth was large enough to block her view...not that there was anything more interesting for her to look at, of course.

Feeling very daring...and naughty...and sexy...Hermione shifted her weight off of her hands, grabbed Harry's legs, and pulled them forward. The rest of his body followed along, to a slouched-down position where his bum was just off the front edge of his chair, and her bum was just off the slope of his forehead.

"What are...?"

"Making sure you do a *thorough* sunburn inspection," Hermione quipped. "See any red?"

Harry took in a sharp breath...a sharply scented breath.

"No red...plenty of pink, though."

"Hmmm," Hermione purred, slipping her hand underneath Harry's loincloth. She lightly scraped her fingernails down his length, then took his erection in hand and asked, "That area might need a closer look...don't you think?"

Harry nodded, leaned his head forward, and placed a big wet kiss on a spot very close to pink.

oo000000oo *"When he spreads...indeed he cleaves asunder...his lover's archway with his nose, and lets his tongue gently probe her yoni, with his lips, nose and chin slowly circling, this becomes The Circling Tongue."* oo000000oo

Hermione squirmed away from Harry's kiss and took a few steps forward.

"What was that!" she jokingly admonished.

"Couldn't help myself," he quipped.

Hermione shook her head as she snuck another quick glance around the privacy screen. "Think that chair will support both our weights?" she asked.

Harry snorted. "Once way to find out, I guess?"

Hermione smiled, and ran her fingers through her lover's hair. Summoning up her Gryffindor courage, she then swung a leg across the sedan chair and pulled herself aboard, resting her haunches against the arm rests as she faced Harry in a straddle. This placed Hermione's crotch just a few inches away from his nose.

The bushy-haired witch reached down and cradled her lover's face in her hands.

"So...really want to do some more inspecting?" she asked seductively.

Harry looked up at Hermione's face and grinned.

"Yes, please."

Hermione pulled up the front of her dress.

"Need a closer view?" she whispered.

Harry nodded, and dove forward.

Hermione gasped and leaned forward.

The balance of weight shifted, which tipped the chair backwards. They would have comically fallen arse-over-teakettle had the back poles of the palki not stopped their momentum. But since the poles were there, and were of sufficient length to support the chair at a backwards forty-five degree angle, the two lovers merely ended up arse-over-face.

Neither one minded, or hardly even noticed.

oo000000oo *"When a girl should wish to bring about her own marriage when she comes of age, such a girl should endeavour to gain over a*

strong and good looking young man. She should do this by means as would endear her to the said person, as well as by frequently seeing and meeting him. She should also talk to him on the subjects he likes best, and discuss with him the ways and means of gaining over and winning the affections of a girl.”**oo000000oo**

Padma and Parvati had imagined all sorts of naughty things that the other two teens might have been doing while they were forced to toil away on their needlepoint. Their lust-filled suspicions were confirmed when they were asked to fetch Harry and Hermione for dinner.

The two lovers were too enthralled to notice the Twins peeking around the privacy screen. The Twins were too enthralled by Hermione’s ride on Harry’s face to do anything that would announce their presence.

Healer Patil wasn’t as enthralled.

“Padma! Parvati!” she called out from the hut.

Hermione gasped as she turned her head towards the voice and spotted the Twins.

Harry gasped and turned his head too, but the Twins neither heard nor saw this reaction since his face was hidden by Hermione’s skirt.

“What are you two doing here!” the Muggleborn hissed as she stepped off of the palki and pushed it back up straight.

“Auntie’s here,” Padma announced.

“Yes, we heard,” Harry said.

Padma smiled, and said, “Sorry, Parvati…looks like Harry won’t need your help checking Hermione for Muggle knickers after all.”

“Maybe Memsahib is just demonstrating the proper squatting position when Harry starts using an Indian loo on his own?” Parvati replied.

“No, I’m sure she’s pushing the boundaries out a little further,” Padma said.

“Didn’t know we had water sports on the list, though…did you?”

Hermione shook her head as she reached down to adjust her skirt. “Very funny, girls,” she replied, trying desperately to regain some composure.

“Nothing funny going on, actually,” Harry insisted with a grin. “Hermione just asked me to check for possible sunburn in areas that are hard for her to see.”

His girlfriend nodded. “And you know how near-sighted Harry is, right?”

“R-i-i-i-ght,” Padma said sarcastically. “Must have been rather dark under her skirt…were you trying to taste a sunburn?”

“Maybe we should add that taste test to Harry’s treatment regimen?” said Parvati.

“Maybe you should bring Harry in for dinner!” a voice called out from the hut.

The messy-haired wizard chuckled.

“Who needs tethers when Auntie’s spidey-sense is within range?” he asked.

Parvati frowned. “Guess that you will just have to imagine me making a joke about Hermione offering Harry an early appetizer.”

“Best we get on task, and get you two inside,” said Padma. “Before Auntie decides that we don’t get to do anything more than imagine being with Harry.”

The-Boy-Who-Won gave Hermione a thin smile as the Ravenclaw stepped behind the palki chair while her sister stepped in front.

“So, can I get a rain check on finishing that sunburn inspection?” he whispered.

Hermione looked out towards the sun as it set within a clear horizon.

“You really don’t want to wait until the rainy season, do you?” she quipped.

Harry looked down at his tented loincloth, then shifted his gaze towards Parvati’s sari-covered bum, which was wiggling just in front of it.

“Don’t think I’ll be able to wait until after dinner, actually,” he hissed.

Parvati giggled at this response. She twisted around while still bent at the waist, which offered Harry an unobstructed underneath her loosely draped shawl. Then she slipped a hand inside that shawl and cupped one of her dangling breasts.

