

The Head That's Showing

by julymorning

Hermione accepts a dare that leaves Snape intrigued. SS/HG Exchange Winter 2008
gift fic for inspired_ideas.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The game began as games do, with a bottle of tequila.

'Truth or dare, Hermione,' slurred Ron. He licked salt from between his thumb and forefinger, downed a shot, and stuffed a lime wedge into his mouth. His eyes crossed.

'Dare,' she slurred back, emboldened by the alcohol running riot through her system.

'Right,' he said, eyeing Harry briefly, who was already recumbent on the rug and halfway to unconsciousness.

'Oh, no, you don't,' she warned. 'I'm not assaulting anybody's person.'

Ron grinned. 'Shame, you would have enjoyed it.' She could see him casting round in his mind for something else. 'Aha!' he exclaimed suddenly. 'Tomorrow. All day. You'll wear a jester's hat.'

'Define "all day,"' she shot back.

'From the moment you get dressed in the morning until the moment you undress at night,' Ron clarified. 'Another?'

'Yes, please,' she affirmed, pouring a generous measure of salt over the back of her own hand.

They drank the shots. Ron keeled slowly over to one side, eyes losing focus rapidly, and muttered, 'You're going to be aces at the staff meeting...'

Hermione clutched one hand to her mouth and ran for the loo.

The next morning, under the burden of a vicious hangover, Hermione dutifully transfigured one of her woolly winter caps into a jester's hat. Knowing Ron would see her later and judge whether she'd truly entered into the spirit of the dare, she gave it no fewer than eight jingly, bell-laden points and festooned it in the most garish colours she could imagine. Then she made her way to the library, unlocked the doors, and stepped gratefully inside, praising herself for having the foresight to get drunk the night before so that she could credibly skip breakfast in the great hall today. The last thing she needed was undue attention from the students, especially with the seven dwarves

practising their pick-ax skills behind her eyeballs. Thank God it was Saturday; students were as likely to come into the library today as they were to sprout third arms.

Although, she amended ruefully as she tidied her desk, the spontaneous growth of third arms wasn't that unlikely at Hogwarts...

The morning progressed peacefully - Hermione spent most of it resting her forehead against the cool wood of the librarian's worktop - until just before lunch, when the library doors banged open, and Severus Snape strode inside, succeeded by his trademark cloak-billow.

Hermione, shaken from her drooling semi-stupor, straightened abruptly, jingling and groaning. Snape spared her not a single glance as he passed the desk and progressed to the back of the cavernous room. While he went about his business, Hermione leant one ear to the thumps, bumps, and mutterings he generated and focused the other on the continued hammering in the depths of her skull. Eventually, the two cascades of sound merged, and in dehydrated delusion she imagined Snape had taken up joinery in the back of her library.

When he emerged some ten minutes later with a stack of leather-bound books and a murderous expression, she plastered a rictus of collegiate courtesy across her face and opened her records book.

'What titles have you got there, then?' she asked, business-like.

He flung the stack onto the worktop, flicked his hair out of his face, and finally looked up. And stared. 'Er...'

'Yes, just read them out to me,' she went on, keeping her eyes glued to the parchment in front of her.

'Miss Granger, are you aware...?' His voice trailed off speculatively.

'Yes?' she repeated. She lifted her head and raised an eyebrow.

'Er...' he said again. Clearing his throat, he shook his head once or twice, then scowled. 'I'll write them down myself.' He snatched the quill from her hand, scribbled something on the page bearing his name, and picked up his books. He seemed about to stalk away, but paused briefly, eyed her once more, and snapped, 'You look ridiculous, did you know that?'

Both eyebrows went up this time. 'I can't imagine what you mean, Professor Snape,' she murmured. 'Have a nice day.'

She was still wearing the absurd jester's hat at half five that evening when the staff meeting began. Curious, amused glances followed her as she entered the room and took a seat at the far side of the table. Ron, across from her, looked rather peaked, and Hermione managed to shoot him a malicious grin, though she was feeling none too well herself. Snape, when he at last showed his sallow face, long after the rest of the staff had arrived, appeared nonplussed to find that she continued to sport her motley.

It was best, she felt, to pretend as if there was nothing out of the ordinary about her choice of millinery, and she took notes during the meeting as normal, contributing a comment here and there, all the while ignoring the stares and stifled giggles from around the table.

An hour later, Dumbledore dismissed the meeting with a twinkly smile, but not before first turning to Hermione and asking, 'Do you know, my dear, that you are wearing a silly hat?'

She didn't blink. 'Yes, Headmaster.'

Silence fell, as if the rest of the faculty were awaiting an explanation.

'Was there anything else?' she enquired politely, gathering her parchments into a neat stack.

'No,' the Headmaster replied cheerfully. 'Enjoy the rest of your weekend!'

Hermione was first out the door, followed closely by Ron, whose face had gone from hangover-wan to suppressed-laughter-puce. 'Aces!' he choked out. 'Same time next Friday?'

Same time, same brand of tequila, same game.

'Truth or dare?' Ron slurred.

