

Ghost of a Chance

by Amita

Hermione encounters the ghost of Salazar Slytherin.

Chapter 1 of 1

Hermione encounters the ghost of Salazar Slytherin.

Lost in thought, she came around the corner to see in reality the scene she had kept imagining. The girl's eyes were closed, and she was emitting little squeaks as the boy ran his hands over her – over her and over her breasts and over her skirt and under her skirt. Lace. The shameless hussy was wearing lace. She turned and fled. She told herself that it was the giggling that upset her.

She could not face her dorm-mates, who, she was certain, would titter behind her back because they had long known what she had just discovered. She fled deep into the castle, deeper than she knew it extended. She fled until she saw a room with light flickering in it. She walked in. There was a fireplace with a gorgeous fire, and there were overstuffed chairs. She sank into one and found it comfortable. She watched the flames. They seemed to consume the logjam in her heart. She became aware there was another person in the room. No, it wasn't a person.

Flowing green robes. Flowing raven hair. It was the spirit of one of the Founders. It was not the Founder she would choose to meet. She leaped to her feet.

"You can't hurt me," she declared. "Your time has gone."

"Am I not of the past? Is not the past memories? Cannot memories hurt?" he replied.

She held out her wand defensively.

"But I have no desire to do so," he said. "On the contrary, I would admire you if I could."

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Are you not an undiscovered beauty? Are not all the things you can give a wizard undiscovered because you can give a wizard so much," he said. "Are not all the males of your generation unable to see you? Does not your talent, the very thing they should seek, discourage their weak souls?"

"And you?" she asked.

"I would ravish you as you deserve," he said.

"I'm not that kind of girl."

"Of course, you're not. No girl is. Yet, somehow, it happens."

"Suppose I refused," she said.

"I'll take your knickers, and as you walk back to your dorm, I'll have the poltergeists hoot that you're knickerless and blow wind up your skirt," he said.

"That's childish," she retorted.

"But we have a castle full of children. What could be more appropriate? Can you think of anything?" he asked.

She couldn't.

He reminded her that her last strong image was one castle-child with his hand in the knickers of another castle-child. He flashed the scene in front of her, but in his version, the hand was moving more purposely and there were moans instead of giggles. The purpose became sliding those knickers down.

The shock had worn off, and she stared.

"That was not kind of me," he said, erasing the vision. "I became too playful and overdid it."

She decided to tease him. "You won't kiss and tell, will you?"

"Who would I tell?"

"Your fellow ghosts, the Slytherins, and ...," she blushed, "Professor Snape."

"How prettily you blush at his name," he remarked. "If there wasn't the spice of possible discovery, it wouldn't be half the fun. Why do you think you have those adventures with your friends, to fight evil? Evil is just the excuse."

She looked at him. Why hadn't she noticed the similarity between him in his portraits and the snarky professor before, except he was evincing another aspect? Underneath the surface sarcasm, the past suffering had produced a noble character, but the cynicism would not let it manifest itself. It was evident now that if the right person reached out, she could cause a transformation. It would not be a wholesale change. He would still bristle. But he would have an anchor, and he could show his deeper side.

She felt his deep side reach out.

You are the strong one, and you will always have to be the strong one, but I do not have to let you be the strong one alone. You are worthy of a Founder. He, like you, has appeared at the hour of need. It will always be so.

Hermione thought the ghost putting it like that wasn't fair, and then she thought that the ghost appearing for her was the first sign of fairness she had seen in this sorry world. He held her and healed her. She relaxed in his arms as he mended the cracks that were threatening to bring the structure down. He let her know that she didn't have to be weak for him, that he would keep her the strong person he desired.

Yes, desired. And he could show her if she wished. She didn't have to spend her days in doubt. He would accept the whole witch – the length, breadth, and depth of her. He was a ghost, but he would make the effort for her. He had been sincere when he declared her worthy. He was a ghost, but he was a Founder, and he would be a complete companion, not some pale and insubstantial wisp. The hardness of his resolve would match hers.

The vastness of a thousand years welled up in her mind. "Did you spend all those years alone?" she asked.

"It's a curse to be drawn to only the best," he replied.

She nodded her understanding and took his hand.

"You're warm," she said.

"You inspire me," he replied.

"Don't we need the Room of Requirements?" she asked.

"All rooms do what I require," he said.

The room was softly lit with a thousand candles. The rug was lush and inviting. The wine was smooth and subtle.

Isn't this a bit dramatic?

Enjoy what you deserve.

Prompt from HermioneDiggory: Hermione just wants to be alone when she unexpectedly encounters the ghost of Salazar Slytherin.