“What makes you think that we’ll be able to last that long either?” she whispered, teasing her nipple with thumb and forefinger.

“Hush!” Hermione hissed. “And behave!”

“Yes, Memsahib,” Parvati replied. She pulled her hand out from under her shawl and used it to offer the Muggleborn a mock salute. Then she turned towards Harry and used a stage whisper to say, “Sorry, Sahib...guess you’ll just have to guess where my fingers are during dinner.”

“He won’t need to guess if Auntie is there at the table with us,” said Padma.

“True...unless it is another one of those incremental steps,” said Parvati. “So, Hermione...now that you’ve checked off *mouth congress*, maybe the next step should be *masturbating with one hand as you feed Harry with the other*?”

The Muggleborn rolled her eyebrows.

“No, I’m not that coordinated.”

“Have you tried?” Harry teased.

Padma giggled, and leaned down over the back of the palki chair so that she could whisper into his ear.

“Well, we know that she is at least coordinated enough to ride Parvati’s toy and rub our two yonis at the same time,” she stated.

Harry’s eyebrows shot up towards his hairline as he glanced over at Hermione.

“Now that is a talent that I’d like to see on display,” he whispered.

“What?” Hermione demanded.

Harry grinned, and gave his girlfriend the ambiguous figure-eight head nod for a response as the Twins lifted the palki into the air, and carried him the short distance to the hut. Manuel’s presence at the entrance saved him (at least momentarily) from having to elaborate.

“Good Evening, Boss!”

“Who are you talking to, Manuel...Harry or Hermione?” Parvati asked.

The manservant frowned.

“Sahib ees Boss...Memsahib ees Sybil...Mrs. Boss,” he replied.

“Oh, Merlin, no!” Harry gasped.

“What’s wrong?” Hermione asked.

“He just called you Sybil,” he explained. “And the only Sybil that I know...”

“Predicted his death on a near-daily basis,” Parvati teased.

“Eeeeww!” Hermione gasped.

Padma giggled and said in a trance-like voice, “*I see a very deep and dark future for Harry as I gaze into my crystal ben-wa balls...*”

“Eeeeww!” Harry gasped.

“There will be no more mentioning of *that* name in our presence!” Hermione demanded sharply.

“Yes, Memsahib,” said Manuel with an exaggerated head nod.

“Yes, Memsahib,” the Twin mimicked in unison, as they carried Harry inside the hut. The black-haired wizard was just about to ask where Healer Patil was when the muffled sound of voices raised in another room answered that question for everyone.

“Dinner will be served een a few minutes,” said Manuel, looking nervously towards the origin of those raised voices. “Perhaps Memsahib wishes to freshen up een her room?”

Hermione glanced towards the bedroom that she’d shared with the Twins and Aya and shook her head.

“Sounds like it is busy at the moment.”

“No, Memsahib....Memsahib has her own room now.”

“My own room?” asked Hermione.

The manservant nodded vigorously as he gestured towards the opposite side of the enlarged hut.

“A proper Memsahib must have her own room.”

Hermione sighed. “So a proper Memsahib doesn’t sleep with the servants?”

Manuel smiled and shook his head.

"No...a proper Memsahib must have her own room. But...ees no problem eef Memsahib orders her very lovely female servants to come into that room at night, or eef she has them take off all their clothes and rub their lovely bodies on her as they warm her bed."

"I'm sure you wouldn't think that was a problem, Manuel," Hermione snarked.

"Sounds like a viable work-around to me," said Parvati. "And them Memsahib can order her handmaidens to expand her knowledge of our culture with bedtime translations of the *Kama Sutra*."

"Would those lessons include practicals?" Harry quipped.

Hermione rolled her eyes.

"Right then, let's have a look," she decided. She took a few steps in the direction that Manuel had pointed towards, then turned.

"Coming, then?" she asked.

Manuel shook his head. "There are clothes for Memsahib to wear for dinner in her room. Eef eet ees pleasing Memsahib, I help Boss dress for dinner?"

The four teens looked at each other to sort out a decision. Hermione glanced towards the room they'd shared the night before...the room where Aya and Auntie were apparently having a rather heated discussion.

"Go on, you three...I'll be fine," said Harry.

"Are you sure?" Hermione asked.

Harry shrugged. "You can show me later. Besides, wouldn't be proper for a proper Englishman not to dress for dinner, would it?"

Hermione rolled her eyes and grabbed each of the Twins by hand.

"No need to get too carried away, Manuel," she instructed. "It will all have to come off after dinner for his treatment."

Manuel giggled. "Very good, Memsahib!"

oo00OO00oo *"The women of the royal harem know each other's secrets, and having but one object to attain, they give assistance to each other."* **oo00OO00oo**

Padma shook her head as she stepped in front of Hermione and gave the new low-cut red dress she was wearing a head-to-toe inspection.

"Any jewelry in there, Parvati?" she asked.

Her twin frowned as she looked into a sandalwood chest and shook her head.

"Doesn't look like it."

"Ah, no matter...nobody would notice if Memsahib was wearing jewelry tonight," Padma smirked.

Hermione snorted. "And why is that?"

Padma giggled as she reached out and pinched her lover's nipples through the dress fabric.

"Because Harry will be focused on these jewels instead," she quipped.

Hermione snorted as she pushed Padma's hands away, then, with the same continued motion, reached underneath Padma's shawl and returned the favor.

"Hey!"

"Giving him some other jewels to focus on during dinner," Hermione teased (while her fingers teased). Then she slipped her hands out, and smoothed out the front of Padma's shawl.

"There, now...a matching pair," Hermione declared. The she turned towards Parvati, and giggled.

"Beat me to the pinch?" she asked.

