Harry and Hermione Travel the World

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Summary

When tragedy strikes, a depressed Harry and Hermione decide to go traveling around the world and meet a lot of interesting people along the way.

Notes

Written for 2017 HP Rare Pair Fest
Prompt # 32 by 3am_moonlight
Pairing: Harry/Hermione
Thank you for the prompt! I loved it because I had so much to work with :-D
Please enjoy :-)
mental images of the bodies of the Fifty Fallen. Even so, he was determined to not let it get to him.

A week and a day before Harry’s 18th birthday, the trio spent the day in a cheerful mood, actually laughing for the first time in a long time. They jokingly talked about taking an extended vacation and just enjoying what was left of their childhood before settling down and acting like the full adults they were.

When Harry and Hermione volunteered to help inspect and repair the wards around the perimeter of the school grounds, Ron decided that he’d be more useful in one of the areas where rubble was still being cleaned up and the castle walls were still being rebuilt. That was a long and mildly frustrating job since the castle resisted quick and handy spells to just have it repaired in an instant. It was like there was some sort of semi aware consciousness that insisted that the job be done properly so that no mistakes were made.

A bit later, Harry decided that he was running low on magic and needed to stop and get something to eat. He’d spent the day using his magic to do things that needed power over finesse, so it made sense that he needed a break. Hermione had handled planning and logistics more than anything, so she still had quite a bit of magic left and wanted to stay longer. Nodding in acceptance, Harry kissed her on the cheek and threatened to petrify her if she didn't come in and get something to eat soon.

On his way back to the castle, he saw the mental image of nearly every one of the Fallen Fifty – almost as if they were lining his path simply to make him feel guilty. With a start, he wondered why Ron was part of the line. He only had the rare nightmare about his friends dying in the war. Once, he’d dreamt that it was Ron instead of Malfoy that had been in the Fiendfyre, and that it was too late for Harry to save him – but that didn’t explain why Harry was having a vision of Ron lying on the ground with one of the large squarish/rectanglish cornerstones of the castle on him. It really looked like the stone had smashed his head and crushed his chest. Only his clothes and red hair made him recognizable, but maybe Harry was wrong about the hair.

He pinched his chin in thought and wondered which of the Fifty Fallen had been crushed by a stone. Another look around made him realize that the rest of the visions had disappeared. Not to mention, the body before him looked a lot more solid and real than the rest of them had.

Harry cast a few spells to see if he could determine if what he was seeing was real or not. A sense of horror sunk in as all the spells indicated that there really was a dead body before him. He started shaking his head in denial and couldn't stop.

“HERMIONE!” He shouted at the top of his lungs. “Come quick!”

It took a few more shouts, but Hermione and those she was working with came running to see what the problem was.

“Harry, stop shouting!” Hermione called out as she got closer.

“I need you to tell me if I'm seeing things or if this is real!” Harry yelled.

“See if what's real?” She yelled in return, and then gasped as she got close enough to see that Harry was pointing at...

She ran all the harder for a moment, easily outpacing those running with her. When she was at Harry's side, she stopped short and gasped in sheer horror. Before she could remember how to breathe, others – including Headmistress McGonagall – arrived, fanning out behind them.

“Ron…” Hermione exhaled in disbelief.
“So you see it too?” Harry asked, now shaking and holding himself.

Rather than answer, Hermione buried her face in Harry's chest and sobbed.

“No. But it.. it can't be him,” Harry insisted. “He was fine! He didn't die in the battle!”

McGonagall stepped forward and placed a hand on his shoulder. “It appears as if Mr. Weasley suffered from a sudden and unfortunate accident.”

“No...” Harry whispered, shaking his head. “I'm just seeing things!”

“Harry...” McGonagall murmured with so much sympathy in her voice that it was unbearable.

“No!” Harry cried out. He and Hermione collapsed to the ground and held each other as they cried.

With a heavy sigh, McGonagall let them be as she did what needed to be done – freeing Ron's body and bringing him to the Hospital Wing. Also, making sure that an owl was sent to his parents. She completely understood how Harry felt since it was far more heartbreaking to lose a dear friend to a tragic accident than during a battle fought bravely.

Both Harry and Hermione seem half gone until the funeral. And then they moped around Harry's house and didn't say a word for days that turned into almost two whole weeks. Finally, Hermione snapped.

“This isn't doing us any good!” She roared in frustration. “I say we go somewhere and do something – anything – to shake off this depression!”

“What do you mean?” Harry asked with a sliver of curiosity so small that he didn't even look up at her or truly try to pay attention.

“The three of us talked about traveling, well, I think we should,” Hermione stated firmly. “We should start by going to Australia and returning my parents' memories. Then...” she shrugged helplessly. “Let's just do whatever makes us happy at the time.”

“Happy!” Harry scoffed derisively, but then shrugged. “Alright. Why not? It can't be any worse than sitting here in silence.”

“Exactly!” Hermione agreed with a nod.

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It took a little over a month after they'd arrived in Australia and returned the Grangers' memories for Hermione and Harry to fully explain everything that had happened, and help them decide if they wanted to stay in Australia or go home. They decided to go home, and Harry was actually glad to help them pack everything up as it gave him something productive to do.

Even so, the two remaining members of the Golden Trio weren't ready to go home themselves just yet. They hugged the Grangers goodbye, and then waved as they boarded an international flight. After that, they returned to the hotel room they had rented the night before – as they had been staying with the Grangers prior to heading to Sydney for the flight. They were sharing a room because
neither could justify spending money on two rooms when the rooms had two beds anyway. Not to mention, they’d shared a tent for almost an entire year, so, really, why not share a room?

Harry sat on his bed flipping through channels on the telly as Hermione read through a guide book from her seat at a table next to the window. “We should learn how to surf while we’re here...”


To both their surprise, they had fun! The instructor they hired recognized Harry’s scar and gave them tips on what spells and charms were useful for keeping the board steady, and reminded them that a simple Bubblehead Charm worked wonders if they happened to fall into the ocean and get disoriented. That led to him giving them a guided tour of the ocean floor. Which lead to him giving them a guided tour of the city. At night. Featuring at least half a dozen different pubs.

Once fairly pissed, they brought him back to their hotel room and made a very important discovery: Harry was bisexual. Also, he didn't have a problem shagging Hermione when drunk. They’d never had sex before, although neither were virgins.

In the morning, their guide – Alex – inadvertently woke them up by exclaiming: “Whoa! I shagged Harry Potter! And Hermione Granger. Together!”

Hermione giggled because the memories were fun to think about and so worth remembering. Even so, she grabbed her wand and cast a spell on Alex before he realized that she was moving. He frowned at her curiously.

“There, now you can't tell anyone in any way without permission,” she stated.

“That's not fair!” He protested.

They both shrugged. “Maybe not to you, but try being a person that the papers follow around and report every little detail they can uncover,” Hermione said with a tone of mild challenge. “How would you like it if every time you shagged someone, it appeared on the front page?”

“But! I wouldn't – er... Alright, so I can see your point,” Alex admitted.

“It was either this or have 'Mione modify your memory so that you wouldn't remember it,” Harry added.

“Yeah, I think I prefer to remember it,” Alex stated with a grin. He then leered at them suggestively.

Harry and Hermione were half tangled up and returned his grin. It rapidly started to look like they were going to have another threesome – which would hopefully be even better since they were sober this time. Unfortunately, Alex received a text wondering why he hadn't shown up to work yet.

He swore rather colorfully, and then sighed. “I have to go. My real job isn't anywhere near as fun as teaching newbies to surf, but it pays the bills, and I can't afford to lose it.”

“Too bad,” Harry murmured as Hermione said: “Perhaps we'll see you later.”

“I hope so!” Alex exclaimed as he leaned over to give each of them a kiss.

Then he cast a charm to make his clothes fly onto him so that he could Disapparate just a moment later.

Harry cleared his throat and rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. “So... er...”
Hermione gave him a firm kiss. “Don’t overthink this,” she advised. “It was bound to happen sooner or later. We are planning to travel the world for an indefinite amount of time, and unless you were hoping to pull a new lover for a one off whenever you get horny, this just, sort of, makes more sense. Don’t you think?”

Harry actually agreed, but he pretended to be disappointed. “You mean I can’t pull a new lover everywhere we go?”

Hermione rolled her eyes and hit him over the head with a pillow. “We’re not dating! If you want to pull someone, then do so. As we discovered last night, we might have a lot of fun doing so together.”

At first, Harry wanted to protest and actually did feel a little offended by the fact that she had basically suggested that they be a couple in one breath, and then suggested that they sleep around in the next. However, the prospect was intriguing enough that he paused to think it through. She had a point. They really had fun. Even better, he’d discovered something important about himself.

“We can do that?” He finally asked.

She nodded. “Yeah, and I think we should. Not every night, for example, but when the mood strikes. That way, we'll be safe. We'll remember to use protection, and we'll be together if anyone tries anything we don't like.”

Harry nodded because it really did make sense. But he was still confused about one thing. “So... We'll be together but not dating?”

Hermione shrugged. “Which would you prefer? Not dating and free to play around? Or dating and exclusive?”

“How about a little of both?” Harry suggested. “Boyfriend and girlfriend in an open relationship that allows us to choose other lovers if and when we want.”

“Alright, I can agree to that,” Hermione murmured, giving him a light kiss that lingered for a second. “Just so you understand that I'm not looking to be serious. It's too soon for that.”

Harry nodded in agreement. It was too soon for him too – he was still grieving over loosing his best friend. Yet, he wasn't really the type to do casual sex, so it felt like there was some sort of mental block that prevented him from remaining just friends with Hermione if they planned to have sex with each other regularly. At least this way – as she had said – they would be looking out for each other.

“So, what should we do today?” He wondered.

Hermione smiled. “Eat breakfast, shower, go surfing, maybe shag at some point. I don't know. What do you think?”

Harry smiled at her. “Yeah, I think all of that sounds good.”

With one last kiss, for now, they got up and showered so that they could find a good restaurant for breakfast. They spent a glorious six months in Australia, laying out on beaches, tanning, surfing, playing volleyball, pulling lovers whenever someone caught their eyes, and shagging at the drop of a hat. But eventually, the weather turned just chilly enough that they wanted to go somewhere else.

“Isn't it weird that we left England near the end of summer, arrived here in the end of winter, stayed until fall, and now could go home for spring?” Harry asked, almost insensibly.

Hermione chuckled. “It is a bit weird to be on the opposite hemisphere, and thus experiencing the
opposite seasons. But it just means that we can choose to go anywhere in the northern hemisphere and enjoy lovely spring weather."

“Or we could go somewhere where the season doesn't matter,” Harry suggested with a shrug. “I always wanted to go to Peru and visit Machu Picchu.”

“That sounds brilliant!” Hermione exclaimed in excitement. “And what about Petra and Angkor Wat?”

Harry smiled. “I can see that you're already itching to plan out a trip that brings us all around the world visiting all the ancient ruins.”