Mindful, through a haze of Mexican liquor, of last weekend's dare, Hermione said firmly, 'Truth.'

'Right. Who on the staff do you fancy the most?'

Harry, prostrate on the floor like a self-flagellant, gave a muffled groan. 'Bet it's me.'

'Ha!' Hermione scoffed. 'It's not you. You're a pathetic drunk.'

'Mmmph,' Harry replied. 'Pour me another shot, then.'

When the round had been imbibed, Ron prompted, 'You have to answer. There's a penalty for not answering.'

Hermione considered the question. 'You know who I bet could drink us under the table?' she mused indistinctly. 'Snape. I fancy him the most.'

Ron's face took on the expression it usually wore when he sucked his lemon wedge, and Harry groaned into the rug again. 'You're not serious,' Ron whispered, horrified.

Laughing, Hermione tumbled over next to Harry. 'You should have seen his face last Saturday when he came into the library! Priceless.'

'If it was that good,' Ron said, a calculating aspect to his tone, 'then you won't mind doing it again. This time with a Neville's-grandmother hat. Snape'll despise you, he'll think you're taking the piss. Remember that boggart?'

'I'll do it,' she shot back. 'I've got more courage in my little finger than you have in your whole body. There's no dare I won't do!' Hermione laughed again and rolled to one side, poking Harry in the ribs. 'Isn't that right?'

'Mmmph.'

She regretted her boasting the next morning - the vulture-topped hat was egregiously heavy on her aching head.

As through drawn there by curiosity, Snape returned to the library and stopped at Hermione's desk to return the books he had taken away the previous weekend. 'Very funny,' he snarled, glaring at her hat.

'Don't you like my party hat?' Hermione asked innocently, gripping the desk to stay upright on drink-wobbly legs.

'No,' he snapped. 'What do you and those idiots get up to on Friday nights? You look like the most incredible shite.'

'It's only because I've mashed my swede,' she protested.

Eyes widening, Snape backed away slowly as one would from a madwoman and fairly bolted for the doors.

'See you at the staff meeting!' Hermione called after him.

The following Saturday, it was a hat Ron had seen once on Muggle television. Two cans of lager perched on her head, each with a clear plastic straw leading to her mouth. When Hermione heard Snape approaching the library doors, she hastily stuffed the ends of both straws into the corners of her mouth, though she was careful not to drink any of the lager, the very thought of which intensified her hangover a thousandfold.

Then a turban. A Native American headdress. A black bowler hat: for added effect, she charmed a green apple to hover in front of her face for the duration. Snape goggled.

At the staff meetings, Dumbledore had stopped commenting.

The Wednesday after her *Son of Man* impression, Snape burst into the library after lessons were over and strode to Hermione's desk with an unmistakable demeanour of confrontation. 'I see you're hat-free today,' he commented archly.

'Yes, that's right,' she agreed. 'That's a Saturday thing.'

'Do you mind,' he said, leaning forward over the desk intimidatingly, 'explaining what the hats are all about? I can't help suspecting,' he carried on sharply, 'that it's a piss-taking exercise for my benefit.'

'My dear Professor Snape,' Hermione answered, boiling inside with suppressed amusement, 'that's amazingly self-centred of you. What makes you think I care two shits in a bucket about your reaction? I wear my hats for my own satisfaction - nothing more.'

'Liar,' he whispered silkily.

Hermione shrugged. 'Think what you like, but remember, it was your decision to start showing your face in my library every Saturday. Perhaps,' she said, her voice dropping to a sultry register, 'you secretly like my hats. Perhaps you want to know what I do on Friday nights that makes me want to wear them.' She licked her lips.

Looking doubtful, Snape drew back, but asked, as if the question were drawn from him entirely unwillingly, 'What do you do on Friday nights?' His lips snapped together in mortification.

'Come along to my rooms around nine,' she answered, infusing her words with the suggestion of promise. 'You'll see.'

He straightened abruptly. 'I think not. And I don't like your stupid hats.' With that Parthian shot, he departed, and Hermione was finally free to indulge in riotous laughter, startling a few students.

Several further weeks of silly-hat-wearing produced no further reactions from Snape, who seemed to have twigged that his own curiosity was the source of his discomfiture. He stopped coming to the library, and Hermione began to believe that the joke was wearing thin.

'Tomorrow will be my last silly hat,' Hermione announced to Harry and Ron one Friday night. 'Snape doesn't care any more.'

'Better make it a good one, then,' Harry opined, floating in tequila-induced bliss. 'Something really outrageous.'

'I'm running out of ideas,' Hermione admitted disconsolately. 'Don't you two have any suggestions?'

Ron snorted into his glass. 'How about one of those Viking helmets with the horns?' He sat up and began to laugh. 'Even better, make it the whole outfit: leather cape, fur trim, breastplate... You can be Snape's lovely Norse warrior!'

'She's got to have one of those insanelly long and luxurious mustaches, though,' Harry added. 'To maintain the silliness. Otherwise, she'll end up looking sexy.'

'Can't be having that,' Hermione slurred. 'Right, Norse warrior it is.' And she waved her wand, transfiguring her much-abused woolly hat into a Viking helmet.

