

Tangled Webs

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Post HBP tale where Snape captures Hermione on Voldemort's orders. Things happen. Plans are made. Does Voldemort get what he wants or has he been outsmarted once again?

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 3

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Disclaimer: These characters have been borrowed from the great Jo Rowling. I promise that I shall return them shortly.

This was written for the Summer 2006 HG/SS Exchange as requested by Andrian (see end for challenge details).

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Hermione waved to her mother and slipped in through the front entrance of the Leaky Cauldron. Her parents wanted to see her off, but she didn't feel it was necessary. Tom, the barman, knew to keep an eye on her until Arthur Weasley picked her up.

"Hello," she said, greeting him. He nodded in return and pointed to a dirty table near the corner.

To her surprise, she saw Charlie Weasley sitting there. Grinning, she went to him. "Charlie! What are you doing here?"

"Ah," he stood, rolling his eyes, "Mum has Dad tied up out at the Burrow." He smiled kindly. "The wedding is less than two days, and she's just decided that she wants the garden to be expanded." He looked down at her trunk. "I hope you don't mind."

"No, it's quite all right," she said, grinning goofily. Charlie was probably the most handsome of all the Weasley sons, what with his build, and even though she really liked Ron a great deal, her heart was beating quickly just being near him.

Thoughts of the Ministry's warnings came to mind. "I wonder why they didn't owl me to let me know," she said casually, allowing him to shrink her trunk and pick it up.

"Errol never came in yesterday evening." He frowned slightly. "I do hope he's all right, but I'm afraid that he is getting on in years. Maybe it was his time, this last delivery. He's been looking right down lately."

Hermione nodded. "Yes, when he brought my invitation, he looked bad, some feathers missing." She decided to try one more thing to make certain this was Charlie without making a fool of herself. "Well, was Wig not home?"

He looked at her as if she'd just fallen off her rocker. "Don't you mean Pig?"

She giggled. "Sorry. I don't know where my mind is."

"It's all right. I suppose you are making certain that it's me and that I'm not someone else."

Nodding, Hermione said, "Well, the pamphlets and everything, they warned us to do so." She shrugged. "Hope you understand."

"Sure," he said, putting her trunk into his pocket. "Come along."

He led her out the back entrance and into Diagon Alley. After a moment of window shopping, he said, "Oh, hey, would you mind waiting right here? I need to go into Knockturn Alley and... Well, maybe you should come with me. I'd hate to leave you here alone. Mum would have my head. We'll just be a moment." He looked around and lowered his mouth to her ear. "I was afraid I'd be late, so I didn't go before waiting on you, but I told Dad that I would pass in front of Borgin and Burkes to see exactly what customers were about."

Hermione's brow furrowed. "I suppose." She hoped the man wouldn't recognize her from the previous summer when she'd gone in to question him about what Draco had been looking to buy.

"Stay close to me," Charlie said, taking her hand and pulling his wand out. Once they neared the shop, he said, "Try to look nonchalant."

She nodded, not even looking in the direction of the store's windows, afraid the man would look out and see her. Suddenly, she was dragged into a dark alley. "What are you doing?" she demanded.

"Shhh!" he said, holding a finger to his lips and peeking round the corner. "Shite!"

"What is it?" she asked in a whisper, heart pounding.

"Severus Snape! He was just coming out as we passed." He looked at her, fear evident on his face. He led her back into the darker section of the alley. "If he looks in, he won't see us way back here."

Hermione pulled her wand out. "Shouldn't we just Disapparate away?"

"I tried just now. It must be warded against it." Suddenly, his body was against hers, pressing her into the wall, keeping her from view with his cloak. "Quiet," he whispered in a strained voice. "Someone's just come in from the alley."

She felt his wand tap her on the head, and it seemed as if he'd broken a raw egg over her. He was Disillusioning her and himself, hoping to not be seen by whomever was approaching.

Clutching her wand tightly, she prayed that it wasn't Snape. He'd not thought twice about killing Dumbledore, according to Harry. He would easily dispose of them if he had to. She tried not to breathe as the footsteps moved closer. She wished that she could see, but Charlie's damn cloak was blocking out her view and most of the light from the entrance that they still had.

It didn't take long for the footsteps to be drowned out by the hammering heart in her chest. Remembering a Muggle story she'd once read, she commiserated with the bloke who had been afraid that his heartbeat could be heard, giving him away.

Something finally did break through the sound of her fear. It wasn't something very welcoming. *"Expelliarmus,"* said a silky voice, sounding slightly smug. Her wand slipped away from her hand easily, and Charlie was moved away from her.