Parvati smiled as she pulled her own hands out from underneath her shawl. The lust in her eyes left just as quickly as those eyes darted towards the now-opened doorway.

"Auntie, things all straightened out with Aya, then?" Parvati asked nervously.

The older witch snorted, and nodded her head.

"If you three are finished...freshening up?" she asked.

Hermione sighed as she walked towards the door, then walked past the smirking Healer with the Twins close behind. She stopped short and loudly snorted when she spied Harry sitting at the head of the dinner table. Mindful of her instructions not to put too many clothes on her boyfriend, Manuel had limited Harry's outfit to a loincloth, a white dinner jacket, and a black bow-tie.

"What?" he asked.

His girlfriend grinned as she walked towards the table.

"Looks like you're dressed more for a Chippendale's show than for dinner," she quipped.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Is there a chill in the air, or might say the same for you, Sweetheart? And no, that is definitely *not* a complaint."

"Good," Hermione replied, as she sat down in the chair that Manuel held out for her. She leaned toward her plate and asked, "So you like this dress too?"

Harry smiled at the side views that Hermione was intentionally providing. He didn't look quite so happy when something distracted his appreciation.

"Parvarti...a little help please?" he asked softly.

"Sure thing, Harry," the teen-aged witch replied.

Thwack!

"Ouch!" Manuel hissed.

"No perving on Memsahib!" she said sternly.

"Yes, Mem...Miss Parvati!" the manservant whined.

The light-brown skinned witch glared at Manuel as he scurried around the table to pull back her Auntie's chair. He made no attempt to pull back either her sister's seat or her own, which suited Parvati just fine.

oo000000oo *"A VIRTUOUS woman, who has affection for her husband, should take upon herself the whole care of his family...Towards the parents, relations, friends, sisters, and servants of her husband she should behave as they deserve."* **oo000000oo**

The table was set for five, with Healer Patil now sitting at the spot where Aya had taken her lunch. The nanny's absence didn't go unnoticed.

"So...Aya isn't eating with us this evening?" Hermione asked.

The Healer shook her head as Manuel began pulling back the silver-domed covers from each of their dinner plates.

"Aya joined you four for lunch in her capacity as Padma and Parvati's chaperone," the older witch replied. "Now that I am here...well..."

"In India, servants don't eat at the same table as those they serve," Padma explained.

Hermione pursed her lips as she considered this response, then nodded her head.

"It is the same back in Britain," she decided.

"Yet some things...like a person's clothing, or their attitudes...have changed now that they are in India?" Auntie asked carefully.

All four teens caught a bit of breath in their throats as they stared at the older witch.

Hermione chewed on her lower lip, then asked, "Is there a problem with these changes?"

Healer Patil stared at the Muggleborn witch for a few moments, then smiled, and shrugged her shoulders.

"For better or worse, Aya really does expect you to wear Western dresses because you are from the West," she explained. She turned towards Harry and added, "While Hermione does honor Indian culture when she wears a sari...to wear one all of the time would be considered by Aya to be...inauthentic...not serious...almost as if she were a child playing dress-up."

Harry nodded. "So to be treated as an adult, Hermione had to dress how Aya expects a European woman to dress. And the fact that her dresses are so..."

"Scandalously sexy?" asked Parvati.

"I was going to say they were suited for the weather, but yes, that too," Harry replied. "I'm sure that Manuel's interests had a lot to do with what was hanging in the closet."

"So you have different interests?" Parvati teased.

"I imagine that my interests in how Hermione dresses aren't that far off from your own," Harry teased. He turned towards his bushy-haired girlfriend and said, "So that explains how you dressed. Is the explanation for your changed attitude similar? Did the Empire muck things up so bad here that acting like anything other than a demanding English snob would be taken as inauthentic?"

"No, that's more about station than statehood," said Hermione. She turned towards Healer Patil and added, "Right?"

The older witch smiled. "Quite so," she replied. The Healer then turned towards Harry and added, "The way that your Memsahib carried herself today is exactly how Padma and Parvati's mother acts towards their nanny. It is how a woman is expected to run her husband's household in our society."

Harry arched his eyebrows, and asked, "Like a woman...her *husband*'s household?" He then turned to Hermione and added, "Thought you said that you didn't sign any marriage contracts for me when I was out?"

The Muggleborn rolled her eyes. "No, Harry...we aren't married."

"Shush!" Padma hissed. "Don't let Aya hear you say that!"

"Why not?" Harry asked.

"You'll give up the chance to have Hermione sleep with you!"

"Padma!" Hermione hissed, her cheeks blushing red.

oo000000oo *"When he comes to know the state of her feelings towards him he should pretend to be ill, and should make her come to his house to speak to him. There he should intentionally hold her hand and place it on his eyes and forehead, and under the pretence of preparing some medicine for him he should ask her to do the work for his sake in the following words: 'This work must be done by you, and by nobody else.'"* **oo000000oo**

"Whether Aya knows the truth of Harry and Hermione's marital status is quite irrelevant to any decisions made concerning their sleeping arrangements," the Healer declared.

"What?" Hermione asked with wide eyes. "How...I mean...how?"

Harry was caught too off-guard to do much more than agree with this question with a head nod.

"I informed Aya that in my absence there must be nothing stopping my designated surrogates from being by my patient's side at all times."

"At...at all times?" Hermione asked.

"All day times and all night times?" Parvati added in disbelief.

Madhura gave a very curt (and proper) head nod in response.

"That's...brilliant!" Padma whispered. In a louder voice she added, "So Hermione gets the night shift?"

"How about rotating shifts?" Parvati asked hopefully.

