

Fool for Lesser Things

by Fervesco

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Chapter 1 of 1

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AN: Big sloppy kisses to Warty for betaing thanks, hun!

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Bunch of dim-witted fools. Granted, this is their normal demeanour, so I shouldn't be so surprised by their ludicrous activities. However, they have levitated beyond their normal moronic status all the way into a communal, alcohol-induced stupor. Furthermore, several have attempted to persuade me to join them. Each and every one of them has been duly warned that it is not worth their lives, not that their lives are particularly worthy.

Having disposed with Minerva, albeit under the begrudging promise that I would "remain at this festivity for one more hour", I have bided my time in a large leather armchair by the fireplace. Drinking Firewhisky, my only distraction from the raucousness is a week old-copy of the *Daily Prophet* I unearthed in the kitchen. Lucky me.

Twenty minutes left and counting.

"Good evening."

"Is it?" I snarl, not looking up from the fascination of last week's star signs.

*Capricorn: Enjoy solitude while you can.*

Intriguing. I can only presume that Madame Millicent is not any relation to Sibyll Trelawney; that was far too accurate.

Nineteen minutes, thirty seconds and counting.

"Well, in all honesty, not particularly."

I snap my paper down, glaring up at she-who-would-dare-to-intrude-on-my-peace, and for a moment words are taken from me. I must admit that she holds my interest for a moment; she is actually quite stunning.

"Sir?"

Bloody hell. Her! Amazing what a little Vanity Smoothing Serum and glamour can do for a frizzy-haired know-it-all. Showing as little interest as I can, I raise my paper. Trying to obliterate her from my view, I reply into the pages, "What?" as my mind replaces her current image with that of a silly twelve year old girl, her massive hair all but

obliterating the rest of her save for two very large front teeth.

"Bit boring, isn't it?"

Boring? Boring?! I have just read the oh-so-thrilling news of a week ago twice over in order to restrain myself from committing suicide - though Merlin only knows why at least that would provide a few precious moments of entertainment.

Eighteen minutes, forty-six seconds until freedom.

"Miss Granger, do you have a point? If so, spit it out, girl. If not, leave me alone!"

Hermione is very quiet for a few moments, and I am almost convinced she is going to leave, when she opens that irritating mouth again.

"Well, I was just wondering how you are?"

I glare up at her over the top of the paper. Silly twat takes that as an invitation to perch herself on the arm of my chair and stare intently at me. Since when did I look like I held an open invitation for everyone's pity?

"I would be far better off had I not been forced to attend this idiocy!" I snap, flicking an annoyed hand at the rest of the room. As if on cue, something in the general vicinity of the Weasley twins pops and feathers start snowing from the ceiling.

"Oh. Minerva made you come?" Hermione presses, barely noticing what is happening around her. How on Earth this girl ever helped defeat the Dark... Voldemort is beyond me.

"Yes. Minerva. I believed I was done with compulsory attendance at these sort of... frivolities after Dumble-"

I killed him. His half-name hangs numbly in the air between us.

"I'm sure Dumbledore would be quite thrilled to see you here, sir," Hermione says, her hand reaching out to touch my arm.

Even through the layers of fabric, I can feel the warmth of her skin. My own skin tingles at the weight of her hand on my arm, at the heat seeping through into my bones. My eyes flick to my arm, staring at her fingers in wonder for a few moments. Bloody hell, she's getting to me; something deep within me begins to stir, a feeling I have not had, nor allowed myself to have, for many, many years. Ridiculous! She is Hermione Granger, Gryffindor know-it-all, the third greatest bane of my teaching years and, oh yes, not to forget she's Potter's friend. She's a frizzy headed... no, I realise looking back at her, the image I hold of her in my head vanishing in a puff of overly-fluffy hair, she's not. My eyes trail the length of an errant strand of hair that has escaped from the pile atop her head, following the tendril over the smooth porcelain skin of her neck.... Severus! She is Hermione Granger!

As I drag myself out of that thought, I find that she is staring at me with a combination of concern and humour.

I whip my arm from under her fingers, convincing myself it is for the better, though there will be an inner debate later. One I shall have restless nights about, I'm certain. Damn her, I'm quite content with nights spent restlessly debating whether the Dark Lord is really gone or if he is perhaps going to return, reincarnated as one of Hagrid's menagerie....