Through the dim light, her eyes adjusted and met the dark gaze of her old Potions master. His pale face seemed to glow in the darkness.

"What have we here?" he asked, putting her wand inside his robes and handing Charlie's back to him.

Gobsmacked, Hermione looked at Charlie. "How could you? You're on his side?" she accused. Before he could answer, she kicked him in the shin and tried to run for it. A jet of red light hit her, dropping her down immediately.

"I told you that would be easy," Snape said. "She's always been very trusting. Grab her, take this," he tossed his friend a small coin, "and Portkey to our Lord. Tell him I shall join you shortly."

"All right."

"You've proved yourself worthy this time... for a change," Snape said, nodding slightly. "See to it that you don't fuck this up."

"I won't, S-Severus."

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Hermione woke. Her head was pounding, and there was a coppery taste in her mouth. Blood? She remembered what had happened with Charlie. He'd betrayed her and had been working with Snape the entire time. The last thing she remembered was being Stunned, but she likely hit her mouth on her fall.

"Yeah, welcome back," Charlie's voice said. "You've only been out thirty minutes, I'd say."

"How could you?" she asked, eyes focusing on his shape. She tried to move and realized that her legs and hands were bound. "Charlie, please help me. Your family will understand that you've made a bad decision. They'll..."

"The Weasleys are good people," he said wistfully. "I've watched you for a long time." He moved closer, foul breath wafting to her nose as his lips lowered to hers. "Master says that I can play. That I've been good."

She cringed and moved her head aside as his tongue licked her lips. "Please don't do this, Ch-Charlie," she pleaded, tears coming to her eyes. It was then that she felt his hands upon her skin... bare skin. He'd stripped her and used magic to bind her, leaving her hands up over her head and her legs parted. He meant to rape her. Unable to stop herself, she started sobbing, partly through fear and partly through disgust. Her first time was supposed to be with Ron, not his rapist brother, Charlie. How could he be doing this to her? "No," she mumbled as his mouth moved down to her breasts, and his hands slid over her body, getting closer to her center.

"Yes," he whispered. "So very lovely. I saw you many times, you know. You'd change into your clothes with such ease, never guessing... never knowing that I was watching." He licked a trail around her soft nipple before speaking again. "And Ginny, she was the same. Oh, how I watched the two of you... Oh, how I wanted to lick you and to touch you..." his voice lowered even more, "to fuck you." He licked the side of her face. "So long since I've fucked someone..."

"You're sick!" Hermione said, trying to squirm. "Ah, no..." she cried out, wishing she could close her legs and ward off the finger that had just pushed into her. "Charlie... no... please!" What had caused him to be this way? Why would he talk about Ginny in such a way? The Death Eaters must have done something to him. And anyway, Charlie had rarely ever been at the Burrow while she'd been visiting... at least not for long. He'd usually been off in Romania.

"That's right, girl," he said, shoving another finger into her roughly. "Beg me."

He pumped his fingers a few times, quite roughly, making her cry louder in sheer horror and causing her channel to become wet with moisture and the blood of her damaged hymen.

She had never felt so violated, so dirty, so betrayed in her life. The horror of having someone she trusted do this to her was just too much to handle. She was uncertain that

she would ever feel the same again. *It's a nightmare. I'll wake up. I'll still be at home, and Mum will let me know that it was just a bad dream.*

"Charlie, please..."

"Yes, yes, beg... but don't call me Charlie," he said. "Call me Peter. Say my name..."

Peter? She gazed back at him and could make out the distinct features of Charlie Weasley. What was he talking about? She moved her head aside to evade his lips only to be rewarded with his fingers digging into her cheeks roughly to hold her mouth still as his lips descended to hers. When his tongue darted out, forcing its way into her mouth, she clamped down with her teeth, biting it as hard as she could, enjoying his scream of agony. A blow to the side of the face made her release her grip, but her plan had worked, for he'd moved away from her.

"You bitch! You dirty bitch!" he yelled, holding his mouth.

"What's going on here?" said a voice from the small, dank cell's doorway. When the figure entered, she could see that it was Snape and that his wand was lit, shining brightly, giving him a full view of her body. He arched a brow. "Very nice, Miss Granger, mostly anyway," he said blandly before turning towards the other man. "Wormtail, I remember you being told to see to it that she was put in her cell. I am uncertain where you got the idea that it was all right to violate her."

He moved closer to Hermione, pointing his wand at her more closely as if inspecting her, even looking at her lower body and making a tsking noise.

"But, Severus, he said that I'd been a good rat, that I could play..."