“Well, maybe not all of them. There are loads! But surely the top ten would be easy enough to do,” Hermione amended.

Harry kissed her. “It sounds fun.”

And so they did exactly that. By the time July came around, they'd visited four breathtaking places – Angkor Wat, Ayutthaya, Borobudur, and Petra. Hermione had pointed out that rather than zigzag back and forth across the earth haphazardly, they should go by region, visiting whatever looked interesting before moving on. Since they had started in Australia, southeast Asia was the most logical choice. They were steadily making their way back toward Europe and planned to visit Turkey, Greece, and Egypt at some point.

However, their plans were cut short – or more accurately, placed on hold – when they received an owl from Ginny on the third of July.

*Now that I’ve graduated from Hogwarts, I rather expected that the two of you would have returned home. I understand from your letters that you're having some much needed fun, but it's been nearly a year! Please come home in time for the Anniversary of Ron's death and stay at least long enough to celebrate your birthday! Love, Ginny.*

“She has a point,” Hermione admitted in a contrite murmur.

Harry took a deep breath as he thought this over. “Yeah. Alright. We'll go home for a couple of weeks, and then keep going with our tour.”

With a deeply relieved smile, Hermione kissed him a couple of times. “I'd like that.” She then pulled out her laptop and booked an international Portkey to be delivered to them 10 days before Harry's birthday. Normally, they took muggle transportation, but using a portkey would allow them to return directly to the Burrow.

In the meantime, they should have just enough time to visit one more place. Hermione bit her lip. “Since we're in the Middle East, how about touring Palmyra?”

“Never heard of it, but I bet it'll be interesting,” Harry agreed with a shrug.

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The night before leaving Syria, the two of them were having dinner in a restaurant when a scholarly discussion attracted Hermione's attention. There was a group of British students who were in
Palmyra in order to study the ruins as part of their graduate work. One man said something that made Hermione stand up and march over to their table to argue.

The group accepted her into their conversation as if she belonged there. The debate grew rather heated with Hermione holding her own. The group eventually agreed to disagree and took turns shaking her hand.

“Sorry to interrupt your dinner,” Hermione murmured with a light blush, realizing that she'd been rather rude.

“Oh no worries!” They assured her.

“I'm Hermione Granger, and I'm returning to England tomorrow, so you'll be well rid of me.”

One man laughed. “Oh sure! Next you'll say that your boyfriend over there is Harry Potter!”

“Who's Harry Potter?” His companions wondered in confusion.

Hermione chuckled nervously. “Er... well...” Then she shrugged, cupped a hand along the side of her mouth so that she could call out across the restaurant, which was now busy enough that it was hard to hear anything over the general din. “Hey Harry! Come say hi!”

Harry had been enjoying his meal and reading the guide book for Ephesus Turkey – where they planned to go at some point after Harry's birthday party at the Burrow. He looked up and smiled at Hermione. Then he set his book down on the table and walked over to join her.

Before anyone had a chance to say anything, he held out his hand to the nearest person. “Hello. I'm Harry Potter, nice to meet you.”

“Blimey!” The one man who had recognized Hermione's name blurted out in astonishment. He was now wide-eyed as he stared at Harry's head.

“No seriously, who's Harry Potter? And how'd you know Jon made a joke about him?”

Hermione chuckled and pointed at the man who was obviously a wizard. “He went to the same school as us, but probably at least five years before we did. In any case, since it's an exclusive private school, the Alumni tend to keep in touch, and so they hear things. Harry here was a notorious troublemaker in school – as was I – and so your friend naturally heard of us; even though we have never met before.”

“Exactly!” He hastily backed up her impromptu story. “I'm Jonathan Finch-Fletchley.”

“Justin's older brother?” Harry asked as they shook hands.

“That depends on if he owes you money,” Jonathan replied with a smirk.

Harry chuckled. “Nope!”

“Then yes,” Jonathan admitted with a grin.

Hermione smiled at the way that Jonathan looked at the two of them – as if he was just slightly star struck. “How would you like to come back to our hotel room with us for a bit and chat?”

“Chat?” Jonathan questioned with intrigue even as Harry raised a brow and gave her a questioning look.
One of the women of the group burst out laughing. “I do believe that she's trying to use polite terms so as to not scandalize anyone!”

Hermione smirked at her merrily.

“Ah!” Jonathan exclaimed in understanding. “Well, in that case, I'd be delighted!”

“Lovely,” Hermione replied with a soft smile.

It didn't take long at all for them to gather up their belongings and find a private spot to Apparate back to their hotel room.

“Are you bisexual?” Harry asked curiously.

Jonathan shrugged and gave him a flirty look. “Well, I'm told I'm actually heteroflexible, meaning that I'm mostly straight but willing to make exceptions from time to time.”

Harry nodded in understanding. “I'm bi, so once 'Mione casts the spell to make sure you're clean, I'd like to kiss you.”

Jonathan affected a gallant bow. “Then by all means, cast away.”

Hermione giggled, finding him both silly and charming. She cast a spell to make sure that he didn't have any transmittable diseases – sexual or otherwise – and when he came up clean, she cast the spell on her and Harry to prove to him that they didn't either.

True to his word, Harry pulled Jonathan close and kissed him. Hermione was content to sit back and watch for a long time. Long enough for their kisses and groping to slowly peel off all their clothes.

Then Jonathan pulled back to look at her, a light blush on his cheeks. “I've never been watched before.” He held out a hand in invitation.

Hermione responded by walking over to him and basically surrendering to them as they both set about removing all her clothes. Harry pressed kisses to her shoulder and sucked on her neck as Jonathan seized her lips. By the time the three of them tumbled into bed, she didn't want to wait and simply straddled Jonathan so that she could take him inside her and ride him.

Harry simply kissed him at first, but then eventually pressed them together as he prepared to enter Hermione from behind. Hermione moaned happily, loving the fact that she was in the middle of an MFM sandwich. Jonathan grinned at the look of sheer pleasure on her face as he massaged her breasts. After a few minutes, he got curious.

“Ever bottomed before?”

Harry grinned at him. “Yes.”

Encouraged, Jonathan suggested that they all change positions. Now Hermione was draped over a pile of pillows so that she had the perfect leverage to play with herself as Harry pounded her arse. At the same time, Jonathan prepared Harry, eventually slicking up his shaft and pushing into Harry's tight hole. Both men groaned happily and paused to simply enjoy the feeling for a moment.

Hermione was so turned on that she reached orgasm first – barely five minutes later. This triggered Harry and – like a chain reaction – Jonathan thought Harry's orgasm felt so good that he couldn't resist doing it too. They collapsed into a sated pile, Hermione wiggling free just enough to move the pillows and grab her wand.
“Oi!” Jonathan protested when she cast a spell on him without warning.

“Just a precaution so that you can't brag about this to everyone you see,” Harry assured him.

“You'll be able to discuss it with your friends a little – since they already know,” Hermione added. “But you won't be able to tell anyone else without permission. Such as the Daily Prophet.”

Jonathan sighed, but then nodded in understanding.

They all rested up a bit for another go, but then slept until the next morning. As a result, Harry and Hermione almost missed their Portkey. Only the fact that the house elf that delivered it was very persistent got them out of bed and dressed with only a scant minute to spare.

Unlike the first time they had ever used a Portkey, this time, they both knew the spell to help them float down to the ground without harm. Although Hermione was better at it, making Harry fall a bit quicker and land a bit harder. Since they had owled ahead, Ginny was waiting for them. She promptly pulled them both into a tight hug.

“I've missed you both so much!” She gushed, shifting to hug Harry on his own before smothering Hermione.

“We've missed you too, Gin,” they assured her, each kissing her on a cheek.

After that, it was mild chaos as Molly hugged them fiercely before releasing them to the rest of the family. There was food and bad jokes and a new baby that looked just like Fleur. They stayed for two weeks and had fun for the most part. Even so, it felt a bit like Ron was watching them, but not as a ghost since they'd be able to see and talk to him if he were. Instead, it was more like a heavy presence, one they couldn't quite decide if it was disapproving or simply observing. It made them both nervous and twitchy.

To their relief, none of the Weasleys commented on the fact that they shared Ron's room. Well, aside from Ginny, who tried to hint that she wanted to spend some time alone with Harry, only to be gently but firmly declined. She cried a little when she realized that they were together, but then nodded in acceptance. Even so, they were pretty sure that there was a reason that she cast a silencing charm on her room that night.

When the feeling of being with Ron but not finally got too much for them to bear, they went to stay with Hermione's parents for a couple of weeks. But even then, it was obvious to everyone that they were already mentally back on the road. They left for Turkey and continued on around the world until they finally made it to Machu Picchu.

Harry was in awe! They stood holding hands just looking around the ancient mountain top city wondering how such a thing was possible without magic. Then they wondered if it had been built using magic, and discretely asked around to see if there was a wizard or witch that might know.

That night as they lay curled up in their hotel bed, Harry idly stroked Hermione's shoulder and hummed in thought.

“What?” Hermione asked curiously.

“I'm just not sure I want to visit any more ruins,” Harry admitted. “They're all breathtaking and I love hiking, but I sort of want to take a break.”

Hermione nodded in acceptance. “So, let's go to Chichen Itza like we planned, and then go on holiday in Mexico. Find a nice resort and just lay out by a pool or a beach.”
Harry smirked at her. “After that, maybe we could go see if ‘spring break’ in America is really as wild as we’ve heard.”

“That sounds fun, and maybe we could go surfing again,” Hermione added before kissing him.

“I’d like that.”

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They found an all inclusive resort in Zulia Mexico that sounded like a good balance of luxurious and quiet. Just after they settled in, they found seats by the pool and watched with mild interest as a man nearby stared at his laptop intently. He was wearing a gray and white striped button up shirt, khaki shorts, and zinc on his nose – and seemed far too focused for a man on vacation.

Just then, a girl emerged from the pool wearing a small blue bikini and started harassing him.

“Are you really working?” She asked in disbelief. “We’ve only been here two days. You really need to learn how to relax, Dad. People who can’t relax die younger. I learned that in health class.”

“Well don’t worry about me, love, will you?” He replied in a British accent, which caught their interest even more. Especially considering that his daughter sounded American.

Harry and Hermione exchanged a look wondering if this actually was a father and daughter, or if they just called each other that to hide a much kinkier reason a man in his 40s was on vacation with a girl of 15 or 16.

“What are you looking at anyway?” She asked, leaning forward and craning her head to see his computer screen, which he promptly tried to hide from her sight with both of his hands.

“Nothing.”

Porn? Harry wondered. A smirk from Hermione told him that she was thinking the same thing.

“You’re spying on the office?!”

“Look, I’m my own boss,” he replied defensively. “That’s a 24/7 job.”

“Someday when I’m a stressed-out workaholic, I’ll have you to thank,” she pointed out as she got comfortable in her lounge chair and pulled on a pair of sunglasses.