"Yes, well, I'm sure Dumbledore would have found this all very hilarious," I reply dryly, going to retrieve my paper.

"He would. Honestly, I know how hard it must have been for you to have ... err.... done what you did," Hermione prattles. "But I hope you do realise...."

"Do you? Do you really, Miss Granger?" I am incensed by her audacity. My eyes narrow at her presumptive words and fury boils in my veins. Calculatingly, I fold the paper, placing it on my lap. "When was the last time you killed someone?"

"Sorry," she mutters. "I just meant that everyone else seems to believe that you couldn't have cared less. I know that's not true."

"Indeed," I reply harshly. "Is that it? You just wanted to say that you know I didn't enjoy killing Dumbledore? What makes you think you know me well enough to land upon that conclusion? Who's to say I didn't think the old bastard had it coming?" I feel a stirring of repulsion at my own words, but quickly brush it away.

Hermione blushes. "Well, this for a start, sir. Short of students cavorting in your class, or Harry doing..." she pauses for a moment, then finishes with a shrug, "...anything, you never get so riled."

Wench. "Well done. I despised killing Dumbledore. How very, very perceptive of you, Miss Granger. Perhaps you could take up position as Trelawney's apprentice."

She is quiet again for a while. Slowly, my seething anger subsides and I glance back at last weeks' headlines again. 'Aurors save baby hippogriff'. How extraordinary. That is the best they could compose for the front page?

"Sir, have you seen Malfoy tonight?"

"I do believe he is here somewhere. Perhaps you could focus your efforts upon redeeming him instead and leave me in peace?"

"That is not what I asked. Have you seen him?"

Suddenly I feel like the inept student, and her the professor. Not that Hermione was ever inept. Slowly I swirl what is left of the amber liquid around in my glass. "Yes."

"Have you seen how happy he is?"

Looking up from my glass, I glance across the room. Sure enough, there is Draco, his arms entwined around Lovegood, his hands stroking her long blond hair, a contented smile crinkling at his heavily lidded eyes.

"He appears to be enjoying himself," I reply nonchalantly and return to my paper, but my mind does not return to the text. Instead, an inkling of jealousy burns inside. Not over Lovegood, as such, but at the fact that Malfoy is now in a position to enjoy company.

"Do you think that would have been possible if it hadn't been for your actions? This is precisely what Dumbledore wanted."

"Well, isn't that fantastic for him," I reply curtly, but what she said does strike a chord. As per usual, Miss Granger is correct and, damn her, she has made me feel a little less self-deprecating.

I hear Hermione snort a little in laughter and when I scowl at her she is barely containing the smile tugging at the corners of her mouth.

"Something funny?" I sneer at her.

"No, sir," she says, giving way to a smug grin. "Well, enjoy last week's paper. I'm sure it's enthralling."

"Indeed."

"Perhaps I shall see you at the Yule Ball?"

I give her a scathing look, but when she doesn't flee in terror, I sigh. "Given that I have no choice in attending that deplorable event either, I would suspect so. Although, why you would wish to attend is beyond me." Why did I just say that? It certainly sounded like a question.... I do not care about what she does, or with whom....

"Minerva has invited Harry, Ron, Draco and I. I can't really say no, since the three of them are going, although I must admit I will feel a little silly the three of them all have dates and well...."

What the hell is she getting at?

She gets to her feet. Thank Merlin, I thought for a moment she was going to ask me to take her. Idiot, Severus. Like any girl, let alone one so young, intelligent and yes, now I have to admit, beautiful as Miss Granger, would ever ask a greasy git like you to attend anything with her. I'm wrenched into the memory of my final Yule Ball as a student; the only sorry prat without a date stealing away to the library to avoid the embarrassment.

"Perhaps you could save me a dance, Severus," Hermione calls over her shoulder. It is more of a statement than a request, and before I can tell her 'no chance in hell', she has vanished back into the party.

Three minutes, fourteen seconds remaining. At least that irritation served some purpose.

