

Charlotte's Angels

by Mad_Chatters_Tea_Party

You remember the TV show Charlie's Angels... right? We bet your memories of it would be fonder if it had starred three handsome, young, wizards... whose boss, Charlotte, has a knack for finding them assignments that require tight/minimal clothing...

Pilot Episode Prologue, Act 1, Scene 1: Angels in the Disco of Doom

Chapter 1 of 2

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Episode 1: Angels in the Disco

Prologue

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Notes:

We highly recommend watching this Trailer Fanvid for the series, if you haven't already:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQuZtc6maBU>

Just so you know what you're getting into...

"Once upon a time, there were three little wizards who went to the Auror Academy. And they were each assigned very hazardous duties, but I took them away from all that, and now they work for me. My name is Charlotte."

Minerva McGonagall frowned at the closed door of her office. She would not fidget, of course. That would be juvenile. However, it seemed perfectly reasonable to consult with her employer one more time before her scheduled meeting. She tugged at the cuffs on her neatly tailored tweed robes until they were positioned just so, opened the handsome, black journal with *Sable Investigations* emblazoned in silver on the cover, and quickly penned in neat, curving script:

Are you certain this is the only option?

After a few seconds, a delicate field of Copperplate blossomed across the page.

You are so direct, Minerva. I have always liked that about you.

And may I say, directly, that I have never cared for your tendency to be obtuseMinerva's reply lingered on the parchment for a moment before seeming to melt into it. Her lips thinned in annoyance as she awaited a reply.

You have seen the proof that they were there. If the reports of bribed Unspeakables and the results of my own disturbing studies are to be believed, it is the only option.

"Reliable sources, indeed," Minerva said with a snort. She wrote out a far more professional, **I have grave misgivings about being involved in this.**

My Angels need a strong hand to guide them. Someone they can trust. Someone I can trust.

Laying it on a wee bit thick, aren't we, "Charlotte?" And why must you call the lads "Angels?"

In either case, it's no more than the truth, Minerva.

The Floo chime rang in the foyer, interrupting Minerva before she could formulate a suitable rebuttal. She quickly jotted down, **Your "Angels" have come early.**

Minerva closed the book on the remark, *I would have to think that they hear those words rather seldom...*

The office door swept open and Minerva nodded a greeting. "We'll start as soon as the others are here, Mr. Malfoy," she said, closing the book and putting the quill aside with crisp precision.

Draco nodded politely in return and hung up his cloak with a flourish before taking up his station on the velvet sofa in the center of the room. His indolent pose detracted from neither his aristocratic elegance nor from the perfect, wrinkle-free drape of his gray wool trousers. Cufflinks, tie tack, neatly starched cuffs, and smirk all retained a high polish as he made himself comfortable. It appeared that he had arrived early for the express purpose of monopolizing said piece of furniture with his seemingly miles' worth of sprawled arms and legs.

Not a moment too soon, for the Floo-chime heralded the much more informal...though no less handsomely dressed...Ronald Weasley. "Hello, Professor," he said, shrugging off a scuffed bomber jacket to reveal a wonderfully lived-in-looking blue button-down, tucked neatly enough into his jeans but with the top two buttons undone, leaving it opened casually to collarbone level.

"Mr. Weasley." Minerva's lips thinned. She distinctly recalled having mentioned that she was not in school and was not partial to being referred to as "Professor."

Ron grimaced slightly at the sight of expensive, softly gleaming, black dragonhide loafers crossed over the arm of the couch, but merely uttered an almost-convincingly friendly, "Hi, Malfoy." He dropped his jacket over Draco's legs before throwing himself into the chair opposite.

With a sound of disgust, Draco kicked the garment to the floor. "Hang up your bloody jacket, Weasley. Even if it is a disgusting bit of bovine arse cobbled together by Muggles, it doesn't belong on the floor." With a near-sniff he added, "Barbarian."

Ron flipped him off without missing a beat. "Wasn't on the floor until you kicked it, Ferret," he said cheerfully.

"Not this again." All three occupants of the room startled slightly at the sound of Harry's voice. "Ron, Draco... Love how you two treat my coat. Hello, Professor."

"Bloody hell, mate, we all know you got top marks in stealth and tracking...we don't need a demonstration," Ron said.

"A bit more professionalism, if you please, gentlemen," Minerva said dryly. "Else between your behavior and being 'Professed' to death, I shall think I'm having a flashback."

"Sorry, Minerva," they chorused, with varying degrees of actual contrition.

