

Hurrah for the Pirate King

by peskipiksi

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Chapter 1 of 1

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For Very Small Prophet, who will get, and I hope forgive, the references.

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Hermione stared at the highly coloured box in her hand. She was so tempted to use it, even though she knew it was madness she had work tomorrow. But Ron was away at yet another Auror Conference, and she was bored. And lonely. And she had been longing to find out how they worked. Oh, what the hell. She opened the Patented Daydream Charm Fred and George had given her five years ago, and, taking a deep breath, she shut her eyes and said the incantation.

She opened her eyes to bright sunlight, and saw she was aboard the deck of the ship on the Charm's box. The craft's lifebelt proclaimed it to be the HMS Semaphore.

Somewhere in the distance she could hear singing raucous male voices:

'Pour, oh, pour the pirate sherry;

Fill, oh, fill the pirate glass;

And, to make us more than merry,

Kick, oh, kick some pirate arse!

Hermione giggled. She had only seen "The Pirates of Penzance" once, but was fairly sure those lyrics weren't in it! Actually, once she'd stopped laughing, she began to feel uneasy. She was quite alone on this boat not even the handsome youth on the box was there to distract her and the singing was getting louder, closer, out of the fog.

As the ship approached, Hermione caught her breath she knew that ship, and it did not bode well for a happy daydream. The Black Pearl! Hermione had watched "Pirates of the Caribbean" over and over again with her mum. Last weekend, Ron had sat through ten minutes and then wandered off in disgust to watch Formula 1 with Mr Granger.

Hermione was startled out of the memory by the sound of rough voices coming nearer. To her horror, dozens of men were swarming down the rigging, crawling along ropes which attached her ship to The Black Pearl. Hermione's heart skipped a beat. Dressed in pirate costumes they might be, but she had last seen every one of these men in Death Eaters' robes, destroying Hogwarts Castle. Avery, Rookwood, Macnair, Dolohov, all of them. Lucius Malfoy was in the lead, but he wasn't wearing a tricorn, so he couldn't be the captain, Hermione thought that was just the way it worked. This gave her an idea.

'Parlay,' she squeaked, remembering the film. 'I invoke the right of parlay. You have to take me to your captain!' As Malfoy marched her up the gangplank to the Pearl, she tried to reason with herself mentally. "It's my dream. The pirates may be Death Eaters, but the captain WON'T be Voldemort; he'll be Johnny Depp!"

And there he was, with his back to her, staring out over the sea: frock coat, tricorn hat, black hair streaming out behind him. Hermione held her breath as he turned to face her.

'You!'

'Professor Snape!'

'Captain Snape, if you please.'

'But I thought I was meeting Jack Sparrow!'

Snape's lip curled. 'This is your dream, Miss Granger. Besides, you have something which calls to me.' He stared pointedly at her breasts.

Hermione slapped him.

'I'm not sure I deserved that,' he muttered, rubbing his jaw. 'The gold, you silly girl; *the gold calls to me.*'

Hermione looked down at the contact Galleon she wore on a chain around her neck. 'You can't have this!' she cried. 'I need it to contact Ron when he's working away... or late... or at weekends. It's how we keep in touch.'

'How... touching.' He reached into her cleavage and pulled the gold coin off her neck.

This time the slap was hard enough to make his ears ring.

'I may have deserved that,' he conceded.

'Enough of this!' The cold, sneering figure of Lucius Malfoy appeared behind Snape and snatched the medallion from him. Two Death Eaters, whose names Hermione couldn't remember, grabbed her roughly and pushed her towards a treasure chest in the middle of the deck.

"Oh, no, no, no," Hermione thought. "I know how this goes now; this is a nightmare, not a daydream." She tried not to speak ill of the dead, but she was cursing Fred for ever giving her the charm, even though she knew she had brought this on herself by watching that stupid film over and over again.

Malfoy drew out a short dagger and pressed it onto her palm. Somewhere behind the shock of the pain, Hermione's brain registered that Malfoy hadn't used a wand. Her blood and her contact Galleon fell on top of the others in the chest. She looked pleadingly over her shoulder at Snape. He was tensed, poised, ready for fight or flight as necessary.

A cloud shifted. Their party was bathed in moonlight. Even though she knew what was coming, Hermione screamed. Every single Death Eater had transformed into a hideous living skeleton clad in rags and tatters things of shreds and patches which lurched towards her, shrieking:

'It didn't work!'

'The curse is still upon us!'

'She's a Mudblood; we need a pureblood!'

Rookwood took a wild swipe at her with his sword. She dodged, one hand holding up layers of petticoats and skirts, thanking Merlin that she and Snape still had wands. Clearly her subconscious had decided skeletons wouldn't be able to hold wands. She actually giggled, knowing how frustrating it would be for Death Eaters to have to resort to what Professor McGonagall had once called "Muggle duelling". Still, she had no desire to die at the hands of an undead Death Eater.

Hermione swiped back at Rookwood, yelling, *'Diffindo!'* Rookwood's skull snapped backwards and, to Hermione's horror, fell to the floor! It gave her a look of utmost disgust from somewhere down by her feet, and Rookwood's body stooped, picked it up, and put it firmly back on its neck. Swallowing her revulsion, Hermione cried *'Reducto!'*, and the skeleton exploded in a cloud of dust.

Picking up on her example, Snape used the curse on several more of the crew, but he knew they were hopelessly outnumbered. From somewhere in the recesses of his mind came images from a film he had never seen Hermione's memories, he realised. He grabbed a pair of handcuffs from his belt, snapped them on, and threw himself over one of the steeply angled ropes connecting The Black Pearl to The Semaphore.

'Put your arms around my neck and your legs around my waist,' he yelled. 'Vous comprenez?'

