

Why?

by Pearle

Some questions defy answers. Hermione Weasley, nee Granger, and Severus Snape have a chance encounter that leads to a road better left untraveled. Angst-ridden one-shot into the world of marital infidelity.

Can be read as a stand alone or with its companion piece, *Why, Indeed*

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: The characters, settings, etc. of the Harry Potter series are not mine they belong to J.K. Rowling and Co. I promise to return them when I am through. Well, most of them anyway.

Why?

They had never meant for it to last this long. She was bored with her life. Bored with him. Bored with marriage. This was supposed to have been just a pleasant diversion, a way to put some excitement back in her life.

He had been willing to partake in a little harmless flirtation. The war was long over. His life had become, predictable.

They had run into each other in January, at a Potions lecture. It had been three years since the defeat of Voldemort. Two years since Hermione had married Ron. Severus was still at Hogwarts. Still teaching Potions to each new crop of dunderheads. Hoping to impart the smallest kernel of learning into students who didn't seem to care.

Severus had seen her at the annual Ministry Celebrations marking the day the boy who lived did it again. They were the golden trio plus one now. Harry Potter had married Ginny Weasley right after the final battle. The photo of his proposal was world famous. Muddy, his Quidditch uniform ripped and caked with blood, Potter had wandered dazed after defeating Voldemort, looking for Ginny. He got down on one knee and proposed when he found her safe and alive near Hagrid's hut. They were married a month later. A year later Hermione Granger married the other third of the trio, Ron Weasley.

Severus had always wondered why such a bright witch would marry someone so obviously below her intellect. They appeared to have little in common other than their friendship with Potter. Severus did not waste too much time worrying about the love lives of his former students. He was now sought after as one of the main heroes of the final battle. It was his picture they had used on *Witch Weekly* when the Ministry had awarded the heroes of the battle their Orders of Merlin, first class.

He had idly observed Hermione at the last two Celebrations. Weasley nearby, talking animatedly of Quidditch with anyone who would listen, he was now the trainer for the Chudley Cannons. Severus thought she looked supremely bored as he watched her sip her drink. Their eyes meet briefly as Hermione raised her glass in a silent toast. He gave no more thought to the witch as his attention was soon distracted by a buxom young blonde witch, of no more than twenty, asking him if he was interested in taking a walk in the garden.

It was six months before they saw one another again. Hermione was doing research in infectious diseases for St. Mungo's. The Potions lecture was entitled, "Flu, You. Know Your Germs." Severus had decided to attend the lecture with the hope he could stop the recent outbreak of flu that seemed to be advancing on Hogwarts, a particularly virulent strain that did not respond well to Pepper-up Potion.

He had not been surprised to see Hermione Weasley nee Granger at the lecture. He had often been forced, during meals, to listen to Minerva read various snatches of a seemingly endless string of letters from the young woman. Some days it was enough to put him off his dinner.

Granger, no he had mentally corrected himself, Weasley, had been accepted into an accelerated program at St. Mungo's. It really was no surprise, considering her intelligence. She may have been a thorn in his side for seven years, and he would never have admitted it to anyone, but he privately agreed with the general consensus of the staff. Granger was brilliant, without equal, unmatched in intelligence.

It was a favorite comment of Minerva's, when discussing her favorite Gryffindor, to point out that Hermione had tied his NEWT scores. Severus's NEWT's had been the highest in the history of Hogwarts, a distinction he no longer held alone.

He was not surprised to see her at the lecture that afternoon. What had surprised him was her offer to buy him a drink after the question and answer session. Both he and Granger, she would always be Granger not Weasley in his mind, it made it easier he supposed, the two had entered into a heated debate with the lecturer. They had each cited glaring errors in his theory as to what potions alterations would be effective in treating this new strain of flu as well as his lack of data in backing up his theory.