"That thing is yours?" Draco skipped right past greetings, instead staring at the offending garment as if it had personally insulted him. He suddenly switched tacks, turning an interrogative stare on Ron. "What are you doing wearing his coat?"

Ron merely rolled his eyes. Harry, with a long-suffering expression, spelled both the jacket and the brand-new dragon hide and denim robes he'd been wearing over to the coat rack. He was left in a soft, black, skin-tight jumper that was definitely not a Weasley Christmas gift, worn over similarly snug, black trousers. His new wraparound glasses with slightly elongated frames contributed to overall impression of dangerous, rakish agility.

"He nicked it last time we were at the Leaky. I wound up borrowing George's to go home in." Harry lounged against the plush arm of the couch like a particularly fit, alert, black jaguar to Draco's long, lean, indolent white panther. He dropped one hand down and casually patted Draco's hair, which won him a sneer. "Stop fretting, Draco...you'll wrinkle," he said, smirking down at the man on the couch.

"Bite me, Harry," he murmured in return, though he followed it up with a smirk of his own.

"You lot are weird," Ron said, punctuating his remark with an eye-roll.

Minerva treated them all to a very familiar quelling stare. "Charlotte will call this meeting to order at any moment...ah, there she is." She readied a True Facts Quill to relay their comments to Charlotte, then opened the journal and read aloud, "Hello, Angels, Minerva." She managed not to grimace, but it was a near thing.

"Hello, Charlotte," the boys chorused in reply, the quill diligently scrawling their words on the facing page. The sudden vocal outburst seemed to startle a small, greenish-gray bird in a miniature round painting just behind Minerva's desk. It abandoned its gilt perch and flew into a tree in one of the landscapes on the opposite wall, twittering indignantly and flashing the yellow patch atop its head.

"Congratulations on wrapping up that Townsend business so neatly, my Angels. It appears that I did well to hire you." Minerva stopped and squinted at the page. The letters had blurred suddenly, as if the ink had been splattered with some sort of liquid.

Sipping deeply from her glass of wine, Charlotte used her wand to make the temperature of her bath a few degrees warmer and to refresh the soap bubbles. She dipped beneath the water for a moment, enjoying the heat, the silence and the sensation of her long shimmery hair floating around her. As she resurfaced, a stray drop splashed over the journal.

"Careful, you," she sighed at the house elf holding the journal. "I haven't the time to track down a new one of those. Aren't my masseurs here yet?"

"The big Swedes are waiting for Mistress in the changing room," Cocky said. The house elf covered his face with the journal as Charlotte rose abruptly from the bath.

"Meet me there, and don't forget my True Quotes Quill."

"Yes, Mistress."

"Why are we here, Charlotte? I can't imagine that Townsend job required any follow-up." Harry was unable to keep a fine thread of suspicion out of his voice. "It almost felt like a dry run to me."

"How very perceptive of you, Harry..." Minerva hesitated before continuing "...darling. That case was indeed a trial of sorts, to see how well the three of you actually work together. At the time I offered you an alternative to your Auror duties, I was already aware of a much more dire situation...one which requires teamwork of the highest caliber. I am convinced that only the three of you can successfully address this potential threat to the wizarding world."

Harry leaned forward, his back stiffening. Draco glanced up with a certain degree of trepidation. "Weasley... tell me he's not going into 'danger mode.'"

Ron studied Harry's posture for a moment. He let his head fall against the back of the chair with a slight groan. "If he were a Crup, he'd be sniffing the air with both tails wagging."

Draco winced. "Here we go again," he muttered.

"What sort of threat?" Harry asked, oblivious to the byplay.

"Nothing less than the utter corruption of history as we know it." Minerva checked to see that they were properly attentive before continuing. Harry was training his gaze intensely on the journal, as if by dint of staring hard enough, he could suss out the secrets of his anonymous employer. Ron looked puzzled and vaguely uneasy, but dutifully focused on the topic. Draco had assumed a coolly professional expression and a less lethargic pose. This only poorly masked his apprehension, given that as he sat up, he instinctively scooted closer to Harry for protection.

Perfect.

"While the first war with t...Voldemort...was in full swing..." Minerva grimaced at the bad taste left in her mouth just from uttering the name "...there was an interval during which the forces of the Dark seemed to pull back slightly. Sometime during the summer of 1977, a new force came to the Dark Lord's attention. He decided it could be a valuable weapon and promptly set about harnessing it. The force in question," Minerva paused significantly, "was Disco."

The Angels exchanged wide-eyed glances of shock and dismay.

