

Selling Snape

by Azrael

"My name is Hermione Granger and I finished Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in June 1998 with Outstanding passes in all of my subjects. After a comment from my former Potions professor stating that I did not have the disposition to be a successful Potion maker, I have lost my dream job to one Draco Malfoy. To get even I have decided to devote my career to humiliating Professor Severus Snape in public." An oldie - made for the Selling Snape challenge - AU and a bit silly...

Prologue

Chapter 1 of 5

"My name is Hermione Granger and I finished Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in June 1998 with Outstanding passes in all of my subjects. After a comment from my former Potions professor stating that I did not have the disposition to be a successful Potion maker, I have lost my dream job to one Draco Malfoy. To get even I have decided to devote my career to humiliating Professor Severus Snape in public." An oldie - made for the Selling Snape challenge - AU and a bit silly...

Selling Snape

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I started this story a (very) long time ago in response to the Selling Snape Challenge, so, it is supposed to be funny (whether or not I'm successful will be up to you.). I admit I abandoned the story, but as I have been writing some very dark things of late I decided to revive it. The story is obviously AU now that HBP has changed the whole HP world. Just pretend all that terrible Snape killing Dumbledore and running off into the night never happened...The challenge went as follows:

"My name is Hermione Granger and I finished Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in June 1998 with Outstanding passes in all of my subjects; and a note on my report card next to Potions that stated I did not have the disposition to be a successful Potion maker. As a result I lost my dream job to one Draco Malfoy, a man with the disposition to do very little at all. To get even I have decided to devote my career to humiliating Professor Severus Snape in public."

Hermione Granger has decided to become an entrepreneur, creating a line of products revolving around one man, Professor Severus Snape. From her first advertisement, the public thirst for more is overwhelming and soon Hermione has her own Snape related empire, but what will happen when the Potions master finds out? Can Hermione keep her identity a secret and her person safe? What will Snape do?

So, with that in mind, please read on and try to forgive my sense of humour...

Prologue

Advertisement: *The Quibbler* 23 September 2003

"Feeling Sluggish? Unable to get going in the morning? Work suffering and your boss convinced you've been subjected to a Stupefying Charm? Why not try the Snaporium's new Snape-a-therapy Revive and Feel Alive kit? Guaranteed to have you wide awake in seven minutes or your money back.

For a full catalogue of products please send five Sickles to "The Snapeorium, Locked bag 12, Diagon Alley."

Lavender Brown stretched and yawned and scratched her head, fingers gnarling in her thick brown hair as she stumbled to the bathroom with the latest in a long line of products promising to wake her up. She figured that she must be getting desperate; she'd actually purchased this after reading an advertisement in *The Quibbler*. Still, she had a presentation to make, and if she managed to make a good impression, she may well get the promotion that she had missed four times already. She simply had to be alert.

Which would be easy if she could just wake up.

She sat the box on the basin and opened it. Inside were twelve little bottles, all numbered accordingly, and an instruction book. She yawned again and rubbed her eyes. She didn't like the look of all those bottles, and she could only hope that this was not going to be all that complex; she was barely awake, and thinking was not something she wanted to be doing at this time of morning. With a dubious look on her face, she opened the instruction book.

"Thank you for purchasing the new Snape-a-therapy Revive and Feel Alive Kit, guaranteed to have you wide awake in seven minutes. Instructions for your new kit will appear as each task is completed. Please ensure you have your wand at the ready."

Lavender shuffled from one foot to another before stumbling back to her bedroom for her wand. This was definitely far too complex for so early in the day.

"Step 1: Run a nice deep bath and arrange bottles 1 through 12 on the side of your tub."

Well, that was easy enough. Lavender turned on the taps and arranged the bottles.

"Step 2: Pour contents of bottle number 1 into your bath and stir clockwise five times with your wand. You may then recline in your tub."

Lavender did as instructed and sank blissfully into the bath, sighing with welcome relief and feeling that if it didn't wake her up, then at least she was certainly going to get a nice relaxing sleep out of the kit. She languidly lifted the instruction book and turned the page.

*"Congratulations, you have just succeeded in poisoning yourself with Asphdiate Boroxide. You now have six minutes** to follow the instructions and create your antidote. If you fail (as I suspect you will), you will suffer an excruciatingly painful death and will probably not be discovered until after some dim-witted Muggle complains to the authorities about the stench coming from your flat.*

*** Please note, we have allowed 30 seconds of panic time."*

Lavender felt her mouth run dry. She blinked, blinked again, and her heart suddenly registered that she was indeed in mortal peril and began to thump painfully in her chest.

Lavender Brown was no Potions maker!

Lavender Brown had failed Potions!

Dear Gods, how long had she been lying there?

Was her 30 seconds of panic time up?

She fumbled with the book and dropped it unceremoniously into the tub. It repelled water and she thanked heavens for small mercies *Oh Gods, where was her wand?*

Five minutes and fifteen seconds later, jittering as though she had consumed twenty espressos in quick succession, Lavender Brown stepped out of her bath and turned to the last page of the instruction book.

"Well, it appears that you have managed to correctly formulate the antidote to the Asphdiate Poison. Perhaps you are not as big a dunderhead as I supposed, but I suspect it had more to do with dumb luck than any real skill. In future, you may think twice about blindly following a kit you found advertised in The Quibbler."

The Snapeorium

Chapter 2 of 5

"My name is Hermione Granger and I finished Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in June 1998 with Outstanding passes in all of my subjects. After a comment from my former Potions professor stating that I did not have the disposition to be a successful Potion maker, I have lost my dream job to one Draco Malfoy. To get even I have decided to devote my career to humiliating Professor Severus Snape in public." An oldie - made for the Selling Snape challenge - AU and a bit silly...

Disclaimer - See Prologue

Chapter 1

"Mione, I really think we should take these Snape-a-Therapy kits off the market. This is the seventeenth complaint this week."

Hermione Granger looked up from a particularly long report on cauldron thickness and glared questioningly at the letter in Ron Weasley's hand. "Why? What's wrong with them?" she asked irritably.

Ron picked up a stack of letters and began to read random excerpts from the pile of complaints. "Let me see, oh yes: 'never been so scared in my life,' 'fouled my bathwater in panic,' umm, 'I'll never sleep again,' and this one's my personal favourite: '*my cat fell in the bath, you greasy bastard, and I demand a replacement!*'"

"Kit or cat?"

"Pardon?" Ron looked thoroughly confused.

Hermione sighed impatiently and tried to contain her irritation. Ron really could be very thick sometimes, and with the cauldron report due the following morning, she'd hoped he'd have a little more wit about him that evening. "Do they want a replacement kit, or a replacement cat?" she said, a little too slowly for good humour.

Ron ignored her tone, read further down the page, and winced. "Oh..." he said uncomfortably, "cat..."

Hermione felt a tight knot of guilt form in her stomach, but she wasn't going to show it to Ron. "Okay, send that person..."

"Estrid Eldritch..."

"Estrid Eldritch, send her a gift voucher for the Magical Menagerie."

Ron nodded, agreeing that the voucher might be a good way to make amends to the angry Ms Eldritch, but he wouldn't let the subject drop so easily. "Yeah, okay, but 'Mione, I think these kits have gone too far... You've really pissed people off."

Hermione sighed, any guilt about the cat leaving her with remarkable speed. "Look, they're awake aren't they?"

"Well... *yeah.*"

"And they're alive?"

"Yes."

"Then what do they have to complain about? The kit did exactly what it said it would do!"

Ron shook his head and returned to opening the post. He knew better than to argue with Hermione these days; and he had to admit that orders and requests for catalogues far outweighed any complaints they'd received, so he figured they must be doing something right. That was to say that Hermione must be doing something right; Ron and Harry were just the suckers she used to test her products and open the mail. Ron fancied that he worked harder for Hermione than he did at his actual paying job; he certainly took a lot more abuse from her. Of the three of them, Harry was the only one who actually had a job remotely close to what he wanted to be doing, and even that was proving unfulfilling. None of them were particularly happy with their vocation, but it was Hermione's lack of her dream job that started the Snapeorium in the first place.

After finishing at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Hermione started working for the Ministry of Magic. Like Harry and Ron, Hermione had high expectations for her future. She'd managed to survive the war and come out a hero of sorts, she was intelligent and gifted, and she expected to do well. And at first she did do well. Hermione found herself advancing through the Department of International Magical Cooperation with amazing speed, and everything seemed to be going according to plan. Her career in the magical world appeared to be on the fast track, until one day when she had been thrust into the public eye because Percy Weasley had taken ill with a cold. Percy was supposed to hold a press conference that day, and as Hermione happened to be in his line of sight that morning, the Minister of Magic had decided she would be an adequate substitute. Hermione did an excellent job, just as she always did, and before she knew it she was the Ministry of Magic's Public Spokeswoman. Now she was constantly in the public eye, and as a result, that same public held her accountable for every ill-fated decision the Ministry had made over the last two years. She often mused that it wouldn't be so bad, except that every time there was good news, some departmental head stepped up and took the credit for it. Hermione was almost uniformly seen as the much loathed bearer of bad tidings.

For almost as long as she had been working for the Ministry, Hermione had talked about wanting to work in the developmental potions department of St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries. Not being one to sit idle when it came to something she really wanted, she had written letters every few weeks asking if a position had opened up in the potions department; and every day she scanned the job ads in the *Daily Prophet* for anything that might possibly aid her ambition to get there. Over time, the idea of working for the hospital had become almost like a dream; a job that would put an end to her troubles and spontaneously bring about her happiness. So it was like a dream come true when one of her enquiry letters came back with a positive response. A position had opened up, and they were willing to interview her for it. Hermione had almost wet herself in anticipation of finally having everything she ever wanted. She certainly had the marks for it; she had topped Potions at Hogwarts and she had kept her hand in ever since, and her constant letter writing had proven her enthusiasm to them. She just needed to sit through the interview and she had the job.