Hermione, she had become Hermione that afternoon in the hotel, had held nothing back, and told the aged wizard just how incompetent he was and exactly what he could do with his theory. She had not waited for the applause of the crowd to die down before stalking out of the room. He had stopped in the lounge for a quick firewhisky, when he saw her sitting at the bar. She had asked him to join her for a drink, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Severus contemplated the glass of whiskey in his hand. He seemed to have reached a crossroads, a true turning point. Did he want something more than an afternoon dalliance with this woman? Was he truly contemplating some type of relationship? Would she even stay long enough to hear him out? A knock at the door disturbed his thoughts. He crossed the sitting area of the shabby hotel room to answer it.

The young woman moved into his arms without a word as soon as the door opened, barely giving him a chance to move out of the doorway. The kiss they shared seemed to have a life of its own. Hunger, arousal, pure lust seemed to drive it on. His hands freely roamed her body, stopping randomly to caress her breast, squeeze her arse, move along her back. It had been like this since their first tryst. This all-consuming fire.

Her hands urgently divesting him of his clothing as he reached for his wand, both suddenly conscious of skin on skin as they fell feverishly into the bed. He pinned her hands above her head, both wrists gathered in one of his hands. He was brutal. His mouth ravaged hers, possessed her, as his free hand slipped lower to tease her breast.

Her moans driving him on, without preamble, he took her, hard and fast. It seemed she had been ready for him when she burst through the door. His hands moved to tangle in her hair, her legs encircling his waist, locking at the small of his back, drawing him deeper into her body. She clutched his shoulder with a strength he didn't know she possessed. It was later, in the shower back at Hogwarts, when the water stung his back, he saw the bloody scratches she had left along his shoulders. Scratches he had not felt at the time.

Each encounter, each joining, had been like this. Each meeting merged into the last until he could not tell them apart. She rarely stayed around for more than a quick release and she was gone, refusing to talk to him about why she was there. Barely a word passed between them since that first afternoon in the bar. He was left to contemplate what it all meant. Why he was meeting her. Each time he returned to the castle, he swore he would not meet her again. His resolve would last until the next time he received her owl, a cryptic message with no more than a time and date.

He had actually stopped during their third or fourth encounter. Her body sheathing his, he had stopped all movement and looked at her. The words a mere whisper from his lips. "Talk to me. Why, Hermione? Why are you doing this? With me of all people."

Her hands on his arse had tried to spur him on, his name, a moan from her lips. He refused to be swayed. His eyes watching hers for some sign, something he could understand.

She stopped then and met his glare. "Fine. I'll leave. I won't bother you again."

"Hermione."

"Let go of me, Severus."

But he didn't let go of her. His hands pinned her to the bed. His mouth possessed her. He rode her as if the demons of hell were at his back. And when it was over, she left, without a word.

He waited. Her owl came a week later. He never asked her why again.

The end?

A/N: Well, that was cheerful. Believe it or not it, this little ficlet started out in a more humorous vein as the answer to the marriage quote challenge that just finished on Wiktt this week. The main requirement was to include this quote, "When a man steals your wife, there is no better revenge than to let him keep her." by Sacha Guitry.

Hermione was going to be her usually persnickety self, measuring angles of pelvic tilt, correction of depth, etc. It was supposed to end with Harry turning to Ron and saying, "I can't believe she's taking off with the git." Ron would shrug, utter the quote above and then say, "So, you want to go look at the new brooms at Quality Quidditch Supplies?" Hermione can be heard in the background telling Severus why the temperature in the dungeons would have to be raised six degrees if they were going to live there and then move on to the changes she thought he should make in his wardrobe. The End. That would have been funny. Instead, this emerged. You never know.

A grateful thank you to Nakhash, my beta for her corrections and suggestions. Another set of eyes is always helpful, the mistakes, however, are still my fault.

Please review and let me know what you think. I love hearing from you! As always, thoughts, comments, reviews, whatever are always welcome.

Regards, Pearle