Harry recovered first. "I shouldn't be surprised, but... How *vile*."

"But, wasn't that," Draco lowered his voice as though he feared being overheard saying something gauche, "an *American* thing?"

"I thought Disco was a myth," Ron said incredulously.

"I'm afraid it was all too real, Angels. Once Lucius Malfoy returned from an... investigative excursion to the States with his report on the phenomenon, steps were taken to introduce the scourge to the wizarding world. A suitable building was procured and outfitted in the manner of Studio 54, and music was imported to be reworked as a recruitment tool. On a particular night in 1978, they were making every effort to recruit a promising young wizard and witch... namely, James Potter and Lily Evans."

"No," Harry whispered. Ron frowned in awkward sympathy while Draco avoided everyone's eyes by fussing with his cufflinks.

"There are living witnesses to the event, and Pensieve-viewable memories to prove it. It was considered just another strange occasion...an anomaly, if you will...of that tragic time. Until recently, when someone had occasion to re-visit the evidence of that night and made a shocking discovery."

Minerva ignored the journal for the moment and removed an envelope from her desk. "I have photographs taken on that evening in the Disco. Apparently Barty Crouch Jr. was something of a shutterbug. He had the habit of snapping photos of prominent guests as they entered, and occasionally as they circulated throughout the evening. If you will notice, two couples who entered that night concern us." She handed the pictures in question around. "Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy, newlyweds; and James Potter and Lily Evans, recently engaged. A third person who arrived as part of a group comprised of agents of the Light should also be noted."

"I say, Weasley, isn't that your father?" Ron snatched the photo from Draco while the other man was in mid-undignified-gawk.

"Bloody hell! What was he doing there?" Ron tilted the image as if it would somehow become less odious if viewed from a different angle.

"What was he wearing?" Harry and Draco muttered in tandem, squinting at the flurry of motion.

"Well... Orange. A great deal of orange, gentlemen," Minerva said gravely. "But we're straying from the topic. The important thing is not that *they* entered the club, but that at some point in the night, three other men arrived." She handed around a second set of photos. "These candids were taken later in the evening, just before James and Lily made their refusals and left."

"It... it's some trick, right? These photos were altered... or staged..." Ron tried the tilting trick again, to no avail.

"It can't be," Draco breathed. He cast a series of Glamour-dispelling Charms in rapid succession, becoming visibly agitated when the image didn't change.

Harry cleaned his glasses twice and made a vaguely hopeless sound when the photograph still showed the same thing.

On casual inspection the photo appeared to show the same three men as in the previous picture dancing in a crowd; the same colors, as alien as if they'd come from another world instead of merely another time, the implausibly wide trouser legs, the same black, blond, and ginger hair. Upon close examination, however, minute differences became apparent, despite the dim lighting of the disco that would obscure the details from most observers. Arthur Weasley did not possess anywhere near that amount of chest hair; Lucius Malfoy had never, ever, smiled that freely in public in his life...and even if he had, he wouldn't have been sharing that particular grin with James Potter, who was just a fraction too short...

Given the sheer amount of time that Harry, Ron and Draco had spent together in school, Auror training, and the various irritatingly pointless assignments that had precipitated their departure from the Ministry's service, there was no mistaking that the men in this photograph were **very** familiar...

Charlotte traced her fingers around the outside of the original photograph, watching the spinning silver ball cast rainbows of light over the witches and wizards dancing below.

"Harder," she snapped at the pair of masseurs attempting to work the tension from her legs and shoulders. "And you," she addressed Cocky, who was supporting the journal with its back, "a little to the left. I can't see what they've written."

"H..." Minerva left off reading, her lips pressed into a line of disapproval. The Angels failed to notice, all their attention wrapped up in glittering images of excess. "I regret to say it is neither a hoax nor a mistake. All the evidence seems to indicate that the crucial factor in James and Lily refusing the Dark Lord was that, at some point during that fateful night, the three of you," Minerva nodded at each of them in turn, "took your fathers' places at the Disco of Doom."

"I can't believe they would have accepted," Harry stared miserably at his parents as they responded in kind to the cordial smile of the bouncer (Goyle, Sr., if he wasn't mistaken.)

"I can't believe my father kept that damned cane," Draco whispered, his face frozen in an appalled expression.

Ron tossed the photos back on Minerva's desk and buried his face in his hands. "I can't believe the orange."

Minerva gathered the photos back into the envelope. "Believe it, gentlemen. We have calculations to show that a portal will open in seven hours to facilitate your journey into the past. Whatever you do, you must ensure that James and Lily are not turned and that no one discovers that you've interfered."