"He said that you could take part in the initial encounter since you knew the Weasleys so well, you idiot." He grabbed the other man and slammed him against the wall roughly. "He will be displeased. You've soiled the girl's hymen. What if he'd wanted to give that gift to someone more deserving?" he asked dispassionately. "I am afraid I shall have to tell him how I've found her."

Snape flicked his wand towards her, and she was free. She clutched at her robes, which were on the floor, and attempted to cover herself. She'd never been so frightened in her life. Snape sounded unlike she'd ever heard him before. His voice was the same, but he seemed even... less caring than before. Perhaps it was the knowledge of what he was capable of that made her uneasy. Perhaps it was what he'd said. Her virginity could have been a gift to someone more deserving. She trembled openly and fumbled to pull on her clothes while she hid behind her robe. Her knickers were ruined beyond repair, so she simply put them into her pocket.

"Ahh," Charlie said, holding onto his head and thrashing about.

She saw that he was changing, and in the next moment, she saw him in his true form. Peter Pettigrew. It was he who had abducted her. What had they done to Charlie? How did they get a bit of his hair or some other part of his person? *Oh, God... Pettigrew was the one who's been violating me, touching me...* She doubled over and vomited the breakfast that her mum had made for her.

"Get out of here," Snape said, pushing Wormtail out the door and closing it. He stooped down and offered her a handkerchief. When she didn't take it, he shoved it into her hands.

Hermione was afraid to look at him. She didn't want him to see her humiliation and anger. She didn't want him to know that they'd truly harmed her beyond repair. She didn't want to see the self-satisfied expression that he was likely wearing.

He stood and moved to the door. She watched his boots move across the stone floor. When the door opened, she finally found her courage and asked, "Professor Snape?"

"I am no longer your professor, Miss Granger," he said quietly.

"What's going to happen to me now, Professor?" she asked, ignoring what he'd said.

"I'm afraid that it won't be long before you find out." The door clicked behind him, and he called out, "Tidy up. Our Lord expects to see you shortly."

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Hermione jumped and tried to press herself against the cold, stone wall as her door opened, revealing a tall Death Eater.

"*Lumos.*"

To her surprise, it was a female Death Eater. She strode forward and pointed her wand at her, blinding Hermione. Though the voice had been soft, the hand that grabbed her arm was firm and rough.

"Come on. No need to deny the inevitable," said the woman, syrupy voice holding a hint of sadness and terror, giving Hermione hope.

Hermione pulled back. "Wait... please..."

"Don't fight, or it will be worse for you," the witch advised. "Come."

Nodding in defeat and feeling the tears well up in her eyes, Hermione stopped resisting and allowed the woman to lead her out of the cell into the darkened corridor. She was going to be killed... or worse... defiled even more than she already had been. Within moments, she was led to a large chamber where Voldemort sat on a tall chair on a raised dais while several others gathered around, forming a circle of sorts. Pushing her to the center of the circle, the female Death Eater released her and moved to stand in her spot.

Turning around to look at all those present, Hermione felt faint. They were all robed and masked. She had no idea who they were or what their intentions were. Her eyes settled back on the man sitting on his throne-like chair.

"Welcome, Miss Granger," he said, voice cold and high-pitched. "I admit that I wasn't prepared for your arrival so soon. It seems that Severus was correct in assuming it would be easy to fool you."

She wanted to ask what he wanted, but her voice had left her, leaving her throat scratchy. As she kept eye contact with him, she realized that he was likely using Legilimency on her, and she lowered her gaze.

"You're afraid of what we're going to do to you." It wasn't a question. It was a statement. "You have every right to be afraid, my dear, for you'll not ever leave this place alive."

The others in the group began snickering and whispering. A sudden burst of anger fueled her as she glared at all of them defiantly before looking back to their Master and saying, "Killing me won't change anything. Harry is still going to defeat you, *Voldemort!*"

A collective gasp and shouts of indignation went through the crowd, but the Dark Lord merely chuckled. "Such spirit," he said. "I would have enjoyed breaking you in my younger days." He stood and slowly walked towards her, wand drawn. "Kneel down." When Hermione took a step back and didn't do as he'd ordered, he flicked his wand angrily. "Kneel down before me, girl."

This time, her body slammed down to her knees of its own volition, forcing her to cry out in pain. Laughter started up again, and she wanted to yell at all of them and tell

them to go to hell. However, the Dark Lord spoke again.

"Your death will destroy Harry Potter and his mission to defeat me," he said, hissing slightly.

She looked up into the small reddish slits that were his eyes and knew that he was right. Harry would blame himself and go mad like he had after Sirius had died. He would be an emotional wreck. She wondered if Ron would be able to take on the task of calming him and remaining a steadfast friend as she'd done in the past. Would Ginny, whom he'd just broken off a relationship with, be up to taking her place in helping him?