Except that she didn't. Thanks to one Professor Severus Snape, who sat on the placement committee, Hermione had been overlooked, in favour of Draco Malfoy, who had also applied for the job, and who had smirked as he offered his condolences after the interviews were through.

"Bastard," Hermione had ranted when she'd returned to Grimmauld Place. "Ferret faced bastard!"

To make matters worse, Snape had advised the hospital board that Hermione Granger did not have the right temperament to work with. He had advised the board that he believed she should seriously revise her decision regarding her vocation!

"Not the right temperament?" she screamed later, pacing the living room of Grimmauld Place and subjecting her unfortunate housemates to her tirade. "Not the right fucking *temperament?*" She had turned wildly on them both. "And Draco fucking Malfoy has the right temperament. *Draco Fucking Malfoy?*"

"Well," Harry had said, without actually thinking first, "he *was* pretty good at Potions at school."

Ron had sunk his head into his hands, and made a noise that sounded remarkably like 'd'oh.'

Hermione had glared at Harry as though he had just called her a Mudblood. "Draco Malfoy couldn't brew a basic sleeping draught if it got up and slapped him about the head!" she'd cried. "Are you trying to tell me that someone like that should be celebrating having *my job?*"

"Err..." Harry swallowed hard and looked to Ron for help, "um, I have to... go... *tøwork!* Yes, that's right... *work!* Bye!" And he bolted out the door.

Two hours and a long hot bath later, Hermione had returned to the living room. Harry had ventured home, a little drunk and a little stoned, but certainly still fearful, and was playing video games with Ron. She had sat quietly on the couch and watched the boys play Doom on the Play Station, before saying in a horribly calm and calculating voice: "I have decided to dedicate my life to humiliating Severus Snape in public."

And so the Snapeorium was born.

Business had been running hot for three months, and Ron reasoned that if sales continued as they were, Hermione would be able to quit the Ministry of Magic and devote herself to the Snapeorium full time. That was, of course, if Snape didn't find out about it first. The Potions master had been strangely silent on the matter. Harry and Ron both agreed that Snape simply couldn't know about the Snapeorium yet, though it was only a matter of time until he found out.

"Hermione," Ron said, suddenly serious as he opened yet another complaint about the Revive and Feel Alive kit, "you can't poison people just because Snape would. That bloody kit is dangerous."

"Oh, honestly, Ron," Hermione scolded him irritably. "Do you think I would actually poison anyone? Just because the kit says we have poisoned them doesn't mean that we have actually done so! It's a joke! The potion is harmless."

"It killed a cat!"

"Yes, well, it *is* harmful to cats, but who in their right mind bathes with a cat?"

By way of reply, Ron waved Estrid Eldritch's letter in her direction.

They were interrupted by the sounds of familiar footsteps dragging up the hall, and Harry trudged past the doorway, covered in mud and slime and looking as though he had just gone a few rounds with a Troll, which, as it turned out, he had. Harry had been a fully qualified Auror for a little over a year, and they were still giving him the 'difficult' cases. Usually it was a task that involved a crazed beast rampaging through London, and they kept telling him that all new Aurors went through the same initiation. Apparently he had to prove his metal before he could move on to chasing Dark Wizards and the like. Not that there were many Dark Wizards around anymore. Harry was at a loss; obviously killing Voldemort in hand-to-hand combat had proved nothing, and he had to wonder what more he could do.

"Harry? Is everything okay?" Hermione called out the doorway, and Harry grumbled a reply about needing a shower because he smelled like a toilet. Hermione chased him down the hall, calling for him to wait, and Harry turned irritably back to her.

"What?" he asked grumpily. He was covered in Troll boogies, and Hermione wrinkled her nose in disgust; he really did smell like a particularly foul public toilet, and he obviously felt as bad as he smelled.

"Do you want to test my new Snape-a-Therapy Foaming Shampoo rinse?"

"Not particularly."

"Oh, come on, Harry, I need a guinea pig... and Ron's going to test the facial wash!" She smiled pleadingly and held out the bottle. Harry sighed and took it with a resigned look on his face, knowing that refusing her was useless. Hermione kissed him on the cheek, and immediately regretted it, because he did in fact taste like a particularly foul public toilet. "Thanks, Harry, you're a saint."

"More like a ruddy idiot," Harry muttered, and he turned and trudged his way up the stairs.

Using the toilet at Grimmauld Place had become a chore that Harry Potter had learned to dread. The house had become a testing ground for Hermione's Snapeorium products, and while Harry could stand most of them... almost... the toilet was another matter. Harry went in, closed the door, and sat down with his eyes closed, and he tried to concentrate on doing what he went in there to do.

It was no use. He could feel the eyes watching him! Why oh why could Hermione have not put the Potions Periodic Tables wall hanging somewhere other than the toilet? Far from teaching Harry the Potions tables, having Snape glaring back at him, looking smug and self satisfied, and blinking on the odd occasion, tended to bind up anything that he would want to do in the toilet.

Just ignore it. Don't look at it. It isn't real; it's just a stupid wall hanging.

Why couldn't she just take it down?

Ron had tried to remove it, but it had simply attached itself firmly and threatened to take points from Gryffindor. When she put the Snape toilet paper in there, declaring that they could wipe their arses on Snape's face, the boys had cried foul. The wall hanging was bad enough, but the toilet paper was just that one step too far.

Harry somehow managed to finish his business and left the toilet. He grabbed a rather scratchy Snape towel from the airing cupboard, and stumbled into the bathroom to shower.

"Snape-a-Therapy Foaming Shampoo Rinse, eh?"

Harry chuckled and looked at the bottle of shampoo. Hermione must be losing her touch, because everyone knew that Snape didn't wash his hair. Just look at the state of it! He placed the bottle on the rack beside the Snape-o-Shave (which had an irritating habit of singing "shave your face with a Snapey razor" if it was picked up), and the Snape Gigantic Nose Sponge, which Harry had to admit did get into those hard to reach places. He moved Hermione's Snape-a-Rub loofah, rumoured to be as abrasive as the Potion master's personality, and turned on the water.

Ahhhhh, hot water. Troll smell washing away. Harry closed his eyes and allowed the water to wash over him, before happily turning on the Snape-o-ponic Waterproof Wireless, and tuning it in to the Macarena. The dangling Snape-on-a-Rope soap leapt to life, climbed up his rope, and found a nice clear space in the soap dish. The miniature Potions master then began to wiggle his hips and wave his arms, his face twisting into a perfect Snape like scowl.

"Ohhhh, Macarena," Harry sang along, encouraging the soap to move that little bit more vigorously.

Snape clapped his hands and jumped to the right, repeating his dance in time to the music.

Harry didn't really care about the Snapeorium at all, but watching Snape dance the Macarena in a soap dish? Well, that was always worth watching.

He retrieved the bottle of experimental shampoo and sighed. It was probably best to get this over with as soon as possible.

Professor Severus Snape decided that after twenty-one years of teaching, he must be losing his touch. He was sure he kept hearing some dreadful Muggle tune every time he turned around, and although he had never caught them at it, he was certain that his students were actually laughing at him behind his back. Which was completely ridiculous, as no student would ever laugh at Severus Snape.

Of course, he reasoned that he could be imagining things. He had never been one for fanciful imaginings, but he had seen a lot in his life, and perhaps all the years of spying and paranoia had finally gone to his head. Approaching the staff room, he decided that it was best to put any fears about his state of mind away in a safe place. He was hardly popular, and there were more than a few teachers who would love to discover that he was doubting his sanity.

Not that he *was* doubting his sanity... not really.

He pushed the door open, prepared to stalk over to his regular chair, slump down in it and endure his weekly contact with the other staff members, but as he entered the room, there it was. *That bloody awful tune!*

There was a peel of laughter from the gaggle of witches in the corner, and Pomona Sprout was actually wiggling her fat hips and singing along; *Ohhh Macarena*, as they pored over some unseen object on the side table. Then Aurora Sinistra looked up, spotted Snape, and nudged Minerva.

There was a confused hiss of whispers. "Oh shit!" "Put it away!" and "Quick, turn the music off!" Then they were standing in front of the table, grinning unnaturally at him, and shielding whatever they'd been playing with from view.

Snape's eyes narrowed in suspicion.

"Severus!" Minerva exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"It's a staff meeting, Minerva, and the last time I checked, I was still a member of staff," Snape said coldly, and he craned his neck a little to see what Minerva had behind her back. Minerva sniggered and Aurora nudged her again, but the Astronomy professor was barely keeping her own face in check.

Deciding it best to leave them to their joke (and resolving to find out what it was later), Snape moved into the room and took up his usual place by the fire, eyeing the witches suspiciously and waiting for Dumbledore to arrive.

Dumbledore did not take long, but unfortunately Hagrid was late and Dumbledore insisted on everyone having tea. Snape knew that regardless of his answer, Dumbledore would always ensure he had a cup, so he nodded silently and glared at the witches until they started to fidget.

"Sorry I'm late." Hagrid finally burst into the room with his usual greeting, and ambled over to the large chair reserved especially for him. "Had t' get the Flobberworms int' their crates for the fourth years."

"That's quite alright, Hagrid," Dumbledore told him jovially. "Tea?"

"Wouldn't mind one, Professor Dumbledore," Hagrid replied, "brought me own mug."

Hagrid produced his new tea cup proudly. Minerva's eyes widened and her tenuous grip on calm ran out the door as she spluttered, snorted and sniggered hysterically. Beside her, Sinistra shook with silent laughter, holding the stitch that was forming rapidly in her side. Hagrid looked as though he was about to join in the laughter until he realised that Snape, sitting by the fire, was glaring at him and positively seething.

