

Laundry Crisis

by Minerva

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Chapter 1 of 1

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No profit is made from this; everything recognisable belongs to JKR. As you can probably guess, I should be doing laundry instead of writing ... Special thanks go to my beta Dreamy_Dragon and the team at TPP.

Hermione Granger was not a vain person. She did not spend time in front of a mirror or trying to find the perfect outfit. All her clothing matched somewhat – better than the things Luna usually wore, but nowhere near perfect for Ginny's standards – and was easy to care for.

When she was embroiled in a research project, however, things tended to slide. She forgot to eat, she neglected her hair, and her household – well, the less said about that the better. After three weeks of neglecting her laundry, Hermione had to resort to her least favourite robes: those in unflattering colours or with a tight fit. Her underwear drawer was nearly empty as well; she only dug out her few silken lingerie sets when her sensible cottons were all in the laundry basket.

Severus Snape detested the Unspeakables' library. Despite having spent years of his life in dungeons, he loathed being cooped up three levels below ground. There was a constant hum down there – he suspected it came from the Gringotts wards around the corner – and the air was stale.

And there was that one, single toilet. Severus had even once mentioned it to the Unspeakables' head, but had been told that getting even this single toilet to work in such a magically charged area had been very hard work. And no, there were no plans to install a second one.

The drains didn't work properly; therefore, the loo smelled despite air-freshening spells. And one couldn't wash one's hands properly because the tap only produced a lukewarm trickle of water.

One of the perks of being one of the very few freelance Unspeakables was that Severus was allowed to take home as many books as he wanted, which was why he occasionally ventured down here despite his dislike of the place.

Harry had threatened Hermione with coming to fetch her personally if she was a minute late to little Albus' birthday party in the London Zoo; therefore, she shelved the books she had needed and dashed into the single, narrow (too narrow to even close the door if one wanted to change) and smelly loo of the Unspeakables' Library to change into her Muggle outfit: a jeans skirt and a short-sleeved blouse. Clothes-changing charms were off limits down here because they would interfere with the sensitive spellwork of the library.

Severus Snape cursed himself for not having used the toilet upstairs but refused to apply a charm to empty his bladder. After having had to use said charm often during Death Eater meetings – somehow Voldemort had forgotten about toilet breaks during his monologues about supremacy – he found it comforting to use a toilet the traditional way.

The door to the loo opened silently – maybe the only feature of the room that worked properly – and Snape was treated to an astonishing sight: someone was trying to wriggle into a tight Muggle jeans skirt, showing a generous behind clad in a sea-foam green, silken thong. The bum continued upwards in hourglass fashion towards a well-formed waist and an unblemished back – decorated with bra-straps that matched the thong – and an elegant neck.

He immediately backtracked into the dark corridor, which still offered him a view. He was curious to whom this delightful derrière might belong. The woman twisted up her curly brown hair into a messy bun, securing it with what appeared to be chop-sticks, before shrugging into a short-sleeved blouse.

She finally emerged from the toilet backwards, as it was too narrow to turn around without touching the walls, and went to the small and grimy mirror over the sink.

Snape's mouth, forming a surprised, silent 'Oh!', mimicked the woman's while she was trying to apply lipstick.

'Hermione Bloody Granger!'

He felt his perception of her tilt on its axis. Of course, it was more than twelve years since she had been his student, but in his mind she still had been a perpetually hand-raising, buck-toothed child.

Snape had not thought once about her since then, which might have led him to adjust his view of her earlier. When someone of his acquaintance talked about the so-called Golden Trio, he refused to listen now that he was no longer forced to know what they were up to.

In his wonderment, he nearly missed the moment she left the washroom. Out of habit, he cast a silent Disillusionment charm, which led to clouds of dust rising from the books to his left and right. Fortunately, she was too much in a hurry to investigate further, and mere seconds later she was gone.

More than a year later, Ms Granger did her best not to yawn during the Minister's speech at the opening of a new potions department at St. Mungo's.

"Are you in need of a strong coffee, or will scintillating conversation do?"

Hermione was visibly surprised to be addressed thus by her former Potions master, but took it in stride.

"Both. And preferably far away from this event."

Severus Snape didn't confess that he had thought nearly twenty minutes about his chat-up line until Ms Granger moved in with him, nine months later.

And it took her three more years to learn from him why he liked her sea-foam-green undies so much, although they were rather worn and faded.

The End