

Fancy Meeting You Here

by ancientgirl

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Chapter 1

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Fancy meeting you here

As a poor boy growing up in the industrial mill-town known as Spinner's End, Severus Snape often dreamed of traveling. There were many nights in his childhood, as he lay in bed listening to his parents fight, that he would imagine himself seeing the wonders of the world.

Unfortunately, his induction into Voldemort's inner circle, and the years he subsequently spent after that mistake to rid the world of the organization created by the hateful wizard, had turned his dream into something he thought unattainable. Spies and Death Eater traitors had short life expectancies, and his most daring dream was to survive the war.

After the war and the defeat of Voldemort, along with the imprisonment of most of the Death Eaters, Severus realized that the dream he once had might become a reality. When Albus Dumbledore's Pensieve was recovered intact from the rubble of Hogwarts, Severus' name was cleared. The old wizard had been dying a slow death as the result of destroying one of the Dark Lord's Horcruxes, and as such he knew that his life would not continue beyond Harry's sixth year at Hogwarts. His death was a necessary sacrifice, in order to keep Severus' cover as a loyal Death Eater; Albus himself had made that decision.

While Severus had been cleared of his crimes including the death of his mentor and friend, he still felt guilt and regret. Wanting nothing more than to leave his past behind him and start fresh, he accepted the final gift Albus left him. In his will, Albus left Severus the key to his personal vaults at Gringotts. It wasn't the mother lode, but the Galleons Albus had were enough to allow Severus' dream of traveling to come true.

Combined with his own Galleons saved from many years as a teacher, Severus would also be able to purchase a modest house and a small Apothecary shop. Before he set off on his journey, he secured several contracts with highly known medical facilities and schools, as well as other Apothecaries, to supply them with rare and hard-to-produce potions. Satisfied in the knowledge there was no need to worry about where his next Galleon would come from, Severus set off on his travels.

His six-week trek across the globe would lead him to several countries, but only a few would be truly memorable.

Egypt

Today would be one of those memorable days. Severus stood at the very top of what is known to the Muggle world as the great pyramid of Cheops. Egypt had always been on his list of places to see as an adult, and now he was here, watching the sun rise from the horizon, looking across a vast plane of amber and gold-colored terrain.

He'd woken up early that morning wanting to have the pyramid and view to himself, and not have to share it along with hundreds of noisy tourists, as he'd done for several interminable days so far. "Mum, the camel spit at me!" some brat would whine, and the tourist guides would stop everything to cater to the customer. "Where are the belly-dancers? You promised!" another brat would whine, and Severus would grit his teeth. No, he'd had enough of tourists! Although he had enjoyed the Egyptian coffee, beer, baklava, and other local delicacies a far cry from the Hogwarts boarding school fare he'd eaten for years. And he had fully enjoyed the belly-dance show he saw last night, and the night before, and the night before that...

As he looked off into the distance he noticed a group of workers coming in from the city. At the hotel where he'd been staying, the concierge had informed him there was a group of archaeologists working near the Giza plateau. A previously undiscovered tomb had been found, and the excavation had only recently been permitted. Severus had always been curious about the science of archeology. He decided to wander into the camp and ask if it would be possible for him to observe the process of securing and preserving an ancient site using Muggle methods.

As he approached the camp, he noticed some small artifacts had already been uncovered. The site seemed to be some kind of ancient encampment of sorts. He noticed a tall old man speaking to several younger associates, and he approached the small group. As he drew closer, the younger people went off in different directions, leaving the old man alone to examine what looked like a map.

"Good morning," said Severus as he held his hand out to shake the other man's.

"Good morning to you sir," said the old man, greeting him.

"I hope you don't mind my wandering into your camp, but I noticed you all seem to have uncovered something here."

The old man smiled and shook his head. "Well, yes and no. There is a new tomb here, but we weren't the ones who discovered it."

Severus nodded. "I'm sorry, I forgot my manners. My name is Severus Snape, I used to teach chemistry in a British boarding school. I'm here on holiday before I begin my new business venture and I've always been quite fascinated in archeology. In fact, I've spent many years exploring a thousand-year-old Scottish castle, becoming an expert in its dungeons and surrounding forest."

"Ah, a studious man then. I'm Dr. Herman Stoltz. I'm here with a team from the University of Cairo. Our task is to document much of what has already been uncovered. There is still a small excavation site just off the edge of the encampment that was never fully excavated. I have a few former students who volunteer some of their time working for us. Would you like a peek?"