He shot her a disbelieving look. “When did you become such a know-it-all?”

Hermione snorted softly because it sounded like she and this girl had a lot in common.

“We had an agreement that if I behaved maturely, you would treat me like an adult. So, as an adult, I’m telling you to relax, and stop it with the creepy snooping!” As she said this, she leaned around his computer and turned off the live feed he’d been watching.

“Oi!” He protested, making Harry and Hermione believe that they were either married and loved to bicker, or they really were father and daughter.

“If you don’t, I’ll just go pick up boys by the pool,” she threatened.
He paused for half a second, and then closed his laptop. “Alright, deal.” He gave her a mildly impressed half grin as a waiter served him a drink. She asked for one as well, but her father insisted that it be virgin.

A new man approached them, and since he was wearing a crisp beige business suit, it was obvious that he wasn't on holiday.

“Doctor Cal Lightman?”

The vacationing father had just taken a sip of his drink and now made an entire body gesture that read: *yeah, and what of it?*

“My name's Lou Nemeroff. I'm with the American Embassy. There's an urgent matter we need your help with.”

Cal looked at his daughter, who glared at him lightly before pointedly looking away. His entire demeanor changed to say: *I can't help it if they need me!* Then downed the rest of his drink and grinned as he followed Lou, calling over his shoulder: “Oi! No boys!”

His daughter scoffed and rolled her eyes as she waved him away.

Harry and Hermione laughed at the exchange, then silently agreed to keep an eye on the girl in case she ran into trouble and needed a bit of help.

Cal abruptly changed his mind and insisted that his daughter come with him.

Later on, as it was getting close to dinner time, Harry and Hermione walked across the lobby to the hotel and spotted the man and his daughter talking to someone via his laptop and were clearly worried about something.

“You're going to find her, right?” The girl asked.

“I'm going to do my best, love,” Cal reassured her.

The part of Harry that was still interested in being an Auror someday wanted to go over and offer to help, but Hermione was too hungry to care at the moment and pulled him away.

The next day as they were swimming, Harry spotted the girl on her own. She appeared to be chatting up a man that was at least as old as her dad. Hermione cast her an amused look, and then muttered: “Uh-oh!”

Harry looked around, and sure enough, Cal was now stalking toward his daughter angrily.

“Oi! Oi! That's my daughter!”

“Hey, she started –”

“Dad...”

“That's my daughter!”

“She started talking to me!”

“You're having a conversation with my teenaged daughter!”

“She started talking to me!” The accused man insisted, sounding aggravated. The girl looked around
Cal gave him a look as if wondering why he thought this was an acceptable excuse, then asked: “What?”

“All right,” the man said as he grabbed his drink. “Okay. I’m leaving.” He held up a hand placatingly. “Dad, that was the guy that Tyler’s been emailing,” the girl whined as the man walked away.

“I know it was, and you shouldn’t have been talking to him, Emily. Bloody hell!”

“You never said I shouldn’t talk to him,” Emily pointed out in frustration.

“Well, what am I supposed to do? Tell you not to do every potentially life threatening thing?” Cal demanded angrily. Harry wondered if his own dad would have acted the same way.

“No. I figured that if I kept him talking –”

“This is the last thing I need, Emily,” Cal roared, clearly escalating. “You know, I’ve got a con man back in my office! And I’ve got you behaving like Nancy bloody Drew!”

Emily looked rather hurt by this point. “I was just – I was just trying to help.” She grabbed her things and stalked off.

“Poor girl,” Hermione murmured in sympathy. “I wonder if her father left England after the first war to be safe but can’t help but be afraid anyway.” Even muggles had noticed the violence, even if they didn’t know why it was happening.

“Isn’t that how parents are supposed to act?” Harry wondered.

Hermione shrugged. “Maybe, but he definitely could have handled the situation better.”

The next time the pair spotted either of them, Cal was drinking alone at the hotel bar that night. He was obviously still upset, but at least he didn’t look like he was about to start shouting again. The pair decided to just leave him alone until he waved them over.

“I’ve noticed you watching me and my daughter at times,” he informed them as they approached. “I’m Dr. Cal Lightman, lie detection expert.”

Hermione shook his hand first. “I’m Hermione Granger, and this is my boyfriend Harry Potter.”

Cal’s eyes immediately flew to Harry’s forehead. “Bloody hell!”

Hermione laughed and before Cal could ask if it was true, she sat down and asked: “Lie detection expert? What does that mean?”

“It means I read people to see if they’re lying or telling the truth,” Cal explained succinctly.

“Oh, so you’re a Legilimens?” Harry stated more than asked.

“Well, yes, but that’s not how I do it,” Cal informed them. “I’ll give you a copy of my books, but basically, I had the theory that at least half of Legilimency is reading visual cues on a person’s face, so I took that and developed it into a branch of muggle science. I have a whole office building full of people – muggles – who use my techniques quite successfully.”

“I’d love to learn more,” Hermione confessed with a shy smile.
“As I said, I'll give you a copy of my books – including the ones I use during training,” Cal offered.

“That would be lovely!” Hermione gushed before she kissed him on the cheek.

Cal responded by acting gruff and looking around. When he was certain no one was paying them any attention, he opened his wallet and withdrew a full set of books. He then signed the most popular one. Hermione smirked and pulled two cards out of her tiny beaded purse.

“Harry, sign your chocolate frog card for Cal,” she insisted as she signed hers.

“Alright,” Harry capitulated. “But only if you tell me a little about whatever case you're working on, Cal.”

Cal shrugged. “So far, there's not much to tell. A woman is missing – an American – and her 12 year old daughter is quite anxious to get her back.”

“Wish I could help,” Harry murmured in sympathy.

“Yeah. I wish I could help too,” Cal stated a bit morosely. “My...” He paused to twirl his hand as if casting a spell with a wand. “Is dreadful in almost every area other than Legilimency. It's astonishing really; I could probably read the Dark Lord's mind – if I'd wanted – without him knowing it, but I can't cast a decent Aguamenti to save my life if I was dying in a desert.”

Harry chuckled as he signed his chocolate frog card. “I once knew someone who was a master at memory charms, but was a complete pillock with everything else.”

Cal accepted the cards and examined them curiously for a moment. “So anyway, with all the Wizarding places in the world you could go for holiday, what brings you to this thoroughly muggle part of Mexico?”

Harry shrugged but Hermione smiled. “We were in Machu Picchu and then Chichen Itza,” she explained. “And this seemed like a relatively quiet place to stay before we head off to the States for something they call Spring Break.”

“Ah,” Cal murmured in understanding. “To be young again.” He lifted his drink in a salute to them, and then downed it. “Well, I'm off. If I drink too much, my daughter'll nag me.”

Harry shook his hand. “It was nice meeting you, Cal.”

“You as well, Harry. If you're ever in DC, look me up.”

“We'll keep that in mind,” Hermione assured him with a soft smile, more than half of her attention already absorbed in one of the books he gave her.

“Oi, don't let her read too much of that in one go,” Cal warned Harry with a smirk. “It'll make her brain explode!”

Harry laughed. “I'm fair certain that if that was ever going to happen, it would have happened years ago!”

Hermione rolled her eyes at him but didn't say anything. With a nod, Cal left them alone. They each ordered drinks and Hermione leaned back in her chair so she could put her feet on Harry's lap as she read. Harry took the subtle hint and pulled her sandals off so that he could rub her feet as he watched the various people milling about.
“Where is South Padre Island again?” He wondered as he realized that he couldn't wait to see if some of the more interesting rumors were true.

“It's at the very bottom of Texas, right between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean.”

“So... we might get to surf?” Harry asked with interest.

“Probably,” Hermione stated with a smile.

“Brilliant!” Harry cheered with a grin.

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Hermione led Harry into a hotel named the Hudson Street Hotel. It was moderately big but also appeared to be clean and nice. There was a slight crowd in the lobby and so they milled about to wait for a receptionist to free up. As they waited, their eyes drifted toward the gift shop – which was just inside the entrance.

Three men walked in the entrance of the hotel and a woman walked out of the gift shop to greet them. “You must be the FBI.”

“David Rossi. These are Agents Morgan and Reid.” He shook her proffered hand.

“Hi,” a tall and awkward but friendly looking man greeted as he shook her hand.

“Julie Riley. I'm the manager here,” the woman introduced herself as she shook the third man's hand. He was black and fit, catching interest from more than just Harry and Hermione.

“You were on duty when the latest body was discovered?” Gorgeous black man asked.

“That's right,” Julie confirmed with a nod.

“Did you happen to notice anyone out of the ordinary?” Tall and awkward asked. Harry took a moment to realize that this one must be the one referred to as Reid.

“I'm afraid not,” Julie replied sympathetically. “You see so many faces during the spring break season that they all start to blur.”

The leader of the three men was looking around the room and noticed Harry and Hermione watching them curiously. However, he didn't let anything deter him. “We need to set up interviews with the rest of your staff as soon as possible. Also, talk to the hotel guests.”

“Of course,” Julie agreed, trying to sound helpful. Harry couldn't help but think that she sounded a bit too eager. Like she was hiding something.

They turned as a group to walk toward the reception desk. Delicious black man – who Harry reasoned must be named Morgan if the other two of the three men were Rossi and Reid. Which was assuming that he had heard the introduction right. Anyway, Morgan asked about the number of cameras in the hotel and was told that there were not enough – just the main entrances and garage.

“Can you show us the room where the last body was found?” Rossi asked, obviously ready to get to work.
Of course, right this way,” Julie agreed before leading them away.

Harry and Hermione exchanged a concerned look. Neither were quite sure if they wanted to hang around and see what was going on, or leave now before anything weird happened. Harry shrugged, leaving the decision up to her.

“If they plan to talk to all the guests, then they might inadvertently ask us questions we can't answer,” Hermione muttered in his ear.

“Such as?” Harry wondered.

“Such as: how did you travel from the middle of Mexico to the tip of Texas in mere minutes?” Hermione elaborated, referring to their Portkey from one Wizarding Travel office to the next. They had ridden in a muggle cab, so they at least had someone who could verify that they'd just arrived and weren't part of whatever mess was going on here, but that didn't guarantee that the investigators wouldn't be suspicious of them.

“Alright. Let's find another hotel,” Harry stated. Hermione nodded in agreement. As casually as possible, they left the hotel.

About an hour later, they were all checked into the Willard Beachside Resort. It was a bigger place than the Hudson Street Hotel – which also meant it was more crowded – but at least there hadn't been any major crimes reported recently. Still having plenty of time, they did a bit of light tourism before finding a place to eat dinner. After that, they drank, danced, and just generally partied with a bunch of others staying at the same resort.

A pretty woman in an interesting, shimmering, dark green pencil dress caught Harry's eye. She had long brown hair that reminded him of Hermione's, only hers was sleek and softly wavy. For a moment, he considered chatting her up. However, she looked like she was on the prowl and he didn't really like the men that seemed to catch her eye. They were all loud braggarts who seemed a bit self-entitled – which reminded him of someone that he didn't really want to think about at the moment.