"Does this mean that Aya has to turn off the tethers?" asked Padma.

Her great-aunt shook her head. "While I insisted that you and your sister have good reason to spend significant time by your patient's bedside, she was just as insistent that her duties as your chaperone would require her to oversee your care giving efforts."

Padma whined, "Great."

Her sister wasn't so disappointed. "So if Padma is taking her turn by Harry's bedside during the day, and Aya is minding Padma as she minds him, then she won't be able to mind me if I'm outside with Hermione, would she?"

The Healer smiled. "You two wouldn't be doing anything outside that she would consider inappropriate, would you Dear?"

"Oh no, of course not, Auntie," Parvati said, using a sing-song tone of voice.

"She could always ask Manuel to keep an eye on you two," Padma argued.

Harry sighed. "Like he wouldn't already be doing that on his own."

Healer Patil shrugged.

“The Maharajah has charged Manuel with meeting his guest’s needs,” she stated. “If you need Manuel to be looking elsewhere, then you only need tell him just so.”

“Yes!” Parvati hissed. “No more needlepoint!”

“I wouldn’t go that far, Dear,” her Auntie advised. “You and your sister do have to complete your family tapestry if you wish to be married some day.”

“Aww...but...now? Here?”

“I actually think your project is brilliant,” said Harry. “Wish that I had something like that that traced both sides of my family tree.”

Hermione smiled. “Well, Harry...Christmas is only eleven months away!”

“Do I have to wait that long?”

“Birthday in six months?”

“It could be sooner still if we give it as a wedding present,” Padma quipped.

“Or as part of a dowry,” Parvati chimed in brightly.

“You think Harry will be married before the end of July?” Hermione asked.

Parvati smiled, and offered up that maddening head-bobbing “yes-that-looks-like-a-no” head shake.

Her sister asked a peripherally-related question.

“Auntie, did you say that one of us has to be *by* Harry’s bedside each night?”

The older witch smiled. “Actually, I think I said that you merely need to be *by* his side.”

“So lying naked on your side in his bed counts as *by* his side?” Parvati asked.

Her Great-Aunt chuckled. “If you have reason to believe that sort of uniform is necessary to provide the right kind of care...”

“Or the right kind of relief?” Padma asked.

“Yes, that too,” the Healer replied. “Although Aya might have justifiable concerns about completing her duties as a chaperone if she allows you two to provide that kind of relief in that kind of attire.”

Parvati desperately wanted to ask her Auntie if they could provide that kind of treatment while she was supervising them, rather than Aya, but was too afraid she’d be disappointed by the answer. Instead, she asked, “Does Hermione have to be awake to provide care, or can she be sleeping as she is lying naked on her side in Harry’s bed?”

“Parvati!” Hermione hissed.

Harry chuckled, finding it hard to believe that he was witnessing this kind of discussion.

Healer Patil appeared to give the question some thought.

“So long as the patient is able to have his needs met in a timely manner,” she finally replied. “For example, if the sleeping caregiver was close enough to be nudged awake by the patient...say with a gentle nudge with his nose...”

“Can he nudge her with other parts of his body?” Parvati teased.

Hermione dropped her face into her hands and shook her head in disbelief.

“The caregiver need not share the patient’s bed, in order to sleep,” the Healer stated. “And perhaps it might seem proper if there were separate beds in the patient’s room.”

Parvati giggled. “Auntie, we know Harry is big, but he’s not big enough to nudge Hermione awake if she’s sleeping in another bed.”

Madhura rolled her eyes. “I don’t suppose that the patient could wake a sleeping caregiver with his voice?”

“Where’s the fun in that?” Parvati quipped.

Manuel’s appearance to clear dishes from the table stifled any responses (be they serious or snarky). Hermione used the distraction to lean towards Harry and whisper a question into his ear.

“You’re serious?” he asked.

Hermione nodded, and cupped Harry's cheek in her hand.

"Healer's orders, Luv...although I suppose we could drop the pretense and leave it where it is?"

Harry held his breath for a moment, then expelled it and shook his head.

"I understand that there is something to be said for incremental steps?" he asked.

Hermione smiled and leaned close enough to reward this response with a kiss. Then she turned and said, "Manuel?"

"Yes, Memsahib?"

"The bed in my new room...it needs to be moved into the master bedroom."

The manservant looked at Harry and broke out into a wide grin.

"Very good, Memsahib! Eet will be done as Memsahib wishes, right away!"

"Gracias, Manuel."

"De nada, Memsahib!" the manservant replied.

"You go, girl!" Parvati said.

"Now, Padma...proper respect for Memsahib?" her sister asked.

Parvati snorted. "Very sorry, Memsahib! Your humble handmaiden encourages Memsahib to climb many steps, in the hope that she might follow close behind her Memsahib!"

"Don't push it, Parvati."

"Yes, Mrs. Boss!"

oo000000oo *"Thus a boy separated from his parents, and living in the house of his uncle, should try to gain over the daughter of his uncle, or some other girl, even though she be previously betrothed to another. And this way of gaining over a girl, says Ghotakamukha, is unexceptional, because Dharma can be accomplished by means of it as well as by any other way of marriage."* **oo000000oo**

Towards the end of the meal, Harry looked towards Hermione and the Twins and asked, "Would you three give me a few minutes alone with my Healer before tonight's therapy?"

Hermione turned towards Harry with an inquisitive look on her face. Padma pulled on her arm before she was able to put voice to this reaction.

"Come on, Memsahib...it will give us time to pick out a proper night shift nurse's uniform for you."

Healer Patil nodded. "It might save time if we first return our patient to his room. There he can ask his questions while I perform my physical examination...allowing the three of you to attend to your...uniforms."