"I see that you agree with me," he said, an amused, nasty grin spreading on his face. "Just so you know," he whispered, moving down to where only she could hear, "I punished Peter for what he did to you, but the punishment was not for you." He tsked lowly. "The poor lad was a bit eager to have what has been forbidden to him for so long." When she said nothing, only glaring at him with hostility, he added, "I think, though, that I will allow him to play with you a little more... once you're dead of course. He doesn't deserve someone so fresh and spirited. Anyone not following my specific orders is dealt with accordingly."

Bile rose in her throat. She hated this man and all of his followers. Most of all, she hated herself. She'd failed Harry and had allowed herself to walk right into a trap. Bloody Professor Snape! He'd helped them. He'd killed Dumbledore, and now, he'd helped them catch and kill her. She was wrong to think that evil was a strong word. It was the perfect word.

The Dark Lord moved away. "Does anyone want a few moments with her before I dispatch of her?" he asked quietly.

A few voices responded, one she recognized to be Pettigrew's, the bastard. He must not have learned much with his small punishment. She prayed that death would find her quickly and that she wouldn't have to endure any more of what he'd already done to her. She prayed for God to give her the strength to remain silent and proud until the end and not give them the pleasure of knowing her pain and thriving on it.

A great fat Death Eater moved forward and pulled up her arm, wheezing, "I can think of several things I'd like to do with her." This elicited a feminine cackle from the group.

"If I might speak, my Lord," came a silky voice, one she'd once considered belonging to her savior.

Remembering the way he'd looked at her naked body and the comment he'd made, she wasn't surprised that he'd join the group of those wanting to debauch her further.

"You may speak freely, Severusss," the Dark Lord replied.

"While I agree that her death would indeed destroy Potter, I do not believe it would render him useless to the point of distraction. For a few weeks, he might be down, but he would rally with the strength of his friends and the Order members, using her death as a tool of determination," Snape said calmly in a quiet voice.

It was then that Hermione realized that all the others had stopped talking. Even the dumpy wizard who had moved in to claim her had backed off.

"And what do you propose?" questioned his Lord.

Someone spoke out of turn, Wormtail as far as she could tell, as the masks were still in place. "He wants her for himself. It's not fair."

"Silence," hissed Voldemort.

"I propose," Snape continued, "that you allow her to live."

"And why, Severusss, would you ask this?"

"E's got a soft spot for her, he has, what with being her professor an' all," someone said.

"Consider: Master, if she is there with Potter, he will have to look at her each day and know that being his friend had caused her capture and... subsequent torture." He moved forward silently and pulled her hair back enough to force her to look up into his mask. "*That* will distract him more than anything."

Oh, how she hated him. The bastard knew what he was doing. His plan was far worse than what his Master's had been. Harry would be guilt ridden and blame himself. Tears welled in her eyes and escaped down her cheeks as she watched his cold black eyes glitter dangerously.

"You have a good point," the Dark Lord said. "And I suppose that you want her for yourself? For a reward maybe?"

Snape released her hair immediately and stepped away. "I do not wish to have anything more to do with her. What becomes of her is your will and judgment, Master. Your decisions are law."

"Right honorable, that," said a Death Eater. "Gives us a chance then."

"Why would you not wish to taste the flesh of a virgin?" the Dark Lord asked. "If I remember correctly, you do enjoy those the best."

"Even if it wasn't for the fact that the incompetent Wormtail has already breached what I prize, she is still but a child to me...one I've had the displeasure of teaching for years. I wouldn't care to take part in it, no." He seemed bored. "Her body, while appealing, still belongs to *her*. I fear that it doesn't interest me enough to overcome my dislike for her."

Hermione's mind reeled. Snape didn't want her after all. Her heart lightened and felt even heavier at the same time. She had no idea who these other people were or what they would do. Surely Snape wouldn't really force her to do anything. Why, he didn't even like her, not in that way. He'd just told them so. And... he'd just asked Voldemort to spare her life! Maybe he thought that even though she would be damaged that she would at least still be alive. Maybe he wasn't so horrible. Or maybe... maybe he was a bastard and was truly hoping to accomplish exactly what he'd said. She was so confused.

"I am afraid, Severusss, that you have no choice in the matter," Voldemort said suddenly, surprising everyone, Snape included, if his noise of shock was anything to go by. "Harry Potter hates you above all others... perhaps even more than me. You know what our informant told us..." His eyes searched Hermione's, causing him to flash his jagged teeth in a moment of triumph. "Even now her mind is playing over the scenario of Potter's rage when he finds out what's happened to her. She's imagining him finding you and hexing you."