After a while, they found a couple about the same age as them who didn't recognize their names. This was actually rather encouraging as muggles were more interested in them as individuals while the various witches and wizards they'd met in their travels usually wanted to hang out with them just to be able to say they did. The couple was obviously in love but looking to play around for a bit while on holiday.

When Hermione gave him a questioning look, Harry nodded and promptly invited the couple back to their room for a while.

The next morning, the two of them decided to lounge around the pool area and just relax for a bit. At one point, the police arrived, but tried to be subtle about it. One officer talked to a man – also around Harry and Hermione's age – who was actually looking in Hermione's general direction with a look of mild longing.

Hermione shifted, just a little uncomfortable under the somewhat creepy scrutiny. She tugged the top of her light green tube dress up an inch or so in an attempt to ward off his interest. To her relief, the man and the officer left after a minute, and the place was relatively quiet for an hour or so.

Suddenly, the same three men they'd seen at the other hotel the day before spotted them and came over. The leader flashed his badge for a moment before introducing them. “I'm David Rossi, and these are Agents Reid and Morgan. We work with the FBI and are investigating a murder case.”
Gorgeous black man – er, Morgan – took over. “Our current theory is that the murderers are a young couple working together.”

“The woman sexually attracts the victims and leads them to a hotel room where she entices him into letting himself be tied up,” Reid explained.

“Then the man takes over and rapes the victim while strangling him to death,” Morgan added.

“A witness claims that the most recent victim was spotted leaving with a pretty brunette wearing a green dress. Can you two tell us where you were last night, and more importantly, can anyone confirm it?” Rossi asked, rather bluntly.

Harry choked, his eyes bulging incredulously. “You think I – er we – could do something like that?!”

Hermione couldn't entirely suppress a soft laugh. Then she sighed. “Sorry. I'm not laughing about the murder, just that, well, you wouldn't ask that if you knew who we were. To answer your question, Harry and I chatted up a nice couple last night and invited them back to our room. They were there with us all night and so are intimately aware that we had nothing to do with your murder.”

“Perhaps, but we also saw you two at the Hudson Street Hotel,” Reid stated. “What were you doing there?”

“We'd just got into town,” Harry answered. “We were going to check into that hotel, but when we overheard that there was a murder investigation, we decided it would be better to go elsewhere.”

“That seems suspicious,” Morgan murmured with narrowed eyes.

Hermione sighed again, completely understanding why these men thought they were a problem. “Look, we arrived yesterday, rode in a cab to the Hudson Street Hotel, and then came here. Here's a receipt to prove that we actually did use a cab.” She pulled a small slip of paper out of her tiny beaded purse that dangled from a thin cord around her wrist. “We really did spend the night with a couple, and I could show you video evidence to prove it if you came back to our room. Although, they just stepped up to the bar over there.”

The couple noticed Hermione pointing at them and waved at her and Harry with a grin that left no doubt they'd had a good time and were considering having another fairly soon. Hermione grinned and waved. The woman blew a flirty kiss at Harry, who blushed lightly and looked away.

“I wonder if they know how to surf,” Harry asked, mostly to himself.

“We could always ask them,” Hermione replied with a shrug.

“Oi, Hermione, I say that we get lunch in a moment and then go surfing – whether they know how to or not.”

“Sure thing Harry, and maybe we should consider changing hotels again, since there's been a murder here.”

“Oh!” Harry blurted out with a tone of enlightenment. “I just remembered! I think I saw that woman last night. She was wearing a dark green dress that shimmered and was wavy, and had hair that reminded me of you, ‘Mione, only a little darker. I remember thinking that she looked like she was on the prowl. Didn't see anyone I thought might be working with her though.”

Hermione shrugged. “Her partner would probably watch her from a distance. Especially if she was looking for a victim for him. He wouldn't want to scare potential victims away. Oh dear, I'm willing
to bet the victim was that man I saw arguing with his friend for a moment before rushing off after a
woman. I didn't get a good look at her since that was right about the time I got snogged good and
hard.”

Harry grinned at her before leaning over to kiss her.

“Harry and Hermione, huh?” Reid murmured speculatively. Then he turned to Rossi. “I don't think
these are our unsubs after all. They don't fit the profile.”

Rossi shrugged as he handed back the receipt for the cab. “And their story seems to check out – for
now.”

“You two almost sound as if you work in law enforcement,” Morgan observed, looking at them
appraisingly.

Harry shook his head. “Not officially. I helped stop a terrorist a couple years ago though. Er,
Hermione helped too.”

Reid snorted in amusement. Hermione smirked at him, her eyes twinkling merrily.

“What's so funny?” Rossi asked, sounding more suspicious than interested.

Reid held out his hand to Harry. “Harry Potter and Hermione Granger, it's a pleasure to meet you in
person. Can I see the famous scar?”

Harry shook his head in amusement, and then pushed his hair out of the way.

“Rumor is that you were planning to become a sort of special Agent yourself,” Reid remarked with a
smile. “Are you also here on a case?”

“No,” Hermione answered with a shake of her head. “We're on holiday.”

“Ah,” Reid stated in sympathy. “I'm sorry to hear that.”

“Uh... how do you know these two?” Morgan wondered.

Reid shrugged. “It's as they said, they helped take down a terrorist over in Britain a few years ago,
and I read about them. The descriptions were accurate enough for me to recognize them once I knew
to look at them clearly.”

“Alright,” Rossi stated sternly. “If we're sure these aren't our unsubs, then we should really get back
to work.”

Morgan and Reid nodded in agreement. Reid held out his hand until Hermione placed hers in it. He
gave her hand a quick kiss.

“If you two are ever in Quantico, Virginia, please look me up,” Reid said with a hopeful tone.

“We'll keep that in mind,” Hermione assured him with a fond grin. Then she ruffled Harry's hair.
“Let's go surfing before someone else gets murdered and tries to frame us.”
Harry snorted in amusement. “Well, unless they're murdered at the beach.”

“Harry Potter! If you have jinxed us, I swear I will resurrect Voldemort and let him have at you!”

Harry snickered as he stood up and helped her to her feet. “Somebody already tried that, remember?”

Hermione harrumphed, and then waved to the three Agents as they walked away. She even winked and purred: “Bye Reid...”

Reid grinned at her. “It's Spencer, actually.”

It was Morgan's turn to snort in amusement. “I think she likes you.”

“Of course she does,” Reid stated with a shrug. “She's supposedly very intelligent, so it makes sense that she'd find intelligence attractive.”

Morgan pressed his lips together to stop from saying something along the lines of: _not another one!_ Since he wasn't sure their group could handle another genius like Reid. With an impatient sound, Rossi gestured for them to get going already.

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“It's beautiful,” Harry praised as he looked around. They'd decided to escape the extreme heat of summer by going to a cooler mountain area to do a bit of hiking and climbing. Thus, they were now in Cheyenne Mountain State Park – Colorado. The place truly was perfect in nearly every way; serene, gorgeous, quiet – which was frankly a bonus after the excitement of the last two places they'd stayed. That said, they weren't exactly alone since the park had a campground and there was a luxurious resort nearby.

Even better, there was enough space that they could use their magic as they liked without having to worry as much about being seen.

Hermione was so busy looking around and taking pictures that she completely missed seeing a large branch that she stepped on and then fell, twisting her ankle in the process. She inhaled a sizzling breath of pain, and then cast a healing spell at her ankle. Giving Harry a sheepish smile, she accepted his hand so he could pull her to her feet.

“I hate to cut this short, but I should really stay off my ankle for a bit. Shall we go into town and find a place to eat lunch at?”

Harry looked up in thought. “Yeah... I remember an alley behind a bakery that should work as an Apparation point.”

Hermione grinned at him becomingly. “Any objections to carrying me?”

Harry chuckled. “Er... why not?” He promptly scooped her into his arms and Apparated them to the alley he mentioned.

“Our neighbor in the tent two sites down said that the only decent tea in the entire town is in that café over there,” Hermione reminded her boyfriend.

“Sounds like we should see if he's right,” Harry murmured, trying not to feel the slightest bit
embarrassed as people watched him carry her with curious expressions. They all seemed to assume that she had sprained her ankle, but a few wondered if she was handicapped, and if so, why not have a wheelchair?

He set her down just before they entered the café because he didn't think he could carry her through the door without bashing her head in. She leaned on him for support and gave him a soft kiss. The hostess smiled at them and quickly seated them at a table for two with an excellent view out the window.

Harry held Hermione's hand and looked around as she busied herself reading the menu. He noticed an older man sitting at a table by himself reading what appeared to be a comic book as he ate his lunch. This made Harry snort in amusement because the man was dressed in what appeared to be a casual version of a military uniform. A sort of dark olive green button up shirt with a logo on the arm over a form fitting black undershirt and matching green trousers with black combat boots. His hair was shades of white, silver, and light brown, but he looked really rather fit for a bloke his age.

Harry and Hermione each ordered hot ham and swiss sandwiches on flaky croissants with a cup of tea for each of them, a glass of orange juice for Hermione, and a glass of water for Harry. Their waitress recommended their pie ala mode later on for dessert, which Harry thought sounded good. Hermione opted for cherry cheesecake instead.

A little after they were served their food, a man in uniform – who looked only maybe five years older than Harry (who was approaching his 20th birthday) – entered the café and showed absolutely no hesitation in walking up the the older man and holding out a laptop.

“General, we noticed something that we think you'll want to see for yourself.”

The older man looked mildly frustrated to be interrupted, but obligingly set his comic book aside and gestured for the younger man to get on with it. The younger man responded by pushing a button which apparently played a video clip. The General looked impressed.

“Yes, thanks for bringing this to my attention,” the General murmured, and then looked over at Harry and Hermione. “Something the matter?” He asked with a tone of challenge.

“Er, no, sorry,” Harry muttered, feeling a bit sheepish.

“We're on holiday.” Hermione added. “I suppose we're just curious.”

“Holiday from where?” The General asked, sounding more suspicious than curious. He also tilted his head in a signal to his subordinate to shove off.

“England,” Hermione replied slowly, wondering why he hadn't simply assumed so based on their accents. With a mental shrug, she supposed that he might think they were from Australia.

“Been here long?”

Hermione shrugged. “We've only been here a couple of days. We're staying at the Cheyenne Mountain State Park, but before that we stayed for a bit in Texas.”

Harry interrupted her. “That reminds me, I was thinking that we should go visit the Grand Canyon at some point.”

“Oh and the Montezuma Castle National Monument since they're both in Arizona,” Hermione added.
“What’s that?” Harry wondered.

“It’s a bit like a ruin, but unlike Machu Picchu, it was carved into the cliffs,” Hermione informed him.

“That sounds interesting. Will we be mountain climbing? Oh! You know what we should try when we get a chance?” Harry asked with a grin.

