

The Answers

A/N: I do not own Harry Potter. Nor any of the other characters or situations associated with Harry Potter. Nor do I own any of the characters and situations associated with any of the Zucker Brothers films or Television shows. But you knew that.

The Answers

Her seventh year at Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry was turning out to be the best that Hermione Granger had ever known.

Harry had defeated Voldemort in a spectacular display of magic, and despite the adulation heaped upon him, Harry had remained Harry. Specifically, Harry was her Harry. After a disastrous two months of trying to date, she and Ron had finally acknowledged that they would never be what the other needed, then Ron, wonderful, sweet Ron had gone to Harry to ask if Harry would consider 'softening the blow' to Hermione's ego by spending time with her.

After the third time Harry softened the blow, he told her what Ron had done. Together they laughed.

Then they made love for the first time.

Hermione's mother loved Harry from the first. Her father put up a good show of being the stereotypical hostile father, but Hermione knew that Daddy thought Harry was a good man, almost good enough.

In late July her seventh Hogwarts letter appeared tied to the leg of an owl, included with that letter was a new badge. Hermione had obtained her goal, she was now the Head Girl. Harry was happy for her, not a hint of the jealousy that Ron would have shown.

Upon returning to school, her friendships with the other seventh year girls grew. There was more than a little surprise that she was now dating Harry, but her friends were actually happy for her, there were many nights in the common room of the Gryffindor Heads suite where the girls told each other of their romances, and for the first time Hermione was happy to join in with her own stories of Harry and his quirks.

Time passed, Halloween came and went with no incidents for the first time in her time at Hogwarts. Harry was welcomed to her home for the Christmas holidays, though he refused to sleep with her under her parent's roof.

Returning to school she and Harry became even closer, even after Hermione discovered that Harry had declined the Head Boy position. She asked why and Harry posited that he didn't need the honor of the position, his reputation was already set for life, that the honor should go to someone who would benefit from the effort. That was how Blaise Zabini got his badge.

Now the year was coming to a close, the NEWT exams were only days away, everything was perfect... except...

The damned Hair Growth potion

To get a perfect score on the Potions NEWT one had to brew twelve potions, and they were all easy. Except for one.

The damned Hair Growth potion

Hermione had brewed all twelve of the potions through the year, and each of them had come out perfectly. Except...

The damned Hair Growth potion

Twenty six attempts. Twenty six failures.

Hermione had searched every note, every book in the library and even the personal volumes of Professor Lister, the new Potions Mistress, but she couldn't find what she was doing wrong. Professor Lister helped as best she could (the twelve 'NEWT Potions' were not to be covered in class) but Hermione wasn't making any progress.

This left her with a single option. Hermione was ashamed that she was even considering taking this step... but she needed that perfect score.

====oooOOOooo====

It was the last Hogsmeade weekend of the year. Harry was playing a pickup game with Ron and several of the more Quidditch obsessed boys and had promised to find her after lunch.

In the meantime Hermione along with Lavender and both Patils were shopping for last minute needs, quills, parchment, reference material, as well as sweets and special items of clothing to surprise and entice the men in their lives. Hermione deftly steered the group toward her destination.

"Ooh!" she said as they were making their way to the Three Broomsticks. "A shoe shine stand." She looked down at her sensible shoes. "I could

use a shine.”

“If you wore trainers like everyone else you wouldn’t have to bother.” Lavender laughed.

“Oh, you three go on, I’ll catch up.”

Hermione approached the stand as the previous patron was leaving, she sat on the chair offering her left foot to the attendant.

“How’s it going, Johnny?” she asked.

Johnny, a man in his mid twenties with rodent like features nodded. “Just fine Miss.”

Hermione looked to the left, then to the right, making sure that they were alone. “What do you know about Hair Growth potions Johnny?”

“I shine shoes Miss,” Johnny said quietly. “How would I know anything about potions?”

Hermione reached into a pocket of her robes and pulled out a pair of Galleon coins, and handed them to Johnny.

The shoe shine boy looked to the left and right, then pocketed the coins, and began to work on Hermione’s shoes.

“The Hair Growth potion is the twelfth potion on the NEWT list and has a seventy three percent failure rate.”

“I’ve managed a one hundred percent failure rate.” Hermione said quietly. “When ever I expose a hair sample to my potion the hair is dissolved.”

“You’re lacking an emulsifying agent. Since your potion isn’t a proper emulsion, the hair is reacting to bubbles of reactive ingredients.”

“Then what should I do?”

Johnny shrugged. “How would I know?”

Hermione shook her head and reached into a pocket of her robes for another pair of Galleon coins, and handed them to Johnny.

“I would suggest you try Irish Moss.”

“Irish Moss?”

“*Chondrus crispus*, known by the common name Irish moss, is a species of red alga which grows abundantly along the rocky parts of the Atlantic coast of Europe and North America. In its fresh condition the plant is soft and cartilaginous, varying in color from a greenish-yellow, through red, to a dark purple or purplish-brown. The principal constituent of Irish moss is a mucilaginous body, made of the polysaccharide carrageenan of which it contains about 55%; the plant also has nearly 10% of protein and about 15% of mineral matter, and is rich in iodine and sulfur. When softened in water it has a sea-like odor, and because of the abundant cell wall polysaccharides it will form a jelly when boiled, containing from 20 to 100 times its weight of water. It is an excellent natural emulsifier.”

“But where would I find any?” Hermione asked.

“It’s in your basic potions kit, fifth vial from the left, green stopper. It’s not used in many potions and is included in the potions kit specifically for the NEWT Hair Growth potion.”

“Thanks, Johnny, you’re a life saver.” Hermione handed Johnny a bag containing twenty galleons, then turned away and made her way to the Three Broomsticks.

As soon as Hermione was around the corner a well dressed woman settled in Johnny’s chair.

“Hello Johnny.” She said.

“Ms. Rowlings.” Johnny acknowledged her.

“Johnny,” she said. “What do you know about writing an Epilogue that satisfies the readers?”

“I don’t know nuttin’ about no writing Ms. Rowlings...”

The woman sighed and handed Johnny a roll of bills.

Johnny looked about to ensure their privacy. “You see, what you need to do is...”

A/N: Johnny the Shine is of course from the immortal and never matched television show Police Squad! And of course his advice on the Epilogue was never followed.