Snape moved back and knelted at Voldemort's feet. "I will do whatever you ask of me, my Lord, but I must speak of my displeasure on this."

"Noted," came the cold reply. "Lord Voldemort is pleased that you would do something you so loathe to please him." He moved away and sat down, gazing into Hermione's eyes for a moment before cackling in amusement. "Like it or not, Severusss, it appears that she would rather you defile her than anyone else here. Perhaps I've worded that incorrectly. She foolishly believes that you'll not harm her, imagining you'll just let her sit in the corner during her stay." His gaze left hers. "Rise and take her into the chambers reserved for you. Keep her there for the next few days and do whatever you think you must to break her...rut with her, cut her, curse her...I don't care. So long as she returns to Potter broken and miserable."

"Yes, my Lord," Snape said, rising and moving back to pull her up roughly. As he dragged her out of the room, she heard some of the others protesting. "Use your feet, girl," he said gruffly, not releasing her.

She began trembling in fear. What exactly would he do to her? Voldemort had given him leave to do anything he wanted for the next few days. After a flight of stairs and a brisk walk down a long corridor, Snape came to a halt outside a portrait. He whispered a password, and the portrait swung open, allowing them admittance. Once inside, he pushed her away from him.

"Get out of my sight," he said coldly, moving off to a cabinet to extract a bottle of liquor.

Relief swept through her body. He wasn't going to force himself on her... or hex her. At least... not yet anyway. "Sir?"

"What is it?" he asked in annoyance after downing a shot of whisky.

"Is there a private bath? I would like to..."

"There," he interrupted, pointing to a doorway to his left. As she neared it, he added, "And do not lock the door."

Swallowing thickly, she hurried inside, closing the door behind her, wishing she could lock it. "Please, God, let this be the worst of it. Please... I swear to never trust anyone again... even myself," she whispered miserably.

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Hermione came out of the bath to find him sitting in an armchair near the grate, small fire burning. His robes had been tossed aside, and his white button-down shirt was opened as if he'd unbuttoned it and simply hadn't taken it off. His boots and socks had been kicked off, leaving him clad in just his trousers and shirt. His head was back, and his eyes were closed, one hand was in his lap while the other held onto a half full glass of liquor and rested on the arm of his chair. She tiptoed over to the bed and sat down, keeping her damp hair wrapped in a towel and adjusting the long, thick nightshirt she'd found in the room around her.

So many things were going through her mind. Voldemort had penetrated her mind using his damn Legilimency to search her feelings and flashes of horrified visions she'd had while thinking about what he'd said. It was true that of all the Death Eaters, she would rather chance her fate with Snape than the others. Wormtail had already assaulted her, and she was thankful that she wouldn't have to deal with him...or his foul breath and hurtful fingers...again. If Snape had gotten his Lord to spare her life, perhaps he would also spare her all of the promised torture that his Lord would like to see bestowed on her. She already had many cuts and bruises.

Bitterly, she thought of Harry. This sort of was his fault, though not directly. She knew she was being unreasonable and that it was her own fault, as she'd not taken all of the precautions that the Ministry had suggested. Well, she'd thought that she had, but she'd let her guard down and never suspected that they would be so bold... that Snape would come for her.

She gazed at the seemingly sleeping man with narrowed eyes. *He* had come up with the plan to snatch her. An idea came to mind. He was sleeping! His wand might be in his discarded robes, though she doubted it. However, he'd taken her wand earlier. She hoped that it would be within its pockets. If so, she could Stun him and find a way out of there.

Creeping forward as quietly as possible, she knelt before him and touched his robes. No sooner had her hand touched the fabric than his long wand was in her face.

"And just what, Miss Granger, do you mean by this?" he asked angrily.

"You... you looked cold," she blurted, using the first thing that came to mind. "I was going to c-cover you."

He grabbed her roughly by the arm, rose from his chair, and yanked her up with him. "Don't lie to me."

She looked down, not wanting him to see the truth in her eyes.

Snape pulled the towel from her hair and yanked at the nightshirt. She quickly pulled on it to keep it down.

"Stop it!" she yelled.

"Take it off," he demanded.

"No, I won't."

She was rewarded with a flick of his wand and found herself hanging upside down in midair. He grabbed the bottom and finished yanking it from her body. Another flick of his wand had her hitting the floor with a yelp. She quickly sat up and tried to cover her breasts with her hands, crossing her legs.