Parvati's eyes lit up. "Oooh, I think that's a brilliant idea...there are a few...uniforms...in Memsahib's new wardrobe that I'd like to try on."

Healer Patil smiled. "Given the staining potential of the salves that you'll be working with, perhaps it would be best if you stick with your slips, dragonhide gloves and aprons?"

"Awww.....!"

Hermione smiled and covered Parvati's hand with her own.

"I'm sure we can work something out."

"At least you don't have to worry about getting stains on your uniform," Padma groused.

Parvati snorted. "At least not from the salve...right, Gushing Goddess?"

"Hush!" Hermione chided, lightly slapping the hand that she had just covered in sympathy.

oo000000oo

When the Twins carried Harry's palki into the Master Bedroom, they found Manuel waiting for them, standing next to the queen-sized bed that had been in Hermione's room before dinner.

"Oh, great, it's here already...thanks, Manuel," said Hermione, as she walked into the room with Healer Patil.

“You’re most welcome, Memsahib!”

“Help us get Harry set up in this larger bed, would you?” asked Hermione. “It will save us the effort later.”

“Very good, Memsahib!”

“Very, very good,” Harry said under his breath.

Once the patient was transferred from sedan chair to bed, Hermione dismissed Manuel for the night, then leaned down and kissed Harry on the cheek.

“Don’t take too long asking your questions, Harry,” she asked. “It will only cut into your available treatment time with Padma and Parvati.”

Harry looked towards the Twins, who were gathering the dragonhide aprons and gloves into their arms.

“I won’t,” Harry promised with a nervous smile, as Padma and Parvati winked at him.

He watched the three teenagers leave the room with the protective dragonhide as Healer Patil lifted up his right foot and began her examination.

“Given time available, can I be blunt?” he asked.

“Of course, Harry.”

“Has any of this hurt any potential contract negotiations with the head of the Patil family?”

Madhura shook her head as she evaluated the range of motion in his leg. “Quite the opposite, I think.”

“Really?”

The Healer nodded as she set his right leg down and moved her focus to his left. “In this country, twins are rarely matched with an unmarried wizard. They are always in subordinate relationships...second and third wives at best. Our Head wants his great grand-daughters to live their lives in India, and act like proper Indian witches and proper Indian wives. The more that Hermione acts like a proper Memsahib...like a proper primary wife that won’t steal the girls away to England and turn them into mini-memsahibs...”

“So I’d still have to marry Hermione first, before I could keep the Twins from being sold off to someone else?”

The Healer nodded, not willing to risk breaching the outer boundaries of her required deference to familial authority.

The-Boy-Who-Won sighed as she shifted her focus to his left arm.

“Well, at least I know,” he decided. “So...will anything that might happen tonight close the doors on contract negotiations?”

Madhura chuckled. “Not unless you wish to enjoy congress of a herd of cows.”

“Enjoy what?”

“It is what the *Kama Sutra* calls full congress...or sexual intercourse...with more than one woman at the same time.”

Harry chuckled, and shook his head.

“No, I’m not going to be greedy...incremental steps, and all that. So does that mean that full congress is okay, just so long as it is only with one...erm...cow?”

The Healer chuckled as she reached over his body and lifted his other arm. “The absence of a herd would be an advisable upper limit on your activities.”

“How about *half-full congress* with a herd of cows?” Harry teased.

The Healer laughed, and shook her head. “I think it wise for you not to phase it that way. Perhaps if you used the English word ‘*therapy*’ in your translation of the original Sanskrit?”

Harry shared in the laughter, not hearing the sound of a door closing.

◉◉◉◉◉◉◉◉ “And when the second wife is married, and brought to the house, the first wife should give her a position superior to her own, and look upon her as a sister. In the morning the elder wife should forcibly make the younger one decorate herself in the presence of their husband, and should not mind all the husband's favour being given to her.” ◉◉◉◉◉◉◉◉

“C’m on Harry, hurry up!” Parvati called out. “You’re cutting into our therapy time!”

The Healer and her patient both turned towards the door, where Parvati and her sister each had an arm looped in Hermione's. All that they appeared to be wearing were their knee-length aprons and elbow-length gloves. Hermione had also changed, and was now wearing a long white silk dressing gown that was tightly tied at the waist. She caught her boyfriend's eyes and smiled.

"Do you like our uniforms?" she asked.

"Don't ask that until he sees the complete outfit, Memsahib!" Parvati protested.

Healer Patil chose that moment to return her focus to her patient. Harry more than made up for this loss of attention as Padma and Parvati spun around and showed him a whole lot of skin and the little bits of string and fabric that formed the back of their thongs.

"Erm...yes, very nice uniforms," Harry stammered, hoping that his rapidly growing erection wasn't all that noticeable.

"Yes, they are, aren't they?" Hermione asked, pulling Padma and Parvati back around until they faced the bed. She then added, "Are you ready for them, Healer Patil?"

"Sure looks like Harry is ready," Parvati quipped. She squeaked when Hermione's "Hush!" was punctuated with a light spank.

"Yes, Memsahib," she giggled.

Healer Patil shook her head and smiled as she gained her patient's attention.

"You are continuing to make good progress, Harry," she said.

"How long before we'll know if the treatment is going to work?" he asked.

The older witch nodded her head. "Keep your spirits up, Sahib, and allow us the time necessary to provide these treatments."

Parvati grabbed her sister's hand and dragged her to Harry's bedside. "I agree, Auntie...so can we have *our* time now to keep his spirits up?"

The Healer looked down at Harry. "Have I answered your questions, then?"

"Yes, thank you."

Hermione stepped up to the bedside next to Padma and asked, "So Auntie...if there is time...I have a few questions of my own?"