"*What is that?*" Snape hissed.

Hagrid realised his mistake after a moment of confusion. It probably wasn't the best idea to show off his new Snapeorium Snape's Head Mug with the nose handle at a staff meeting, particularly when Snape would be in attendance.

"OH MY GOD!"

Hermione looked up from her report in alarm, and she and Ron ran into the hall at full speed, looking for Harry, who they were certain was the owner of the horrified yell that had just echoed down the stairs. Out in the hall they were confronted by a pissed off, and very naked, Harry.

"Wow, Harry," Hermione took in the full sight of her housemate and raised an impressed eyebrow. "With a package like that it's no wonder that witch from Wiltshire doesn't stop writing."

"Never mind my fucking '*package*', look at my fucking hair!"

It took great effort for Hermione to drag her eyes away from the blatantly obvious, and she began to wonder how long it had been since she'd actually had a shag. When her gaze finally settled on Harry's face, she beamed, positively delighted. Ron, on the other hand, was horrified. Harry's normally messy and uncontrollable hair was hanging lank and greasy down either side of his head.

"Oh wonderful!" Hermione clapped her hands and squealed with vindictive delight. "It worked!"

"It's supposed to do this?" Harry asked, and his mouth dropped open. He couldn't quite believe that one of his best friends would do this to him on purpose.

"Of course it's *supposed* to do that," Hermione replied, exasperated that they just didn't get the brilliance behind the product. "It's *Snape* shampoo."

Ron looked as though he would cry.

"What's your problem?" Harry snapped irritably.

"I..." Ron's mouth worked open and closed silently for a moment. "I said I'd test the facial wash."

Considering he spent most of his evening staring at a mug in the shape of his own head; and that several of his colleagues had spent the entire meeting sniggering and casting glances at him when they didn't think he was looking, Severus Snape was in a reasonably decent mood. Well, as decent a mood as he could be after someone was drinking tea out of a cup in the shape of his head.

With his nose as the handle.

And it was obviously custom made for Hagrid because it was roughly the same size as Snape's head too... which made it unpleasantly like watching someone drink the contents of one's own cranium.

It was best not to think about it. After all, the actions of one fool caretaker was no cause to start hexing everyone one in sight. Not yet anyway. He would leave that until he found out who had manufactured the offending mug. Could it have been a student? Was Hagrid even close to any students of late? The last time Snape could recall Hagrid being particularly friendly to a group of students, it had been Potter, Weasley and Granger. Aside from seeing that infernal Granger girl several months back when she had applied for a job for which she was wholly unsuited, Snape could honestly say that he hadn't seen hide nor hair of them around the school since they'd left it.

He put his kettle on the fire and began throwing an assortment of herbs into the pot, but was disturbed by a strange rustling sound at the door. He turned, frowned and just couldn't quite believe what was happening. What the hell was going on? Now they were sneaking up to his door? Had some sort of idiocy curse been cast upon the entire school? Snape stormed over to the door and swung it open.

There was no one there.

He frowned and scanned the deserted corridor and found nothing. And then he saw something on the floor, right in front of his feet. Some kind of brightly coloured magazine, with twinkling little advertisements that popped and whizzed and sang out from the cover as he picked it up.

"*The Snapeorium, for all your Snape related needs. Official catalogue, accept no substitutes.*"

Snape paled until he was the colour of fine china and closed the door. The proprietors of the Snapeorium were about to wish they had never been born.

A Matter of Legalities

Chapter 3 of 5

"My name is Hermione Granger and I finished Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in June 1998 with Outstanding passes in all of my subjects. After a comment from my former Potions professor stating that I did not have the disposition to be a successful Potion maker, I have lost my dream job to one Draco Malfoy. To get even I have decided to devote my career to humiliating Professor Severus Snape in public." An oldie - made for the Selling Snape challenge - AU and a bit silly...

Chapter 2

A Matter of Legalities

Disclaimer: See Prologue

Neville Longbottom was not having a good day. Having graduated from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Neville had gone on to become a respected botanist, who specialised in the creation of experimental hybrid plants. He had spent four months creating a Devil's Snare-Puffer Pod hybrid, and that morning it had matured into adulthood. Unfortunately, what should have been a moment of triumph took a rather tragic turn when the plant puffed and burst and shot out black tentacles that almost killed his assistant.

For as terrible as he'd felt about the mishap, he was beginning to wish that he hadn't allowed the poor girl to go home because it meant that he had to go and register the plant himself. The Department for the Registration of Magical Businesses also served as the office for the Registration of Magical Plants and Creatures and was Neville's first stop before heading down to the Control of Dangerous Plants office. It was a lot of fuss for one small plant, but Neville reasoned that the Ministry was there for a reason, and other than having to stand in line for hours on end, he really had no cause to complain about it.

Unfortunately, he ended up in line directly behind the one person who had truly terrified him in his youth, and whom he had hoped to never set eyes on again. To make matters worse, he was wearing his Snapeorium "I survived the Greasy Git" T-shirt, complete with the snarling face of Snape that periodically dripped grease from the end of its nose. Neville decided that the best thing to do was remain calm and nonchalant, as though standing behind the one man who scared you most in the world, and wearing an offensive shirt emblazoned with his image, was a completely normal thing to do.

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Severus Snape hadn't seen Neville yet, which was probably a good thing given his mood. His scowl was certainly deeper than usual that morning quite a feat considering the depth of his usual scowl and he was racking his brain trying to work out just who hated him enough to defame him in such a way. The truth was that there were any number of people wandering about the wizarding world hating him, but he had always assumed that once they left his classroom forever, they would happily forget he ever existed. He stepped up to the counter where a terribly familiar fresh-faced attendant was sitting with a large grin and a Snape mug half hidden behind his quill and ink.

"What can I do for you today, Professor Snape?"

Snape recognised the voice instantly, and he suppressed a shudder as the headache he thought had long passed blossomed suddenly behind his eye. He had almost danced a jig the day that Colin Creevey had finished school. Frighteningly, it appeared the voice still hadn't managed to break. For his part, Creevey looked very much as though all of his bad dreams had just come to fruition, and he quickly slid his Snape mug a little further behind his ink pot.

Despite wanting desperately to cause the mug to explode (and possibly lodge a large porcelain chunk into Creevey's right cornea), Snape decided that being polite would benefit his cause. There was not enough gold in the world to make him smile at that moment however, and his usual demeanor was enough to cause Colin's head to bobble up and down nervously. "I would like to find out the identity of someone who registered a business here," Snape said, trying to sound friendly and failing miserably.

Colin's eyes grew terribly wide, and for a moment it seemed he was trying to produce spit to wet his dry mouth. In the face of Snape's glare he shank back so that he looked positively minuscule, but eventually he did manage to find his voice. "I'm sorry, Professor Snape, we are unable to disclose that information directly to the public. If you like, you can make an application and the head of department will review it. You should have your answer in five to ten days."

While Colin appeared to believe he had found the perfect solution to Snape's dilemma, Snape felt his blood pressure rise slightly, and the Creevey-produced headache became a pronounced thudding pain. He cleared his throat and wondered how long he could keep up the polite persona. "I don't have five to ten days," he said quietly and noted that his voice sounded a little strained. "I need to know who registered the business now."

"I'm sorry, Professor, but the policy of the Department for the Registration of Magical Businesses clearly states that..."

Snape felt his rather tenuous grip on politeness snap, and he reached across the bench, grasped Colin hard by his collar, and dragged him bodily over the counter. It would have been far easier to have used the Imperius curse on the squeaky voiced little bureaucrat, but there was a terrible sort of pleasure in grinding his wand into Colin's quite possibly unused scrotum and making him squeak just a little bit higher. "I'm sure you can make an exception for me, *Mr.* Creevey. Tell me who registered the Snapeorium as a business."

Colin Creevey was looking around wildly for the Security Guards, and when at last he spotted them moving forward, he almost wilted with relief. "I... I'm sorry, Professor," he spluttered, knowing that his salvation was only moments away. "I... I can't give out that information."

Snape didn't bother to release his grip on his former student's collar, but he did want to see exactly what had given him such courage. He jerked his head around to see what Creevey was looking at, smiled, and nodded cordially. "Crabbe, Goyle, good to see that the references I gave you found you gainful employment."

Crabbe and Goyle were resplendent in their black and silver security robes, and much to Colin's dismay, they waved cheerfully at Snape and settled in to see what kind of damage their ex-Head of House could inflict. Snape could almost sense Creevey making a mental note to complain to his department head about them later, but from the way the imbecile was shaking, Snape wasn't certain if he would survive the encounter without having a heart attack first.

"Now listen, you no-talent little pissant," Snape hissed, his face so close to Colin's that spittle flecked across his cheek. "You either tell me the name of the person who registered that business, or I will give you a case of elephantiasis of the nuts so bad that you'll be wheeling your balls around in a barrow until you're fifty!"

"G-G-G-G-G..."

"'G-G-G-G-G' what?" Snape dug the wand in a little harder.

"Granger..." Colin wailed. "H-Hermione Granger."

Snape released him immediately with a frown. Hermione Granger? What in hell had he ever done to her? "Thank you," he said politely, "you have been most helpful."

Snape turned away and spotted Neville. His eyes glanced quickly at the T-shirt, and he snorted impatiently. He pushed past him, and Neville looked panicked, as though he were about to wet himself. Snape didn't pause to make a comment, but as he passed he made sure to catch Neville's eye and hold his gaze for a second before walking away. He smirked when he heard a yelp of dismay, as Neville no doubt realized that instead of feet he now sported a giant set of rabbit paws. He turned his head ever so slightly, and the smirk that had tugged at his mouth became an evil grin as he caught sight of Neville unconsciously twitching his nose.

