

Five Times

by Unholy_Spectacle

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Chapter 1 of 1

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##

She approached him five times.

The first attempt was roughly one year after Voldemort's fall. Snape was back teaching potions and the school year had just ended. It was an unadulterated relief to see the back end of the term, and he'd been enjoying a celebratory glass of whiskey in his chambers. It had been a hard year. First there was his convalescence, which had been both excruciating and humiliating, and then there was dealing with the people, which was even worse. Minerva had forgiven him, as had the staff, but their emotions toward him, their over-eagerness to show how they'd moved past it, made interactions with his colleagues awkward, to say the least. And then there were the children... Snape would, he knew, be dealing with students who had attended during his tenure as Headmaster for some time. Hopefully, it would get easier as the years passed. At least now, one group of them was gone.

He had just sat down, closed his eyes, and taken a sip when the hesitant knock came. It was swiftly followed by a firmer one, as if whomever it was had gathered their courage.

It was, quite possibly, the last person Snape had wished to see.

"Miss Granger," he said, his voice flat. "I thought the students had departed." She wore Muggle clothes, he noted, jeans and a long-sleeved Henley. Heeled boots. He couldn't help but notice her figure. She'd grown up; but then, he'd known that already, hadn't he? He averted his eyes.

"What could you possibly want?"

"Professor Snape." The girl took a deep breath, clearly warming up to some tiresome rehearsed speech. "May I come in?"

"Certainly not."

She nodded, as if expecting this. "Very well. I'll just get to..." She swallowed, and her voice wavered. "The point."

He eyed her. "If you are so capable. Years of having you in my classroom have left me quite uncertain."

She nodded again. Her eyes searched the wall behind him before meeting his. Whatever it was Granger wanted, it scared her. Considering she and her friends had helped

defeat the Dark Lord, this was moderately interesting.

"Contrary to what you may believe, I do have things to accomplish, Miss Granger. You have another thirty seconds to state your business."

Hermione swallowed, bobbed her head yet again, and squared her shoulders, clearly bracing herself. "Professor Snape." She cleared her throat and locked eyes with him. "I would like to sleep with you."

Her voice only cracked a little, at the very end. He stared at her, faintly wondering if the snake's venom had gone to his brain, after all. "What was that?" Surely he couldn't have heard correctly.

Yet, from her terrified expression, Snape knew that he had. His eyes took her in clinically even as his mind reeled. Her skin was flushed, and she was clenching her right hand her wand hand as if she expected him to curse her.

Snape wondered if perhaps he wouldn't, at that. But then again, hexing Potter's Golden Girl would probably put a crimp in his reintroduction to polite society.

"Is this a joke?" he asked. He already knew it wasn't. It was strange, he thought distantly, that the last woman to proposition him had been Bellatrix. Was there something about mad hair that addled women's brains?

"No sir." She took a deep breath; it seemed to give her courage.

Sir.

"You wish to..." He paused. "You are joking. Or delusional." He wondered if she had been dosed with a love potion. Potter and Weasley had been at the ceremony, perhaps... But no, he thought. They, too, had matured.

"I assure you sir, I am neither." Granger...Hermione...eyed him. "... I've rather come to admire you over the years, Professor, especially..." she blinked rapidly, "...since the end of the war, and I was hoping, well, you see, I knew that being a student it was impossible, so I waited until now to tell you, but, you see, sir, that is to say..."

Good God, the girl was going to spin out of control. He was more than half-tempted to let her. He was by equal turns outraged and flattered. Of course, he would turn her away.

"How old are you now?" He asked, cutting into her babbling. "Eighteen?"

"Twenty." She paused. "Sir."

He paused. "The Time-Turner."

"Yes, sir. And I started a year later than the others."

He allowed himself a brief inward wince at the 'sir', and then an unsavory speculation on whether, should he say yes, she would call him that in bed, while he was inside her.

"And you wish me to..." He allowed his eyes to drift downward, very slightly, before reeling them back up. The curve of her breasts as they disappeared into the top of her shirt was intriguing. Plump yet firm, with peaches and cream skin. He kept his expression utterly blank. It took more effort than he would have liked.

"I wish us to..." She smiled. "Sir."

This time, when he imagined her saying that, her legs were on his shoulders. He knew he needed to get rid of her. "You could be thirty, and it would make no difference." He began to close the door. "Goodbye, Miss Granger."

"Sir, wait."

He paused, his hand on the door. "Yes? What else is it, Miss Granger? Yet more virginity to dispose of, perhaps?"

"I have only the one hymen, sir." She peered up at him, her face serious. "Why not?"

He stared at her, and she flinched very slightly.

That tiny reaction, the conditioning of seven years of his teaching, was the exact reason he wouldn't do as she asked, although he would never tell her that.

"Because you are a child, Miss Granger, one who but days ago was my student. Even were I to consider your completely absurd invitation, I don't sleep with children."

"I'm twenty," she repeated, "And after" She hesitated. "The war... Sir, I may be inexperienced. I might not know how to do this, but I'm not a child."