The Healer nodded. "Do you wish to ask them here, or...in a more private setting?"

The Muggleborn witch nodded in agreement, then nodded towards the screen that separated the television viewing area from the rest of the room.

"Maybe...they really don't need my help to do either the salve treatment or the stones."

Harry gave Hermione a serious look. "Maybe not, but...is it okay if they start without you here?" he asked.

Hermione smiled, and nodded bravely. "I will have the night shift all to myself, right?"

"Squee!" Parvati exclaimed, bouncing up and down on the balls of her bare feet.

Healer Patil nodded, and placed a hand on Harry's shoulder while she addressed her nieces. "Just mind which appendage you're working on in Memsahib's absence."

"Awww...!" Parvati whined.

"Shush," Padma loudly whispered. "That just means we have to wait until she comes back."

"Oh...alright then," Parvati said, balancing in her head what they might do with and without the Memsahib's supervision.

"Come, Hermione," the Healer said, taking her hand.

The bushy-haired witch followed the Healer as she walked behind the screen and took a seat in one of the comfortable chairs placed in front of the television/VCR entertainment center.

"You do have your spidey-sense working, right?" she asked, glancing nervously back towards the screen.

The Healer nodded. "Perhaps it would be better for you to be with them?"

Hermione took a deep breath, then expelled it and shook her head.

"No, I've got to do this...I've got to let them do this..."

"It must be hard," the older witch noted.

"Oh, yeah...he was hard, alright."

No, I mean the sharing...it must be hard for you to trust...to risk..."

Hermione nodded. "But I'm not the only one who is sharing, am I?"

"That is true, Dear...so...you had some questions?"

"Given time available, can I be blunt?" Hermione asked.

That Harry had started with that exact same question brought a smile to the Healer's lips. The smile grew as the Muggleborn witch proceeded to share the exact same concerns that Harry had expressed earlier. Healer Patil, in turn, gave the same answers. Hermione's actions that day would help, rather than hurt potential marriage contract negotiations. Nothing Harry and Hermione might do that evening would hurt either, so long as they drag the Twins into their bed. And short of that step...and so long as it was considered therapy...

"Padma...mind the positions of those stones!" the Healer suddenly admonished.

A voice from the other side of the screen replied, "Yes, Auntie...sorry Auntie..."

Hermione arched an eyebrow.

"She *accidentally* stimulated his healthy limb," the Healer explained.

"Really?" Hermione asked, staring at the screen. "Funny that Harry didn't scream like last time."

The Healer chuckled. "Parvati's breasts may have served as an effective sound insulator."

Hermione frowned. "I have to admit that the level of detail provided by your spidey-sense is unnerving."

The Healer shrugged. "It can be as much of a curse as a gift," she replied. "To have a strong sense of what twenty different patients are doing, or what they are having done to them, all at the same time...quite maddening, unless one is able to develop appropriate filters."

"Ah...so you aren't keeping track of every thing that is happening to Harry?"

"Not unless what is happening rises to a level of concern..."

Healer Patil turned towards the screen and said, "Padma, scoot forward if you must straddle your patient!"

"Yes, Auntie..."

"Well that's good," Hermione sighed, looking back at the screen and shaking her head. "Although, still seems strange....isn't it strange that...I mean, for you to be in the same room while they are...you know..."

Healer Patil smiled, and placed a comforting hand on Hermione's knee. "We have had good fun calling these things *therapy*, even if others would consider them inappropriate behaviors. Yet there is more healing to be found in the love that you are sharing with that young man than any alternative kind of medicine."

The bushy-haired witch looked down at the Healer's hand on her knee and covered it with her own.

"Well...if you really think that's the case..."

"I do."

"Then I guess I've got some therapy to help with," Hermione stated, nodding her head.

"I've answered all of your questions, then?" the Healer asked.

Hermione chewed on her lower lip as she stood, glanced towards the screen, and fingered the knot in her dressing gown's sash.

"Yes, thank you...except..."

"Yes?"

"So how high can we fly out there without hitting your radar?"

"My what?"

Hermione chuckled. "How vigorous can the therapy get before it breaks through your spidey-sense filters?"

The Healer's eyes sparkled.

"You've lost interest in exploring those limits on your own, then?" she asked.

Hermione snorted.

"Okay, then...how much time do we have before you need to leave?"

“Approximately fifteen minutes...enough, I hope?”

“Guess we’ll make do,” the younger witch replied with a wink, walking towards the screen.

oo000000oo *“On the second and third nights, after her confidence has increased still more, he should feel the whole of her body with his hands, and kiss her all over; he should also place his hands upon her thighs and shampoo them, and if he succeed in this he should then shampoo the joints of her thighs. If she tries to prevent him doing this he should say to her, 'What harm is there in doing it?' and should persuade her to let him do it. After gaining this point he should touch her private parts, should loosen her girdle and the knot of her dress, and turning up her lower garment should shampoo the joints of her naked thighs. Under various pretences he should do all these things, but he should not at that time begin actual congress.”* **oo000000oo**

Hermione turned the corner...and stopped short at the sight.

Parvati had Harry’s face pressed between her breasts. Padma had Harry’s chest pressed between her thighs, as she sat on his chest and ran a stone up and down one of his arms. He was naked...the Twins almost so, wearing only their thongs.

Hermione gawked at her three lovers for a few moments. Padma interrupted Hermione’s musings when she dropped first one stone, and then the other onto the side of the bed and gave her sister’s bum a playful slap.

“Time for the patient’s sponge bath,” she announced.

Parvati squirmed away from the slap, but kept her back turned as she held Harry’s head in place.

