

Frills of Fury

\$FRILLS



A squad of grizzled, muscle-bound soldiers squeeze into frilly pastel maid outfits and bunny ears while clutching glittery star wands, forced to perform synchronized tea-shaking dance rituals to charge their magic. Their bearded fox-eared leader barks orders between high kicks and sparkly explosions, turning a gritty urban battlefield into an absurd magical-girl stage show. Victory demands they trade bulletproof bravado for delicate poses and polite curtsies or the whole mission collapses in glittery shame.

Treatment

In the ash-choked loading docks of the Ashford Barrens, where forklift skeletons rusted beside bullet-pocked shipping containers, Sergeant Rex Harlan's squad received the only working ordnance left after the corporate EMP sweep. The crates held pastel maid aprons, starched and ribboned, sized for men who bench-pressed artillery. Bunny-ear headbands sat on top like afterthoughts. Harlan, bearded jaw tight beneath a fresh lipstick smear, snapped the fox-ear band over his own temples; the synthetic fur twitched when the first charge hummed through the fabric. He ordered the men to lace the bodices. Private Brick Kowalski's chest tattoo of a howitzer vanished under ruffles. Jax Rivera cinched his waist so the glitter wand could sit flush against his palm. The wands lit only when the squad shook miniature teapots in exact four-count rhythm, porcelain clinking like spent brass.

Harlan drilled the sequence once on the cracked concrete. High kick on the off-beat, curtsy to vent the stored spark, then the synchronized pour that turned tea into a pressurized glitter shell. The first test round detonated against a container wall and left a six-foot starburst of adhesive pink dust. Enemy spotters on the elevated rail line opened fire. Bullets punched through frills and lodged in muscle; the wounds sealed only after each man dropped into a precise bow. The return volley from the wands shredded the rail in a shower of sequins and rebar. Harlan barked the next formation while blood and glitter ran down his calves.

By the time they reached the underpass that funneled into the corporate tower lobby, two more squads had been pinned by automated turrets. Harlan's unit advanced in staggered tea-service lines, aprons flaring on every pivot. The turrets tracked the largest heat signatures first. Brick took a burst across the ribs; he stayed upright only because Jax caught his elbow and forced the curtsy that vented the stored charge upward. The glitter shell cooked the turret servos into slag. Ramirez's wand misfired when his shake lacked the required wrist snap; the resulting backblast glued his own bunny ears to his cheeks. Harlan yanked them free, ordered the next count, and the squad answered with mechanical grace learned in parade drills now repurposed for porcelain.

Inside the lobby the marble floors reflected their distorted silhouettes. The central server pillar hummed behind a ring of executive guards in matte armor. Harlan called the full tea ritual. The men formed a circle, teapots raised, wands crossed at the apex. Each pour released a widening ring of light that forced the guards to shield their eyes. One guard's return grenade arced toward the circle; Rivera intercepted it with a high kick that sent the device spinning into the chandelier. The detonation rained crystal and glitter in equal measure. The server pillar cracked. Data poured out in visible threads of code that the squad's final curtsy bent into harmless sparks.

Harlan's ears flattened when the building's failsafe engaged: a floor-wide pressure mine keyed to sudden movement. The only counter was the slowest possible sequence, each man lowering into a prolonged bow while the mine's sensors registered only polite stillness. They held the pose until the timers bled out. When the last light on the pillar died, Harlan straightened. Pink dust coated every beard and epaulet. Outside, the remaining corporate drones paused at the sight of five armored silhouettes framed in the shattered doors, aprons torn, wands lowered, executing one final synchronized curtsey before the entire block went dark.

THEY CAME. THEY CONQUERED. THEY SPARKLED.



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