That was two weeks ago. Now, I am a blithering mess. Two weeks I have spent obsessing over what Miss Granger... Hermione... Miss Granger meant by that conversation. As predicted, I have spent many a night reliving the feeling of her hand on my arm, with reactions ranging from self-pity to warmth to full-blown arousal. One thing is for certain, though, I have lost my goddamned mind. I cannot believe I am even thinking the things about her that I am, let alone seriously considering acting upon them.

I am completely and utterly torn about the Yule Ball tonight. Certainly, despite the fact that Minerva has insisted that I attend, I do have several options to avoid doing so, given the copious amount of poison I have at my disposal. However, I am not certain that I wish to avoid Miss Granger, nor spend any amount of time in the hospital wing. I have the perfect excuse to touch her again she did, after all, ask for a dance. I must also admit that, other than her 'feel good' chatter about Dumbledore, it would certainly be pleasant to partake in a conversation with someone with more intelligence than your average Blast-Ended Skrewt.

But, as always when there is a slim possibility of some happiness happening my way, I am more than likely going to be made the fool.

Bloody Merlin. I have been made a fool for lesser things; one more certainly will not destroy me.

However, I will be damned if I am going into this completely unprepared. I dress in one of my better sets of robes; yes, they are still black, but far better tailored than my usual teaching ones, although a little itchy. Thankfully, that leaves me with little to deal with from the neck down. As for my face, well, I am not about to put on a glamour like some silly school twat, monstrous nose be damned. My hair though.... As much as I dislike admitting it, it is as greasy as everyone snipes behind my back, with good reason. One doesn't bother to take much pride in one's appearance when the purpose of such is to scare the living daylights out of detestable children. Fine. A quick flick of my wand and the greasy mop that hung from my head is now a clean mop hanging from my head. Disgusted enough at my efforts, I head for the Great Hall.

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Bunch of dim-witted fools. Granted, this time they are sober (for the most part, although Minerva is looking a little shaky) dim-witted fools, but there are exponentially more of them.

And she is not here.

I should have known. The twat sobered up, remembered what she'd said to me and decided not to show her red face. Brilliant.

Better yet, Potter and Miss Weasley, Weasley and the moron attached to his arm, and Draco and Lovegood have located themselves far too close to me for my liking.

Oh, and it gets better. Here comes Minerva.

"So good to see you all," she says cheerfully to the group. "Wait... where is Hermione?"

"She's fine," Harry replies to her concern. "Said she was finishing up some work, sends her apologies. She should be here soon. You know what she's like though, never any fun until the work's done."

"Indeed. Indeed! Though perhaps you lot could have learnt a little from Hermione about that sort of thing?" Minerva says tightly to them, but she's smiling all the same.

I hear no more. Hermione is coming. Time to run. I cannot do this.

I relocate myself to the far side of the hall, amused by the first-years all scampering to clear a path for me. Twits.

This is a vast improvement. From this vantage point I will be able to see the instance Hermione enters the hall, and then I can disappear to my rooms.

My eyes are drawn to the main entrance, and there she is. Merlin, she is... beautiful. Her hair is up again, but this time she has abandoned her somewhat plain Muggle clothes for a dress. Although in red, flowing to the floor and, well, not particularly revealing, she still looks infinitely alluring. This fabric clings to her body, and suddenly I am acutely aware of precisely how idiotic my plans were. There is no chance that a woman who looks like that and whose mere presence in the same room as I can have such detrimental effects on my self-control would ever even consider the possibility of looking at me with anything but pity. You are a fool, Severus.

I don't care. I am going to ask her to dance anyway. Just not yet. No, she just walked through the door; that would be pathetically needy.

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Not yet, she is talking with Minerva. I don't need that old witch (yes, I said witch), putting her two Knuts in.

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Not yet. Potter and his loyal imbeciles surround her. As much as I am certain my asking Hermione to dance would bring them entertainment for centuries to come, I am not in the mood to be sent to Azkaban for murder.

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Not yet. She's talking with Miss Weasley. I care not to interrupt idiotic girl banter.

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Severus, now or never, you fool. There are only twenty minutes of the ball left.

Fine.

Before I realise it, I have stalked straight across the hall and am standing before Miss Granger. Miss Weasley clears off so bloody quickly you would have thought I was a

walking death penalty.

"Professor Snape," Hermione says, smiling at me.

"Miss Granger." That was not so bad: she smiled at me, I remembered her name....