"Trust me," he said in a bored tone. "It's not because I want to see you. However, if the Dark Lord pays a visit and finds you sitting primly as if on holiday, he will believe that I am not doing my job."

"You speak of your job as if it's something with honor!" She allowed her anger to boil and explode. "You are a rapist! It's your fault that I am here!"

"You are gullible. That's why you are here, girl," he said, pulling his shirt off. "And don't talk *to me* about rape. *I* didn't want you. *You* put the notion in the Dark Lord's head to have him pick me."

"I didn't." She inched back away from him as he began unbuckling his trousers, eyes avoiding his thin abdomen.

"You did," he said, kicking away his trousers, remaining in his underpants. "From your mind, he gathered that it would affect Potter the most if it was ~~was~~ who entertained you during your stay, and you had the nerve to show him that you preferred me over the others," he snarled.

"Oh, don't look so offended!" she yelled. "Just like any other man here, you'll be happy to take what you never would have gotten otherwise."

He was at her side in two steps and yanking her up roughly. He carried her to the bed and threw her down. "Shut your mouth," he said dangerously.

"Rapist!" she hissed.

Raising a hand back to slap her, he paused, keeping his hand high above him. "I can be so much more than that if you don't keep your little mouth shut."

She had the good sense to close her eyes and cringe, waiting for the blow, but it didn't come. Shakily, she opened her eyes, hands moving to cover her breasts again. His pallid face was splotted with red in his cheeks, and he was shaking with anger.

"Do you not think that I feel the same? I did not ask for you. I do not want you. I am... forced as much as you are." He lowered his hand. "Do not call me a rapist when I am taking what I do not want."

Hope blossomed, and she sat up quickly to seize her chance. "Professor, please... I won't tell them that you've not touched me. I swear. I'll... I'll pretend. I won't say a word."

He looked away from her and began extinguishing the candles until they were in complete darkness. "I cannot. I have no choice. To deny my Lord's will is to sign my own death certificate. You, my dear, are not worth my life I'm afraid."

Sobs racked her body as the last of her hope faded. He didn't want her, and he felt as violated as she at being forced to have sex with her, but he would do it nonetheless. How could this be happening? Only a year before he'd been her aloof professor, quite stern, and very forbidding, but now...

"Stop sniveling," he said in the darkness, moving onto the bed.

Hermione scurried over to the farthest side of the bed in attempt to get away from him. "Just... just give me a moment," she said, trying to regain her calm. She could survive this. She could live through this. *What doesn't kill you will make you grow stronger*, she thought, grasping onto it like a mantra. She could live with this hateful man touching her. At least he wasn't Wormtail. At least she wasn't bound and unable to move while he looked his fill and did as he pleased. Well, he might still do that, but she hoped not.

"I assure you that I am not ready either," he said, voice strangely emotional.

She wondered exactly what it was costing him to do this. *No, don't soften your resolve, Hermione. He helped them do this to you. He's a Death Eater and a murderer.* Even as she thought this, she said, "I wish that I'd never went with Charlie... with Wormtail I mean."

There was a rustle of fabric, and he returned, "And I."

The bed began moving in small little tremors, and she wondered what he was doing. She could tell that he'd taken off his underpants, but he continued to move. "What are you doing?" she asked, curiosity getting the better of her.

"Do you mind?" he asked in irritation.

She bit her lip and closed her eyes. He was preparing himself. This was really going to happen. He was going to rape her. *Why did I think that it would be easier with someone I know, especially after the betrayal I felt when I thought it was Charlie doing that to me?* she asked herself brokenly. She decided to approach this as rationally as she could and was grateful that he wasn't pawing at her like some rabid dog.

"Before... back in the cell... I didn't like it," she said more calmly than she felt.

He said nothing, simply continued what he was doing.

She was glad that he couldn't see her expression and that she couldn't see what he was doing. "Professor, could you...?"

"Stop calling me that," he bit out.

"Can we just get it over with then?" she said finally after many minutes of silence.

"The longer it's drawn out, the more you are tortured," he said snidely, though she could detect a hint of amusement in his voice.

"We don't have to do this. We could fool all of them. I'll go along with whatever you want me to say," she pleaded suddenly.

"Miss Granger," he warned.

"At least promise me that it won't hurt... not like with *him*."

Growling in annoyance, he said, "The only thing I can promise is that for the moment you are quite safe. It seems that your... womanly charms do nothing for me."

She thanked the Lord silently. He couldn't force himself to become aroused, and in return, he couldn't force her into anything. "I'll... I'll just sleep then."

"You do that," he said coldly, moving off of the bed.

She didn't care where he was going. She was simply happy that she was safe so far. She pulled the thick duvet up over her and curled into a ball, hoping she would wake up and find herself in her bedroom.