“What?” Hermione asked with a wary look.

“Spelunking. Exploring caves,” Harry stated. “It sounds a bit more physically challenging than hiking around these mountains.”

“Hmm...” Hermione hummed in thought as she bit her lip. “I suppose I could do a bit of research the next time I can find an internet connection for my laptop.”

“Try Cave of the Winds, which is right here in Colorado Springs,” the General advised them, now looking more relaxed and slightly amused by them. “Or if you want to wait until you get to Arizona, there's the Kartchner Caverns. Carlsbad Cavern in New Mexico is fairly popular. That said, I'm not sure you'd get to do much actual spelunking in any of them since they're all carefully set up for tourists and are more like underground hikes than climbs for safety reasons.”

“Still sounds like it could be fun,” Harry stated with a shrug.

Hermione smiled at him. “Yeah, and if we want to go back down into Mexico for a while, I've heard that there are some utterly stunning underwater caves to explore on the coasts.”

“You have diving experience?” The General asked with interest.

“Some, but mostly we surf,” Harry replied.

“And you like to hike?”

Hermione chuckled wryly. “Well, it's more like we've learned to like it since it's nearly required in order to explore some of the more interesting ruins.”

“Yes,” the General agreed. “It's too bad that you're not part of the U.S. Air Force; I could use a couple of athletic young explorers. My name's Jack O'Neill and I run a military base here in Cheyenne Mountain. If you do decide to go see the Cave of the Winds, hopefully you'll come back here and tell me all about it.”

Harry smiled at him. “I'm Harry and this is Hermione. We're not in any military, simply a young couple traveling the world.”

“And how long have you been traveling?” Jack wondered, still curious enough that they wondered if he actually suspected them of something.

“Almost two years now, if you count from when we left home – less if you don't count the time that we basically lounged on a beach in Australia and surfed,” Harry answered.

“And you just felt like traveling the world for fun?” Jack inquired.

Both Harry and Hermione sighed a bit sadly at that. Hermione reached over and squeezed Harry's hand. “We, er... we found ourselves in a dangerous situation a couple of years ago. A right mad man made it his goal in life to murder Harry, and after we managed to survive and defeat him – he was classified as a terrorist back in Britain – anyway, we lost a dear friend right after that, and it just felt
like we had to go somewhere and...”

“Find peace,” Harry finished when she trailed off. She nodded in agreement.

Jack nodded in understanding as he gathered up his belongings. “Well, I hope you both have fun while here, and I really do look forward to talking to you again.”

“Me too,” Hermione assured him with a smile.

After they finished their meal, Hermione walked slowly, her hand tucked into the crook of Harry's arm, as they returned to the nearby alley behind the bakery. A good look around assured them that they weren't being watched by anyone. Closing her eyes, Hermione focused on their tent, and a moment later, they were all alone and in the privacy of their temporary home.

Harry grinned at his girlfriend suggestively. “It seems that we're all alone with nothing to do until we get hungry again. Whatever shall we do?”

Hermione laughed and shook her head. “Oh I don't know. Maybe...” she trailed off as she pulled off her top.

Harry pulled her close and gave her a hard kiss. “I think you might be reading my mind.”

They wasted no time stripping off and then attacking each other. Harry scooped Hermione into his arms rather abruptly and carried her to the bed. This was a wizarding tent, so it was not only spacious, but had a real bed.

It only took a moment for Harry to set Hermione on the edge of the bed, but then he pulled her legs over his shoulders and pulled on her hips so that she was as close to him as possible. She moaned and relaxed onto her back, letting him tug her forward even more. Then his tongue was on her clit and she nearly thanked the muggle God out loud that Harry knew how much she loved it when he skipped straight to the main course.

Hermione wasn't exactly a tough nut to crack, but even so, it still took patience and the right combination of tongue strokes – that seemed to change every time – in order for her to reach orgasm. To her continual delight, Harry's tongue never failed to light a fire in her that slowly built up until she was overwhelmed by it.

By the time the end was nearing – a good 10 or 15 minutes later – Hermione was crying out continuously as she thrashed her head back and forth. She clutched Harry's hair and held on for dear life as her legs shook uncontrollably. Then it hit her and she squealed in a way that still managed to mortify her when she thought about it.

“Oh God! I'm so sorry!” A man shouted out in embarrassment, surprising them both.

Harry tilted his head as he looked at the stranger in uniform who was now standing just inside the entrance to their tent. The man looked around curiously rather than stare at the pair of naked lovers.

“Er...” Harry droned in confusion. “Were you looking to join in?”

The stranger blushed. “No! Uh... Why? Would you let me?”

“You're rather fit, and I do like a man in uniform,” Harry informed him with a shrug and a grin.

“Mmmhmm,” Hermione hummed in agreement.
“God damn it!” The man blurted out, and then sighed. “Sadly, I can’t. I’ve been sent by General O’Neill to bring you in.” Then he cleared his throat in mild embarrassment and gestured out the open door. “I mean *we*’ve been sent to bring you in.”

“Why?” They asked in unison.

“He didn’t say,” the soldier replied with a shrug. “I just want to apologize for intruding. I called out but there was no response. I’m pretty sure you were too busy to hear me.”

Hermione chuckled but didn’t bother to tell him that even if they had heard him, there was a silencing charm on their tent so that he wouldn’t have heard them in return. Then she cleared her throat.

“Er... have we done something wrong? Or can we decline this dubious invitation?”

“I don’t think you’ve done anything wrong, ma’am, but no. The General was quite insistent.”

Hermione sighed, echoed by Harry.

“And, um, I was specifically ordered that once I have you in my sight, not to let you out of it again. So – I’m really sorry – but I can’t look away or give you privacy,” the soldier apologized.

“That’s alright,” Hermione assured him. “We both grew up in a dorm with very little privacy, and since then, we’ve gotten used to strangers seeing us naked, so...” she trailed off with a shrug.

Normally, they’d probably summon their clothes and use charms to dress quickly, but since they had a muggle audience, they had to do it all by hand. They both also sincerely hoped that he didn’t realize that the inside of their tent was far bigger than the outside. That would be seriously hard to explain.

Less than 10 minutes later, Harry and Hermione were being helped into the back of a topless military jeep. There were two soldiers in the front – a driver and a woman who gave them a blank stare. The seats Harry and Hermione were told to sit in faced the rear of the vehicle which meant that they were staring at the two soldiers sitting at the back of the jeep that seemed to be designed for exactly six people. One of the two in the back with them was the man ordered to keep them in his sights at all times.

He cleared his throat nervously, and then grinned at them. “So... how long are you planning to be in Colorado Springs?”

“Not entirely sure,” Hermione answered with a shrug.

“When you’re done visiting the General and once I’m off duty, I could give you a tour – if you like,” he offered.

“That could be fun. Jack did mention a place called Cave of the Winds,” Harry said, looking around curiously, but for the most part, the scenery was the same: forestry with a glimpse of the surrounding mountains.

“Are you hitting on them?” The female soldier asked incredulously.

“Yes, I mean no, Lieutenant,” he grumbled contritely.

Harry chuckled. “You may not be, but I certainly am!”

“You remind me of someone I saw on the telly once,” Hermione added with a soft smile.

He grinned at them. “I don’t believe I introduced myself earlier. Sorry. I’m Carl Grogan.” He then
gestured around the jeep in preparation to introduce everyone else, but was preempted by the female soldier.

“Flirt later! We're here.”

Hermione whipped her head around to see that they were approaching a heavily guarded entrance into the mountain. All they could really see was a tunnel that went down at a slight angle. Above the tunnel was written Cheyenne Mountain Complex. She could hear Harry hum in thought.

The moment the jeep came to a stop next to an equally heavily guarded door – inside the tunnel – they were ordered to get out. Immediately, another half a dozen soldiers crowded in around them and pointed large and scary guns at them. Hermione practically flung her hands into the air, Harry following a little slower.

“Alright, it's official!” Harry exclaimed in frustration. “Americans are bloody mental! I say we forget about the Grand Canyon and all those caves and just get the buggering hell out of this country as soon as possible!”

“Agreed,” Hermione responded softly.

“Try not to worry,” the female soldier advised them, although she still seemed as cold as ever, so they weren't exactly comforted. “Once we verify that you have nothing dangerous on you, my boys will put their guns away. Isn't that right, boys?”

“Yes, Lieutenant Hayley!” They chorused obediently.

Two of the escort – Carl and his partner – patted them down, asking to take everything they found. Feeling they didn't really have a choice, Harry and Hermione nodded their consent. Therefore, Carl and his partner confiscated the only things they had, which was a small beaded handbag from Hermione, a smaller pouch from Harry, and: “Sticks???” Carl asked in confusion.

Lt. Hayley gave them a sharp look. “I'll hold onto those.” She flapped her fingers impatiently until the belongings we're handed over, and then peeked into the handbag curiously.

Hermione smirked softly because the bags were both charmed so that no one without magic could see anything other than a bit of muggle money and identification. Also, nothing else could be removed. This meant that if someone tried to stick their hand in her bag, it would only go so far, rather than all the way up to their shoulder.

Deemed not a threat, the men with big guns all stood down and cleared the path to the entrance. With an invitation they could not refuse, Hermione and Harry found themselves walking through a hallway to a lift. This led them to a lower level that led to a room that was clearly some sort of interrogation room.

Carl and Lt. Hayley stayed in the room with them as the rest of the escort waited outside. Hermione tapped her foot impatiently while she sat and sincerely wished that she could conjure a cup and fill it with an Aguamenti. Meanwhile, Harry was feeling mildly claustrophobic and paced the room.

About 20 minutes later, the door opened to admit four people.

To everyone's surprise, Lt. Hayley spoke up: “General, may I ask what exactly they did to be brought in?”

“If you wait patiently, you'll find out,” Jack stated rather sternly. Then he looked at his, er, guests and his expression softened slightly. “Sorry about all of this. I'd offer you something to drink, but I think
that’s best left for later.”

Hermione frowned at him. “Jack, er, General, why are we here?”

Rather than answer, Jack gestured around as if indicating the whole room, or maybe the entire complex. “This place is surrounded by a dampening field so that you can’t use your alien tech to escape.”

“Wha...?” Harry blurted out in confusion, casting a look at Hermione to see that she was equally as confused.

“Alien tech?”

“Don’t try to deny it, we caught you on camera,” Jack stated, and then jabbed a thumb in the direction of one of his companions. “This is Colonel Samantha Carter. She’s our resident smarty pants and she’ll show you what I’m talking about.”

Samantha opened a laptop and tapped a button to make a video play just before she turned the laptop to face them. “This is security footage playing in a loop. As you can see, there’s no one in the alley behind the bakery, and then there you are. We’ve double and triple checked, and this video hasn’t been tampered with in any way. This...” she trailed off so that she could select a different video and make it play. “Is footage of the two of you about an hour later. As you can see, you walk into the same alley, and then disappear.”

