

Winning at All Costs

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"Wanna know what my New Year's Resolution is, Hermione?" Ron asked, sitting down heavily and nearly knocking over her tea.

"No, not really," she said, shooting him a disgusted look and looking back down at her book.

"No, really. C'mon, let me tell you. I think you'll like it." He was beginning to whine, and it was getting on her nerves.

"Tell her what?" Harry asked and sat on her other side, grabbing a roll and shoving it in his mouth.

Sighing heavily, she marked her page and shut her book. "Fine, Ron. What is your New Year's Resolution?"

Beaming, Ron answered, "I'm not going to bother you for a whole year, at least about going out with me."

"Going out?" she asked shrilly. "You never ask if I want to 'go out.' You ask if we can snog. Oh—or shag! Isn't that what you asked me only last week?"

Ron's ears turned bright red, and he turned to Harry, who only shrugged. "Well, er..."

"Yeah. As if I believe that resolution will last a day, much less a whole year," Hermione said and firmly opened her book back to where she had left off and tried to shut Ron out.

A little impossible since the usual self-dialogue ran through her brain about how if Ron put more effort into thinking with the brain between his ears instead of the brain between his legs, he might not be struggling through half of his Auror courses.

"Let's make a wizard oath then," Ron said, interrupting her reverie.

"An oath?" she asked, shutting her book, suddenly interested. "Meaning?"

"We all write down one resolution, and we see who can stick to it. The oath will keep us honest," Harry chimed in. "A brilliant idea, really. We have one of those Resolution Pools going at the office."

"Okay ... So let's say Ron loses, which he undoubtedly will—" Ron feigned hurt by clutching his chest "—what happens?"

"Well, there's three of us. So the last one standing wins whatever is decided upon by all of us."

"Sounds good," Hermione said, an evil glint in her eyes, and tore off a bit of parchment for each of them.

Each busily wrote down a single resolution, and they joined hands over the scraps of paper and performed the oath. The papers glowed and heaved for a moment before settling back on the table.

"There," Hermione said with satisfaction. "Before we read them aloud, I have just the thing for the winner." She reached into her pocket and pulled out a small, wrapped candy and placed it on the table.

"What's that?" asked Harry, peering at it closely.

Ron, on the other hand, blushed again furiously. "That's Fred and George's latest experiment, that is. Where'd you get it?"

"Never you mind that, Ron. Fact is I have it. It's in its last testing phase, I was told. It's their Titillating Taffy. They laced it with a very minute amount of Love Potion. Supposed to give the person who eats it intense orgasms for about four hours—hands free."

It was Harry's turn to blush, and he cleared his throat—twice. "Ah, hmm. That—that sounds really good, Hermione," he choked. "You er, keep that safe, would you?"

"Since I'm the one who's going to win it, you bet your life I'll keep it safe," she retorted. "Now, let's read our resolutions. I'll go first. I resolve to stop chewing on the tip of my quills."

She looked up to see the boys' glares. "What? It's a disgusting habit. You wouldn't believe how many quills I go through in a year. I'd probably save at least 15 Galleons if—"

"All right, all right," Harry stopped her, grabbed his own paper, and opened it. "I resolve to—you know, I really didn't think we'd be reading them out loud. I would have put something different."

"Too late, Harry. We took an oath over these. They have to be read it out loud," Hermione replied and snatched it out of his hand. "Oh! Well, I might as well read it for you. Sorry, Harry. Harry resolves, er, not to masturbate for a year. An entire year, Harry? Isn't that a *bit* drastic?"

"Ginny caught you, didn't she?" Ron asked.

"Yup," was all Harry said.

"Well then, Ron, do I have to read yours too? Or do we all know what it is?" Hermione demanded.

Ron snatched the last paper from the table, opened it and read, "I resolve not to ask Hermione out on a date, or to snog, or *tøshag*. Happy?"

"Quite." She grinned smugly and removed the Titillating Taffy from her pocket.

"You know what I'm going to do with this when I win it, don't you?" she said, making a show of looking at the bit of taffy longingly. "I am going to plan a whole night of pampering. I'm going to light a few candles, get undressed, run a warm, bubbly bath, and soak for a loooooong time. I wonder if orgasms that intense could cause waves in a bathtub? And then I—"

"Excuse me," Harry muttered, got up from the table with his books in front of his trousers, and left quickly.

"Oh, well," Hermione said lightly as though she had no idea what her friend was running off to do. "I got a present from some of the girls in seventh year. I am wondering if I used it along with a Titillating Taffy, would it affect the intensity of the orgasms... I suppose since it lasts for four hours, I should have plenty of time to discover—"

"Oh Merlin, Hermione! *Please* can we do it just *once*? I promise no strings attached!" Ron begged, falling at her knees.

Hermione smiled, tucked the candy back in her pocket, and stood up. "You boys are positively hopeless," she said as she patted Ron on the top of his head. "Positively hopeless."

A/N: Slytherin-Hermione emerges in this response to a prompt set by Sempra: *Characters of your choice decide to make some New Year's resolutions. To make it interesting, they place wagers on who will be able to stick to theirs the longest. What are the resolutions and what do they do to win the bet?*

It's up to you how many people are involved, how colourful the resolutions are and whether or not there are any penalties for breaking the resolutions.