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**Southern's Notes:** Yeah, it's a bit darker than I normally like (sort of). I'm not exactly comfortable with writing this plot, but I've decided to make the most of it.

## Chapter 2

*Chapter 2 of 3*

Post HBP tale where Snape captures Hermione on Voldemort's orders. Things happen. Plans are made. Does Voldemort get what he wants or has he been outsmarted once again?

**Disclaimer:** I've borrowed some characters, but I'm making no money for it. Blast!

**SW says:** What we have here is somewhat noncon, but I'd like to think it is more dubious consent. Thanks go to CocoaChristy for beta reading.

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*Hermione moaned slightly as Viktor lowered his mouth and began suckling her neck, one hand softly caressing her breast. She could see the dark hair on his head shaking as his head moved and his mouth feasted on her flesh. She brought a hand up to tangle in his long, soft locks, her other hand moved to rest on his back as she arched her body into his touch and kiss.*

*'Viktor is in Bulgaria,' she thought, realization hitting her that it was a dream. Ah, and what a lovely dream it was, keeping her from thinking of her current situation with Snape.*

*Snape! This was no dream... and it was not Viktor. It was Snape who was touching her body...without permission...in an attempt to seduce her or arouse himself.*

Foggily, she woke and tried to move away from him, hands that were holding him close suddenly trying to push him away. "No!" she cried.

He moved over her more firmly to pin her down, lifting his head. "Do shut up, Miss Granger." There was a slur to his voice, and his breath smelled of whisky. "I don't want to remember who it is that I'm devouring."

"Stop it!" she said again, struggling against him, hating the feel of his thin, naked body moving against hers.

"I could gag and bind you, you know..." His mouth lowered and trailed its way to the peak of one of her breasts, his previously semi-flaccid penis hardening with each stroke of his tongue.

The warning broke through her mind, and she remembered how it had felt to be so helpless with Ch-Wormtail in that cell. She might not want Snape to have her, but she didn't want to be helpless again.

"Please don't hurt me," she whispered, dropping her hands from him and ceasing her struggles.

He sighed and rolled away from her, saying nothing, but she could hear his heavy breathing.

From the darkness of the room, she could tell that it was still nighttime out, and she wondered if the others were looking for her. What had Mr. Weasley thought when he'd gone to the Leaky Cauldron and found her missing? What had become of Charlie? There were so many things she wanted to know. She could ease their worries...and hers...if she complied with what Voldemort wanted done with her. Maybe if she helped Snape along and got it done sooner, she could leave.

Yes, that was it. She could always Obliviate herself later. There had been many sacrifices on their side so far. Why should she remain unmarred or be any different? By giving Snape her virginity...she would never consider what Wormtail had done as the loss of her virginity...she would be making a sacrifice, yes, but she would live... live to fight another day.

"Sir, I am ready now," she said bitterly. "And I'll not speak again," she added, remembering that he didn't want her to talk, as he was obviously trying to pretend that she was someone else and not his ex-student.

She could do that as well. Why couldn't she close her eyes and imagine Ron touching her? They'd snogged a bit before they'd parted, so she knew well what his lips felt like and how he tasted. She'd even allowed him to grope her when he'd tried. She hadn't minded really and had enjoyed the tingling sensations that had shot through her when his fingers had touched her flesh intimately. *This isn't Snape. It's Ron. Hell, Viktor. Anyone else. No, it's Ron.*

Just when she thought that Snape had fallen asleep and forgotten all about his orders to have sex with her, he rolled back towards her and placed a tentative hand upon her soft stomach. When she didn't fight him, it slowly slid down to softly caress the trimmed hair at the juncture of her thighs. When she said nothing, though she did inhale a deep breath and hold it, his fingers curled inwardly, getting familiar with her skin, dipping slightly into her entrance, seeking moisture.

And then it happened. One long finger slid into her, timidly probing her depths, exploring her heat. She released the breath she'd been holding and quickly sucked in another and held it. Eyes shut tightly, she tried not to move, not wanting him to know that she felt anything at all...repulsion, anxiety, or anticipation.

"Ah," escaped her lips in a quick gush as another finger joined the first. This elicited some sort of grunt from him. She pressed her lips together tightly, afraid that she'd ruined it and that he'd have to stop until he could touch her freely again without being repulsed. She dumbly wondered if she should be offended by exactly how much she disgusted him. She knew she was no beauty queen, but she certainly wasn't some hag! Someone of his age and looks should be happy that she would even allow... *I'm not really allowing him though. I am forced to do whatever he wants, or we might both die.* "Well, he would deserve it," another voice whispered.