“Bugger!” Harry swore under his breath.

Hermione glared at him lightly for a moment before returning her attention to Samantha. “I’m not sure what to say. Obviously the equipment is faulty and stopped recording long enough for us to seem to appear and disappear.”

“Right,” Samantha stated in disbelief. “So you’re going to claim faulty cameras when clearly you’re in possession of technology that either uses molecular dissolution to teleport you, or creates some sort of temporary wormhole that you travel through to specific locations.”

One of the as yet unknown men cut in at that point. “Sam, in all our travels, we've never really come across the technology to create temporary wormholes without huge transceivers, but molecular dissolution is fairly common. I've just not seen it on its own like this – which means that they probably have a ship nearby.”

“I understand what you’re saying, Daniel, but we've checked and there are no unknown ships in orbit around the planet – nor close enough to be within transporter range. So this tech has to be portable somehow,” Samantha argued.

“Not to mention, I've never seen teleporter beams that look like that before,” Jack added, pointing to the screen – which was still playing the footage of them disappearing on a loop.

“Nor have I,” the last man – an absolutely beautifully black man who looked like he could be a pro wrestler or an MMA fighter – stated.

“And Teal'c would know better than any of us,” Daniel pointed out.

“Yes, which is why I think it might actually be some sort of temporary wormhole,” Samantha stated. “I've studied this just enough to know that it doesn't look like molecular dissolution. It really looks like they have the ability to create temporary wormholes!” She was clearly excited about this.
Meanwhile, Hermione was staring at her in fascination while Harry was still more or less confused. He leaned over Hermione since he was standing behind her and whispered. “What are they on about?”

Hermione chuckled and decided not to even bother whispering since it was likely they'd either hear her anyway, or ask her to repeat herself. “It seems that they think we can somehow make ourselves disappear and reappear at will, using some sort of device.”

“But that's barmy! Right?” Harry wondered, since – unless device referred to wand – there was no such thing. And actually, they didn't need their wands to Apparate. It was just easier that way.

“Utterly,” Hermione agreed.

Jack sighed. “Look Harry, Hermione, I understand that you think you need to keep this a secret, but Alien technology is what we do here. And if you were sent on any sort of mission to Colorado, chances are that you were supposed to meet up with us anyway.”

To the sheer gobsmacked astonishment of everyone in the room Lt. Hayley squealed giddily like a teenaged girl. “Harry and Hermione! As in Harry Potter and Hermione Granger?!”

“Er.. hi,” Harry greeted awkwardly.

“Ooo! Can I see the scar?”

Harry sighed a bit morosely. “Why does everyone ask me that?” He pushed his hair out of the way and let Lt. Hayley come close for a good look.

“It really is shaped like a lightning bolt,” she murmured to herself, and then cleared her throat and turned to her superiors. “Uh, Sir, I think I know what the misunderstanding is. You're right, they are using technology, but it's not Alien tech. It highly classified government technology.”

“Which government?” Jack questioned with a frown. “I have seriously high clearance, so it shouldn't be classified from me.”

“Not to mention, how do you know about it?” Samantha asked, a little upset that someone with a lesser rank knew something that she didn't.

“More importantly, how do you know these two?” Daniel added.

Teal'c looked around at them in silence, adding to the impression Harry had that he wasn't much of a talker. Hermione noticed that he was following the conversation with clear intelligence in his eyes and couldn't help but moon over him just a little. Harry noticed what she was doing and gave her a playful nudge that she didn't even notice. Then he stared at Teal’c a little dreamily as well.

Someone said something that they didn't even hear. Whatever it was got repeated. Teal'c flexed his arms and frowned at them threateningly, but this simply made them both moan softly in appreciation.

“Why are you staring at me like that?” Teal'c asked aggressively.

“What?” Hermione asked, shaking her head.

Harry chuckled. “Apparently we're staring like nutters.”

“Sorry,” Hermione mumbled in mild embarrassment.

“I'm not,” Harry whispered in her ear, making her smirk.
“Looks like they lost interest in you, Grogan,” Lt. Hayley informed him with a smirk.

“I'm not worried,” Carl replied since he was confident that Teal'c would not be interested in going to bed with them.

Anyway, as I was saying, Sir, their tech is classified and how I know them and why is also classified.”

“Jennifer...” Jack ground out. This made Hermione realize that Hayley was not her first name, even though it sounded like it.

“All I can say is that they are well known in the U.K. and if you allow me just one hour, I'm fairly certain I can have someone with the right clearance vouch for them.”

Very unexpectedly, this made Jack grin. “So, you're saying that these two are highly classified? Great! I know exactly what I want to do with them!”

“Oh, Sir...?” Jennifer began hesitantly. “They're not classified for the reason you think. I'm fairly certain that they have no idea what we've been talking about.”

“That doesn't matter,” Jack stated dismissively. “They're physically fit and have a deep interest in exploring. Sounds perfect to me!”

“Now wait just a minute!” Jennifer protested. “You are an incorrigible hard ass who refuses to admit almost everyone into the program – and that's highly trained Air Force personnel. The best of the best! But suddenly you want to headhunt just anyone off the street?!”

Jack gave her a pointed look with one raised brow. Even though Harry had seen quite a few people give that look in ways that could practically kill a person and thought this look was actually rather warm, it apparently intimidated Jennifer Hayley. She cleared her throat, stood at attention, and hastily added a respectful: “Sir.”

“Not that I need to explain myself to you, Lieutenant, but these two have a certain quality that the majority of people who want to work here lack,” Jack informed her, but then refused to say anything more on the subject.

Instead, he gestured for Samantha to gather up the laptop even as he spoke to Jennifer. “If – as you say – that someone higher up will vouch for them, then all we need to do is wait for that to happen. After that, and once they hear me out, they'll be free to either leave through the front entrance or through the gate.”

He then gestured to the door. “In any case, everyone can leave the room now – except you two.” Which referred to Harry and Hermione.

“Wait just a minute, Jack,” Harry said rather insistently. “It sounds a lot like you want us to do something classified by your government and probably highly dangerous. What if we don't want to?”

Jack gave him a rather disconcerting grin. “Well, Harry, if you and Hermione decide you're interested, you have the opportunity of a lifetime. If not, then you'll be on your merry way, exploring caves and surfing in someplace such as Hawaii.”

“Ooo, Hawaii...” Hermione murmured. “There's a volcano there I'd quite like to see.”

Harry smiled at her. “And wasn't surfing invented in Hawaii? How have we not been there sooner?”
Hermione laughed. “Because we started in Australia and have made our way west ever since. We simply haven’t gotten to Hawaii yet.”

As they chatted, Carl opened the door for everyone, but only Teal'c and Samantha had stepped out of the room as yet. Jennifer cleared her throat nervously. Then she squirmed just a little.

“Can I ask,” she finally blurted out. “Is it true that when, uh, you know who died, he turned to dust like one of those movies about vampires, and simply blew away?”

Harry and Hermione exchanged an amused look. Then they shook their heads. Harry decided to actually reply.

“No, when he died, he simply fell over. His body had to be buried like everyone else.”

“Although, I'm pretty sure the Ministry decided to have his body burned just to be extra sure,” Hermione added.

Jennifer seemed rather disappointed by that. “Oh... Well, what about his looks? Did he really have red eyes and no nose.”

They both nodded.

“That much is actually true,” Harry said. “His nose was completely flat so it looked like he didn't have one, but he had slits for nostrils, so I suppose that he actually did.” As he spoke, he made gestures with his hands to illustrate his point.

“And yes, he was bald and rather ugly on the whole,” Hermione added.

Jennifer forgot that she was still on duty and sat in a chair at the table across from Hermione. “And what about during the Final Battle? Is it true that he had an army attack a school full of children?”

“Yes,” Hermione confirmed grimly. “But all the underage ones were smuggled to safety.”

“God! What a nutjob!” Jennifer exclaimed with an angry growl.

“Yes,” Harry agreed with a nod.

“What about –”

“Lieutenant Hayley!” Jack snapped impatiently. “Aren't you the one who needs to call the right people and have our guests vouched for?”

“Yes Sir!” Jennifer cried out obediently as she hopped up and ran off to do just that.

With nods and encouraging smiles, the rest of the people left the room. Even Carl, who was told by Jack that he wasn't needed any longer. When the door was closed – and locked judging by the pronounced click – Harry and Hermione exchanged questioning looks, but neither knew what to do.

After about five minutes of relative silence, Harry stopped pacing and sat on the table – rather than in a chair. Hermione grinned at him playfully as she opened his trousers.

“Hermione!” Harry protested with a blush since he wasn't wearing pants under his trousers because he had gotten dressed in a hurry and couldn't be arsed to bother with them.

“What?” Hermione asked with feigned innocence. “We were interrupted before we got a chance to finish. Besides, I think it's rather hot to have sex in a place like this. It'll be a naughty story to tell our
grandchildren – when they're old enough to hear about such things.”

Harry felt his breath catch. “Our grandchildren???”

Rather than answer, Hermione simply took his entire flaccid shaft in her mouth and sucked on it vigorously enough to override his very reasonable objections.

He tried one last time anyway. “Hermione! They're probably watching,” he hissed as he pointed at a camera in the upper corner of the room.

Hermione smirked at the camera and said: “Perverts!”

Then she was back at her task, working Harry up with more enthusiasm than was strictly necessary. She'd alternate between deep throating him as she hummed and bobbing up and down fairly rapidly. Harry groaned a few times, but mostly a string of soft sounds like ah escaped him. Just when Harry was getting close, she'd stop and pull back to rest her jaw for a few moments while idly stroking his shaft.

In this way, more than a half hour passed. He couldn't be sure, but he strongly suspected that it was close to an hour later when she had him hovering right on the very edge. However, she didn't seem inclined to let him have his orgasm, since she did something to prevent it each time.

Suddenly the door opened. “Alright, so – Ack!”

Without enough brainpower to figure out who was speaking, Harry simply surrendered to the strange feeling that swept over him at the realization that they'd been walked in on – which triggered an orgasm so intense that Harry collapsed onto his back on the table and cried out downright sinfully as he pumped his girlfriend's mouth full. At the same time as she swallowed, Hermione looked up at the person who had interrupted them and held up a finger as if saying: one moment please...

Jack cleared his throat. “God I miss those days!” Then he shook his head and suppressed the urge to roll his eyes. “I'll give you a minute to get dressed, but then I want to talk to you. You want me to bring you anything? A bottle of water?”

“That would be lovely, thanks,” Hermione answered with a grateful smile.

“Yeah,” Harry managed to add in between soft and breathy heaves.

When the door opened two minutes later, both Harry and Hermione were sitting like good little students in chairs behind the table. Harry stared at his hands on the table with a light blush on his cheeks. Jack chuckled and gestured to the man named Daniel, who responded by handing them each a bottle of water and a dish of banana cream pudding.