Severus' eyes nearly bulged out of their sockets. "I would most certainly like a peek, thank you."

Dr. Stoltz didn't usually like people wandering onto his sites, but the man looked honest enough for him, and he seemed genuinely interested, so he decided to allow Severus a look at one of the small digs being conducted. Besides, there wasn't much to be taken anyway, just a few broken pottery fragments and bones of the ancient workers. These items weren't of much value to anyone outside of a museum.

As the two men approached the site, someone called out to Dr. Stoltz.

"I'm sorry; I need to see what they want," he apologized to Severus. "Go on ahead, it's safe certainly safer than a dark dungeon, and there are plenty of people to guide you. Just mind your footing on the way down the ladder. Let Jane know I said it was all right for you to be there." He patted Severus on the back and walked back towards the main camp.

Severus climbed down the ladder and entered the rock-cut underground tomb. He had to bend down slightly since he was far too tall to walk upright. As Severus walked down a wide path he heard the sound of tapping, as though someone was striking a metal tool against a rock. He followed the sound and stuck his head through the entrance of a small chamber, where he saw a woman kneeling on the ground.

"Excuse me, Dr. Stoltz was showing me around and said it would be all right for me to see the work here."

The worker turned her head slightly, and smiled.

"Oh! Hello, Professor Snape!"

"Miss Granger?" Severus was so surprised that he stood straight up, and promptly hit his head so hard on the ceiling of the rock-cut tomb, that he knocked himself unconscious.

He woke up an hour later with a splitting headache and blurred vision. However, he now realized he hadn't been seeing things before. There, sitting on a stool next to his cot in a small tent was a smiling Hermione Granger.

"It really is you," stated Severus.

"Professor, what a wonderful surprise to see you! What are you doing here in Egypt?" asked Hermione.

"Egypt, you say? I half-thought I'd been transported to purgatory I can't leave Hogwarts no matter what. Miss Granger, what are *you* doing here? I thought you would be married by now with a dozen red-headed babies hanging from your robe."

Hermione smiled. "Ron and I broke up just after we left Hogwarts. He's living in London with Lavender Brown and those dozen red-headed children. As for me, I'm here as a favor to Nearly Headless Nick. One of his friends from the Headless Hunt thinks his son's head is buried here, so I've been looking for it."

Severus sat up and felt the back of his head for the tell-tale bump. He narrowed his eyes as he looked at her smiling face. "Well, thank you for your assistance, but I think this is my cue to leave."

"Professor, you hit your head quite hard. Perhaps you should stay a while. Besides, don't you want to explore the tomb? There are beautiful pictures on the walls."

Not wanting to be in his ex-pupil's company a moment longer, Severus stood, swayed a bit, and walked toward the opening of the tent.

"Miss Granger, I'd hoped that the last time I saw you, was the last time I'd see you and your classmates. I am on holiday and wish to spend my last few weeks alone, without any reminder of the war, before I go back home and begin my new business. Good day."

He turned and walked out of the tent and back to his hotel. Along the way he tried to convince himself the fluttering in his stomach wasn't because he was actually pleased to see her, but more like his breakfast disagreed with him.

Las Vegas - A week later

When Severus' travel agent notified him his next stop would be Las Vegas, he was curious. While he had never actually thought of visiting the city, he was curious about it. After two days he was hooked. He found he enjoyed the shows, the food, and the nightly activities. By observing body language, he'd won some money at the gambling tables. He'd even volunteered at one of the "magic" shows and had enjoyed messing up the Muggle's routine with a bit of real magic; the magician apologized by giving him vouchers for free hotel rooms and dinners. Las Vegas showgirls were very different from the belly-dancers he'd seen in Egypt, but he was not one to complain. There was always something to do here and it was quite a refreshing change for him. He would have to thank his travel agent when he was home again.

Tonight was his last night in the city, and Severus sat at the hotel bar enjoying a drink. As he lifted his Zombie to his lips, he heard a voice behind him.

"Oh, hello, Professor."

Slowly he turned and saw Hermione Granger.

"Miss Granger," he said nonchalantly. Just as he took a sip of his drink he promptly spewed it all over the bar. "Miss Granger?" He stared at her as she smiled.

"Fancy meeting you here, sir." Her hair was pulled back, showing that the tips of her ears were shaped in a long point.

Severus looked at her perplexed.

