

The Professors' New Clothes

by Angharad

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Could it be that they are each trying to attract the attention of someone special?

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Note: This story was inspired by two of the costume changes in the third Harry Potter film. I realize that, in reality, those changes were the result of a new director and a new actor. I simply thought it would be fun to explore the changes from the characters' point of view.

Additional Note: If you have a problem with the idea of anyone over the age of 60 falling in love, and expressing that love physically, please do not read any further. If, however, you have an open mind, please continue.

THE PROFESSORS' NEW CLOTHES

One summer morning, about a week before the students were due to arrive, Minerva McGonagall stood in front of the full-length mirror in her bedroom at Hogwarts and critically surveyed her reflection. For the first time in what seemed like ages, she had permitted herself the luxury of new robes. In the past, she had indulged herself this way either to celebrate something, as when she became Deputy Headmistress, or to replace something, as when a bizarre incident with oddly spiked pumpkin juice produced a substance that consumed green cloth at an alarming rate. This time, Minerva was wearing something new for an entirely different reason, and as she stood there, she wondered, yet again, just what she thought she was doing.

It had all started, quite innocuously enough, during a shopping trip to Hogsmeade several months earlier. Minerva wanted to stop in Gladrag's Wizardwear to take a look at a new line of tartan mittens the proprietor had owled her about, and Albus Dumbledore decided to tag along. While she waited to make her purchase, he wandered to the back of the shop where several large bolts of fabric were lined up against the wall. There Minerva found him examining one of the bolts, which was a color that could only be described as glowing bile green. It was beyond hideous, and she told him so in no uncertain terms. "I agree," Albus replied, "but what fascinates me is the texture of it." He ran his long fingers across the surface of the cloth. "It has the most marvelous ridges." This prompted a discussion about fabric in general, during which Minerva learned that Albus had quite a fondness for any sort of distinctively textured material. *That explains the wooly bathrobe*, she thought to herself. As a result, she made a mental note to look for that ridged fabric in a color that wouldn't have one arrested, and buy a few yards for him as a gift. Subsequent trips to Gladrag's proved fruitless, however, and she resolved to continue her search when next she ventured to Diagon Alley.

Events at Hogwarts soon conspired to put mundane things like shopping out of her mind for quite a while, so it wasn't until the end of July that Minerva was able to spend a day in London. She found what she was looking for at Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions, but there was one problem. This version of the ridged fabric was dark forest green which, though a decided improvement over glowing bile green, was not a color that would suit Albus' complexion. *It does suit mine*, she mused, noting that the "ridges" he had described were simply a kind of raised embroidery. On an impulse, Minerva inquired about the possibility of having a robe made from this fabric. Madam Malkin, thrilled at the prospect of designing a garment for such a respected and elegant witch, made several sketches on the spot, and promised her a one-of-a-kind creation in three weeks. An hour later Minerva emerged from the shop, having been measured, fussed over, and flattered within an inch of her life. It was at this point that she began to marvel at how far she'd come - and wonder how far she was willing to go.

Minerva had loved Albus in silence for at least thirteen years. She had always been a direct sort of person, and had he been any other man, she would have simply told him how she felt. However, Albus Dumbledore was not any other man. He was a kind, gentle, funny, eccentric, and extremely attractive man - and a living legend. She had come close to telling him many times, but at the last moment the realization of just who he was would hit her, and she would retreat into silence once more. This past year, though, their relationship had changed. The Chamber of Secrets being opened again, students petrified, and Lucius Malfoy's plotting had brought them closer together than ever before. For the first time, she could see how much Albus needed her, and how much of a team the two of them had become. She also realized that her feelings had grown to the point that it was going to be difficult, if not impossible, to hide them without doing permanent damage to her face - and her heart.

Minerva's new robes were finished right on time and, she had to admit, Madam Malkin had really outdone herself. The under-robe was in form-fitting black silk, gathered in the front and all the way up the high neck. The over-robe of dark forest green embroidered silk had a distinctive, rather angular cut with a high collar. The overall effect was quite striking, emphasizing her figure where her previous robes had covered it up. A lighter weight, more upright hat completed the ensemble and, looking in the mirror once more, Minerva was pleased in spite of herself. A quick glance at the clock informed her that it was nearly time for her breakfast meeting with Albus so, with a murmured "Good luck," to her reflection, she headed out the door.