While Snape again absented himself from the library the next day, he was bound by duty to appear for the staff meeting, and Hermione watched his behaviour with interest when he entered the staff room. He was, she determined, only pretending to ignore her, for throughout Dumbledore's administrative nit-picking, he shifted uncomfortably in his chair this way and that, averting his eyes deliberately from her outrageous attire.

She was proved victoriously right in her supposition when, as she was leaving the staff room, Snape caught up with her in the corridor and drew her to one side with a vise-like grip on her upper arm.

'You total nitwit,' he murmured into her ear in a low voice. Hermione shivered involuntarily. 'I'm going to get to the bottom of this,' he went on *Tonight*. 'Then he was away in a swirl and billow of black robes.'

She turned apprehensively to exchange glances with Ron. 'What's that all about, then?'

He shrugged, mystified. 'Not a scooby.' Then he brightened considerably. 'You know you have to wear that stuff until bedtime, right?' Then he, too, buggered off, shoulders shaking with amusement.

She was just about to undress for bed, in fact, when someone pounded on her door. Assuming the uninvited guest to be Ron or Harry, she waved her wand carelessly and said, 'Look, I still have it on, all right? No cheating, I promise.'

'Miss Granger,' said a dark voice, 'you look like an arse. And now I know why.'

She whirled around to find Snape standing in her doorway regarding her with a sardonic smile. 'A little bet, perhaps? Or a dare?' he continued, unfolding his arms and slinking toward her. '"I wear my hats for my own satisfaction,"' he mocked. 'Bullshit.' The smile turned predatory.

'Bugger off, Snape,' she replied wearily.

Instead of bugging off, he aimed his wand at her face and pointedly vanished the drooping mustache. 'There. Now I can take you slightly more seriously.'

Hermione spluttered, outraged. 'That mustache completed the whole ensemble! It really tied the outfit together. What do you want, anyway?'

'I'm going to make a few more guesses, if that's all right,' Snape said smugly, glancing around the room. He spied the empty bottles of tequila, and his expression, if possible, became even more self-satisfied. 'On Friday nights, you drink with those two muppets you call friends, yes? And sometime about six weeks ago, you got roped into wearing a stupid hat. Correct me if I'm wrong,' he added.

She shook her head.

'And that would have been the end of it,' he said, 'but I, fool that I am, reacted. So you carried on, week after week, and as long as it kept startling me, you kept doing it. Am I right?'

'A bit,' Hermione bleated.

'Very well.' He unbuttoned his outer robe and draped it across a chair. 'As it happens,' he said conversationally, 'I am also wearing a silly hat, though nothing half so gaudy and attention-seeking as that monstrosity atop your silly skull.'

'I don't see any hat,' Hermione protested sullenly.

'Ah,' he responded, nodding. 'That's because it's not on the head that's showing.'

She gasped, and he took that opportunity to sweep her into his arms and fasten his lips to her open mouth. He kissed her until she was breathless with desire, then dragged his mouth to her ear and whispered, 'I want to see if you're a warrior in bed, too.'

'Yes,' she breathed and led him to the bedroom.

The Norse helmet was the first article of clothing to go, followed by her leather cape and breastplate. Snape's hands roamed across her body, squeezing her through her fur-trimmed leggings. Caught up in his fit of madness, she tore off his jacket and shirt, planting tiny kisses across his chest. Before long, she was flat on her back on the bed, begging for more of his mouth and hands.

Finally, unable to resist her lust and curiosity any longer, she ripped at the fastenings of his trousers and drew them down over his thighs.

'I took a leaf out of your book,' he said hoarsely as she hooked her fingers into the waistband of his pants. 'I think you'll like it.'

And then he was blessedly, delightfully naked, and Hermione froze.

There, situated over the head of his well-proportioned cock, was a jester's hat, complete with eight bell-tipped points.

She opened her mouth, though without any idea of what she was going to say, but he stopped her with a finger to her lips. 'Shh,' he said. 'Listen.' His visage took on an air of intense concentration, and his cock began to bob up and down. The bells, which he had carefully charmed to hold certain pitches, jingled out a perfect A-major chord.

Hermione finally found her voice. 'That's much better than mine,' she admitted ruefully. 'Hoist by my own petard, eh?'

Snape whipped the jester's hat from his cock and pushed her back onto the pillows. 'Not at all, my brave Norse warrior,' he answered. 'Hoist *by mine*.'

When it was over, and they lay together in breathless, glowing satisfaction, Hermione mused, 'Who would have thought that silly hats would inspire such a reaction from you?'

Next to her, Snape shrugged. 'Every man has his fetish, I suppose.'

'And yours is silly hats?'

'No.' He laughed. 'Mine is people who don't mind looking like damned fools.' He paused, then enquired carefully, 'What's yours?'

Giggling, she sat up for a moment and rummaged in her bedside table for a moment. Turning back, she brandished a packet of sticky-notes and asked coquettishly, 'How do you feel about stationery supplies?'

The look on his face was just as she had described it to Ron: priceless.