

Centrefold

by Amethyst

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: The story you are about to read has characters that have been borrowed from others. The locations and settings and other things recognisable are also borrowed. The only things I own are a warped sense of humour, a laptop computer, and a Kia minivan.

Harry Potter was sitting in his small, leased flat. Yes, he still owned number 12, Grimmauld Place; however, he only kept it for posterity. As he was haunted by memories of Sirius every time he had to stay there, he rented a small flat in London where he could benefit from both worlds: the Muggle world where he grew up and the wizarding world he was born to and sometimes seemed more like home. On this sunny summer afternoon, he was relaxing with a few magazines and some bitters.

'Bloody hell, Harry!' His best friend, Ron Weasley, burst through the door. 'You need to get a Floo connection. Some drunk beggar chased me up the alley behind this place when I Apparated and scared him into spilling his drink.'

'Nice to see you, too, Ron,' he responded. 'I'm doing fine, thanks. How are you?'

Ron sneered. 'Hermione still won't talk to me, you know.'

'Yeah, Ron, I know.' Harry rolled his eyes. 'Ever since you guys broke up again, I hear it from both of you. You about how she won't speak to you and her claiming you are a short step away from being a stalker.'

'Stalker!' Ron shouted. 'She accused me of being a stalker? She's the one who walked out on me! She's the one who won't even tell me why! She's the one who's blocked her Floo connection!' He went on for a good five minutes grumbling about the ills that he had suffered from his now thrice ex-girlfriend, Hermione Granger. 'She complains about Quidditch! And she's back on S.P.E.W.!'

Harry let his friend yammer on. While it was true that Hermione was his friend, too, Ron was his first-ever-friend, and that was a bond too strong to let the on-again-off-again relationship of his two best friends interfere. Harry had a feeling this time his friends were off for good.

'Ron, I think you have to face the fact that this time, she might not come back. Usually within a month you are talking again, but it's been nine months this time, and she still won't talk to you.' Harry tried to reason.

'Thanks a lot, Harry,' Ron sneered. 'The least you could do is offer me a drink and share your magazines.'

'Help yourself,' Harry answered offhandedly.

Ron summoned a pint and picked up the latest copy of *Naughty Witches* and began to flip through it.

'Ha-Ha-Harry,' he stammered out as if he was thirteen and facing a forest full of spiders.

'Yeah?' Harry asked as he leafed through a copy of *Playwizard*.

'Ha-ha-have y-you I-lo-looked a-at th-this y-yet?' Ron continued to stutter.

'No, why?' Harry was growing curious.

'L-I-look!'

Ron showed him the magazine's centrefold, and Harry's green eyes almost popped out of his head. There on the page was the other third of their little group, Harry's other best friend and Ron's currently ex-girlfriend, Hermione Granger. She had her wand in her right hand, holding it rather suggestively between her legs; her left hand wound itself through her bushy, brown hair. S.P.E.W. badges covered her nipples. Every now and then she would move, teasing her viewers, but the buttons never shifted.

'Harry, we've been going out off and on for five years. *Five bloody years, Harry!* And this magazine is showing more of her than I've seen in that time.'

As Ron sat there devastated at the sight of his former girlfriend revealing herself to the male population of the wizarding world, Harry read the article and looked at the other pictures. He would have never guessed that his friend was hiding that kind of a body under her robes or was that brazen. But then again, she was a Gryffindor.

'Um, Ron, you might want to just forget about her now. By the way she's moving around in this picture, she's either stuck those badges on with Permanent Sticking Charms or pierced her nipples with them,' Harry said, trying to be helpful, but knowing it wasn't working and that his other friend had appeared to go off the deep end.

He refused to show Ron the picture of Hermione with bat-like, house-elf ears poking out of her bushy hair, wearing only a sheer pillowcase that ended at her navel. The badges and everything else showed brilliantly. She had definitely pierced her nipples and slid the S.P.E.W. badges through the holes.

'Harry, she never even let me look at her in her, her . . . ' he trailed off dejectedly as Harry continued to look at the magazine.

'I know, Ron, I know.' He looked back down at the magazine in his hand. 'Every time you tried to push her to the next level, she'd come crying to me asking why you're so pig-headed and when you'd grow up. This is just unlike her. I wonder . . . '

'Wonder what?' Ron asked, dribbling the bitter down his chin.

'Well, just a few things that she's let drop, but I think she might be seeing someone new. I just wonder if he might have something to do with this.'

'What do you mean she's seeing someone new?' Ron roared. 'She can't be seeing someone new! Did she tell you why we broke up this time, Harry, did she? She broke up with me because I proposed to her! I proposed! I saved every last Knut I could and bought her a nice rock and took her to a nice restaurant, and she responded with, "No, in fact, I'm really sorry to do this now, but it was my intention to tell you tonight that it is time for us to move on. This, US, it just isn't working, and well, it is time to move on before we spend too much of our lives nagging and hating each other." She then walked right out on me and left me looking the fool.'

'No, she didn't tell me,' Harry answered solemnly. 'I just assumed that it was over the same old things: you paying too much attention to Quidditch and not enough to her or her paying too much attention to books and projects and not to you. But for a year now . . . ' Again, Harry trailed off as he realised that Hermione had been talking about this guy for longer than she had been broken off with Ron.

'A year! She was seeing the bloke before she ended it with me?' Ron slumped even further, picking at the beading on the arm of the chair he sat in. Then he yelled out, 'What a slag! She was probably bonking him when she wouldn't even let me look at her in her white granny knickers. Who is it, Harry?' His voice lost steam as he sobbed out the question.

Meanwhile, Harry had let Ron rant and went on reading the interview:

After years of refusing any request for an interview, Hermione Granger – friend of Harry Potter, The Boy Who Lived – has agreed to with talk us about the issues she holds dear to her heart: The rights of non-human creatures . . .

'What was that, Ron?' Harry asked, rather embarrassed that he had not heard his friend's question.

'Who is it? Who did she cheat on me with, leave me for?' he spluttered out.

'Some guy named Iggy. He's got something to do with S.P.E.W.'

'That figures, doesn't it? I tell her she's nutters for all the S.P.E.W. stuff, and then as soon as some bloke comes along that shows interest in it, she humps him and dumps me. How could she do that, Harry? How?'

'Don't know, mate, but you know Hermione, and she's not really that type. She must really like this guy. She also won't talk to us about as long as she thinks we'll jump down her throat about it. You sure she didn't try and break it off before, and you just wouldn't let her? You certainly haven't let her be much in the time since.'

'I don't know, I just don't know. She's supposed to be mine. She almost was.' Ron finished picking up the other magazine. 'You don't suppose Lavender will be in this one do you?'

This story was inspired by the song "Centerfold" by the J. Geils Band.

Thanks to SW for beta reading!