"As long as we're going back, why couldn't we stop the war right there?" Ron voiced the question that was clearly on everyone's mind.

"Excellent question, Ronald, dear. Any number of assassination attempts were made against Voldemort during the course of the war. Their failures have led reliable sources within the Ministry and various research institutions to conclude that he was genuinely invulnerable at that point...at least until the prophecy. The fact that this portal phenomenon was only recently discovered, in addition to your presence in the pictures, leads us to believe that this was inevitable."

"You mean, we would somehow have gone back in time whether we knew about this or not?" Draco asked.

"That is it precisely, Draco, my sweet. I believe it is far better that you go into this situation with the knowledge of what you must accomplish. And, of course, properly dressed."

"I still don't like it," Harry glowered at the photos, the emotion behind the expression subtly shifting from anger to determination as he spoke. "But we'll do what we have to do."

Ron swallowed audibly. "Right, mate."

Draco cast one more look at the photos and shuddered. "Even if it involves bell bottoms."

Charlotte dismissed the masseurs. "Cocky, leave the journal on the table and go Obliviate the masseurs. They're supposedly Swedish and don't understand a word of English, but one can't be too careful."

"Certainly, Mistress." As Cocky hastened to obey, Charlotte took up her normal quill again.

"I knew I could count on you, my Angels. According to the calculations, the portal will open near the disco's original location approximately seven hours from now, and will remain open until dawn. You had best begin getting your couture and your glammers sorted now." Minerva took stock of their nods of assent and grave, alert expressions. She did not hesitate to relay her employer's final remark.

"Good luck, Angels."

TBC

Sneak peeks at Charlotte (whomever she may be...) and the glorious, fabulous, Fanvid Trailer, courtesy of ravine.

Body of the scene courtesy of dracontia, with contributions by ravine, SS Lupin & snapemylove.

This Pilot Episode (of what will hopefully be a long, amusing, and thoroughly cracky Charlotte's Angels series) is dedicated to the memory of Farrah Fawcett, whose depiction of Jill Munroe was just the tip of the iceberg. But since said iceberg eventually led to Sexy!Wizard!Exploitation, it was a pretty nifty contribution, all told.

Angels in the Disco of Doom, Act 1, Scene 2: Angel Eyes

Chapter 2 of 2

Once upon a time, there were three little wizards who went to the Auror Academy. And they were each assigned very hazardous duties, but I took them away from all that, and now they work for me. My name is Charlotte.

Disclaimer: All Harry Potter characters copyright JK Rowling and large, corporate entities. All things resembling Charlie's Angels Television Show copyright Spelling/Goldberg productions and large, corporate entities (Columbia/Sony).

Authors' Note: One scoop of Edy's Hot Cocoa + 1 bottle Cedarburg spice or one B-52 (LAYERED, of course...no Potions master would stoop to serving it MIXED) + a slice of sweet potato pie respectively, and ravine and drac were ready to edit.

This should give you some idea of the optimal zone for reading this stuff...

"You're welcome to use my drawing room of course, but why do we need it?" Harry asked Minerva as she walked briskly out of the Floo into Grimmauld Place's kitchen with the ease of someone disembarking a bus.

"You cannot rely on having the time or opportunity to exchange clothes with your targets, so you must be dressed as much like them as possible when you arrive. We need space in which you can change," she explained. "It also happens that the Portal's location has been confirmed as the basement of an office building not three blocks from here."

"Sir Harry! Welcome home," said a little boy bouncing from a tapestry covered, oversized chair in an ornate portrait on the wall next to the Floo. The child was wearing dark blue velvet robes with glinting brass buttons, a large white collar and a brocade bow adorning his neck. His long black curls bobbed along with his excitement as he gave a shy little wave when Harry looked his way. Harry found his godfather's Victorian namesake to be an engaging little fellow; judging by his younger brother Phineas, most of the geniality in the family had died with him.

"Good evening to you too, little Sirius."

Little Sirius' eyes widened as he glanced over Harry's shoulder. "Oh, forgive me, Sir Harry. I didn't see that you have a guest." He quickly ran to the side of his painting, only the top of his head showing so that his eyes were peeking just above the frame.

"Nonsense, Sirius, come out here. I'd like you to meet my friend, Minerva. Um, what would be the correct title for a woman knight?"

"Dame," Draco said as he slipped through the fireplace with enviable *éclat* and dusted off a few random ashes. He narrowly missed being bowled over by Ron, who exited with considerably greater force. Fortunately, Harry was conveniently close enough to catch Draco.