Hermione looked to Harry, who subtly waved his hand under the table to cast detection spells. When the food and drink were proven clean, he nodded to her. Both dug in even though they weren't all that hungry – just wanting something to do.

Jack sat in the chair across from them and his companions each chose chairs around the table at random. It was just the four this time – both Carl and Jennifer were missing. With a smile, Jack began his half rehearsed speech.

“So, I just got off the phone from an interesting call. It seems there really are some people in high places who sing your praises. Lt. Hayley called someone in our government that she won't tell me about, and that person called someone in your government, who called your Prime Minister, who called our President, who called me. Believe me, if the President vouches for someone, then that
person could practically murder a child on live TV and there's not much I could do about it. That said, I have much better things in mind.”

Then Jack pointed a finger at Daniel. Daniel sighed even as he nodded in agreement. He took a deep breath before launching into his clearly rehearsed speech.

“Back in 19 –”

“Daniel,” Jack ground out impatiently.

Daniel ignored him. “Archaeologists found an ancient artifact in Egypt. It caused them to completely rethink everything –”

“Daniel!”

Daniel sighed in aggravation. “Fine! Anyway, this artifact turned out to be the gateway to other planets. Using it, we can nearly instantly travel from Earth to any planet with a gate that we know the address to.”

Both Harry and Hermione were looking at him like he had just lost the plot.

Jack took over because no one else knew just what he had in mind. “There's one planet in particular that is uninhabited and seems unremarkable at first glance, but one of our teams discovered that there's actually at least one ancient city underwater. Which means that I need someone who's interested in and has experience exploring ruins, and can also dive and explore underwater. You'd be classified as civilian contractors, which could be problematic on more troublesome planets, but since this one is uninhabited, there shouldn't be any problems.”

He turned to look at Samantha. “Although I'd be sending in SG-1 and a few other teams because I think this is something that both you and Daniel would just love.”

Teal'c nodded in approval. “Thus if any trouble does arise, we'll be on hand to deal with it.”

Jack nodded in agreement. “This is my top team. I already introduced Carter, but this is Dr. Daniel Jackson, and Teal'c. Teal'c is an Alien known as a Jaffa. When you have time while on your mission, ask him about it sometime. It's fascinating!”

Hermione gave Harry a look that made it clear that she still didn't think they were being honest. Harry nodded because he was dead certain they were trying to play a joke on them. Samantha laughed.

“You don't believe us.”

They shook their heads. Before anyone could try to convince them, there was a knock at the door.

“Come in,” Jack called out.

Jennifer stepped into the room and looked around cautiously before stepping forward. With a smile, she approached Harry and held out her hand.

“I was floo'd a special communication disk,” she explained without really explaining anything. At her words, a figure approximately the same size as a Barbie doll rose from the disk.

“Good afternoon, Harry Potter and Hermione Granger. I'm the President of MACUSA – you've heard of MACUSA, I trust.”
Harry looked to Hermione, who smiled and told him: “It's the American version of the Ministry.”

“Ah, so she's like Kingsley?” Harry asked.

“Yes, Mr. Potter,” the woman stated with a pleased smile. “May I just say that it's an honor to be speaking with you?”

“Likewise,” Hermione assured her with a matching smile.

“Getting directly to the point, Miss Hayley here has told me a little bit about what's going on. As I understand it, there's some highly classified exploration to be done and someone important wants to recruit you to the cause. I can understand if this causes you both some considerable apprehension, so let me just state for the record that we are giving you both permission to reveal any information you deem necessary in order to accomplish the mission. Also, I would urge you to accept the mission for much the same reasons, I would assume.”

“Sorry,” Harry murmured in confusion. “I'm not following you.”

Hermione shook her head at him. “She means that we have permission to talk about it, and she also wants us to go on this mission we haven't quite been fully briefed on so that we can test our our special differences in what I presume to be unique conditions.”

“Exactly right, Miss Granger!” Madam President exclaimed with a pleased grin.

Harry grinned at her in return. “So that means I can have my wand back?”

Jennifer nodded and held out their belongings. Hermione sighed in relief and cast a heating charm on her bottle of water before summoning a bag of her favorite blend of organic tea from her small purse. Harry promptly cast a heating charm on his bottle of water and summoned a bag of the same tea from Hermione's purse too. They were quiet as they waited for their tea to steep.

Madam President chuckled. “I see that you Brits are still dependent on your tea.”

“It's no worse than you Americans and your dependence on Coffee,” Hermione rebutted.

“Touché,” the President replied with a smirk. “Anyway, as I was saying, if you do decide to accept the mission, I expect a detailed debriefing upon your return. Also, Minister Shacklebolt is quite looking forward to a debriefing as well. As I understand it, he's worried about the two of you since you haven't been in contact with him for some time.”

Harry smiled at her. “If you speak with Kingsley again soon, feel free to tell him that we're both fine and having fun while on holiday.”

“I will,” she murmured with a fond smile at them. “Now I really have to go, but may I just say one thing first: Thank you for defeating You Know Who and saving the world from unspeakable evil.”

Harry sighed heavily. “I was just a boy doing what I was told was necessary. I really don't deserve all this attention.”

Hermione rubbed his back in sympathy.

Jennifer snorted derisively. “Harry, you're the equivalent of Luke Skywalker. I'd think you'd be used to that by now.”

Madam President turned to Jennifer. “Miss Hayley, please return this communication disk by floo at
your earliest convenience.”

“Yes, Madam President,” Jennifer stated obediently. The next moment, the figure disappeared.

“What was that all about?” Jack asked with clear curiosity.

“Classified,” Jennifer insisted with a sigh. Harry and Hermione having permission did not mean that she had it as well.

Harry looked around and noticed that all the chairs were currently filled. He smirked at Jack for a moment before conjuring up another chair for Jennifer to sit on. As he did so, Hermione conjured up a trio of tea cups, and then poured tea from her bottle into one of the cups. “Tea?”

Jennifer accepted with a nod and a shrug as she sat in the newly conjured chair. Hermione summoned a bowl of sugar and a container of cream from her handbag.

“Sugar? Cream?”

“No thank you,” Jennifer replied as she took a sip. Hermione added a little of both to the tea she poured into her own cup, while Harry only added cream to his tea, which was poured from his bottle into the third cup. Hermione then stuck her hand into her bag – all the way to her shoulder – and dug around for a moment before pulling out a book.

“Since you had a lot of questions about Voldemort and the war, I thought you might like to read this,” Hermione informed her, handing her a book titled: Facts About the Second Wizarding War by Hermione Granger. “I wrote that while surfing in Australia and sent it to a publisher, so it should be in any bookstores for our kind, but I get the feeling that you probably don't have one of those around here.”

Jennifer took the book with a wide grin. “Thank you so much!”

“Can I see your bag?” Samantha asked with definite interest.

Hermione smirked knowingly, and then shrugged. “Feel free.”

Samantha took it and looked inside, but no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't find anything more than a little money and some identification inside. A loud and resounding sound piqued her interest even higher when she shook the bag. Yet, there was nothing to explain it. Daniel was craning his neck to look into the bag as well.

“That's weird,” he stated with a mildly puzzled frown.

“I'll say!” Samantha exclaimed in agreement.

As they were examining the bag, Hermione was busy studying the communication disk.

“Can we get back to more important things?” Jack demanded impatiently. “Like: Will you two agree to explore the underwater ruins with my teams?”

Hermione snorted in amusement. “You actually want us to believe that there are other worlds you can just travel to in mere minutes?”

With an impish smirk of his own, Jack beckoned to them. “Come on. I'll prove it to you.”

Hermione looked to Harry, who shrugged, then stood up to follow Jack. Within a few minutes, the seven of them had relocated to a large room that prominently featured a large metallic circle that
looked like the prop from a movie or a TV show. Jack pointed at a long window set high in the wall opposite the ring.

“Dial up that planet, uh...” he trailed off as he scrunched his face up to remember. A man over the intercom made a suggestion. “Yeah, that one.”

Neither Harry nor Hermione could prevent a small gasp when the circle lit up and started moving. They nearly screamed and dove for cover when an enormous wave of water burst forth before springing back into a shimmering pool, but sheer nerve helped them hold still. Even so, they were apprehensive and more than a little certain that this was all some elaborate practical joke.

“MALP telemetry confirms that everything is exactly the same as it was last week,” a voice called out over the intercom.

Jack nodded. “Lt. Hayley, go through the gate and verify the MALP’s readings.”

Jennifer nodded and confidently strode up to and through the brightly glowing vertical pool of water. Nearly 30 seconds passed in silence before her voice was piped through the intercom. “The area appears secure and very beautiful.”

Jack gestured to the gate, and then held out his hand to Hermione. “Come on. This will be fun, I guarantee it.”

With a deep breath, Hermione put her hand in his and let him escort her to the ring. Samantha grabbed Harry's arm with a mischievous smirk and pulled him toward the gate too. In practically no time at all, two nervous magical users found themselves on a different world entirely.

Harry pointed a shaky hand at the sky, which made Hermione gasp. There were two moons! One was small and looked more or less like their normal moon, but the other was huge and looked as if someone painted it in shades of blue and purple with a little red and orange shading here and there.

As for the sun, it looked to be around five o'clock, was slightly smaller than the sun normally was, and seemed slightly more orange than yellow. Which brought their attention to the fact that the sky itself was rather greener than it was supposed to be. Not green like a bad storm was coming, but a blue green that again looked like someone had painted it using colors that were just slightly different than they were supposed to be.

As for the actual planet, the immediate area was just as beautiful as Jennifer had said. The ring was set in what appeared to be a zen garden made up of sand and rocks. It was a clearing in an otherwise thick forest. Small sounds made it clear that there was plenty of wildlife despite the fact that the planet was called uninhabited.

“This way.” Jack said, pointing off to the left. Then he gave an overview of a tour as they walked. “Our initial survey team reported that this planet is something like 95 percent or more ocean with a handful of large Islands dotting it here and there. However, rather than being a deep ocean, it's fairly shallow. It's not clear yet if the ruins were built when the land wasn't underwater and then were abandoned when the planet was flooded, or if the planet has always been like this and the ruins were built underwater to begin with.

Harry chuckled. “And you're certain that there aren't merpeople down there? Oi, 'Mione, did you ever learn to speak mermish?”

“Not fluently like Dumbledore, but I could probably get by if I had to,” she replied with a shrug.

“Merpeople?” Daniel asked with interest and more than a little disbelief. “Like Aquaman?”
Jennifer snorted. “If only!”

Samantha gave her a curious look. “So, Jennifer, can I read that book they gave you when you’re finished with it.”

Jennifer let out a heavy sigh. “Can’t. Classified.”

“They were given permission to tell us,” Samantha pointed out.

“Yeah, they were. I can still get into a steaming pile of trouble if I say anything,” Jennifer pointed out.

“Fair enough,” Samantha admitted reasonably.

