

Smile

by sunny33

Gregory Goyle has decided he needs a makeover. Who does he go to for help?

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: The characters belong to JKR. The prompt was MuseAmusant's. I wrote the words.

The knock on the door seemed to cut off, as if the final rap was hovering over the wood, awaiting permission to fall. Hermione Granger, recently appointed Charms Assistant at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, looked up from her desk and glared at the offending sound. *What now? I'll never get my marking done if people keep stopping by for a chat. Can't they wait until mealtime?*

The last tap was tentative, accompanied by a shuffle of feet and an audible sigh.

Oh, for Merlin's sake. I hope it's not Ginny again. If I have to sit through another session of "What if Harry meets someone while I'm still at school?" I'll slap her, friend or not. She needs to get a grip. "Come in!" And make it quick.

A large paw reached around the door as the bulk of returned seventh year Gregory Goyle moved into the room, his expression remarkable for its complete lack of confidence. He stood, silent, as she studied his slouched form and bowed head.

"Hello, Mr Goyle." *Better keep it formal. Wouldn't want to upset Professor Grumpypants by insulting one of his precious Slytherins.* "What can I do for you?"

"Greg," he mumbled into the vicinity of his tie. "Name's Greg. Mr Goyle is my da."

It was like dealing with a dumb animal. She gentled her tone. "Okay, Greg. What's the problem?"

Goyle looked up at the young woman, whom until recently had been one of his peers. "... I..." He shrugged. "Never mind. Bad idea." He turned and headed for the door.

Curiosity piqued, Hermione called after him. "Wait! Greg. Don't go. You must have had some reason for coming to me. It won't hurt to ask, will it? The worst I can do is say no." She smiled. "Why don't you sit down for a minute and tell me."

"You'll laugh." His face scowled, but his eyes fixed on hers with a plea for help.

"I promise I won't." Walking around her desk, Hermione took the big wizard's arm and guided him to a chair. She would have missed the faint tremble in his hand if she hadn't patted it as she turned to she perch on the edge of her desk. *Odd how he seems so nonthreatening now he's alone. Must have been tough losing Crabbe after they'd been inseparable for so long. And with Draco Malfoy having done the same accelerated N.E.W.T.s course I did, he's left all alone.*

Goyle's sigh was laden with loneliness and grief and years of poor self-esteem, but Hermione heard only a soft exhalation of air.

"It's just... I don't know what to do. How to make them like me. I'm just a dumb piece of muscle, no good for anything." His head dropped into his hands.

"Who do you want to like you, Greg?"

He looked up, and there in front of her was no longer Malfoy's hulking henchman, but simply a lonely boy. "Anybody. Now Vince and Draco are gone, no-one gives me the time of day. No-one except you, Miss... Hermione. You always say hello and smile when you pass me in the corridor."

You poor bugger. That's all it takes to make your day, a smile and a polite greeting? "Tell me, Greg, how often do you smile at people?"

He looked surprised, as if she had asked him how often he brushed his teeth. "Um... dunno. Not often, I s'pose. No reason to."

"Well, there you go. If you want people to smile at you and see you as a likeable person, you have to show them you're interested. You'd be amazed what a smile will do." She reached forward and squeezed his hand. "Come on. Smile for me."

It was tentative at first, but with another squeeze and an encouraging nod, Goyle managed a reasonable attempt at a grin. When Hermione replied with one of her own, he relaxed and allowed the smile to extend to his eyes. The transformation from the sullen, dull-eyed thug to a beaming, relaxed young man was remarkable. Suddenly, Hermione noticed things she'd never seen before. His eyes were a startling blue, his skin smooth and clear, and his teeth were white and even. He'd continued to grow taller and had grown into his breadth somewhat. Gregory Goyle was no pin-up, but he was not that hard on the eye. Then she remembered Crabbe had always been a failure in most of his classes, but could not recall Goyle as having had particularly poor grades.

Well, well, Gregory Goyle. I believe you have potential.

Greg was startled when Hermione flung her arms around him and gave him his first hug from someone other than his mother. He was even more surprised when she patted his cheek and sighed happily.

Hermione Granger had just found herself another project.

A/N: Saturday Night Drabble prompt from MuseAmusant.

Greg Goyle is sick of everyone seeing him as just a dumb piece of muscle. He turns to someone surprising to help him revamp his image and gets more than he bargained for.

Thanks to quaffswinegaily for looking this over.