"Do you ever just 'enter' a room, or is there a Gryffindor Code that forbids it as insufficiently explosive?" Draco said it offhandedly, apparently more focused on flitting his hands over Harry's clothes to rid him of stray soot. Harry was focused on setting Draco back on his feet.

Ron simply grimaced in exasperation. "It's more of a personal thing, Malfoy."

"As I was saying," Harry said, rolling his eyes and returning his attention to the portrait on the wall, "this is my friend, Dame Minerva McGonagall."

Little Sirius' eyes widened again. "You fought in the war, too?" he said, his voice filled with awe, then he seemed to remember himself and bowed. "It is an honor to meet you, Dame Minerva."

Minerva's impatience was mollified...slightly. She nodded and said, "It is nice to make your acquaintance, as well."

"Good evening to you too, Sir Ron and Sir Draco," his voice resuming the excitement it had shown at Harry's arrival. "It is nice to see you again."

Draco acknowledged the portrait with a smile, but Ron just stared at Draco.

"You didn't earn an Order of Merlin, Malfoy...how are you *Sir* Draco?"

Draco's shoulders tensed defensively. "Third class, for charity work, if you *must* know."

Ron rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. "Oh... well... okay, then."

Minerva's lips were disappearing again. "To the Drawing Room, then?" Without waiting for a reply, she led the way at a brisk pace. The Angels hustled to catch up.

Harry cleared his throat. "Oh, Minerva...I don't use the drawing room much and told Kreacher to let it be, so it's a bit..."

Minerva opened the door and promptly sneezed as a gray, trailing blob that had once been a cobweb dropped down before her.

"...dusty," Harry finished apologetically. He Banished the offending cobweb and held the door for her.

"I say, it is high time that someone cleaned and aired this room properly, high time!" A young man dressed in elaborate brocade robes and looking (if possible) even more Victorian than Little Sirius, addressed them from a portrait hanging over the fireplace. Flourishing a mass of fluffy, white fabric (which, on closer inspection, proved to be an inordinately lacy handkerchief), he sneezed. It was almost believable.

"Bless you," Minerva said dryly. She spared him no further attention and removed a shrunken trunk and several rolls of parchment from her valise. While Harry cleared excess dust from a large table near the windows, she Enlarged the trunk and Transfigured several odds and ends into screens, levitating them over toward the opposite wall. "The garments are a wee bit outlandish; adjust to them while I go over what we know." She tossed several articles of clothing over each screen, and handed a few more items to each wizard, before unrolling various documents on the table.

"Oh, is it to be a fashion show, then? I do so like to see young wizards gadding about, all in the mode."

"Mr. Black! If. You. Please," Minerva admonished the portrait.

"Please call me Cygnus. That's a lovely plaid you're wearing... Did you know that pattern was all the rage in nought-seven?"

"Harry... can he see behind the screens?" Ron eyed the portrait askance.

"Take your stuff to the far end if you're worried." Harry picked up a pair of burnt orange trousers and did a double take. "I hope this is your stuff," he muttered as he tossed it over to Ron. Ron exchanged it for a heap of denim that... jingled.

Draco took his place behind the center screen, walking gingerly as if trying to avoid mystery contaminants in the rug. He favored the clothes draped over the partition with a blank stare. Draco fingered the fabric of his outfit. Blankness quickly morphed to outrage. "Polyester? Who... What... There is no sodding way my father wore...Muggle *synthetics!*"

"Mr. Malfoy, I guarantee you, these are perfect replicas of the original garments worn that night...including the material. We are fortunate, gentlemen, that our anonymous source was able to provide fairly detailed information about the Disco; what people were wearing there, and the general roles of all the principle players on the night in question." She turned to glare at him, but quickly returned her attention to the table. Ron was well into the changing process already. Judging by the amount of broad, muscular, ginger-hair-sprinkled chest visible above the partition and the trousers that suddenly dropped to reveal angular knees peering out from below it, she hadn't made the screens any too large. She cleared her throat. "Please, get your clothes on and pay attention."

For a time the soft whisper of fabric sliding against skin or dropping to the ground, occasionally punctuated by indignant sounds or sotto voce remarks, provided the soundtrack to Minerva's recital.

Minerva resettled her glasses on her nose to better read her notes. "Lucius Malfoy was one of Voldemort's top recruiters. Lucius and Narcissa had only been married about a year at the time the Disco opened, yet they already had quite the reputation for luring new Death Eaters and sympathizers with a combination of his political promises and her disarmingly elegant manners as a hostess."