"What are you doing here in Las Vegas?" Before he could ask her if she was part of some curse he'd been put under, he looked again at her ears and then at her attire. *Merlin, what has she done to herself?* "Why in blazes do you look like a house-elf?" he questioned.

Hermione frowned. "I am not a house-elf, I'm a Vulcan."

His eyebrows shot straight up. "I beg your pardon. You're a what?" Now he was really confused. What did she mean by saying she was a Vulcan? She certainly did not look like Vulcan, the patron deity of alchemy.

She rolled her eyes. "Honestly, Professor, haven't you ever seen Star Trek?"

"I can't say I've had the pleasure." He answered dryly.

Without invitation, Hermione pulled out the barstool next to Severus and began to explain to him the intricacies of being a Trekkie.

Much to his surprise, he found this Star Trek lore quite fascinating. Of course his interest began to wane as soon as he realized the Zombie he'd been consuming during her lesson in Star Trek 101 was gone.

"Would you like to attend the convention with me?" asked Hermione hopefully.

"Are you mad?" shouted Severus. "There isn't enough alcohol in this town that would make me even go near this convention." He looked at her and thought he saw a hint of disappointment in her face, just before she smiled again.

"Not even to see the green-skinned Orion slave girls?"

"No."

"The Borg Queen?"

"No."

"Quark's dabo girls?"

"That sounds like a disease. No, I would not."

"Well, it's your loss. Nice to see you again." Hermione rose, waved goodbye, and left.

Severus sat still, watching her walk away. Once again he told himself his nervous stomach was because of the four Zombies he'd had since he arrived at the bar, and not his excitement in seeing her.

Mt. Everest

While his trip up to this point had been mostly taken in the Muggle fashion, Severus had only one week of his holiday left. He wanted to climb the highest mountain in the world, but really had little time for all of the Muggle preparation that went along with such a dangerous trip. Muggle climbing permit fee and government permissions? An approved expedition team with Sherpa guides minimum \$50,000 royalty? Customs duties? Visas? Hah! It was now that he would use his skills as a wizard. It was a little known fact, but the wizarding community had a small village set up just a mile away from the summit of the great mountain; for him, the ascent would be merely a day-trip. So he was able to spend several days visiting other countries in the area Thailand, India, Tibet, Japan to purchase rare potions ingredients, before he headed to Nepal.

On this day, Severus packed his gear and made ready to trek up to the top of the world. Tomorrow he would be returning to Hogsmeade, to begin his new life. His business licenses were all in order and his customers were already lined up to meet with him upon his return Monday morning. Today, he wanted to sit peacefully and enjoy the view from Mount Everest.

He Disillusioned himself to prevent Muggles from seeing him. He'd taken a potion to allow him to resist any altitude sickness. The Bubble-Head Charm kept him from being affected by the thin air. He used a broom to fly to the wizarding village, and from there it took him a little over an hour to climb the mile up to the very top. While he used magic to keep himself from freezing and keep his boots from slipping, he wanted to climb on his own strength. Magic helped, but snow and ice were very hard to walk in, so it was still physically difficult, yet very satisfying.

He arrived at the summit. He saw many flags that had been left by Muggles before him, who'd made the climb with no magical help, a task he found himself admiring. He set down his climbing staff, and stood looking out into the blanket of snow-covered mountains and white clouds. He closed his eyes and allowed himself to just listen to the wind. Severus thought back on the past several weeks. He'd enjoyed visiting the places he'd always wanted to see. He also found himself remembering rather fondly his brief meetings with his ex-student. Would he ever see her again?

"Amazing, isn't it?"

Severus smiled. For a moment he thought he heard her voice. He shook his head and opened his eyes, as he turned to look at the view behind him. As he did so, he bumped right into someone, almost knocking them down.

"I'm sorry, I thought I was here alone..." he said as he grabbed the other person's shoulder to prevent them from falling. Suddenly he realized who it was, bundled up in layers of clothing. "Miss Granger?"

"Hello, Professor!" she said with a smile.

He stared at her blankly. Now he was truly dumbfounded.

"Cat got your tongue?" she teased.

Severus shook his head, thinking perhaps the potion he'd taken might have been wearing off, since he was now having some kind of a hallucination.

"What in bloody hell are you doing here?"

Hermione spread her arms and spun around. "I'm enjoying the view!"

"How is it, Miss Granger, that for the past three weeks, you have managed to be at the same places I have been?" Severus briefly wondered if perhaps he actually had