'Savvy!' Hermione corrected him, wanting to get the quote correct, but obeyed. (She heard Avery, or what was left of him, singing, 'I saw a tart!')

'I think I am above crude colloquialisms, Miss Granger,' Snape retorted, and let go.

Hermione screamed as they zip-wired down the rope to the deserted ship.

One slash of her wand sliced the ropes through so they couldn't be followed. A quick *'Diffindo'* severed Snape's handcuffs, and *'Locomotor ship!'* set them off at such a pace that they couldn't be followed. Hermione had never performed such speedy spellwork. The Black Pearl was soon swallowed by the swirling fog.

Gasping for breath, Snape groped in his pockets for a tiny key, and unlocked the handcuffs. 'You're safe now,' he assured her. 'The fog will keep them at bay until you can wake up.'

Now that the furious Death Eaters were out of sight, Hermione turned her attention to the most pressing matter at hand. 'Why were you helping them?' she demanded furiously.

'I would have thought that was obvious, Miss Granger.' Seeing her still glaring at him, he explained. 'As they are, they cannot be killed; with the Galleon... and the blood... I can at least attempt to destroy them. As this is your dream, I assumed it was your blood they needed.'

'Why are you here, not Johnny Depp?' she asked, bewildered.

'As I keep saying, this is your fantasy, Miss Granger.' His smile was mocking and rather sexy. She blushed, looking for all the world like the eighteenth century maiden she was supposed to be.

'But I wasn't looking for fantasy.' She blushed deeper, aware that she was lying to him and to herself. 'I just wanted to find out how the Charm works!'

He looked thoughtful. 'Well, let me see. If I remember correctly, to dream about your teacher implies you have issues at work.'

'I've got no problem with work; I've just been promoted!' Hermione said indignantly.

'Not necessarily *your* work,' he explained gently.

Hermione felt her stomach sink. Lavender Brown was at the conference with Ron. And they seemed to be doing a lot of overtime recently. 'Anything else?' she asked, her voice trembling.

Snape seemed ill at ease now, as if he realised he'd upset her, but had information she needed to hear. 'Dreaming of a pirate means you will be exposed to the evil designs of false friends, and a pirate hat,' he took his own off and regarded it as if it had done him a personal injury, 'denotes someone is taking advantage of you.'

Hermione looked up at him, tears sparkling in her eyes. 'Anything else?'

Snape moved behind her and gathered her thick hair away from her neck. Reaching into his pocket, he withdrew the contact Galleon, and fastened it around her throat, where it nestled again between her breasts. She turned to face him.

'You took it back?'

'I don't need it, and they don't deserve it. *The Dream Oracle* states that having something on your chest denotes something about which you need to speak out.'

Hermione nodded silently. She knew now how the Charm worked, and what it was trying to tell her. Like the Mirror of Erised, it reflected her subconscious desires and fears. If she were perfectly happy, this would probably be a chaste little romance with the handsome boy on the box – no monsters, no swords, no needing to be rescued. She took a deep breath and resolutely changed the subject.

'Why are they... the crew... like *that*?'

He smiled grimly. 'I believe it is your revenge on Voldemort's supporters.'

Hermione gave a small smile of satisfaction. 'But you're not...?'

'No. You appear to have forgiven my past.'

There was an awkward, embarrassed silence. Hermione filled it by trying to tend to her cut hand, but she couldn't get her thick, voluminous skirts to rip for bandages. She gave a little scream of frustration, and tried very hard not to burst into tears.

'*Let me*,' Snape said firmly. The cut was shallow, but long. He cleaned it gently, then tore a strip from the hem of his shirt and bandaged it. When he touched her hand, she shivered.

He grimaced apologetically. '*I'm sorry. Potioneer's hands. I know they're rough.*'

'No... *I mean, yes, but don't stop.*'

He tied a neat knot in the fabric, then covered her hand with his. Hermione turned her hand so that she was holding his, then looked up at him through her lashes. She had an idea, but would he agree? Oh, well, nothing ventured, nothing won. She took a deep breath. 'Come with me, Professor... I mean, Captain,' she pleaded. '*Accompany me back to civilisation.*'

'*No spell can reawaken the dead*, Hermione,' Snape said heavily. Was she imagining it, or did he sound regretful?

'I didn't mean that!' she clarified hastily. 'I meant... George and Lee have loads of different Daydream Charms... we could...'

'No, Hermione, *it cannot be*.' He drew himself up, and seemed to recover his usual poise. '*I don't think much of my profession, but, contrasted with respectability,*' (the familiar sneer was back in place) '*it is comparatively honest. No, Hermione, I shall live and die a Pirate King.*' He swept her a swashbuckling bow, then caught her around the waist, pulled her to him and kissed her soundly.

When he released her mouth, she started to speak, but he placed a finger to her lips to silence her. 'Hermione, *it would never have worked between us, darling.*'

Swooning in his arms, Hermione wasn't sure about that. The first thing she was going to do when she woke up was find this week's *Witch Weekly*. She was pretty certain she'd seen an order form for Weasley's Wizard Wheezes in there. Once she'd had a talk with Ron, she reckoned she'd need an escape or two.

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From a SND prompt by Muse Amusant: "Sometime after the war, Hermione finds herself toying with the Patented Daydream Charm that Fred once gave her. Curiosity compels her to try and figure out exactly how it works. What she discovers is beyond even her wildest dreams."

But it took longer to write than one night!

The quotes are from *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *Prisoner of Azkaban*. There are also a few references to other Gilbert and Sullivan operas. The lyrics, inevitably, were doing the rounds at my local operatic society rehearsals! The dream meanings are from dreambible.com and dreammeanings.com