Sleeping Professor

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save him...

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For the 'Sleeping Beauty' challenge at grangersnape100 (6 x 100)

Hermione cared for the proud and cold Professor Snape despite herself, but the Head Girl was pragmatic enough to keep her love locked away in her heart.

When Snape became unconscious due to being caught in the crossfire of duelling students, it was said he had been hit by the spell Quietus Décor (Sleeping Beauty).

Only a loving kiss would awake him… but no one loved him, as far as Hogwarts was concerned. Some students muttered in Hermione's hearing that they hoped Snape would stay asleep forever. But she might be the only one who could wake up the professor.

After midnight, the infirmary was quiet as Hermione crept into it, having 'borrowed' Harry's Invisibility Cloak. If she failed, she didn't want to be the laughingstock of Hogwarts. If she succeeded, well, she didn't want everyone staring sideways at her. Amazement and distaste from Snape.

But she had to try.

Snape looked still and stern in sleep, his inky black hair a stark contrast against the white pillow. Hermione looked around, then opened the cloak just enough so she could quickly and softly kiss Snape's lips.

Concealing herself again she stepped back, watching Snape hopefully.

Nothing happened. She had failed.

Blinking back a tear, Hermione left the infirmary.

Snape's eyes fluttered open. There had been warm lips on his, a now fading scent of peaches and cinnamon about him. What was going on?

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"Did you hear the news?" Ron blurted out to Hermione the next day, his eyes round. "Someone kissed Snape awake! They don't know who, though."

Hermione didn't have to feign surprise. *It had worked!*

"Maybe the spell wore off?" she said, glad she sounded calm.

Ron shook his head. "Someone actually *kissed Snape*," he said, bewildered.

Hermione was thankful Snape had woken. She would keep quiet, though.

Hogwarts buzzed with speculation over the mystery kisser, with some even suggesting using Veritaserum, before an irate McGonagall quashed such talk. Hermione involved herself in the gossip – staying aloof would be suspicious.

Snape's face was tight at meal times, his glittering gaze often scanning the hall. He disliked feeling so frustrated and perplexed… as well as being the focus of romantic gossip!

In class when he was inspecting some dunderhead's potion, his nose caught the enticing scent of peaches and cinnamon. Carefully stalking his prey, he abruptly realised it was… Granger. Intelligent brown eyes with wariness in them met his.

Their tension-filled stare was only seconds, but seemed like eternity to them both. Then Snape swept on to another student without a word.

Hermione Granger had kissed him, Snape thought, his head whirling. She had saved him. Loved him. How dare she! A Gryffindor student, of all things.

He knows! Hermione thought with mingled defiance and fear. *What now?*

She expected a reaction from Snape… but nothing happened. Life went on. The gossip died down too.

But every time Snape looked at Hermione, he would think of her kiss… each such thought warming his cold heart. She loved him?

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On her last day at Hogwarts, Hermione went up to the Astronomy Tower, feeling sad and glad to leave. A dark figure followed.

"I owe you a debt, Miss Granger," Snape murmured behind her.

Hermione turned, the wind ruffling her brown hair.

"I wasn't thinking of debts at the time. Sir," she said tightly.

Snape stepped closer, his black robes rippling towards her.

"Nevertheless… any rare book you wish, I will give you it."

"I don't want any gifts! I want…"

She bit her lip and turned away.

"Then I give you myself."

Warm arms embracing her.

"Yes," Hermione breathed.

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