"How are you, sir?"

Not again. "Reasonable. Yourself?"

"Fantastic. It's been over a year since I was here and...."

"Hermione! Hermione!" I turn to find Miss Weasley flying towards us, her face streaked in tears. How the hell did that happen? She was perfectly fine when she departed just a few moments ago.

"Ginny?" Hermione asks, turning from me to give her friend her full attention. "What on Earth...?"

"I am going to kill him!" Miss Weasley yells, storming away from Hermione.

"Who?"

"Harry! Who else?!"

And after all the trouble I was caused to stop Voldemort from murdering the boy... oh well. That's life.

Hermione is right on her heels, barely taking the time to call over her shoulder to me, "Sorry!"

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Bloody Potter. Of course, it seems only fitting that he should ruin my plans. Then again, perhaps he has done me favour. Given that Miss Granger is no longer in attendance, nor is he- or she-Weasley, I needn't worry about making a fool of myself.

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Brilliant. Not only was the Yule Ball as detestable as normal, I have been left with clean-up duty, and by that I mean depositing all the errant children trying to commit carnal acts around the Great Hall back to their rooms. Even Minerva has disappeared, flitting away to the considerable comfort of her tartan bed socks.

And here we have two more. There is something so disgusting about watching two fourth years slobbering all over one another as if that could possibly be enjoyable.

"Ahem."

The two break apart so suddenly I literally hear their lips pop. They stare up at me wide-eyed. Twits.

"I am in no mood to deal with vile little imbeciles like yourselves. Your own beds, this instant, before you witness precisely what my unpleasant moods are capable of."

They scamper so quickly from the room they are a complete blur.

"Haven't lost your diplomatic touch, I see."

I turn and find myself looking down at Miss Granger. Merlin, she's caught me off guard. Say something, Severus, anything.... "Indeed." Oh, that was intelligent!

"Well, I just came to retrieve Ginny's and my things. Poppy says she will have Harry's ears back to normal by tomorrow and Ginny's now pleading with him as to how sorry she is, so I suppose my work there is done."

"The boy who lived can defeat the Dark... Voldemort, but he cannot deal with Miss Weasley?"

"Ginny is a force to be reckoned with," Hermione says with a laugh. "Be glad she was on our side."

I actually laugh - just a little. Hermione stares at me like I am a leper.

"Good evening, Miss Granger," I say suddenly, and turn on my heel to leave the otherwise empty hall. I catch the sound of her heels tapping across the flagstones behind me for a few steps, and then her hand is on my arm again.

"Not so fast, sir. I believe you owe me a dance."

I turn to face her. She looks so expectant.

"Miss Granger, the ball finished hours ago."

"Honestly, that's nothing a little foolish wand-waving cannot solve," Hermione chides, and the next moment the air is filled with music again, but much softer than earlier. I am thankful for that much my head is still thumping.

"Miss Granger," I begin to protest, trying my best to back away from her. Unfortunately, my feet refuse to co-operate.

"If you did not want to dance with me, you should have said so at the Order party," she replies smugly, her eyes twinkling in amusement.

"You didn't give me a chance," I retort, yet I find my arm around her back, her fingers laced with my own. When did that happen? Bloody Merlin... I have no chance now.

"Didn't I?" Hermione says softly, moving gently with me. "How very rude of me."

She feels amazing in my arms. The fabric of her dress is so smooth under my fingers. However, it is where her fingers touch my own that has me so utterly distracted; they are so slim, so small beneath mine. She is so very feminine. Merlin, what am I doing?

"Miss Granger?"

"Yes?"

"Why do you wish for me to dance with you?"

Hermione laughs a little and I leap back from her, crossing my arms defensively across my chest. "This is some sort of joke, isn't it? Some idiotic game you and your little friends are playing! Well, I will not be used as..."

"Sir! Sir!" Hermione says, cutting me off. "I asked you to dance, because I wanted to." She gives me an embarrassed smile, takes my hand again and steps back towards

me, but this time she rests her head upon my chest.

"You... you wanted to?"

"Is that so hard to believe? I am human... Severus."

Bloody Merlin. Right, do not think. Do not think. Whatever she says. Fine.

That sounded so very much like she doubted I would ever want to dance with her. As if... if she might actually....