"Careful where you toss your rags, Weasley," Draco complained when an article of clothing fell his way.

"At least one attempt was made to recruit James while he was still at Hogwarts...obviously unsuccessful. We believe that Lily was approached separately, either just before or just after leaving school. That attempt also failed. By this time, they had announced their engagement."

Ron spent several minutes trying to sort out just which opening in the garish orange tweed trousers was meant for his waist. "Unless you can tell me which opening to step through, sod off, Malfoy." He had almost solved the conundrum when Draco let out a high-pitched yell and jumped back, nearly knocking over Ron's changing area.

"Eurgh! This dust is alive!"

"Oi! Stay on your side of the screen!" Ron braced one hand against the partition to block Draco's apparent attempt to escape over it.

Harry looked over into Draco's changing area to see what was causing all the fuss. "Calm down, it's only Stanley."

Ron let his hand drop away from the screen. He stared at Harry, gobsmacked. "Stanley?"

Draco was surprised out of his alarm for a moment. "The dust in your drawing room came to life and you named it?"

"Well, they're kind of cute," Harry said, a little defensively. "They're only dust bunnies. Luna says they're harmless."

Draco looked unconvinced, which was most likely why Ron went along with Harry's declaration. "Look, Malfoy, now you've scared him off," Ron scolded as the skittering gray fuzz retreated to the corner. A corner that appeared to be, well... alive.

"They're breeding, Weasley," Draco murmured.

"Are you quite through bonding with the animate bits of fluff, gentlemen?"

"Sorry Minerva," the boys chorused.

She plowed on, carefully keeping her back turned and her eyes on the paper. "Lucius invited James and Lily to the Disco of Doom on the orders of the Dark Lord for a final recruitment attempt. He promised them the opportunity to make valuable connections with people in the Ministry, people who could advance their careers...to say nothing of a party to exceed anything else in the Wizarding world. Their reluctance to associate with suspected Death Eaters was weakened by the apparent non-violent nature of the Disco itself, an impression supported by the lull in Light-Dark hostilities and a supposedly chance meeting with Narcissa." Minerva tapped another piece of paper with her wand. Muttering a spell, she projected a blueprint into the air above their heads. With another flourish, the image took on three dimensions.

Still watching the floor around his feet for unexpected life forms, Draco righted his screen, then carefully removed his cufflinks and opened his shirt.

Suddenly, a wolf-whistle broke out.

"What the hell?" Draco grabbed the sparkly fabrics in front of him to cover the lean, alabaster perfection of his chest.

"Bloody hell, who did that?" Ron stared around the room, trying to locate the source of the whistle and getting his mother-of-pearl snaps all mixed up in the process.

"Stupid kettle! Should have buried it somewhere in the pantry where it couldn't get into mischief." Harry darted out from behind the screen to try to stifle the kettle.

"What in Merlin's name?" Minerva turned again, only to be confronted with Harry's shoulders, above a well developed chest that tapered down to trim waist and hips...with only a pair of black briefs to impede the view.

"My, is that what the lads are wearing on their nether parts these days? Looks a bit binding...." Cygnus sounded entirely too interested.

Minerva's voice was slightly muffled by her hands, but it was still easy to tell that her brogue had become more pronounced with annoyance. "It is a cheeky tea kettle, lads...get your clothes on and it'll have nought to whistle at."

"I still don't understand why my parents believed any of it," Harry said. He shoved the kettle under a sofa, where it hissed indignantly.

"Truthfully, we aren't certain. It may be that James was simply trying to make contacts for pureblood friends or distant relations and was resorting to some desperate measures."

"If that's all there was to it, we're free and clear once Harry is in place," Ron said. He studied the diagram of the Disco of Doom in an effort not to look at the shirt he was reluctantly buttoning.

"Aye, but we suspect that Lucius and Narcissa had intimated to Lily that their involvement with certain important people could influence policies. Since the people in question are Ministry officials but also suspected Death Eaters, the implication was that the influence would be extended over both Ministry policies, and Death Eater activities. She may have believed that she could change things from within."

"That complicates things considerably," Draco said. He stopped short with his hands on his belt buckle. "Am I seeing things, or is the interior of the Disco shaped like..." He trailed off, dismay clear on his features.

"If you're seeing what I'm seeing..." Harry grimaced. "It's a skull. With bar counters for eye sockets and tables for teeth."