Jennifer stopped short and then leaned over to cup a hand over Hermione's ear and whisper into it. “I've never once risked breaking the statute of secrecy by bringing my wand with me, so I have no idea if magic works on other planets, or if it's specific to Earth.”

With a nod of understanding, Hermione pulled out her wand and pointed it away from everyone. “Aguamenti!” A long thin stream of water promptly zoomed out of her wand and hit a tree about 10 feet away.

“Hmm...” Harry murmured as he bit his lip in thought. “Looks a bit weak. Lemme try.” He whipped out his wand and cried out: “Aguamenti!”

“Wingardium Leviosa!” Hermione cast on a large rock that promptly floated into the air.

“Protego!” Harry roared. So far, their magic was definitely usable, but it felt like it was at about three quarter strength.

Harry gave Hermione a questioning look, and when she nodded in agreement, they both pointed their wands off to the side and called out in unison: “Expecto Patronum!”

When a large stag and a playful otter appeared and ran/swam around for a moment, Jennifer exhaled in awe: “Oh wow...” Both conjured animals were transparent, more than usual, but still fully formed.

Hermione sighed. “It appears that I'm not at full strength.”

“Me neither,” Harry added. “We're supposed to test out our magic, right?”

“Yeah?” Hermione both confirmed and asked.

“Well then...” Harry beckoned to his stag, who came closer and bowed to him. “Tell Ginny: We're fine, no need to worry. I'll send you an owl when I get a chance.”

The stag tilted his head to the sky as if thinking this over for a few seconds, then he disappeared.

Hermione stroked her chin in thought for a moment. “Tell Kingsley: Good day, Minister. I'm so sorry if we alarmed you earlier but Harry and I are both in good health and enjoying ourselves. We're thinking over that mission that was mentioned, and will send you an official message when we decide either way. Best wishes, Hermione.”

The otter also had to think about it, but then disappeared. Hermione looked at Harry. “I don't actually expect that to work.”

Harry shrugged. “Worth a try.”
“I didn't know they could do that,” Jennifer murmured.

“Not many do,” Hermione informed her.

“What was that?” Samantha asked, looking as if she was scrambling to explain it satisfactorily in her mind.

“The Patronus Charm is a powerful protection against a lot of different dark entities. Most notably a creature called a Dementor. Dementors feed off negative energy while simultaneously getting rid of your positive memories and emotions until all you are left with is the worst of the worst for them to feed on,” Hermione explained.

She sounded like she had gone into know it all mode. Harry rolled his eyes at her and shook his head. She stuck her tongue out at him and continued.

“This naturally weakens a person, allowing the Dementor to perform an act we call a Kiss that seems to suck out a person's soul and leave them in a comatose state.”

Harry put a hand on Jennifer's shoulder. “The Ministry ordered about a hundred Dementors to guard our school in my third year.”

“That’s insane!” Jennifer protested incredulously.

“Right?!” Harry asked and exclaimed in agreement at the same time. “And they attacked me once or twice. I was particularly susceptible to them since I didn't have a happy childhood and very few memories to protect me against them. Therefore, I had to learn to protect myself from them.”

Jennifer gave him an impromptu hug.

Hermione smiled at them. “Then – when Harry took charge of training Dumbledore's Army – he taught everyone the spell because it's useful for so many reasons.”

Just then, a silvery horse burst into existence next to them. “Harry! I was just about to send you a howler to remind you to get your arse home in time for your birthday. If you don't, I'll hunt you down and cast a bat bogey hex on you! And thanks, 'Mione, for your last owl. Those pictures of Chichen Itza were amazing. I can't wait to see you both again.”

Just as the horse disappeared, a Lynx appeared. “Good day, Hermione. Harry. I'm glad to hear from you. When are you planning to come home and accept positions in the Ministry? I suppose I'll just have to keep waiting, eh? I look forward to your report. Have fun and best wishes, Kingsley.”

“I reckon they work after all,” Harry observed with a wry smirk. “I'd like to see Ginny hunt me here!”

By this point, they arrived at a speedboat big enough to accommodate eight people. Jack got in the boat, and then gestured for Samantha and Teal'c to push it into the water just enough that they wouldn't get stuck on the shore when the rest of them hopped in. Jennifer followed without question, but Hermione cast an impervious charm on both her and Harry, and then jumped into his arms for good measure.

Harry laughed. “Afraid to get a little wet, love?”

“Not particularly,” Hermione replied with a shrug as Harry carried her into the boat.

As the boat sped away from the shore, Hermione leaned over the side to watch for aquatic life. “The
water is so pure and clear!"

"It's beautiful," Harry added. "I wonder if it's drinkable?"

Hermione bit her lip in thought.

"Our scientists analyzed it and yes, it's potable," Jack informed them. "However, there are different organisms in it than back on Earth, so that could cause a little stomach trouble if you don't filter it first."

"Generally if a person is in good health, they can acclimate to extraterrestrial water in about a week or so with no problems – so long as they take it slow," Samantha added. "Much like traveling abroad."

Hermione nodded in understanding, and then asked Harry to conjure a liter sized bottle which she promptly levitated water into. Then she cast a series of diagnostic spells on the water to see if it had anything that could make them ill. To her relief, even the organisms showed up as generally safe. She cast a spell to filter them out just to be safe. Harry twisted the cap onto the bottle and handed it over to Jennifer.

Daniel filled them in on a little more information about the Stargate program until Jack stopped the boat about 10 minutes later.

"As you can see, there's clearly a city down there," Jack pointed out. The boat shifted abruptly as both Harry and Hermione leaned over the left side to take a peek.

"Oh wow!" Hermione exclaimed in awe.

The ocean at this point wasn't too deep, but it was deep enough that it completely covered what appeared to be 20 or 30 foot tall buildings by another 20 or 30 feet. It truly was a city as it appeared to be just a little too big to be called a town. From what they could see, the walls of the buildings appeared to be made out of packed mud or perhaps stone. Some of it was covered in coral, giving it an interesting and artistic look.

"Oi 'Mione, transfigure my clothes into a wet suit," Harry ordered in distraction as he craned his neck to see the underwater city better.

Hermione did as asked, and then transfigured her own clothes as well. Harry noticed this and grinned at her.

"I take it you want to check it out with me?"

"Of course!" She stated with a tone that suggested he was silly for thinking otherwise.

"There's Scuba gear under the seats," Samantha informed them.

"Good to know," Harry murmured as he opened the tiny pouch he always wore around his neck. He pointed his wand into the opening and called out: "Accio Firebolt!" A moment later, his broom handle poked out of the pouch. He grabbed it and pulled until it was free. Then he mounted it and helped Hermione sit behind him.

A moment later, the two of them were flying over the ocean to get a clear overview of the city.

"Whoa!" Jack and Daniel exclaimed in unison. Jack cast Jennifer a pointed look. "What's going on?"
She let out a long-suffering sigh. “That's classified, Sir.”

“That answer’s getting mighty old, Lieutenant,” Jack grumbled unhappily.

Jennifer growled. “I can't talk about classified information!”

Samantha tapped Jack on the arm. “Which is one of the reasons she's such a good soldier. She can be trusted.”

Jack sighed in defeat. “Yeah, I guess.”

When Harry spotted something that looked extremely interesting, he halted his broom and cast a spell on it so that it would continue to hover without him. Then they both cast Bubblehead Charms on themselves and flung themselves off the broom. They were high enough up that they were able to angle themselves into a perfect dive.

Jack stood up and used a pair of binoculars to keep an eye on them. He could see them swimming about even as Teal'c slowly drove the boat closer to them. Even so, at around five minutes, he was starting to worry that they had drowned. Jennifer watched with a serene expression, clearly picturing when she’d have permission so suit up and go diving herself.

Hermione Apparated into the boat without warning, thankful that no one had shifted into her seat. She was as dry as ever thanks to the impervious charms she had cast over every part of herself. She seized Jennifer's hand excitedly.

“It's amazing! The buildings are even bigger than they look toward the middle of the city, and I found a library!”

“A library?” Both Samantha and Daniel asked with definite interest.

“Ugh, geeks,” Jack muttered.

“Come on!” Hermione urged, casting spells to transfigure all their clothes into wet suits. “Even as deep as it is, it's not so deep that you can't swim to the surface in an emergency – well, so long as you know how to swim. Grab your Scuba gear and explore!”

“Permission to explore, Sir?” Jennifer asked.

“Granted,” Jack stated, amused by the fact that he was now wearing a skin tight outfit and actually still looked good in it.

“Side-along?” Jennifer asked as she held out a hand to Hermione, who responded by casting a Bubblehead Charm on her before Disapparating them back to the library she'd found.

Well, at least she assumed it was a library since it was filled with tablets and other artifacts. That said, it wasn't in any language she recognized, so it could actually be some sort of art gallery. Jennifer also didn't recognize the language, but she wasn't anywhere near as knowledgeable as Daniel. She chose an important looking document to bring back, just in case the rest of the team didn't make it to the library before finding something interesting.

All of the buildings were designed with large, open doorways – that resembled arches – and windows wherever the structure allowed for one without compromising stability. This meant that there were lots of openings in the buildings to swim in and out of. It also meant that the buildings: A – were built above water in a place that wasn't prone to annoying insects; B – was built above water with some form of window pane that had completely dissolved after being submerged (although
there didn't appear to be grooves in the openings to support this theory); or C – the buildings really were built underwater and didn't need window panes to keep things out.

The more they explored, the more both Hermione and Harry were intrigued by this place. After an hour that felt like mere minutes, they were all back on the boat and in high spirits. Harry idly summoned his broom and shoved it back in his pouch. Then he waved his wand and nonverbally reverted all their clothes back to normal.

“Can I see your special stick?” Daniel asked curiously.

“You mean my wand?” Harry asked before shrugging and handing it over. He knew he could always summon it wandlessly if needed, and Hermione would protect him if Daniel suddenly tried to hex him.

Daniel waved the wand around and repeated some of the spells he'd heard them use, but nothing happened. Samantha was also curious enough to give it a try, but nothing happened for her either. Not expecting anything, Jack gave it a careless wave. To all their surprise, a few drops of water emerged in response to his mumbled Aguamenti.

“Ah, must have something to do with the Ancients' DNA,” Samantha hypothesized.

“Huh?” Harry asked as he took his wand back. But rather than answer, she told him that she'd give him a full briefing later on.

“So...” Jack drawled, just a little spooked by the way he had done something that shouldn't be possible, but trying to act nonchalant. “How would you like to get paid to explore this place for as long as you want?”

Harry looked to Hermione, who nodded. Then he smiled at Jack.

“Alright, but only if we can return to Earth whenever we want and visit our families. Such as for my birthday at the end of the month. And hers in September.

“Deal,” Jack stated with a grin and held out his hand for them to shake.

End Notes

There is one tiny thing I left out of the story because I thought it would be just overkill, lol. That said, after this is posted and revealed, I might just do a drabble sequel to do it anyway, hee hee hee :-D

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