Don't think it!

I am suddenly acutely aware of her presence, her body pressed against mine. Of her warmth, the curve of her lower back beneath my hand - her breath permeating my layers of clothes and teasing at my chest - her own chest against me.

Tentatively, and trying to be stealthy, I dip my neck and inhale. Her hair smells divine. I have always been so sensitive to scents something unavoidable as a Potions master. The luscious smell soars through me and settles deep within the animalistic portion of my brain.

No longer caring what she thinks of my actions, I purposefully inhale again, drawing her slightly tighter against me. Mmm, cinnamon and rose fill my senses. My eyes are drawn to the pale skin of her neck, and I find myself nuzzling her.

Hermione sighs contentedly. Bad, bad move. My lips, as if of their own free will, graze over her neck, tracing light kisses down her skin. She actually tilts her head to allow me better access. Merlin! In desperate need, I am nipping, sucking, licking at her skin. I cannot get enough of her.

"Severus," she moans, her hand leaving my arm to tangle in my hair, tugging slightly on it as I continue. I kiss my way up her neck, along her jaw and then pull back to look at her. She smiles softly at me, and I am lost. Our lips meet. My tongue tangles with hers. She tastes heavenly, her mouth so soft, so hot under mine. Her hips suddenly surge forward, grinding into mine; my arousal can no longer be in doubt in her mind. Merlin, Severus, that was stupid. She is hardly the sort of girl who would find the fact that you have a raging erection after just a few moments of dancing with her a suitable thing.

"If I might be so presumptuous," Hermione murmurs, kissing my Adam's apple, "perhaps it would be prudent to take this somewhere less... public."

"What?" I find myself choking.

Hermione laughs. "I would have thought you would be fully aware of the birds and the bees by now." I feel like a twit, until she stands on tiptoe and whispers in my ear, "I want you, Severus Snape."

I close my eyes tightly and let out a small moan. "Hermione, you do not want to do this," I manage to say quietly.

"I believe that I am quite capable of making my own choices, sir. However, if you are not of the same inclination...."

"Do you have any idea who I am? I am Severus Snape, greasy git of the dungeons, ex-Death Eater, murderer...."

"Those things are not who you are, Severus. Time to stop hiding behind them."

Her fingers are trailing down my neck, fiddling with my coat buttons. I am beyond backing out.

"You are correct, as per usual," I reply, grasping her hands to a halt. She stares up at me, looking a little worried. She actually thinks I might turn her down? This is insanity. "I'll concede that my rooms would be far more accommodating."

Hermione smiles up at me and any resolve I might have once held has evaporated.

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I show Hermione into my rooms, and I am overcome with nervousness. Never in my wildest dreams did I suspect she would be back here tonight, and hence I have not cleaned up at all. Not that the place isn't clean, that's what house-elves are for, but I am referring to hiding anything I wouldn't wish for her to see. Thankfully, there's nothing in view.

"Perhaps you would like a drink?" I say, thinking that I am certainly going to need a strong Firewhisky if I am going to make it any further tonight. I am as jittery as a first-year at sorting.

"That would be wonderful," Hermione says, looking around her, appraising my rooms.

"Sorry, I do not know what you prefer," I say questioningly, hoping she'll stop her exploration of my rooms it is making me nervous as hell.

"Chassagne-Montrachet, thanks."

She what? Thankfully I know what she is talking about, but what a pretentious... never mind, this is little Miss know-it-all; she has a brain and for that I desire her even more. I magic up two glasses of the crimson liquid, and hand one to her. There is a rather awkward moment while she waits for me to move and I stand frozen to the spot, unsure of how I should proceed. Don't get me wrong, I am perfectly apt at pleasuring women I'm just completely innocent when it comes to... how can I put this tactfully? Nice women? Merlin, women who aren't Voldemort's call girls.

I wish for Hermione to return after tonight.

I what? I down my entire glass.

Never mind.

Hermione stifles a small laugh, then reaches out and takes my hand. With another glance around the room, she gently persuades me in the direction of the fireplace.

Her eyes linger over the two armchairs there, before turning back to look up at me, amused.

"I suspect that you would not be particularly pleased with me wandering in here and rearranging your rooms," she informs me with a smile. "So perhaps, if you'd be so kind as to move those chairs back a bit, you could join me on the floor by the fire?"

