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Just another night on Telegraph

by

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She called him Harry. Actually, his name was *Henry*, but she was so beautiful, and he was so drunk, that he let her get away with it.

"You *are* Harry. You know, *hairy*. All men are, but you...." She touched his bare chest, which was exposed by his Jedi costume.

"Yeah, I'm like Robin Williams," he said, looking down. He'd inherited his hirsute nature from his father, a Greek immigrant. At least he could grow a decent beard, unlike most of the other freshman at the Halloween party.

"Robin who?" she said, looking confused. She was holding a bright red plastic cup of something dark and sweet.

He laughed. Everything she said made him laugh. He desperately wanted to talk with her, and, well, see what else might happen. Everyone at the party had made some attempt to draw her into conversation, or outright hit on her. Even the women. What the hell, it was Berkeley.

Henry swigged some of his beer. "Halloween brings out one's true nature, don't you think... ah. Sorry. Forgot your name."

"Honeysuckle."

Her costume was a cross between Summer of '66 Flower Child and Fairy Goth. Filmy blue dress, tight leggings and slipper socks. Nails painted bright red. Eye shadow of fuchsia, blue, and yellow. She had long, glossy black hair, piercing black eyes, and a figure that would put Barbie to shame.

"It fits you," he said. "Great outfit, by the way. Very *Composita fidelissima*."

"What?"

"It's a kind of moth. Means 'Faithful beauty.'" He smiled. "I'm majoring in entomology. You?"

"I do *not* look like a moth." She gestured toward her dress. "And these are my everyday clothes."

*Oh*. He tried a different tack. "Kind of hard to ride a bike in those slippers."

"I walk everywhere," Honeysuckle said.

"Very green of you." She probably shopped at the farmer's market for organic local food and essential oils. Her perfume reminded him of his dad's second wife, who always wore patchouli and cooked with lots of Indian spices.

"Hey," he said. "I really like your accent. Is your family from India?"

She shook her head. "Further away than that." She looked at her cup. "I need a refill. I'll be back. Maybe." But she winked on the last word, turning it into something other than a rejection.

Then she leaned forward and kissed him quickly, leaving behind the taste of her rum and Coke. Then she wandered off, pausing briefly at knots of people, like a *Lepidoptera* sampling flowers.

For a few minutes, Henry watched her flitter around the room, exchanging a few words with several other men, and two women. All of them were endomorphic, or what his friends at the Botanical Garden called "pear-shaped white boys."

All the better for me, Henry thought, making his way to the buffet table. The nachos looked particularly good tonight.

There were several other men at the table, eating raw vegetables and complaining about their Bikram yoga teachers. Their only concessions to the holiday were t-shirts that they'd picked up at the discount rack at the costume store. Henry immediately classified them as *Archimantis latistyla*, stick mantises. Useful in the garden, but ugly.

"Harry?"

He turned and found her standing *really* close.

"Uh, hi."

"Want to go for a walk?"

"Absolutely!"

She led him out of the crowded apartment into refreshing cool air. She headed down Telegraph Avenue.

"So where are we going?" he asked.

"Oh, I know a place. It's a little bit of a hike, but I like it." She glanced at him, as if weighing possibilities. "You think you can keep up?"

Hell, he'd crawl after her if he had to. "Sure. Lead on, MacDuff."

Again, she gave him that weird, confused look. "Who?"

"Old joke."

They walked for a time through gentrifying neighborhoods, skirting the edge of the campus. After about a half hour, they reached the entrance of a big park. The gate was locked, but Honeysuckle just slipped between the bars. Henry had to climb over, nearly losing his light saber when his belt caught on the wire mesh.

She led him deeper into the park. Many of the street lights weren't working, making it pleasantly dark. It had gotten cooler, too. Henry was glad he'd worn his cloak. He looked around, trying to remember the way they came. Then he bumped into her. Her back was really solid, like a swimmer's.

"We're here."

He looked around. The trees and bushes had grown together, forming a natural enclosed space. A thick layer of duff covered the ground.

Honeysuckle knelt down and padded the earth. When she looked up and smiled, Henry quickly unclasped his cloak and spread it on the ground.

As soon as he sat down, Honeysuckle straddled him and pushed him onto his back. Then she trailed her fingers down his chest to his belt.

“May I?”

Henry smiled and said, “Ladies first.” He closed his eyes, and felt her yank off his belt, tossing the light saber and tool pouch to one side. When she pulled down his shorts, he let his brain go offline, focusing on the *amazing* sensations happening down there. *The Force is strong with this one.*

At one point she bit him, but he was too far along to care.

Some time later, he opened his eyes. He felt nauseous and stiff. Hung over? Probably. He tried to roll onto his side, but couldn’t. Something heavy and sticky lay on his belly.

“Uh...?”

“Go to sleep,” Honeysuckle said. “It will be over soon.” She leaned over and touched the sticky white mass. It rippled under her hand. “Take care of my daughter.”

He watched her pull on her costume, covering those impossibly thin legs and too wide hips.

“You’re right, Harry. Halloween does bring out one’s true nature.”

He heard her pulling branches over the space, and it grew darker. In the quiet, Harry felt the thing on his belly squirm.

Then he realized his mistake. Not *Composia fidelissima*.

*Pepsis formosa*.

Spider Wasp.

The End