"In case you had not noticed, gentlemen, the entrance is a fanged snake's mouth, and there is a corridor that wraps all the way around the 'skull,'" Minerva illuminated the pertinent portions of the diagram with her wand. "Take care not to get lost in it...we only know a few of the major rooms that open on to it."

"I'm done," Ron said and moved into her view. Draco dropped his waistcoat in astonishment. Ron was sporting the burnt orange tweed trousers, paired with what appeared to be a brown and plaid satin shirt. Though even a blind man wouldn't be able to miss the enormous width of the collar, highlighted as it was in shiny orange piping. The icing on the cakewreck, however, was the orange-hued, faux mother-of-pearl snap closures that extended from collar to waist.

Harry squinted at the image and turned his head aside in an effort to save his remaining eyesight. He noticed Draco crouching below the edge of the screen, scrabbling frantically through his assigned clothes.

"What are you doing?" he whispered.

"Looking for sunglasses," Draco whispered back.

"I say... what is that you're wearing, young man? Is this quite the mode now? I do hope that robes haven't gone altogether out of style, though I daresay those trouser-legs rather mimic the effect..." Cygnus eyed Ron up-and-down.

Minerva nodded briskly. "Well done, Mr. Weasley. You need a mustache and glasses yet, but take a look." She grabbed a cloth that obviously was covering a full-length mirror. Harry noticed a moment too late.

"Minerva, wait! Don't..."

But the damage was done. The dust cloth fell away, and Minerva and Ron were reflected in the ornately framed surface.

"Well, hello, handsome... I like the picture, but you need to lose the cheap frame." Ron blinked at the mirror. It wasn't entirely a reaction to the brightness of his shirt.

"What did you say?"

Harry groaned softly and tried to ignore the flirtatious mirror that had been a serious threat to his sanity before its banishment to the drawing room. The intricacies of his clothes gave him ample distraction. "All this denim... and the leather boots... what was my dad thinking?"

"Do tell." Draco crossed his arms over the top of the screen, neglecting the cuffs of his powder-blue shirt in favor of appraising Harry's outfit. "Looks a bit dangerous, doesn't it?"

"Drop your grandmother and those cheap, tacky clothes, and you'd have something," the mirror said.

Minerva seethed. Ron sputtered. "Don't talk to Professor McGonagall that way! And this is a costume..." He gestured to his outfit, one unfastened plaid cuff dangling from his wrist. "I have decent clothes, thank you."

Draco snorted at the notion of a Weasley with decent clothes, but had the sense not to elaborate in light of his own outer robe, which he'd finally gotten around to fastening. People in white sequins not throwing hexes, and all that.

"Ron, don't give it an opening!" Harry tried to say, though it was muffled under a chain of some sort and massive denim lapels.

"Need some help?" Draco leaned a little further over into Harry's changing area.

"Darling, when I said lose the frame, I didn't suggest replacing it," the mirror said...and used Ron's own face to leer at him.

Harry's slightly strained, "I think I've got it," was drowned out by Draco gasping, "Oh my God, Weasley, the mirror wants you naked." He looked thoroughly unnerved.

Harry, finally victorious over the denim jumpsuit, exited his changing area at a slow wobble, trying to adjust to the dizzyingly high-heeled leather boots.

"My, I thought you were dear, young Reggie for a moment...except that his belt buckle was a snake." The mirror all but simpered as Harry sorted out the flaring collar that was nearly a cape.

Draco was the last ready. He glared petulantly around the room, daring anyone to remark on the shimmering, white-and-powder-blue confection of an outfit, with lapels in two different time zones and platform shoes that threatened altitude sickness.

"Gentlemen, if you're quite dressed. At last. Mr. Malfoy, please tend to the rest of the disguises."

Draco hastened to begin, first adjusting the length of his own hair and filling in his brows a bit. When he had achieved the proper amount of sideburn, he turned his attention to Harry.

"Now, as to the night in question, the night you must change: James and Lily casually mentioned their impending visit to Alice Longbottom. It seems clear that they did not think enough of it to make a formal report, nor were they hiding anything. Alice, however, was suspicious enough that she turned to Arthur."

Draco traced the other man's scar with gentle fingertips, whispering a spell that obscured the telltale mark, and then ran his hands through Harry's hair, arranging it in a style that was if possible even more mussed. He supplied Harry with additional facial hair using the same charm he'd employed on himself. Finally, he handed him a potion to temporarily change his eye color.

"I hate this charm." Harry rubbed at his speedily grown hair as if trying to soothe a razor burn. "Why can't we use Glamours?"