Presumptuous little witch! What am I saying? Am I going to pass up this opportunity because she wants me to move a chair or two?

The armchairs slide back slightly from the fire at a swish of my wand and Hermione sinks down to the floor, her fingers still locked in mine and tugging me with her.

I cannot believe that at my age I am even contemplating sitting down on the rug. Merlin, my legs are going to kill me tomorrow. I have totally lost control, Hermione has me wrapped around her little finger. Time for a change.

Lowering myself to the floor, I lean back against one chair and bestow Hermione with a contemplative appraisal.

"I highly suggest, Miss Granger, that you quit messing around with that wine before I leave you with no time to savour it."

Hermione's eyes grow dark, and in four or five well-placed gulps, the glass is empty. I grasp the wrist of her hand containing the empty glass, gently prise the vessel from her fingers and place it around the side of my chair. Leaning forward, my lips meet hers, picking up precisely where we left off. She tastes heavenly of Hermione and a perfect vintage. I am not certain which is making me more intoxicated.

My hands slide down her sides, coming to rest on her hips. I leave them there for a while, stroking circles through her dress, until I am certain she is not anticipating my next move; I pick her up and lift her into my lap, pleased with the surprised squeak she emits.

"For all appearances, Miss Granger, do not think for one moment that you have the better of me."

The wench grinds her hips forward into my lap, and I can feel the heat of her radiating through my clothes, acutely aware that the skirt of her dress has ridden up to her thighs and that the only covering between the two of us now, besides my layers, are what from this angle appear to be a fairly skimpy pair of impractical, lacy blue knickers. Right now, impractical is for once completely acceptable.

"Miss Granger, attempt to make me the fool again and you will have to deal with the consequences," I retort, seeing the amused look on her face at my reaction to her movement. My fingers wander over the exposed skin of her thighs, relishing the silky feel.

"And what would those consequences be, sir?" she teases, running her fingers down my chest.

I vainly attempt to put on my best scowl, the one reserved for first-years and Potter, and inform her, "Test my patience and you shall find out."

Hermione chews on her bottom lip for a moment, then an evil smirk creeps over her face. Leaning in towards my ear, she says in barely a breath, "I'd like to deal with the consequences, sir." She punctuates her remark with another roll of her hips. This time she lets out a low moan of her own, thankfully disguising mine, as she presses forward to find me fully aroused and straining for release.

"The consequences," I growl, sliding the zip down the back of her dress, the sound igniting my desire further, "are not negotiable, Miss Granger. Never say you weren't warned."

I lower her back onto the rug, sliding her dress down her body and off as I do. Merlin. Merlin. Merlin. She now lies before me, completely naked save her shoes, those knickers and an only slightly more practical bra. I can even see a slightly damp patch soaking through the fabric between her legs, and the vision overwhelms me.

"Duly noted, sir," she replies with a grin.

So much delectable skin, so smooth. Where to start?

I begin by removing her shoes certainly, not the most arousing thing in the world, but a necessity to insuring that I don't end up with one of those heels imbedded somewhere... unacceptable.

My fingers dance across her ankles, then slowly I begin to slide them along the insides of her legs, along the rounded muscles of her calves, the dip of her knee, then even slower up her inner thighs. Hermione wriggles under my touch, her breathing growing shallower as my fingers linger closer to those totally impractical knickers. Whoever made those is a genius. Her eyes flick open to meet mine and, locking her with an evil grin, I trace along the very edge of the lace and then over her hips, moving away from where she wants me.

"In a hurry, Miss Granger?" I tease.

"Bastard," she whimpers, but as my fingers find the undersides of her breasts, I can tell from the needy way her eyes slip shut and her breath hitches in her throat that she will forgive me.

"So they say," I reply.

I let my fingers wander up her chest, sliding between her breasts, never quite touching her where she wants me. They journey across her shoulders, pushing the straps of her bra down as I go and I lean down over her to let my lips follow the journey of my fingers, softly kissing the bare skin of her shoulders. Just another inch and a well-placed flick of my fingers and her bra will be unclasped; her breasts will be exposed to me to do with as I please. The urge to simply tear the garment from her and take what I desire is almost overwhelming, and in a rash attempt to sate myself I settle for capturing her mouth with my own. She returns my gesture - not only enthusiastically, but with aptitude. Apparently her schoolbooks haven't been all she's studied... I don't want to think about that. No, tonight she belongs to me. Her tongue tangles with mine, her soft lips graze against my own and her hands tangle in my hair, pulling me closer.