The *Daily Prophet's* dissection of her last press conference reiterated to Hermione that she was not well liked by the media. In truth she wasn't well liked by many people at all, and even shopping trips to Diagon Alley had become events that she treated with some trepidation. Someone always felt the need to come up and tell her exactly what they thought of her even as they were shaking Harry's hand! She often wondered how she had managed to get into the unenviable position in the first place. She wasn't all that brilliant at public speaking, and she had a tendency to get annoyed at answering the same question, differently phrased, over and over again.

To make matters worse, she was fairly certain that Percy Weasley (who was now Head of the Department of Magical Co-operation and thus her boss to some degree) had some kind of strange crush on her, because he kept asking her out for a drink after work. She had contemplated taking him aside and explaining that in a moment of lunacy she had submitted to intercourse with his brother, and as such it would just be far too strange for her to form any kind of relationship with him. She felt pretty sure these were terms he would understand, and they were far kinder than the truth that he looked like a giant red pimple and there wasn't enough gold in Gringotts to convince her to have so much as a glass of milk in his company. She had not taken action though, because if her current luck was holding out, she was completely wrong about Percy's 'crush', and she would end up looking like a total idiot on top of everything else.

Today's *'everything else'* consisted of yet another press conference regarding the new regulation for cauldron thickness. The Ministry appeared to be completely obsessed with the subject, and a new report, with a new set of recommendations, was released every few months... and every few months Hermione stood in front of the same crowd of journalists and adjusted the regulations amidst much scoffing and sneering. Today was no exception.

One of the main problems with press conferences for the Department of Magical Co-operation was that it made for an international press gallery, and Rita Skeeter (who had fashioned herself a serious journalist in recent years and who referred to Hermione as the Ministry's resident know-it-all with such alarming regularity that it was no longer funny) was always keen to make a statement in front of her foreign counterparts. She was now asking, yet again, why the wizarding world should be concerned with changes so minimal that they could well be considered irrelevant when there were far more important things to worry about, such as the incidents of vampire attacks having risen ten-fold in recent years. Hermione would have loved to have agreed with her, but she settled instead for rolling her eyes and glaring at the troublemaker, envisioning the reporter buzzing around in a jar and fiddling with the wand in her robe pocket, wondering if she could both Transfigure a jar *and* say the incantation to force her into her Animagus form simultaneously.

Such moments had their uses, however; they served as fodder for her grudge against the man who had been the means for keeping her in this god-awful job. As she had sat through breakfast that morning, with a greasy haired Harry and an even greasier faced Ron, she had been concocting a new product... one that was now taking glorious new shape in her brain. Even as she walked away from the podium, ignoring the grumbled misgivings of the various press assembled, Hermione found that a smile had begun to tug at the corner of her mouth as she contemplated the brilliance of her new plan. With some work, she could have it ready just in time for Christmas, and she had no doubt it would be a hit.

She walked into her office, her mind still mulling over her new plan, and she was about to sit down, when she realised that there was a large and rather ferocious looking owl standing on her chair. She took a step back, and it glared at her impatiently.

Can an owl really look impatient?

She looked at the owl and raised an eyebrow. Yes, an owl could really look impatient. The bird hopped up onto her desk and held out its leg, waiting for her to remove the letter it was carrying and giving her the distinct impression that it was only just tolerating her touch. She untied the letter from the owl's leg, but before she could offer it a drink, the bird took off out the window.

Hermione looked at the heavy grade parchment envelope and read the neatly gold embossed name on the back. *Akerbole and Sidenhelm Solicitors at Law*. She felt her stomach drop with a nervous thump and carefully opened the letter.

16 October 2003

Dear Miss Granger

I am writing on behalf of my client, Professor Severus Snape, in relation to your business, 'The Snapeorium'. It has come to my attention that you have made an unauthorised use of my client's name, face, figure, personality and reputation in the preparation of products relating to said business. All rights to Professor Snape's person, including any resulting products created by your business, are therefore infringing his personal copyright to his own person.

As you neither asked for nor received permission to use Professor Snape as the basis for The Snapeorium, nor to make or distribute products relating or referring to Professor Snape, I believe you have wilfully infringed my client's rights under ACT 17 M.O.M. Section 101 et seq., and could be liable for statutory damages as high as 150,000 Galleons as set forth in Section 504(c)(2) therein.

I demand that you immediately cease the use and distribution of all infringing works derived from The Snapeorium, and all products of same, and that you deliver to me, if applicable, all unused, undistributed products of same, or destroy such products immediately. I also hereby demand that you desist from this or any other infringement of my client's rights in the future. If I have not received an affirmative response from you by 31 October 2003 indicating that you have fully complied with these requirements, my client shall take further action against you.

Yours faithfully

Augustine Akerbole

Solicitor at Law

"Wow," Hermione said, astonished, "I thought he'd just hex me."

"Dear Ms Akerbole

RE: Your letter of 16 October 2003. The Snapeorium.

My client, Miss Hermione Granger and The Snapeorium, has asked that I contact you with regards to this matter.

In relation to Professor Snape's issues with the Snapeorium's use of the name 'Snape' and in relation to the Snapeorium and all products therein, we wish to advise that

Snape is a small village in Suffolk, and the village council have raised no objections to my client's business being named after their town, which is where the head office of the Snapeorium is located.

Further, with regards to my client's use of your client's person as a basis for products, in *International Wizarding Law 715 2.2 -3: Dorbello v. Nottingham, 379 U.K. 64 (1864)*, we hold that even when a speaker or writer is motivated by hatred or ill-will, his expression is protected by the *Wizengamot Declaration 1 273.6*. Were we to hold otherwise, there could be little doubt that political cartoonists and satirists would be subjected to damages awards without any showing that their work falsely defamed its subject. The appeal of the political cartoon or caricature is often based on exploitation of unfortunate physical traits, or politically embarrassing events an exploitation, it should be noted, that is often calculated to injure the feelings of the subject of the portrayal. The art of the cartoonist is often not reasoned or even handed, but slashing and one-sided (as in the *Wizengamot finding of November 1989 Lockhart v Quibbler*). The use of this finding extends to any other reproduction that would be considered a respectful parody of a public figure. A public figure being defined as anyone who stands up in front of the public to lecture or impart information and thus also includes teachers and professors. Therefore, on each and every product manufactured by the Snapeorium, my client very clearly states that the product is a "respectful parody" of a well-known figure and as such falls under the above mentioned ruling.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, I request that you direct all correspondence to my office.

Yours faithfully

Pavarti Patil

Solicitor at Law"

"Well, Severus..." Augustine Akerbole sat back in her chair and blew smoke from her cigarette into the air, "she's got your balls in a vice."

"What?" Snape hissed and glared across the desk at the woman as though she had suddenly sprouted horns. "What do you mean *she has my balls in a vice*? That know-it-all little bitch will never get my balls in a fucking vice! Why don't you do your fucking job and *stop her*?"

Augustine blew some more smoke and to Snape's astonishment, she smiled dreamily. A quick and silent *Legilimens* revealed a disturbing image of his solicitor singing in the shower with a Snape Soap-on-a-Rope dancing on a loofah. Worse still, another image spang to her mind: a group of wildly intoxicated witches whooping and cheering as another, blindfolded witch strived to pin a penis on a frighteningly accurate caricature of himself. Pin the Penis on the Potions Master? What kind of mad woman would buy such a thing? *What kind of mad woman would invent it?*

"Well, Severus," Augustine said cheerfully, "if we take her to court, it could come out very badly for you. I mean, you're not the most popular man in the country, and..."

"I think you will find that those fortunate enough to have been placed in Slytherin House have quite fond memories of me," Snape cut in indignantly.

"Yes, I understand that former members of Slytherin house have a great deal of respect for you, but they do total less than a quarter of the wizarding population, and it doesn't stop them from buying these 'products'."

Bastards.

Snape began to pace Augustine Akerbole's office. The Granger girl was obviously harbouring some grubby little grudge from some ill he had done her, either real or imagined. He had to admit that it was very possibly real; he had generally gone out of his way to either ignore or insult her when she was at school. But he had schooled countless students, all of whom still hated the sight of him, and none of them had ever done anything like this. To add insult to injury, the little bitch was too smart for her own good, and she had managed to find a legal loophole that would allow her to do it. Damn the *Wizengamot!*

So how should he stop this? Should he just ignore it? Take the high road and pretend it didn't bother him? Or should he come up with something else? Should he perhaps get his own back?

Snape stopped pacing, and a thin smile crossed his sallow features in a way that made the world-weary Augustine Akerbole shudder.

Then, inexplicably, Snape began to chuckle. "Oh, yes," he murmured more to himself than to his solicitor. "How utterly perfect. How perfect indeed."

Revenge is a Dish Best Served...

Chapter 4 of 5

"My name is Hermione Granger and I finished Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in June 1998 with Outstanding passes in all of my subjects. After a comment from my former Potions professor stating that I did not have the disposition to be a successful Potion maker, I have lost my dream job to one Draco Malfoy. To get even I have decided to devote my career to humiliating Professor Severus Snape in public." An oldie - made for the Selling Snape challenge - AU and a bit silly...

Chapter 3

Revenge is a dish best served...

Disclaimer: See Prologue

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Advertisement: Witch Weekly 27 November 2003

"Hair feeling a little flat? Dull and lifeless hair will be a thing of the past once you boost your locks with H.G. Inc Super Maximising Hair Treatment. Designed to transfigure

your hair from lank to lively, we guarantee to give your hair a lift – or we'll give you your money back!"