"Or Polyjuice?" Ron added. "Three flasks, Summon a loose hair, and Bob's your uncle."

"The policy against outside drinks was strictly enforced to prevent anyone from using Polyjuice," Minerva explained, consulting a sheaf of notes. "I'd not advise trying it...even an extended use batch would require one more dose to last the night, and the penalty for being caught with Polyjuice in the Disco of Doom was rather... severe."

"Bloody potion makes my eyes itch," Harry complained.

"Quiet, you," Draco scolded as he adjusted the length of Harry's hair. "You heard Minerva...we can't use Polyjuice, and Glamours don't hold up well under disco lights. I'll give you some drops for your eyes." He gently lifted Harry's chin up and tipped a drop from another small vial into his eyes.

Minerva glanced at the proceedings and cleared her throat before continuing. "Arthur had been issued a standing invitation to the Disco by Lucius...something to do with a proposed business deal, though we have no details, as Arthur has never given quite the same story twice on the matter. He had not planned to accept, but given this unexpected information about James and Lily, he volunteered to use the invitation in order to keep an eye on them."

While Harry blinked the potion into place, Draco shortened up Ron's hair, and then gave him a pair of glasses. "Those won't alter your vision, but anyone else looking through them won't see much but fuzz."

"All the same, Mr. Weasley, don't leave them lying about," Minerva reminded him. "Arthur needs them to navigate and especially to read anything. Mr. Malfoy, the mustache?"

"Right. I suppose one of those will do..." Draco eyed the corner where the dust bunnies skittered and squeaked.

"Oh no you don't!" Ron objected, following the line of Draco's gaze.

Draco huffed, "I thought you were on a first name basis with Stanley over there. Fine. Since you don't have enough follicles in the area for the Growth Charm to work...here." He tossed Ron a small Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes packet. With a grimace indicating the option wasn't much preferable to Transfigured dust bunnies, Ron dutifully swallowed the contents and after several facial contortions had sprouted a suitable amount of hair on his upper lip.

Draco compared the photos to his own image in the mirror. With a sigh, he cast the spells to feather his lengthened hair. "Whatever was Father thinking?"

"Figure that out quickly. Mr. Malfoy. Your success, gentlemen, depends very much upon how well you can divine what your fathers were thinking." Minerva spelled the parchment briskly back into the valise. "Let's move; it may take a wee while for you to walk three blocks in those shoes."

"I'm not being seen in public in this!" Draco clutched the massive lapels of his powder-blue shirt in outrage.

"I hate to say it, but I'm with Malfoy." Ron studied his garments in dismay.

Harry shrugged helplessly, his eyebrows drawn together in a plea for mercy.

"Oh for goodness!...very well! There was a Floo connection in the office building for the Unspeakables who examined the portal. To my knowledge, it is still open." Minerva swept the three wizards out the door like so many wayward dust bunnies.

Giggles emanated from the portrait as the group crossed the kitchen toward the Floo. Harry stopped. "Sirius? What's so funny? I don't think I've ever heard you laugh."

The boy's hand covered his mouth but his shoulders shook, bouncing his curls again. "Your clothes... they look like... mamma's dresses... so bright and shiny," he giggled. Ron and Harry groaned again, looking down at their costumes. Draco frowned and picked at his synthetic shirtsleeves in disgust. Minerva actually chuckled.

"Thanks, little Sirius," Ron grumbled, making his escape through the Floo as soon as Minerva uttered the address. Little Sirius' giggles echoed after them all the way to the empty office building.

"This is it, gentlemen." The portal, somehow menacing in its glittery blackness, looked all the more dramatic in contrast to Minerva's matter-of-fact introduction. "It is now almost 7 PM; the time should be the same on the other side. You have until 3 AM, but if I do not see you by 2:30, I will seek you out. You know what form to look for." She assumed her tabby shape. "Myaaaah."

"I'm guessing that means, 'Good Luck,'" Harry said. He squared his shoulders and stepped through the whirling, glittering, disk. Draco eyed the opening with trepidation.

"Either that or, 'don't bollocks this up,'" Ron muttered. Draco yelped as Ron grabbed him by the arm and dragged him through.

Prep scene: In-chat collaboration between dracontia, snapemylove, ravine, silverdoe, & sslupin.

Little Sirius' remarks/persona by snapemylove.

Cygnus' remarks/persona by dracontia.

Thanks to silverdoe for pointing out their existence on the Black family tree.

Just for a lark, you may want to search the chapter title on YouTube (with the addition of the word *cough * 'ABBA' *cough *) and see what you come up with...