By the time Minerva walked into Albus' office, she was quite nervous. However, that condition abruptly vanished when she saw him. He had apparently been shopping as well, for instead of his usual majestic crimson and gold brocade robes (she had once heard them described as "Merlin meets the Italian Renaissance"), he now wore two layers of dusky lavender silk, intricately embroidered at the neck, collar, and cuffs, and what looked like a star-patterned panel in front (she would later hear these robes described as "Merlin meets the Counterculture Movement"). It was a rather dramatic change, to say the least, but she liked it, and was about to tell him so when he spoke. "Good morning Minerva," he rose and came around from behind his desk to greet her, pausing as he did so. "Something's different about you today," he observed with a questioning look. "Are those new robes?"

"Yes, they are," she replied a bit unsteadily, her nerves having come back in a rush. Albus reached out his hand to touch her arm, and she held her breath.

"May I?" he asked.

That's why I had it made, she thought to herself as she nodded, not trusting her voice.

Albus ran his fingers lightly up and down her arm. "This feels very like that fabric from Gladrags," he remarked. "Do you remember? Only that one was a ghastly color."

"It is the same fabric," Minerva informed him. "I have since learned that exactly two bolts were made of it - Gladrags has the awful one and Madame Malkin's has this one." She smiled ruefully. "My original intention was to buy several yards for you," she admitted, "but when I saw what shade of green this is, well..." she trailed off, slightly embarrassed.

"You realized that it would be far more suitable for you than for me," Albus finished, placing both hands on her shoulders. "And you're quite right. You look lovely. Besides," he continued softly, "this way I have an excuse to touch you."

"You don't need an excuse," Minerva replied, just as softly.

Albus' eyes widened in surprise, and Minerva, fearing she had gone too far, quickly changed the subject. "What about you?" she asked brightly. "Are these robes new, or have I just never seen them before?"

"They're new." He was massaging her shoulders gently now.

"I like them very much," she reached out to touch his arm. "May I?"

"That's why I had them made," he answered with a warm smile. Minerva looked up sharply, not quite believing what she'd heard. "Well," he explained, "you did say that you adored the feel of silk next to your skin."

"You're teasing me," she stated, hoping that he wasn't.

"Not at all," he shook his head, and as he did so a flash of silver from his chest caught her attention.

"What on earth are those?" she asked, indicating what looked like stylized silver acorns dangling from the cord that tied his beard.

"These," Albus revealed, "are imbued with a very powerful virility charm," Minerva stared at him. "But when the gentleman in the shop mentioned that they also make a marvelous cat toy, I knew I had to have them."

Minerva couldn't help but laugh, and Albus took that opportunity to put his arms around her. "I love your laugh," he told her tenderly. "In fact, I love every bit of you."

"I love all of you too," Minerva whispered. She wound her arms around his neck and stood on tiptoe as he bent down to meet her for their first kiss.

Minerva had read enough *Witch Weekly* serials in her life to have encountered the phrase "bone melting kiss" more than a few times, and she had always dismissed it as the author's wishful thinking combined with a penchant for purple prose. Now, however, she was forced to revise her opinion regarding the accuracy of the description. By the time the kiss ended, she had also decided that purple wasn't such a bad color for prose, especially if it was at the dusky lavender end of the spectrum.

"I've wanted to do that for nearly fourteen years," Albus confessed as they came up for air.

"So have I," breathed Minerva, as she pulled him down for another kiss. This time she found the phrases "being kissed senseless" and "going weak at the knees" to be highly accurate as well.

"I must say Minerva," Albus murmured as he nuzzled his way down her neck, "You've quite convinced me of the virtues of silk next to the skin." He began to nip at a delightfully sensitive spot above her collarbone. "Would you think me terribly decadent if I told you that I bought silk sheets as well?"

"No," she replied with a throaty chuckle, "I would merely ask if they were crimson or gold."

"Neither," he responded with a chuckle of his own. "I thought you'd look particularly fetching in green tartan."

He was right, of course.