“You start at the top, I’ll start at the bottom, first one to the middle wins?” she asked.

“Sure that you two are cleared for that kind of treatment?” Hermione called out.

Parvati dropped Harry’s head to his pillow as she and her sister turned sharply towards the new arrival. Hermione had a very stern expression on her face as she stood with her arms folded across her chest.

“Erm...hello, Memsahib?” Padma said nervously.

“Finding their treatments therapeutic, Harry?” the bushy-haired witch asked sharply.

Harry looked up at the nearly-naked witch who was straddling his chest, then turned to her nearly-naked sister, whose bum was pressed up his arm as she sat on the edge of his bed.

“Well...erm, you did say that they should start...right, Hermione?” he stammered.

His girlfriend held the other three teens in her gaze, doing her best imitation of her former Head of House, before she lost it and broke out into laughter.

“Oh...the look on your faces...” she giggled, as she walked towards the bed.

Harry let out a deep breath and smiled.

“Got your questions answered, then?” he asked.

“Yes, just in time for your bath,” Hermione replied.

“Awww....I thought that we got to do that!” Parvati whined.

Hermione shook her head. “Oh, Parvati...have either of you given a patient a sponge bath before?”

Padma shook her head. “That wasn’t a problem for you, the first time though...was it Harry?”

“Erm...” Harry stammered, as he glanced between Hermione and Padma.

“I think that maybe you two should watch me do the procedure,” Hermione declared.

“Didn’t we do that this morning?” Padma asked.

“No, we were a little rushed...you two were working with the stones at the same time, right?”

“Well...I guess...” Parvati said glumly.

“Then it’s settled,” Hermione said with a nod, as she slipped her dressing gown off of her shoulders and let it drop to the ground.

While Padma and Parvati had known that Hermione hadn’t been wearing anything underneath the robe, that didn’t keep them from catching any

less of a breath in their throats than was presently caught in Harry's at the sight of her standing there starkers.

"Right, so Padma...you'll need to be skyclad too for this demonstration," Hermione said matter-of-factly, as she walked up to the charmed basin of warm water that was sitting on a night stand.

"But I don't?" Parvati asked.

Hermione shrugged as she dipped a wash cloth into the water then wrung it out.

"That's up to you," she replied, as she placed the cloth in her former dorm mate's hand. "If you think that you'll get your nurse's uniform wet as you rub Harry down...although, from the looks of it you've already managed to get it wet..."

"What?" asked Padma. "Why does she get a wash cloth...why does she get to rub him down? Thought you were giving Harry the treatment?"

Hermione turned towards the former Ravenclaw and smiled. "No, silly...I said that I was going to provide a demonstration...I never said whom I was going to do it on, did I?"

"What...?" a very befuddled wizard asked.

Hermione smiled as she leaned down and whispered into her boyfriend's ear.

He smiled even more as he listened to her proposal.

"Do I mind? Are you fucking kidding?"

"Language, Sahib!" a voice called out from the other side of the room.

Harry looked towards the screen, and began to laugh.

"Sorry, Auntie," he replied.

"It's settled, then," Hermione stated. "Padma, once you lose the thong you'll need to lay down next to Harry..."

"What?" asked Parvati.

Hermione teased. "Well, Sweetheart, I've already washed you today, and I did promise Padma that I'd do the same for her...it'll just be a horizontal wash-up, rather than a vertical one."

"Oh, I think that Harry is *very* vertical at the moment," Parvati teased, nodding towards his erection.

"Can you blame me?" he asked.

Parvati smiled, and shook her head. "Maybe Padma's wash-up should be vertical, Memsahib? It might be a more...instructive demonstration for both Harry and me?"

Harry gasped. "Erm...that does sound nice," he said. "But..."

"Yes, Harry?"

"It's just that...if you are washing me off, Parvati...you'll be the one that I am going to be watching."

"Oh, you are so...good answer, Sweetheart," Hermione said as she leaned down and gave Harry a kiss. Then she stood up and slapped Padma's bum.

"Running out of therapy time, Luv," she announced.

"Yes, Memsahib," Padma giggled as she stripped off the thong.

"Oh, my..." Harry gasped, as he stared at Padma's bits.

"What?" she whispered, as she climbed onto the bed and lay next to him.

"Sorry, it's erm...just the first time that I've see you like....first time you've taken that incremental step," Harry stated.

Parvati gasped, and looked back towards the screen.

"It is, isn't it?" she said with delight, as she stripped of her own thong and climbed onto her side of Harry's bed. She stayed up on her knees, which meant that Harry's gaze shifted to three different levels as he directly compared (for the first time) just how creative each of the three witches was with a depilatory charm.

"I am leaving in five minutes," a voice called out.

The four skyclad teens looked towards the screen, all amazed that this was the Healer's most pressing concern.

Well, then...no time to waste," Hermione stated, as she lifted Padma's nearest leg and caressed it with her cloth.

Harry snorted.

"I'm glad you think that I'll be able to last that long."

"You and me both, Harry," Padma hissed as a wash cloth traveled up the inside of her thigh.

Hermione snickered. "Now, Parvati...there are, of course, some anatomical differences between our two patients..."

"Praise the Gods for that!" Parvati quipped.

"Yes, so...when we get to those differences, you'll just have to...improvise."

"I think I can do that."

"And take your cues from your patient, of course," Hermione added. "They'll let you know if you are doing things right...right Harry?"

"Uh...huh..." he grunted, as Parvati began to fondle an anatomical difference.