My body falls completely into contact with hers, her feminine form moulding to my torso. Merlin, I can feel her hard nipples pressing through her bra, my clothes, and into my chest. She wants this... she wants me.

She wants me.

I raise my chest from hers and unclasp her bra. Beneath me I feel her breasts slide from the garment; their restraint gone, they are much softer now. My lips never leave her mouth as I drown in her taste. I gently trace the fingers of one hand over her chest, drawing ever-decreasing circles around one breast as she raises her body to meet my touches. Finally, the taut peak of her nipple brushes beneath my fingers. She presses more firmly into my hand as I roll the tight bud between my thumb and forefinger, increasing the pressure until she is moaning softly below me just short of pain, and most definitely pleasurable. Her hips buck beneath me, and the urge to discover precisely how much she wants this overwhelms me.

Somewhat reluctantly, my mouth leaves her lips, but, with my next destination in mind, I know that her pouty whimper won't stay that way. For now, one hand remains on her breasts, teasing her with promises of things to come. My lips return to her neck for a moment, kissing her soft skin as I take the opportunity to inhale her scent once more. Merlin, she is one potent aphrodisiac.

I kiss my way down her upper chest and along the top of the soft curve of her breasts. Hermione shudders beneath me, her breath hitching in her throat as my mouth draws nearer and nearer one taut nipple. With the palms of my hands, I urge her breasts together softly. My tongue darts out and flicks first at one nipple, then draws a damp line across the sparse space to the other as she whimpers under me. Her skin is so deliciously soft beneath my tongue. I tug one taut bud into my mouth, slowly increasing the pressure as I test her desire; as she lets out a soft moan and bucks against me I am quickly drawn to the conclusion that I have found Hermione's threshold. I capture her other nipple with my thumb and forefinger again, appraising with the same enthusiasm, my free fingers stroking the sides of her breasts.

"Merlin, Severus," she breathes, her chest arching up off the floor in agreement with my ministrations.

Urged on by her words, I brush my tongue over her nipple and am delighted by the squeak that escapes her. With fairness in mind, just for once, I slide across to her other breast to pay it the same attention. I am lost in the heavenly world where Hermione is murmuring incoherent things beneath me as my nose brushes along her soft skin and my lips draw her taste into my mouth. I cannot believe how impossibly aroused I am now. If this were anyone else, I would have dismissed with her pleasure and be taking my own from her body by now. But, despite my discomfort, I would far rather see Hermione sated. Merlin knows, I'm not going to last long when I finally delve into the depths I so desire.

My hands linger for a moment more, revelling in the feel of her breasts pressing into my palms, before I gently release her nipples and begin kissing my way down her torso, my hands trailing down her sides. My mouth reaches an oddly silky piece of skin, and on close inspection I realise this is the remnants of the scar left from the final battle. Guilt and anguish seep through my veins; I should have done something to have stopped this, I should have destroyed Voldemort earlier, prophecy be damned! I should never have let this innocent go into battle for what was my mistake.

"Severus," Hermione whimpers, and I realise I've stopped my movements. "Please."

Why does she not hold the fact that the reason her younger years were so tormented was my own doing? That this mark on her perfect skin could have been avoided?

I glance up and my eyes meet hers. "I'm..."

But Hermione cuts me off with a little laugh. "Bit like a badge of honour, I've grown quite attached to that scar. Besides, as it fades it seems to be taking on the opening line of *Hogwarts: A History*."

A small smile tugs at the corners of my mouth. She doesn't despise me for it. Driven by the desire to attempt to erase some of my past deeds, I lathe the scar in a futile attempt to soothe its meaning to me.

My fingers brush against the lace of her knickers where they lie over the curve of her hips and I halt there as my mouth catches up with them. I press my nose against the soft fabric, inhaling her muted scent deeply. It envelops my mind, sending it reeling into deplorable thought. My tongue darts out and draws along the damp patch on the fabric, tasting her muskiness for the first time. She writhes and whimpers beneath me. I return once more, this time purposefully sliding along the crease where the fabric clings to her, pressing slightly harder at the top, beneath which her clit resides.

