

From Zero to Love in one Hour

by karelia

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: Not mine

* 1 *

The sight before him made him shudder. *How can this intelligent girl fall for that oaf...*

"You'll change your mind about children. Only one child would be really lonely. You know that."

The girl sighed. "Whether or not I'll change my mind is beside the point. What if I don't? Then you'll be unhappy."

The redhead's next words chilled him to the bone. "Every witch wants many children. I know you'll change your mind. There are lots of spells for that and not all of them dark."

Her head flew around. "How dare you, Ronald? That's despicable!"

Weasley's shoulders slumped.

* 2 *

When he witnessed Weasley take out his wand, he was glad he had followed his hunch to watch them.

The moment the redhead started casting the spell on her...with her back to him no less...Snape's wand made contact with his neck.

"Stop. Right. Here."

The girl turned her head, and her eyes widened as she took in her boyfriend's wand stance. "What did you just do, Ron?" Her eyes flew back and forth between the two men.

When Weasley remained silent, Snape said, "He justified any means necessary to change your mind." His sneer made the idiot flinch.

* 3 *

"Perhaps," she started slowly, "I will change my mind when I find a man worthy of my love." Her voice produced icicles on the walls. "You, Ronald, are not that man."

"You can't mean that," the redhead protested, but quieted instantly when Snape dug his wand into his neck.

The girl's eyes met Snape's briefly before she focused on the boy again. "What I mean is get the hell out of my life, and if you don't, I'll make you. With any means necessary." When he didn't move, she added. "Now, Ronald. Get out of my sight and never return."

* 4 *

When the young wizard finally turned to leave, she slumped to the floor and covered her face with her hands.

He dreaded the inevitable dramatic act, one he'd witnessed too often with female students of his own House.

But all that came was a barely audible whisper of, "How could he?"

He wondered if, perhaps, she was in shock. "Miss Granger, would you like me to take you to Madam Pomfrey? Do you need a Calming Draught?"

She looked up at him. "You are a man," she stated, rather unnecessarily. He'd always thought it was obvious. "What makes you tick?"

* 5 *

When he merely looked at her, noting her expression was one of patent interest, and remained silent, she elaborated. "Are all men hell-bent on reproducing and go to any length? Do all men use any opportunity to get a woman into bed anytime?"

He should appear incredulous, but all he could do was focus on the variety of expressions on her face. There was curiosity, openness...he figured she'd never be able to hide anything at all...and vulnerability as well as a spark that showed an unadulterated joy for life.

He took a deep breath. "How to answer that..."

* 6 *

"It is in man's nature to wish to reproduce, probably more so than in a woman's, Miss Granger," he started. "Though I've not come across many who would go as far as using mind-controlling spells...no matter how mild...on the woman they claim to love. Those spells are ancient and were designed in an age when arranged marriages were the norm, and the woman was simply easier off if she believed herself she wanted to be nothing but a mother."

He noticed how her eyes flickered between his lips and eyes and the sparkle they emitted. *She looks appealing...*

* 7 *

"As to your second question, I'd say if a man partners with an attractive woman, then he'll probably wish to be, erm, rather active." It took all of his willpower to refrain from squirming.

Her eyes rested on his now. "I see." She flicked some stray hair over her shoulder in a swift, yet delicate movement.

The image of Lily appeared in his mind, and he wondered why he'd not let go years ago. *How many opportunities have I missed...?*

"Is a woman condemned, then, to give pleasure for the majority of her life?"

He looked at her, expression blank.

* 8 *

"You know," she elaborated, "she's supposed to give *him* pleasure and not derive any?"

"Oh, Merlin," he breathed. "What did Weasley tell you?"

She blushed and looked outright endearing. "Well... you know... He made it sound like it was my duty to provide pleasure for him..." Her discomfort was evident, and he hoped it wasn't too obvious that he wanted to comfort her when he let himself slide down onto the ground next to her.

"Both..." he emphasised the word, "...partners should derive equal pleasure."

She looked at him. "Both partners?"

"Men and women are equal," he said.

* 9 *

She uttered a disbelieving laugh. It was a delightful sound. "If you say so..."

"Weasley does not deserve you," he grumbled.

She nodded, looking thoughtful now. "You are right. He doesn't. I've had my doubts for a while to be honest..." He was relieved she didn't seem overly sad at the loss.

"What are your plans for the future?" he asked, trying for a casual sound.

She looked at him again, a frown shadowing her forehead. "Good question," she said. "I'm running out of excuses to stay at Hogwarts, what with NEWTs over. I'm not sure about joining the Ministry..."

* 10 *

"The Ministry..." he sneered, "...who knows if it'll ever be devoid of corruption. Besides, you'd bore soon unless you join the Department of Mysteries."

She sighed. An alluring sonance. "And one can't apply there, I know..."

"Have you thought about an apprenticeship?"

"Yes, but all the Arithmancers who take on apprentices are abroad, and I'd prefer to stay here. And Arithmancy is really the subject that interests me most." An apologetic expression flashed across her face.

Endearing. He thought fast now. This girl captivated him; he simply had to jump at the chance. "Potions is not an option?"

* 11 *

Her eyes widened momentarily. She smiled. "It would be a fine second choice."

"But not a first." He moved to stand. "In that case..." He couldn't leave her sitting there on the floor. "Wait in my office; it'll be more comfortable. I'll be back shortly." He didn't wait for her to move, nor did he notice her air of bewilderment when he rushed off, determined to find Vector.

He figured it wouldn't be hard to convince his colleague she needed an apprentice; he knew she liked the girl.

The Fates were benign; Septima was sitting in the staffroom. Alone.

* 12 *

"Professor!" She looked up from her position on the old rug in front of the fireplace...exactly the same spot he preferred when no students were about.

"Miss Granger." He wondered if she'd mind him sitting next to her on the rug. But it was his own office, so he took the liberty and sat down.

She cast a curious glance his way but didn't speak. He was pleasantly surprised. A talkative woman would drive him insane in no time.

"Professor Vector is perfectly willing to offer you an apprenticeship," he said, hoping to sound blasé.

Her eyes became saucers.

* 13 *

"Why? You didn't have to do that for me," she said, her voice soft, echoing a slight quiver. Her pretty face held an expression of awe. "Thank you."

"It's nothing." He didn't meet her eyes for fear of wanting to kiss her.

"Nothing?" Her laughter sounded like a symphony to his ears. "It's *everything!* An hour ago, my future looked gloomy and uncertain, and now I can't wait for it to start, and you say it's *nothing?*" She sounded charmingly incredulous.

Then she giggled in the most erotic way. "That was almost Hufflepuffian."

Unable to help himself, he kissed her.

* Epilogue *

"How did you fall in love with me again?"

His eyes glinted; she'd never tire of asking that. It had become some variety of foreplay. "When you were slumped against the wall and looked dejected, unhappy after your idiot ex tried to hex you." She smiled almost contemplatively at his sneer.

"And then?"

"Then, you made yourself at home on the rug in my office and accused me of Hufflepuffian actions. I'd have resorted to any means necessary to keep you here." Bending down, he captured her lips in a searing kiss as he carried her effortlessly into the bedroom.

Fin

A/N: Originally written for the LJ Community grangersnape100. Grateful thanks to SouthernWitch69 for the beta.