Snape regarded her. When he'd said that, he had forgotten what she'd endured. Malfoy Manor. The Horcruxes. "Perhaps not," he said, crossing his arms on his chest. The heavy wool covering his flesh was reassuring. "Still, the answer is no."

"But why, sir?"

He sighed. This was growing tiresome. Was he really in a position to turn away a girl...a woman...who wanted to be with him? The idea of a single, congratulatory glass of whiskey was forgotten, replaced decisively with plans for oblivion.

"Because, Miss Granger," he said, "not one week ago, you were my student. War or no, this is something that matters to me."

She chewed on her lip. "So, you do find me attractive."

"I didn't say that."

"You didn't not say that."

"Leave, Miss Granger." He began to swing his door closed. The little chit actually had the nerve to stick her foot in his door! He stared at it and then at her. Whatever was in his eyes made her pale and hastily remove the appendage.

"Please sir," she said rapidly. "I just need to know. If it's not me... Am I correct in thinking that you're saying it's too soon, and you would otherwise consider it?"

Was this, Severus wondered, how the house-elves had felt? "No. Yes. Fine," he said. He was exhausted. His brain had absorbed her proposal like nectar; his eyes longed to roam her body freely, and he'd been in a state of semi-erection since he had registered the meaning of her visit.

"Just go." He paused, and then said the unthinkable. "Please."

She smiled at him then, and the dazzling, unabashed quality of it belatedly alarmed him as he watched her walk away. By the time he had opened his mouth to protest, though, she was gone.

##

The second time it happened was a year later. He opened the door to his personal chamber, raising an eyebrow when he saw who it was.

"Miss Granger. To what do I owe this... pleasure." He allowed himself to sneer, just a little, while looking down at her.

"Professor Snape," she said. Her back was ramrod straight, he noticed, as if she were prepared to face the Dark Lord all over again. She licked her lips, and his eyes tracked the movement. "I see you are well."

It couldn't be, he thought. Surely not. "Do spare me your meaningless pleasantries." Seeing her small, pink tongue reminded him of his thoughts over the last year. To his consternation, she'd crept in at odd moments. The images hadn't been chaste. He'd done things to her that would have made Malfoy Senior take note.

Remembering the whole thing put Snape in a dangerously foul mood.

"Very well. May I come in?"

"No."

"Fine." She started in, not dissuaded. "As you remember, I came to your office last year, after graduating."

"I do not." He smirked nastily. "Did we speak, Miss Granger? I don't recall."

Ah there, that took the wind from her sails. He carefully removed the pleasure from his face.

"Care to remind me, Miss Granger? No? Well, if that is quite it..." He moved to close the door.

"Wait!"

He sighed and waited. The pause seemed to give her courage. Not that the over-puffed bookworm needed much, he reflected. At least she had left off the 'sir' this time.

"I came to ask you a question. You told me..." She took a deep breath. "I'm not doing this very well. Look. What I asked for last year... I would like to try again. I haven't been your student for over a year, and..."

"If by over a year, you mean 'a year and one day' then, yes, Miss Granger, you are correct. However, this game grows tiresome and beyond insulting."

She sucked in a breath. "I fail to see why asking you..."

"Do you want to be fucked by a Death Eater, Miss Granger?" He cut her off and leaned against the door frame. If she wouldn't go away, he would make her. She'd been gone for a year; he no longer needed to watch his language.

She widened her eyes in shock. "I see," he noted calmly. "Still a virgin then. That is a shame for some Weasley or other. What is it, Miss Granger? Ordinary Order of Merlin recipients not good enough? Want to give it away to a big bad agent of the Dark Lord?" His eyes roamed her up and down scathingly. "Have fantasies of being tied up and bent over, is that it?" He tsked. "Many women have such."

Oh yes, that seemed to have done it. This was fun; he should have done it ages ago. Sometimes, he reflected, his morals really kept him from living. Hermione was an alarming shade of red, almost purple. "That is not why I asked you, Professor."

She was blinking rapidly now. "And you were not a..." She cut herself off rapidly. "Well, you were, obviously, but you were...are...a hero, sir."

"I see. So which is it then?" he asked. "A misguided thank you, or pity?"

"Neither!" She swallowed. "I..." Her voice trailed off uncertainly.

He sighed, feeling all the elation drain away. "Just say it, Miss Granger."

She nodded, her eyes wide, and took a deep breath. "I admire you, sir. And... I feel... drawn to you. I don't know why, and it is not that...thing...you said before... but I am. So there, I said it."

Hermione stared at him challengingly, daring him to make fun of her again. There were bright red spots on her cheeks, and her hair made a faint but alarming crackling sound.

Snape found that, indeed, he could not mock her. I feel drawn to you. Had anyone ever said that to him?

"Go home, Miss Granger," he said quietly, feeling suddenly very old.

"Is that a no, sir?"

He pinched the bridge of his nose. "Obviously."

"May I ask why?"

"Because you've clearly had some kind of... trauma... or strange delusion, that makes you say such. You will find that it will go away, in time." He forced his face into dismissive lines.

"It's not because I'm a former student?"

"It is that; it's who you are; it's all of it. For pity's sake, Miss Granger, you have no idea even for what you are asking."