Harry was still suffering the ill effects of Hermione's experimental *Snape*' shampoo several weeks after he used it, and in desperation he had turned to the *Witch Weekly* cosmetic help pages for advice. He'd found no help at all in the kind words offered by some faceless witch who thought he should be happy with himself just the way he was, but the advertisement for the H.G. Inc Super Hair Maximising Treatment that glittered beside the advice column had certainly caught his attention. He had sent away for the treatment, ticking the express option on the little form that he'd clipped from the magazine, and he was thrilled when a neatly wrapped brown paper parcel arrived only two hours later. Pleading ill, he rushed home and locked himself in the bathroom, hoping against hope that this would be the cure for the disaster that Hermione had visited upon him.

He pulled the neatly wrapped package from his robes, and even though he knew he was alone, he did a quick search of the room, almost certain that someone was lurking in a cupboard, ready to catch him being vain. It was not in Harry's nature to be particularly vain, but having lank and greasy *Snape* hair had turned out to be rather depressing, and his self esteem – low enough given his current occupation – had taken something of a nose dive. He cast a disparaging glance at his reflection in the mirror, shuddered, and untied the string on the parcel. The effects of Hermione's shampoo were unfortunately permanent, and even though Hermione had initially blamed Harry's hair for the failure, she had eventually admitted that the potion was flawed and she would need to do some serious work on the formulation before she could sell it. It had been weeks, and Harry had been stuck looking like a parody of his former Potions master. To make matters worse, Hermione seemed to have lost interest in finding a cure for his hair disaster and was concentrating a new humiliating *Snape* doll – still, Harry did feel a little guilty as he unwrapped his new shampoo. For a brief moment he thought he should perhaps give her another chance to fix it.

Another downside to having foul, greasy *Snape* hair was that Harry's love life was suffering along with his failing self esteem. Unbeknown to Hermione, Harry had a lover, and while that lover had found the greasy hair a novelty at first, it was a novelty that had fast worn thin, and nothing Harry had tried would make the mess any better. He had even tried to get the formula Hermione had used to create the shampoo in the first place, in the hopes that his lover could concoct a remedy (Hermione had been remarkably unforthcoming with the recipe, asking Harry so many questions that he had dropped the subject altogether). When he had seen the advertisement for the new hair maximiser, Harry had decided that it couldn't make it any worse. Of course, he knew that he shouldn't buy anything from an advertisement in a magazine, but he had reasoned that *Witch Weekly* was a reputable publication... certainly more reputable than *The Quibbler* anyway.

He took the bottle of shampoo out of the unwrapped box. The bottle looked rather feminine, long and slender, made of clear glass, and with a purple liquid inside. The white label on the front of the bottle was ringed with a swirling silver border, and a little caricature of a rather bossy looking girl with a tiny body and an enormous head covered in rather untamed brown hair stared back at him. She tapped her wand smartly, and 'H.G. Inc' swirled out of the tip as seductive violet smoke.

Harry raised both eyebrows and grinned at the image of the girl on the bottle. "You know, you look a lot like Hermione," he said, and the girl winked and tossed her wild mane.

"So she looks like Hermione," he mused silently. "Doesn't mean she's Hermione."

Harry cast another glance at his reflection and quickly opened the bottle. He sniffed suspiciously. It smelled alright. It smelled like flowers. Harry looked back to the mirror and shuddered at the curtains of greasy black hair, and then looked back to the bottle. The shampoo smelled alright, and it really couldn't make his hair any worse.

Draco Malfoy was laughing, laughing so hard his sides hurt, and even the man standing in the centre of the room with his hands on his hips looking murderous could not stop him. In fact, as Draco drew breath and tried to focus on his father, he found himself laughing even harder, clutching his ribs and falling back into the lounge, desperate to breathe.

His mother was doing a better job of controlling her mirth, though only marginally. "It... um... it isn't as awful as you think... darling."

Lucius Malfoy turned from his son to his wife and glared at her, his eyes blazing a trail of total incredulity. "Not so bad?" he all but screamed *Not so bad!? Are you insane, woman? It's a fucking disaster!*

Narcissa Malfoy's mouth twitched uncontrollably, and she patted her son's knee for support, which was pointless because it caused Draco to look at his father again, and that only brought the laughter to a hysterical fever pitch. Draco was convinced that if he didn't stop, he might just wet his pants.

"I'm sure we can..." She choked back her laughter and actually began to cough from the effort. "I'm sure we can... do... something about it... I've got some *bleekeys*..."

"Well, it certainly gave you the *body* you wanted," Draco said, attempting to say something constructive in the face of his father's horror. Unfortunately, it only caused his mother to lose all control and collapse into Draco's arms, laughing so hard that she was starting to cry.

Lucius sneered and then scowled, his lip curling into something of a snarl – which would have been frightening had he not been standing in the centre of the rug with hair that resembled some kind of albino afro. He evidently failed to see what was so amusing about his suddenly looking like a dandelion gone to seed, and he looked very much as though he had to physically restrain himself from hexing his treacherous family. It crossed Draco's mind that he was treading on very dangerous ground indeed, but one more look at his father had him deciding that it was just too funny to stop. Lucius glared at them for a moment longer, but when this brought on fresh peels of laughter, he turned on his heel and stormed out of the room, declaring that he would be sending something particularly nasty through the post to the proprietors of H.G. Inc.

"That bastard!" Hermione cried as she paced the floor of Harry's bedroom. "That dirty fucking bastard!" She glared at the shampoo bottle with its barely disguised caricature of her on it and squeezed so hard that the bottle fractured with a resounding crack. She turned the oozing mess over in her hands and found the tiny disclaimer on the back, and then she hurled the whole thing at Harry's bedroom wall.

Ron winced as several of Harry's pictures tumbled to the floor with the impact of the bottle, and then he bit his lip in anticipation of what was going to come next. He and Harry both knew that Hermione had no sense of humour at all about her looks, and even less about her hair. Ron himself was caught between the desperate need to laugh at his best mate – who no longer resembled Professor Severus *Snape*, but would now have no trouble passing as an 80's Goth singer – and the desperate need to calm Hermione down before she did something really rash... like going to Hogwarts and punching the Potions master in the nose.

"That..." Hermione spluttered, "that... that... that..."

"*Bastard?*" Ron offered, and she turned on him.

"He stole my idea!" she cried. "That greasy shit stole my idea!"

"Well, you have to admit, he asked you to stop and you didn't," Ron said, hoping that she wouldn't hex him. "I mean, what did you expect? Did you really think that he'd get your solicitor's letter and just let it go quietly?"

Hermione almost growled audibly, and Ron took a step back from her. In truth he would never have thought *Snape* would come back at her in quite a way as this. He was pleased that Hermione had never studied Legilimency because he was feeling the first traces of a budding respect for the greasy git, and if Hermione ever found out, his life wouldn't be worth living. It really was ingenious of *Snape*, beating Hermione at her own game. Ron honestly never thought that *Snape* had it in him.

A whimper from the bed had them both looking at Harry with no sympathy whatsoever.

"That's *my* shampoo." Hermione pointed at Harry's bushy head. "He stole *my* shampoo!"

"Well," Ron replied logically, "technically, he didn't. I mean, that shampoo does the opposite of what your shampoo does... and yours isn't on the market yet. So if you released it now, it would look like *you* stole *his* idea."

Hermione gaped at him and cried: "You have got to be fucking kidding me!"

Ron sighed; he hated being the logical one. Hermione was supposed to be the logical one. Ron wanted nothing more than to be back in front of the television drinking his beer and getting the questions on *'Who Wants to be a Millionaire'* horribly wrong, but in recent months he was increasingly becoming the voice of sanity in the house, and Hermione was becoming just plain scary.

"Think about it," Ron explained patiently, ignoring Harry, who was actually crying at the sight of his reflection in the mirror, "you still haven't released your shampoo because you can't get the formula right. Snape obviously got his right, either that or he just doesn't care, and he's released it. You can hardly dispute that."

"He's only doing it to get back at me!" Hermione hissed viciously. "The petty little shit!"

Ron almost choked from the effort not to scoff at her. He thought that Hermione calling someone petty was pretty rich, given that she had created the Snapeorium because she didn't get a job. He turned back to Harry, who was distributing fistfuls of Sleekeasy's through his hair, and couldn't help but ask him: "What kind of an idiot are you? The bottle has her fucking picture on it!"

"That picture looks nothing like me!" Hermione cried.

"Okay, well, it has a likeness of someone that *looks* like Hermione on it – and there's a fucking disclaimer on the bottle! Jesus, Harry, how thick are you?"

Harry had no answer; he just made a strange whimpering noise and continued to persevere with the Sleekeasy's.

"Err, mate," Ron said uneasily, "I think that's making it worse. Maybe you should cancel your dinner tonight."

Harry shot Ron a warning look and made a despairing noise in his throat.

Ordinarily, Hermione would have caught the interplay of looks between the boys, but she had not been in a normal mood for quite some time, and at that moment she was in a rage. "This is war!" she declared fiercely. "If this is how he fucking wants it, this is *war!*"

"Are you under there?"

Harry looked out from under his hood and ventured a smile.

"Why are you wearing your hood inside?"

Harry swallowed hard and tried to make his voice sound calm and normal. "Um, I had a bit of an accident... with my hair."

"I've seen the Snape hair, remember?"

"This is... *worse*... than that."

"*Worse than looking like Severus Snape?*"

Harry looked up at his lover of six months and grimaced at the reason he couldn't tell Hermione that he was with someone. It had taken him forever to get Draco Malfoy, but if Hermione ever found out, she would probably use Avada Kedavra before she had time to think of a more suitable curse to perform. Harry had never expected Draco to get the job that Hermione had coveted, and while the position had certainly made Draco happy, Harry had often thought that it would have been far easier had it been Draco who had received the disappointment. He would have been able to tell Hermione about his relationship at the very least. As it was, he hadn't even found the courage to tell her that the witch from Wiltshire was actually a wizard. He tried once again to smile at Draco, but he didn't feel as though there was much to smile about. They'd been seeing each other for six months, and he'd given him Snape hair for over a month, and now there was this mess. *Oh yeah, Harry*, he mused silently, *you're a real catch.*

Draco leaned across the table and pushed the hood back from Harry's face – and then sprang back from the table, almost knocking his chair to the floor. Around them, people had stopped eating and had taken the opportunity to stare at the mass of black hair that looked as though it had literally exploded from Harry's head.