"Please," she moans again, her hands sliding into my hair to urge me on.

My thumbs hook over the elastic of her knickers and I slide them agonisingly slowly down her hips, drawing out the anticipation.

Finally, she is naked before me. I can see the evidence of her arousal glistening against her bare skin. Cautiously, I reach out with one finger, drawing it along her moist folds. She gasps at my touch, whimpering slightly. I can't wait any longer, I have to taste her. Raising the finger to my mouth, I watch her face intently as I suck her moisture from my skin. A low moan slides from her lips and my eyes fall shut for a moment, overwhelmed by her taste and her reaction. Forcing my eyes open again, I lower myself down to her level, my fingers sliding over her, pulling her taut, exposing her to me.

My tongue meets her skin; pure silk. Her fingers dig deeply into my scalp, her hips arch beneath me. Over and over my tongue teases her, rewarded by a constant stream of moans. Her head tosses wildly from side to side as her pleasure grows. Suddenly her back lifts from the floor, her eyes wide as she stares down at me, before falling back against the carpet. Her orgasm is undeniable, her hips buck, her fingers tug at my hair and my longing is sated with a sense of satisfaction. I did this to her and she seems more than pleased with it.

"Merlin, Severus..." she murmurs on the cusp of a deep breath. I flick her clit with my tongue once more for good measure, delighting in the unrestrained shudder that wracks her body again. Kissing my way back up her body, I claim her mouth once more. Her enthusiasm is overwhelming. I cannot restrain myself any longer.

Retrieving my wand from the floor, a quick flick leaves bare skin on bare skin. Her flesh warms me, soft and smooth against my own. Her hands slide from my hair to my back, clutching at my skin, wordlessly urging me on. It is all I need.

Adjusting my hips, I find myself poised outside her entrance, her slick heat teasing the tip of my cock. I could die here a happy man.

Composing myself, I press forward, sliding inside of her until I am completely engulfed within her needy body. She shivers beneath me, a whimper on her lips caught by my own.

I am inside of her. It is her - Hermione's - warm folds I am buried in, slick with her desire for me. She is moaning gently because of what I am doing to her. Me - Severus Snape - greasy git of the dungeons. Gods, I cannot believe that she is here, that this is really happening...

My thought processes are dangerous. I can feel my body starting to tighten with the tell-tale signs of an impending orgasm. I cannot afford to let go just yet to claim her as mine and... Severus, those thoughts are not going to help! She will think you inadequate.

I concentrate on her face, watching her reactions to me, distracting myself. Slowly I move, sliding through her, pressing in again. Her eyes struggle to stay open as I pleasure her. Her heavy lids framed by thick lashes are nothing short of exquisite. Her muscles clamp around me and lose control; supporting myself with my arms, I increase my tempo, losing myself in her delighted sounds. Merlin, she is so hot... so tight.... It doesn't get any better than this.

"Severus!" she calls. My name on her lips the final straw. I pound into her, joining her as her name escapes in a growl from my throat while she pulses wildly around me.

In what seems like an eternity later, I lift my head and chest from her damp skin, watching with curiosity at the smug grin on her face. She has obviously found my lack of control amusing.

I look away from her in embarrassment.

"Severus?" Hermione says, touching my cheek.

"Sorry," I think I mutter.

"What on Earth for?" she asks, sounding confused.

"For... my... err... lacklustre performance."

Hermione laughs. *Brilliant*.

"Oh, no, Severus, please, don't get me wrong! I was laughing because I was just thinking about how that was the most mind-blowing sex I have ever had and here you are apologising for your part in it!"

"Stop humouring me, Miss Granger."

"Severus Snape," she says with a laugh, "I am not humouring you! Besides, if you wish to make another attempt at it, I am certainly not going to complain," she whispers sultrily in my ear.

Bloody Merlin, how old does this woman think I am? She expects me to be able to bounce back like a seventeen-year-old boy? Yet I find myself smiling at her.

"Let's discuss that over another glass of wine." I may have been made a fool for lesser things, but not this time; she is too important to me.