She met his eyes. "Well, sir, I may be mistaken, but according to my research, I believe the male, once erect, places his turgid member..." A tiny smile played upon her lips.

"That is quite enough!" He glared at her. "Give it a year, Miss Granger, and I believe you will forget this misguided idea."

"I see." Her expression became thoughtful. "Interesting." She turned and moved down the hall, leaving him to watch her walk away. She did have a nice arse, Snape thought. Then, belatedly, he realized what he'd said. And with whom he was dealing.

"Oh, bugger."

##

The third time, she showed up at Spinner's End. Snape had already gone home for the summer holidays. When she'd failed to show up at Hogwarts, he'd congratulated himself on having seen the tail end of her. No pun intended. He'd even had a drink, to celebrate. And then three. By the time he was done, he'd found himself wondering what her ridiculous hair smelled like, the exact combination of firm and soft her arse was likely to be underneath his fingers, and if it, too, were peaches and cream.

For all of those reasons, he wasn't pleased to see Hermione on his doorstep. She'd managed to invade his thoughts, and now she was intruding at his home. The nagging question of her derriere remained unanswered. She needed to leave. Immediately.

"Miss Granger. You need to leave. Immediately."

His would-be seducer's medusa hair had been carefully tamed, and she wore a rather, he had to admit, blue dress. It framed her body nicely, showing off an expanse of smooth, curved perfection. Inwardly, Snape groaned. Hermione Granger's annual visits were becoming more damaging to his mental health than decades serving the Dark Lord.

"Professor."

"Miss Granger."

"May I come in?"

"I think not."

"Then shall I proposition you on your doorstep, Professor Snape?" Unbelievably, she smirked. At him. His eyes widened in spite of himself. Damn her.

"You may do a striptease on my doorstep, Miss Granger, or march with placards. I care not." And now he was talking about her taking her clothes off. What had this girl done to him?

If anything, her smirk deepened, and her eyes never left his. "Would that convince you, sir?"

"Yes. No." Time to go on the offensive. "What must Mr. Weasley think of these visits, Miss Granger? Begging the greasy git for sex... Wouldn't he find it shocking?"

She shrugged. "Am I begging? I rather think I'm just asking nicely."

"Repeated asking in the face of denials qualifies. And you didn't answer the question."

"Why should I care what he thinks? After all, it's just sex."

Just sex. Snape could feel himself wavering, on the verge. "No, no, no, and bloody bugging no."

Then he realized he'd said that last bit out loud. He'd lost it completely. "Good day, Miss Granger."

She didn't stick her foot in the door this time, but the look on her face was hardly reassuring. He knew she'd be back. And, from her smug expression, she knew that he knew.

##

The fourth time, he didn't answer his door. It was safer that way. Much safer.

##

The fifth time, she came a week later than usual. He was both astonished and unsurprised to see her standing in his doorway.

"Professor Snape," she said levelly. His eyes swept over her. Hermione's face had matured. She looked like a woman. He wondered if she was still untouched. Unlikely, he decided. There was, he noticed, an uncertainty in her eyes that had been lacking two years ago. He wondered: Had he caused it? Had another man? And if there were another, why would she be standing here?

He was a fool.

"Miss Granger," he acknowledged. And then he slammed the door in her face.

##

The sixth time, she didn't arrive. Snape waited at Spinner's End, poring over potions journals without seeing the words. She was twenty-six now...what would he do? Snape suspected he knew the answer. Two days passed, and then a week. Two weeks. Once it was clear the girl wasn't coming, he spent an evening ignoring his research in favor of examining the inside of a fresh bottle of Ogden's. He told himself he was celebrating, and he even believed it, more or less, until he found himself naked on his bed and saying her name. Hermione. Snape uttered it gently, exploring the feel of it in his mouth. It was soft, he thought, and complex. Like her. He had turned her away, he realized. Five times.

He came, bitter, full of regret and with her name once more on his lips.

##

A year later, Hermione Granger opened her door. She squinted against the bright light of the hallway and frowned. Seeing who it was, at first she said nothing.

He cleared his throat. "I'm a little late."

Hermione cocked her head upward at his silhouette. Her face was expressionless. "I see."

"Yes," he said. "There was this girl...I found myself detained, quite against my will."

'Interesting,' Hermione said, staring up at him. The wizard's eyes were impossibly dark and intent. "Perhaps you should have told her to leave you alone."

"Ah. I did," he said. "But you understand, she's an extremely persistent witch. Just a slip of a girl, but terribly annoying."

"I don't see why that would be a problem for a wizard like yourself."

Snape regarded her gravely. "She kept coming back, no matter what I wished, with her absurd ideas and bright eyed beauty..." He swallowed. "I found myself at a loss."

Hermione blinked at him with liquid eyes. "It's not just sex, Severus," she said quietly. "Not anymore."

"Was it ever?" he asked. One of his hands reached out tentatively to ghost across her cheek. Hermione's eyes fluttered closed.

"No," she said, "probably not." She took a shaky breath. "This is going to ruin everything, isn't it?"

Snape's eyes followed his long index finger, which had moved to trace Hermione's bottom lip. One side of his mouth twitched upward at her words.

"I sincerely hope so," he said.

##