"Holy fucking shit!" Draco exclaimed; his eyes positively goggled at the spectacle sitting across from him.

"I know, I know..." Harry wailed. "Oh God, don't laugh!"

But of course, Draco had already begun to laugh. In fact, he began to cackle at the hilarity. "Oh my God!" he cried, unable to contain himself. "Oh, wow, that's... that's fucking amazing!"

Harry moaned pathetically, and Draco reached forward and tried to run his fingers through the mop, probably wanting to see if it felt as bad as it looked. Harry slapped his hand away irritably.

Draco chortled, ignoring the irritable mood in his mirth. "Don't tell me, H.G. Inc. Hair Maximizer?"

"How did you know?"

Draco settled back into his chair and decided to put Harry out of his misery. "Dad used it," he said, his grin growing wider at the memory of his father standing in the middle of the drawing room rug.

A smile finally began to tug at the corners of Harry's mouth. "Really?"

"Oh yeah." Draco grinned evilly. "You should see it. Mum had to tie it up in these two huge bunches to get it off his face. He looks like a very large Powder Puff girl."

If anything was going to make Harry laugh, the mental image of *Lucius Malfoy, Powder Puff Girl* was going to do it.

"Which reminds me," Draco continued, picking up the drinks menu, "Dad's on the war path, so we can't go to my place tonight. We'll have to go to yours."

The trace of a smile faded from Harry's lips, and he began to fidget uncomfortably. "You know we can't," he said quietly. "Hermione will be there."

The mirth faded from Draco as effectively as it had from Harry, and a frown creased his brow, marring his features. "I thought you were going to tell her," he said. "You said you would tell her."

"I *am* going to tell her," Harry replied, still uncomfortable, "but she's been a bit... odd... lately."

Odd was an understatement and Harry knew it. Terrifying was a more apt description: she had both Harry and Ron sneaking around their own house for fear of upsetting her. Harry could only imagine what would happen if she found out that Harry was shagging Draco Malfoy. If she didn't kill him, she would probably start a new business selling a Pottermania line of fake stick on scars and crap plastic glasses held together with sticky tape – not to mention the Harry 'n' Draco salt and pepper shakers that fitted into each other. When it came to revenge, Hermione reigned supreme.

"I'm working on telling her," Harry lied, but Draco didn't believe him for a second. He sat back and folded his arms, glaring at Harry with something that looked like disgust.

"I got that job because I'm a better Potions maker than she is. If she can't accept that, then she has a problem."

Harry remained silent, as though agreeing would cause Hermione to spring from the woodwork with a hex made especially for him.

Draco pinched the bridge of his nose. "Harry, this is daft. I told *my* parents about us! And after three days, Dad recovered enough to take the Leg-Locker curse off me."

Harry shrugged.

Draco glared, his face expectant, and when Harry said nothing, he threw his hands up in exasperation. "You killed the Dark Lord for Christ's sake! How can you be scared to tell a tiny little woman that you're seeing me?"

"You don't know Hermione," Harry told him. "She can be really vindictive when she wants to be."

"I see," Draco said calmly, a horrible forced smile on his face. "She's *vindictive*? I can see why that would have you terrified, Harry. I suggest you grow a set and tell her about us, or there might not be an 'us' to tell her about."

"Draco, don't... I'll tell her, just give me some time."

"Of course, I'll give you *plenty* of time." Draco tapped his finger absently on the table top. "And just to let you know, we won't be having any sex until you tell her."

Harry's mouth fell open. "W-w-what?" he stammered, horrified at what he had just heard. *Are you insane?* That's not fair!"

"I think it is," Draco said pleasantly.

Harry looked around wildly and grabbed Draco's wrist. "They make me chase trolls for a living," he pleaded desperately. "Please, Draco, sex is all I have to look forward to – you can't do this to me!"

"Oh," Draco said with a cold smile. "I think I can."

"Drrrrayyyyyyyccco!" Harry whined petulantly.

"Harryyyyyeeee!" Draco replied in kind.

Harry pouted like a child and stamped his foot.

"Are you going to tell her?" Draco asked reasonably.

"No!" Harry said, sounding very much the child he was acting like.

"Well then, it looks like Mrs Palmer and her five lovely daughters will be entertaining you for quite a while."

Advertisement: The Quibbler 30 November 2003.

*"Just in time for Christmas! New from the Snapeorium: the all-singing, all-dancing Potions Master Action Figure**. Relive all those classic moments from Potions class and hear your favourite long-winded rants as you've never heard them before! Who could forget the infamous 'Bottle Fame, Brew Glory' speech? Hear all new renditions of 'If You're a Dunderhead and You Know it Raise Your Hand,' 'I'm Going to Poison You for Christmas,' and our personal favourite (great for those who missed it or for those who just want to hear it again) 'Harry Potter, Our New Celebrity.'"*

Limited stocks available, so be quick to get yours now!

**Please note, figure is anatomically correct and may not be suitable for children. Comes with complimentary magnifying glass."

"Oh, isn't he cute!"

Minerva McGonagall looked at the unusually bushy haired Sinistra and pursed her lips. "Sin, dear," McGonagall said in an almost motherly tone, "I am more than willing to put that night you slept with him down to momentary lunacy, but not if you keep making comments like that."

Sinistra blushed and pushed her unruly hair back from her eyes. "It was last year's Christmas party and I'd had a lot to drink... I would like to forget about it, thank you very much." She smiled at the figurine. "And really, there is something very sweet about him when you can pick him up and put him away."

Minerva looked dubious. She'd heard the *'I was drunk'* excuse before, but she remembered the Christmas party well enough, and no amount of drink would have been enough to let Severus Snape near her person... and Sinistra really hadn't seemed all that drunk. She shuddered at the thought.

She decided to ignore her suspicions and play with her new toy instead. She twisted the base of the figure and set it correctly. "Just wait till you see this," she said, unable to contain a giggle. "It's hilarious."

She placed the figure on her desk, and the two witches watched it expectantly.

"What's supposed to happen?" Sinistra whispered.

"Shhh, he'll do it, just wait."

A tune began to emanate from the base of the figurine, and slowly, the miniature Snape began to sway in time. Then, seductively, it stepped down off its base and approached them. Heavy lidded, and with the gravel tones of a French blues singer, it opened its mouth and began to sing.

"I can show you how to bottle faaaaaaaaame.."

Sinistra snorted with laughter, and McGonagall clamped a hand over her mouth with a hushed: "Shhh, it gets better."

Mini Snape began to undulate, singing in earnest and, to both witches' eternal mirth, began to unbutton his robes.

"*He's not?*" Sinistra hissed in complete disbelief.

"*Shhh!*"

He discarded his hat. He untied his sash and twirled it above his head before throwing it to his fans. Soon the desk was littered with tiny articles of clothing, and the skinny white Snape wore nothing more than a rather grubby looking pair of greying underpants – in which he wiggled his arse with gusto.

"Oh my god!" Sinistra could not contain herself any longer, and a cackle of laughter burst from her lips. McGonagall almost hurled her away from the desk.

"Don't! He gets all indignant if you laugh, and he stops!"

And having him stop would just be too cruel. Sinistra struggled to maintain composure as Snape gave one last wiggle of his hips, tore off his underpants and threw them to his quaking admirers, causing McGonagall and Sinistra to burst into hysterical fits of laughter.

The miniature Potions master paraded across the desk, full of smug self satisfaction as Minerva, laughing, handed Sinistra the magnifying glass and she leaned in to look.

"Oh!" Sinistra peered at the figure and lost control again. "It's a tiny little man with a tiny little dick! Oh, you have to get him back together again so we can show Poppy. She'll love this!"

And they were rolling around again, laughing hysterically and deciding that whoever had made it had to be a woman, for only a woman could be so cruel.

"Well," said a silky voice from behind them, "I'm glad you are able to find amusement in such a humiliating toy."

The laughter stopped immediately as the full size Snape swept up behind them and snatched up the doll before Minerva could get to it.

"It's only a toy, Severus," Minerva snapped crisply, "and it's mine, so kindly give it back."

"Tsk ts, Minerva," Snape said in his quiet, silky way. "I would have at least thought you would have tried to blame it on a student."

"Just give it back," Minerva replied with some disdain.

"Certainly." He smiled thinly and stretched out his hand, pressing hard with his thumb as he did so, and they all heard the doll break with a resounding 'snap.' Unbeknown to Minerva, it was the tenth one he'd broken that day, and he had been congratulating himself on just how well he had kept his temper.

"Brittle little thing, isn't it?" he asked, raising an eyebrow and casting a pitying look at the broken toy. "That's poor quality, you see. You should be careful about what you waste your money on, Minerva." Minerva sneered and snatched the remains from his hand, and Snape turned and swept to the door, pausing there and looking back. "Oh, Sin, love the hair," he hissed, "although I must say it is hardly original. I've seen at least a dozen other people with that style today."

~

Chapter 4 - the girl with the exploding head

Chapter 5 of 5

"My name is Hermione Granger and I finished Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in June 1998 with Outstanding passes in all of my subjects. After a comment from my former Potions professor stating that I did not have the disposition to be a successful Potion maker, I have lost my dream job to one Draco Malfoy. To get even I have decided to devote my career to humiliating Professor Severus Snape in public." An oldie - made for the Selling Snape challenge - AU and a bit silly...

