If the Shoe Fits ...

by Fox

Notes

I am not now, nor have I ever been, George Lucas.

As Qui-Gon recalled, it had all been going according to plan, when Obi-Wan had suddenly slipped on a patch of spilled wine and fallen into the raw bar at the center of the banquet hall. Even that wouldn't have been so bad, but -- as one always does when losing one's balance -- the young man, sensing the imminent impact, had flung both arms out to break his fall and struck a passing waiter on the elbow, causing him to drop his tray, which had been piled high with toast points. Backing away from the waiter apologetically, the padawan had walked smack into the father of the bride, spilling that gentleman's drink down his shirtfront. Paralyzed with a combination of horror and amusement, Qui-Gon had made a mental note to have Adi help Obi-Wan practice before the next time work required him to wear three-inch heels.

Collecting his apprentice, he made a Force-enhanced apology to their blustering host and shepherded the "girl" to a secluded balcony where "she" could fume without being overheard -- and he could throw back his head and laugh. "Go right ahead and laugh, Master," Obi-Wan seethed. "One of these days we'll visit a world where you'll be the one in the uncomfortable --" he fumbled a bit with the serape around his shoulders -- "preposterous disguise."

Qui-Gon brushed a tear of mirth from his eye. "I'm sorry, Padawan," he said, "but you made quite a spectacle. I don't think I've ever seen someone flail quite so much or so violently --" Obi-Wan scoffed -- "especially not someone who looked such a picture as you."

"Flattery won't work on me, Master," the younger man spat. "I'll put up with this idiotic charade for those ridiculous people in there --"

"Obi-Wan," Qui-Gon warned, "what have we discussed about your tendency to judge other peoples' ways of life?"
"I'm sorry, master, but the idea that only a man and a woman can -- never mind."

"No, go on."

"And I don't understand why it's important that they believe we're a couple on this mission anyway."

"It's important that they think of us as a couple rather than a partnership so that they trust us, Obi-Wan, you know that. Couples make social visits. Partners make business trips. And we don't want them suspecting our purpose."

"As you say. Anyway, I'll go along with the ruse for them, but only until we can discover their purpose for the attack on their neighbors. Then we agreed we could leave and I'd be allowed to get rid of this hair. And these shoes. Not to mention the makeup --"

"I don't know," Qui-Gon pretended to muse. "The hair and the makeup can go, but I find I like the shoes more than I expected to."

"Master?" Obi-Wan said, managing to sound at once wary and incredulous.

"They make you taller, for a start, which can only be good. Save us both a lot of neck cramps," the older man began, leaning down -- not quite as far as usual -- to nip at his lover's earlobe. Obi-Wan swatted him away. "Also, they make your legs seem that much longer, and you know I can't think of anything else once I get started on those legs of yours," he continued, unperturbed, bending to taste behind the opposite ear. Obi-Wan ducked and made to skitter away, but landed off-center on one foot and tipped over to that side as the heel slid out from under him. "And," Qui-Gon finished, catching his padawan before he fell, "you can't move as quickly in them as you can flat-footed, which gives your old master a fighting chance at catching up." Holding Obi-Wan with his arms pinned to his sides, Qui-Gon went for the neck.

"You're bigger than me, Master," Obi-Wan said through clenched teeth, valiantly trying to maintain his control of the situation and keep the conversation focused on their assignment.

"Mm-hmm," Qui-Gon agreed, pressing warm, moist kisses to the other man's collarbone.

"Your legs are longer. You can always catch up."

"Mmm," came the non-committal response as Qui-Gon dipped his tongue into the hollow of Obi-Wan's throat.

"And -- ah -- you're not ... not old," Obi-Wan said, wrestling his arms free of Qui-Gon's grip so he could grip the self-confessed bigger man by the shoulders in time for the fierce, head-spinning kiss that followed.

"Mmmmm," Qui-Gon said into Obi-Wan's mouth, as he threaded a hand into the long, curly hair currently spilling from the younger man's head. Their tongues clashed single-mindedly, teeth nibbled at each other's lips, nostrils flared as they tried to avoid separating to breathe. At the same moment, both noticed the presence of a third person.

Obi-Wan froze, his eyes flying open. Qui-Gon relaxed his grip and gentled the kiss, but kept moving and urged Obi-Wan through the Force to do the same. [[Remember, love, they know we're here together.]]

[[Right,]] Obi-Wan projected.
[But they believe you're a woman. Behave like one.]

[What?!!]

[Qui-Gon said, seeming somehow to sigh. [you've been with women. Have you been so caught up in yourself that you've paid no attention to them? How they move, how they feel?]]

[How they feel in my arms, Master, is entirely different from how they must feel in their own places.] His actions belied his words, Qui-Gon noticed, as Obi-Wan unconsciously wriggled in his arms and tipped his head to one side, exposing more neck for Qui-Gon to bite. [[It would be better if you behaved as though I were a woman, rather than the man you know me to be.]]

[[It's a moot point, Padawan.]] Qui-Gon noted as they both felt their observer drift back toward the crowd of pulsing life-presences inside the hall. They separated, leaning their foreheads together, smiling slightly into each other's eyes. "You'll need to redo your lipstick before we can go back inside," Qui-Gon murmured.

Obi-Wan snorted. "I bet when you took up with me, you never thought you'd say that again," he said. "And that's not the only thing that has to happen before we can go back inside."

"Hmm?"

"I'm -- uh -- I'm not a woman, Master. And at the moment nobody in that room would believe I was."

"Ah." Qui-Gon took a step away from his apprentice. "Can I help?"

"No, I think you've done plenty," Obi-Wan smirked, closing his eyes and taking a deep, cleansing breath.

"There is no passion," Qui-Gon reminded him, "there is serenity."

Obi-Wan opened one eye. "There's plenty of passion, Master," he said. "But it will keep."

Qui-Gon grinned and handed the younger man his shoulder bag, which he had dropped when he fell off his shoe. With a skill Qui-Gon wouldn't have thought he possessed, given his balance issues, Obi-Wan reapplied his feminine makeup and fixed his wig, artfully arranging the curls with a fingertip. Giving his head a shake and squaring his shoulders, he looked at his master with an eyebrow raised. "Shall we?"

"Indeed," the older man smiled. "Better take my hand, though. We wouldn't want you to fall. Again."


"Yes, dear," Qui-Gon chuckled, following him.

End Notes

First-line challenges used to be freakishly common in TPM fandom. In one afternoon, I
posted responses to two of them: Minuet's "As Qui-Gon recalled, it was all going according to plan, when Obi-Wan suddenly slipped on a patch of spilled wine and fell into the (author's discretion)" and Mac's wildly popular "'Obi-Wan, no one is going to believe we're lovers!'".

The raw bar in *If the Shoe Fits* is a direct allusion to the one I had to set up for a wedding at the country club where I waited tables the summer I was 18. The idea, in *Things*, that Obi-Wan would have learned something in Comparative Cultures is whole-cloth fanon. (Or it may be canon from the Jedi Apprentice novels. I wouldn't know; I've never read one.) Both are a little heavy on epithets, which now drive me crazy -- "the younger man", "the older man", "the other man", and "his lover". (Wasn't that a critically-acclaimed film?)

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