"Uh...huh...is...right," Padma hissed, as Hermione followed her sister's lead.

oo000000oo

Healer Patil allowed for a few extra minutes of therapy, so that there could be a wash-up after the wash-up. When she announced her imminent departure and stepped out from the screen, she discovered the three teen-aged witches nearly dressed, and their patient completely asleep...and snoring.

"Are you sure that this is because of the therapy?" Parvati asked, after a rather loud snore.

"We'll just have to wait a few weeks to see, won't we?" her Auntie replied.

"Or wait until tomorrow and ask Memsahib," Padma quipped.

"And how will I know?" Hermione asked.

The Ravenclaw smiled. "By taking that last, biggest, best incremental step when he wakes up, Luv," she replied.

"Yes, well...we see how big a step we're ready for," Hermione giggled.

Healer Patil cleared her throat when the bushy-haired witch walked towards the bedroom door.

"Aren't you planning on taking the night shift, Dear?"

Hermione nodded.

"Thought I ought to change into my nurse's uniform," she replied.

"Wasn't anything wrong with the uniform that you were just wearing," Parvati quipped.

"Yes, well...guess I just have something in mind," said Hermione. "Would one of you two run back to the wardrobe and fetch that pink teddy?"

"The one with the Muggle snaps in the crotch that is sheer enough for us to see your nipples and pubes?" asked Parvati.

"Yes, that's the one."

"And on that note?" Healer Patil asked. "I'll see you all in the morning."

"Good night, Auntie," Padma said, as she stepped up and kissed the Healer's cheek.

It pleased the older witch greatly that both Parvati and Hermione said (and did) the same.

oo000000oo *"Some women of the harem, when they are amorous, do the acts of the mouth on the yonis of one another, and some men do the same thing with women. The way of doing this (i.e. of kissing the yoni) should be known from kissing the mouth. When a man and woman lie down in an inverted order, i.e. with the head of the one towards the feet of the other and carry on this congress, it is called the "congress of a crow"."* oo000000oo

When Harry woke early the next morning there was a weight on his chest and mass of bushy-brown hair in his face.

It took a moment for him to clear the cobwebs and sort it all out. Parvati had been giving him the most amazing sponge bath hand job while

Hermione rubbed off Padma right there next to him. He had been really close to cumming, and Parvati had tried to go down on him, but her Auntie protested from behind the screen. So she had pulled her head back, but not fast enough and...he had really made a mess on her face. But then Padma pulled her sister across his body and licked her face clean, and then Padma orgasmed, and then Hermione pulled her fingers out and fell down...part on Padma and part on Parvati...who was on top of him sideways, and it was a big jumble of limbs and bits, and....

And that was all he remembered, damn it!

So he must have fallen asleep, and Hermione worked the night shift while sharing his bed, and she was wearing a pink silk something, instead of being naked like he was, because.....because.....

It was a very good question, Harry thought. And the shift in his girlfriend's weight indicated that she might now be awake enough for him to ask it.

"Hermione?"

The bushy-haired witch moaned, then slowly lifted her head off of his chest.

"Good morning, Harry...sleep well?"

"Brilliantly," he replied, as he lifted his head and placed a kiss on her lips. "I'm just sorry that..."

"That what, Harry?"

"Well, I know that I got...got plenty of relief last night. And I'm pretty sure that Padma did too."

"Oh, yeah...she did," Hermione giggled.

"But...then I must have fallen asleep, before Parvati or you were able to...unless, of course...."

"Oh, Harry, there you go, worrying about others," Hermione said. She reached down, grabbed Harry's erection, and gave it a stroke.

"Would you like me to describe in vivid detail how Parvati and I helped each other get relief yesterday under the canopy shower?"

"Hmmm, sounds nice," Harry groaned. "Just wish that I could have been helping out as well."

"That sounds like something to work towards," said Hermione.

Harry nodded.

"Hermione?"

"Yes, Harry?"

"Erm...just wondering...not that I expected you to sleep starkers, of course, but..."

His girlfriend giggled, and gave him a playful squeeze.

"Don't you like my uniform?"

"Erm...of course. It feels nice against my skin, and it's very pink, from what I can see...."

Hermione let go of her grip, pushed back their blankets, and popped up to her knees.

"It's called a teddy, Harry. I'd be happy to take it off..."

"No, no...unless you wanted to, of course..."

"Good," Hermione said, as she swung a knee over Harry's chest. "Because I was hoping that you would finish your sunburn inspection."

"Really?" Harry asked.

"Oh, yes," Hermione cooed, as she stood up onto the mattress with her feet straddling his hips. Pushing the white mosquito netting away from her face, she carefully stepped up to the head board, swung around so that she was facing his feet, then squatted over his face.

"So what do you think? Did I get burned?" she whispered, scraping her fingernails down his chest.

Harry snorted...he could hardly see anything since it was still dark. But he played along, particularly since the darkness did nothing to hinder his sense of smell.

"Erm...not that I can see, but...with you wearing this...teddy?"

"Oh, yes," Hermione acknowledged. "Well, then...want to help me remove that barrier?"

Her boyfriend sighed. "I would if I could..."

"Oh, but I think you can, Harry," Hermione teased, as she lowered herself closer to her face. "Just start digging around...you might find a way..."

She gasped as Harry took up the challenge.

Harry grinned when he felt the three metal snaps with his tongue. He grabbed the corner of fabric with his teeth, and pulled backwards.

His lover gasped after the "pop!" of each of the unsnapped snaps, and gasped again when she settled on his face and he resumed his sunburn taste testing.

He would have gasped when Hermione leaned forward and took him into her mouth at the same time, but his mouth was otherwise occupied.

oo000000oo *"Though a woman is reserved, and keeps her feelings concealed; yet when she gets on the top of a man, she then shows all her love and desire."* **oo000000oo**