Disclaimer: See Prologue

Chapter 4

Advertisement: Daily Prophet 15 December 2003

"Are your friends astounded by your stupidity? Is your child no well of knowledge? Or are you just always lost for an answer? Your prayers may now be answered by the Little Know it All from Granger Inc. Educational Aids.

The Little Know it All is the ultimate well of knowledge!

There is no question she can't answer!

Even rhetorical questions aren't safe with Little Know it All on the case!

Standing 12" tall, Little Know it All comes complete with reflex 'hand in air' action and her own soapbox to stand on. Suitable for all ages, Little Know it All is an ideal Christmas gift and can even be used as a study aid!

From students eager for House points to the Ministry worker seeking promotion, let Little Know it All find the answer for you.

Little Know it All,

She knows it all!"

~

Harry Potter dragged himself into the family room at Grimmauld Place and sank into the settee with a defeated groan. He had spent his day sorting out an altercation between two families of goblins from Hoggarths Cross over the ownership of seven candlesticks said to have belonged to Merlin, and he had only just escaped with all his limbs. For such wrinkled creatures, goblins were surprisingly spry.

"Bad day?" Ron asked needlessly as all Harry's days seemed bad of late, and he tossed him a beer, which Harry promptly failed to catch, and it hit him in the head. Ron winced and Harry had no reaction at all, which served to demonstrate just how bad he was feeling.

"I wish I was dead," Harry said emotionlessly and opened the can, covering himself in spray and downing it in one go.

"Here you go," Ron said brightly, holding up a folded and sealed letter delivered that morning. "It's from Wiltshire!"

If Ron thought that perhaps the letter might cheer Harry up, he was in for a rude shock as Harry groaned and summoned himself another beer.

"Draco still not putting out, eh?" he asked sympathetically.

"I'm more celibate than a fucking monk," Harry grumbled.

"More celibate?"

If Harry noticed Ron's wry amusement, he didn't comment. He didn't even scowl. He cracked his fresh beer open, utterly determined to get as drunk as possible in as short a period of time as possible. "Draco Malfoy is like a camel in the desert," he said bitterly, "he can go forever on nothing."

"Even a camel has to drink eventually," Ron said in what he hoped was a cheerful way.

"Then he's better than a fucking camel," Harry grumbled. "The bastard is never going to give in."

Ron offered up a wavering smile and hesitated before suggesting, "Well, maybe you should do what he wants you to do."

Ron found himself wincing again as Harry dropped his beer and stared at him in complete astonishment.

"Well, you'll have to eventually," he said hastily. "I mean, what if you get really serious about him or something like that? You'll want him to move in and she'll have to be told!"

Harry's eyes goggled at the very idea; Ron was almost certain that his eyeballs were actually pressing on the lenses of his glasses.

"Want him to move in?" Harry asked with horror.

"Well, you might... one day."

"Move in here?"

"One day," Ron replied helplessly.

"I can't even tell Hermione that I'm seeing him and you're suggesting that he move in here?"

"Well, I'm not telling you to do it now!"

Harry was gaping in total disbelief, as though he'd heard the words 'move in' and stopped hearing anything after it. He began shaking his head, got up and began to pace, convinced that Ron had gone completely insane. "Why the fuck would I ask him to move in here?"

"You're just avoiding the point!" Ron cried in an accusing tone. "Why are you so scared to tell Hermione about Draco?"

Harry was about to answer with another question of his own, but he stopped, his mouth still open as though about to form a word. Something was moving under the settee. He frowned and stared and frowned again. Under the settee was Ron's special place to hide things from Hermione. She had an abject horror of sticking her hand under there, as she was convinced that hideous things like Boggarts or Doxys might be hiding underneath. Ron had taken to the space with Raid to assure himself that there were no spiders and enlarged it with a charm he'd found in an old text book, and so now a little treasure trove of his personal things could be found there. Harry had never bothered to look and Hermione had no idea it even existed; but now something was moving around and Harry's eyes narrowed. Had Ron stuffed a girl down there?

"What?" Ron asked, looking at Harry's expression with some alarm.

"There's..." Harry bent down a little, his gaze fixed on the spot where he had seen the strange shuffling. "What is that?"

"What's what?" Ron asked, looking at the place Harry was looking.

"What's that?!" Harry said, pointing at the spot, and he saw it again, a shuffling, as though something was trying to get out from under the couch.

"Oh..." Ron stepped back, and Harry didn't fail to notice that a guilty grin had spread across his features. Harry looked back to the settee. If Ron was smiling, then it couldn't be a spider or anything like that. Harry reached out and lifted the fabric surround that skirted the bottom of the piece of furniture...

And out wriggled a rather stressed out looking doll.

A rather stressed out looking *Hermione* doll.

Harry's mouth fell open and worked for a moment as he tried to fathom what he was seeing. Had Ron finally lost it and somehow transfigured Hermione into a chunky looking baby doll? And if Ron had transfigured Hermione into a chunky looking baby doll, was Harry upset by it or was he secretly rejoicing in the fact that he could just lock her in the cupboard and shag Draco to his heart's content?

He felt the shame rise with his desire to dance a jig, and so he contented himself with exclaiming; "Holy fucking shit, what the fuck is that?"

Ron was grinning guiltily, and he scratched at the back of his head before answering. "I was going to show you later, but she must have gotten disturbed by all the questions."

"That's not..." Harry's eyes were shining manically, "That's not... Hermione... is it?"

"What? NO!" Ron glared at Harry and had to concede that the thought of turning her into something had crossed his mind, but for Harry to actually think he'd do it! "No, it's a toy..."

Harry stared at the little doll in wonder. She was dressed in a little set of black robes with sturdy shoes and a tiny little wand raised at the ready. She had an enormous head, ridiculously cute but so big that Harry thought she might topple over under the weight of it, and adding to the size of her head was a mane of bushy brown hair that looked as though a rat might take up residence in it. She looked up at Harry in such a way that Harry could already tell she was incredibly bossy and that given a chance

she might just take over the house. He had the strongest urge to kick her around the room like a football; they could use the stereo speakers as goals! But she had her hand in the air, and she looked as though she was desperate to get his attention.

"Where did you get it?" Harry asked, and he dropped to the floor to pick the doll up.

"It's a Granger Inc. product," Ron admitted. "He's got an ad in the *Daily Prophet*. She's called Little Know it All and she answers questions."

"Is that all?"

Her little body strained in Harry's grip as her little arm stretched a little higher in the air.

"Well, yeah, that's all," Ron replied, "but trust me, if you're going to ask questions, be prepared to let her answer them."

Harry turned the doll upside down and pulled her robes back.

"I've already checked," Ron said. "She's not anatomically correct."

Harry snorted with laughter. The doll was wearing a pair of white cotton panties proving that Snape was perhaps not as crude as Hermione gave him credit for but Ron had obviously already gotten to the doll. "Did you do that?" Harry asked, pulling the knickers down and indicating the fact that someone had drawn on a mass of curly pubic hair with black ink. The doll was really beginning to struggle now, her arm reaching desperately for the air.

"Yeah," Ron blushed, "she just looked a little nude down there and I can assure you that Hermione has never heard of waxing."

Harry groaned, deciding that Hermione's abundance of body hair was truly in the realm of too much information.

Harry looked at the 'Granger Inc.' stamped across the doll's little plastic bum and had to nod in admiration. "You have to hand it to him," he said, "he does good work."

And it was true. Four days after washing his hair with the ill-fated Granger Inc. shampoo and conditioner set, the frizzing mess had washed out as had the effects of Hermione's failed formula. Harry found himself with hair more manageable than he'd ever had in his life. He was actually contemplating using it again because the good results outweighed the four days of misery.

"Yeah, she's pretty cool," Ron agreed, and he grabbed the doll and flipped her up the right way, "but we have to hurry up and get her to answer our questions or she'll explode."

"What?"

"Her head explodes if you ask too many questions without letting her answer them."

Harry stared at him straight and said evenly, "I will pay you 1000 Galleons if you let her head explode."

Ron arched an eyebrow. "Stop using the doll to avoid the point," he said. "Why are you scared of telling Hermione about Draco?"

Harry really didn't want to get off the subject of the doll, which was struggling so much now that Ron had to let her go, and she fell to the floor with a heavy thud. He wondered why Ron was so intent on discussing the subject of Draco Malfoy, but he just rolled his eyes and threw himself back onto the settee.

"Have you..." Harry stopped and rethought the question. "Remember when you guys broke up, and then you told her that you had a new girlfriend less than two weeks later?"

Ron nodded and scratched his groin uncomfortably at the memory. "Yeah, but the Healers at St. Mungo's were able to fix my balls pretty easily... and she got over it."

"Well, think about it. I have the double whammy to deliver. First up, the witch from Wiltshire sending me all those letters is actually a wizard from Wiltshire who I've been seeing and just when she starts to recover from that shock, I have to follow it up with 'oh, and by the way, it's Draco Malfoy.' Somehow I think I'll have more than a case of crotch itch!"

Ron once again scratched at his groin and suppressed the urge to argue about the severity of Hermione's hex on his balls; instead, he tried to reason with Harry. "Look, you told me without any problems why is it so much worse with her?"

"Because you aren't going to hex me so that I have twenty arseholes or start some kind of mail order company selling humiliating products that will make me look like some kind of twenty-arseholed pervert! In case you haven't noticed, she's really fucking scary at the moment!"

"It's true," Ron agreed, "but I gotta tell ya, I really think she just needs a good shag."

"A shag?" Harry cried a little hysterically. "She needs a weeklong fuck fest that leaves her utterly incapable of walking or talking for a month!"

Ron snorted with laughter and opened a beer of his own. It was probably true and at the very least it would give them a month's worth of peace. He wondered briefly if they could hire someone for her. "She'd get over you and Draco though," he said thoughtfully. "She'd get over it eventually."

"You think so?" Harry asked and didn't believe a word of it.

They were both distracted by a small whimpering noise and looked down to discover that Little Know it All had dragged a tiny soap box out from under the settee and was now standing on it, her hand stretched so far into the air that she was going a little red in the face.

Ron, it seemed, could not deny her and crouched down to her level. "Do you think so, Little Know it All?" he asked kindly.

The little doll seemed greatly relieved that she would get to answer at least one of the many questions thrown about the room that day. She lowered her hand, straightened her robes and cleared her throat so they could both hear her clearly. "Hermione will 'get over' your news that you have started a sexual relationship with Draco Malfoy," she said in a horribly all-knowing and familiar way Harry was just waiting for 'I read about it in *Hogwarts, A History*' to come out of her mouth. Instead, she came out with "However, you are scared to tell her because you are afraid that she will discover that it was you who told Mr. Malfoy about the position in the developmental potions department of St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries one night when you were trying to convince him to have sex with you in a broom closet at the Leaky Cauldron."

Harry's mouth fell open.

"Mr. Malfoy spurned your affections that evening, telling you that he 'didn't do sex in closets,' and you came home and masturbated in the shower orgasming into Ron's flannel..."

Ron's mouth fell open.

"... You then set about trying to cover up the evidence of your masturbation by..."

"How?" Harry gibbered. "How? How? How does she know that?"

Little Know it All's hand immediately flew into the air.

"ON MY FLANNEL?" Ron cried, recovering from the initial shock and turning balefully to Harry.

"I washed it!"

"You... you..." Ron searched desperately for a word, "you disgusting, feral... cretin!"

"I WASHED IT!!!"

"You dirty bastard! How could you do that? Why didn't you use your own flannel, you dirty shit?"

"I washed the fucking thing! I put it in the washing machine with a scoop of fucking Persil and everything!"

"I'M ALLERGIC TO PERSIL, YOU DUMB FUCK!" Ron's mind reeled, thinking back to a time when he'd had an outbreak of hives all over his face and then turned his fury on Harry. "I don't care if you washed the fucking thing in lye! You let me use that on my face, you dirty prick! How could you do that? How could you..." Ron's expression changed then, and his mouth formed a perfect 'O' of shock. "YOU!" he cried, unable to think of any other word to describe it. "You told Malfoy about that job! You started this whole thing! You told..." He stared wildly at Harry and then suddenly became agitated. "I'm telling," he said crisply. "I'm telling Hermione!"

"Oh Jesus, Ron, no!"

"What the fuck were you thinking? You know what she's like!"

"Don't," Harry pleaded. "Don't tell her. Don't all these years of friendship mean anything?"

Evidently it didn't because Ron was on him suddenly, launching himself at Harry with speed that Harry never thought he had in him and tackling him to the ground.

Harry tried to roll him off, but Ron had the advantage of sheer fury, and he grappled at Harry's face as Harry tried to push him away. He rolled onto the doll, causing it to squeak in protest and dig its little wand hard into Harry's back as it fought to get out from under him.

"My fucking flannel, you dirty bastard!" Ron was ranting. "All these years of friendship, my arse. You jerked off into my fucking flannel!"

"I WASHED IT!" Harry screeched, aiming a knee at Ron's groin but missing and ineffectually catching his thigh.

"I'm telling her," Ron told him, pounding him bodily into the floor. "I'm telling her ~~that~~ you told Malfoy!"

"Then I'll tell her about the doll," Harry retaliated, hoping to strike at least a nuance of fear into him.

"She'll know about the doll!"

"I'll tell her you bought one..." Harry panted under Ron's weight and the fist he'd just taken to the ribs, "and I'll tell her that you drew pubes on it with a quill!"

"Tell her!" Ron cried, sounding vaguely triumphant. "See if I care! She won't give a shit about the doll after I tell her that you take it up the arse from Draco Malfoy and you told him about her job!"

He was probably right, but Harry felt the need to clarify one point. "I'm the pitcher, he's the catcher," he panted.

"You won't be when she's finished with you!" Ron roared.

There was a sudden screaming from the hall as a door slammed and echoed through the house. They heard the sound almost every day, but it still managed to shock them both into silence. They froze, listening as Old Mrs. Black let forth a stream of abuse about Mudbloods and Traitors invading her home. They had been tempted upon first moving in to try and remove the painting but it was an excellent alarm system, as not much got past Mrs. Black. And as they heard the dulcet tones of Hermione screaming, "Shut up, you old sow!" they were keenly aware of the fact that although they had no time at all to compose themselves, their alarm system had enabled them to learn that their housemate was not in a particularly good mood.

She appeared in the doorway before either Ron or Harry had time to move. Not that it mattered; the look on her face told them all they needed to know, and she did not bat an eye at the fact that the pair had obviously been fighting.

"Dolls!" she cried somewhat maniacally. "He's making fucking dolls!"

She waved the headless remains of a Little Know it All in their direction as though to prove her point.

Ron and Harry struggled to sit up and to keep the doll hidden from view. They shoved her unceremoniously behind their backs, and Ron found that he had to hold on to the thing lest it march out and confront her.

"Everyone at the Ministry has one! They're on everyone's desks! Kids are carrying them all over Diagon Alley, and Rita Skeeter was letting one answer questions at today's press conference about the Muggle Protection Act!"

Ron shuffled the doll desperately over to Harry, who desperately shuffled it back.

"They are horrible," Hermione continued. "They don't *shut up!* I mean, it starts answering a question and it just keeps going and going. They're awful, obnoxious..." she glared at them both, but wasn't really seeing them through the veil of anger that had consumed her. "They don't even look like me! I mean look at it, does it look anything like me?"

It was a rhetorical question, but behind them the boys felt the Little Know it All start to struggle harder, her hand no doubt stretched so high in the air that her arm was about to dislocate. Harry mashed her bodily into the carpet behind him and stared at the headless version that Hermione was waving at them.

Amazingly, even headless, it had its hand up.

"Well?" Hermione demanded, shaking the headless doll a little harder. "Does it?"

"Um..." Harry ventured, hoping that if he answered the question the doll behind him might calm down, "it doesn't have a head... so..."

Hermione threw the useless doll's body away. "That greasy pig is going to pay," she growled. "What kind of a petty animal is he anyway? I do shampoo so he does shampoo, I do a doll, so he does a doll."

"Well, technically he didn't know about the shampoo," Harry said stupidly.

"I don't care what he did and didn't know about, he's a petty..." another thought obviously ran through Hermione's mind because she stopped suddenly and swooped down on the headless doll remains. She turned it upside down and pulled the robes back quickly.

"Don't worry," Ron said brightly, "it's not anatomically correct."

Hermione's eyes narrowed instantly, and she looked at the pair suspiciously as Harry groaned and Ron had a moment to realise his mistake. The headless doll was still clutched in her hand, its little white pants on display. "How do you know that it isn't anatomically correct?" she demanded.

Ron's mouth ran dry, and he tried to make some spit but found he couldn't.

Hermione's eyes flicked from Ron to Harry and back again, and she finally registered the state they were in. "You've been fighting?" she asked suspiciously. "What have you been fighting about?"

Harry grappled behind his back and almost yelped when Little Know it All jabbed her wand into his hand. He let her go for a moment, but it was enough to lose his grip. "Nothing," he said and his voice was oddly high in pitch. "We were wrestling, that's all."

"How does Ron know that the doll isn't anatomically correct?"

Harry swallowed hard. Considering he had been hiding a secret from her for months, he was terrible when confronted directly. It wasn't helping that they were sitting on the floor while Hermione was looming above them holding the headless remains of a children's toy.

"Ron?" she asked, turning her attention back to Ron and giving Harry a moment's pause to breathe. "How do you know what the nether region of this doll looks like?"

"W-w-w-w..." Ron blinked and realised too late that Harry had lost his grip on the doll. Before he could catch it, she slipped deftly between them, emerging from the tangle of robes with her hand in the air and her face almost scarlet from holding her tongue.

"You," Hermione's face ran so pale that even her lips turned white. She began to shake as she glared down at Ron. "You got one?"

"The ad," Ron yelped, "the ad said it was a study aid! It said it was good for people looking for a promotion! I didn't know it looked like you!"

It was a terrible lie and Hermione saw through it immediately. "Where did you get it from?" she demanded.

"I..." Ron gulped and realised that he had broken out in a sweat. His hands instinctively moved to cover his balls. "The ad... it was in the *Daily Prophet*..."

"And so you thought you might buy one?" Hermione growled.

"I... I... I..." Ron looked frantically from Hermione to the doll and then to Harry. Hermione had her wand out and she was going to hex him, he just knew it.

"So? You thought you'd just buy one then?" Hermione prompted again, and the little doll, her soap box crushed under the weight of Harry's shoulders, decided to climb up onto Harry's knee to get attention.

"I... I... I..." He looked at Harry and almost felt bad for what he was about to do, but then saving his own arse was paramount at that moment. "Well... Harry told..." he began frantically, and then his face visibly relaxed, melting into an appearance of dopey confusion. "Huh? Oh, yeah... Harry... huh?"

Hermione took a step back and noticed that Harry had his hand in his pocket. "Did you just Confundus him?" she asked, a little confused herself.

"Me?" Harry asked innocently. "I wouldn't Confundus Ron! He's drunk. He's been home drinking all day."

"Then what was he going to say?" she growled.

Harry looked at the little doll whose face had gone from red to purple. She was beginning to shake.

"What was he going to say, Harry?" Hermione took a step closer, and Harry looked up at her sheepishly. "He said, 'Harry told.' What was he going to say?"

"I... I, um..." Harry swallowed and shrugged and decided that he might well have to take some punishment. "I told him to draw pubes on it with a quill," he said.

And in the face of such a bald faced lie, Little Know it All's head promptly exploded.

~