To her surprise, she felt him rubbing his erection against her thigh, pressure increasing every few caresses. It wasn't so bad, really. His fingers were much more gentle than Wormtail's had been, and she found their rhythm soothing...almost. She prayed that he would be satisfied with just rubbing himself against her, but she knew that would not be all that would happen between them.

Even as she thought that, his hands moved to part her thighs as he positioned himself between her legs. She instinctively froze and tried to clamp her legs together.

"Easy," he said quietly, slur still evident in his voice. "Just relax."

Biting her lip and keeping her eyes closed together tightly, she relaxed her legs, digging her heels into the bed and clutching at the sheet beneath her with her hands in order to prepare herself for his physical invasion.

With surprising finesse, he slid into her partially. It didn't hurt, but her body didn't approve of this new filling sensation. There was a slight burning feeling as her insides stretched. Her hands lifted to claw at his shoulders; she was uncertain if she meant to push him away or to simply hold him still.

"Shhh. It's all right," he murmured, pausing long enough to give her a small sense of control, which she appreciated.

She released her tight grip on him but didn't remove her hands. Slowly and steadily, he finished pushing all the way in where he stopped and breathed heavily. She wanted to curse him and to reassure him at the same time. She was uncertain if she should be grateful or not, but she simply wanted the ordeal over and done with. Maybe it would be the only time she'd have to do it.

As if reading her mind, he pulled back slowly and pushed in again. The friction was still a bit more than she could bear, and she clawed at his shoulders again.

"Won't be long," he said, voice oddly tense.

His movements quickened, pulling and pushing, friction never easing. The odd awareness that she was having sex...and with Snape...filled her brain. It wasn't as she'd imagined in all of her fantasies. It wasn't Ron or Viktor. It wasn't an act born of love or emotion. Nothing like it at all. She couldn't believe it was happening. She'd always been a good girl and obeyed the rules...well, most of them...so why was this happening to her?

*You're an ungrateful girl, Hermione. It could have been one of the other eager men that were asking for you* a voice chided, sounding much like Professor McGonagall. *Do you think they would have been as gentle and given you as much say in what happened? One of them would have likely easily buggered you before doing anything else.* She knew that the voice was right. Snape was at least trying to be gentle with her, and his inability to become aroused by her body spoke for his true feelings. He was as much a victim of forced sex as she.

A nearly silent sound, much like, "Ungh," reached her ears, and a moment later, Snape's head rested on her shoulder where he pressed one small chaste kiss against her skin. The room was filled with silence. It didn't take her long to figure out that he'd fallen asleep, still on top of her and still inside of her. She maneuvered slightly, and his flaccid prick slipped out of her, leaving her free of her obligation. It was over. Had he had an orgasm? She couldn't really tell, as she still felt the same...wet, used, and stretched.

*Maybe he's passed out while doing it,* she pondered. That had to be it. There was no vocal noises or shouting in ecstasy that she'd read and heard about. She supposed that one little noise could have signified his release, but she was uncertain. Moving sideways, she slipped away from his body and stood on side of the bed. Once orienting herself, she felt her way over to the bathroom where she could wash, cry, and be sick in private.

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"Get up, girl, and get out of here," Snape's gruff voice said, rousing her from sleep.

The dim glow of his wandlight hurt her swollen eyes when she opened them. "I..." It all came back to her: sex, tears, retching, more tears, determination to survive.

"I don't care. Get back in bed," he commanded, moving towards the toilet.

Noticing that his pale arse was bare, she quickly scampered from the room, able to see her way to the bed by the light of the fire that he'd lit. She had no idea what time it was or how much time had passed. Her body ached, inside and out. What would he want to do now? Would the one time be enough? Would he be angry if she put on the

long nightshirt?

She decided to not give him any reason to get angry. After many minutes passed, she closed her eyes. The water was running in the loo, so she figured he was washing himself, much like she had. When she thought of rape, she never really considered what males who were violated might feel like. She'd always pictured rape as something a woman endured at the hands of some sick bastard. However, this was something different, and while she'd known deep down that men, too, were forced into sexual situations...usually by other men...she'd never heard of it happening to anyone that she knew personally.

Did he feel dirty, debased, or have the urge to vomit... feel that need to purge himself of her touch? She shivered in disgust, remembering the stabbing feel of him stretching her, violating her. At that moment, Hermione wished to have some of that whisky that she'd smelled on his breath. That was likely why he'd done it...to deaden his senses, to give him the will to carry through with Voldemort's orders.

Voldemort. That bloody bastard! How did he expect to keep his followers if he forced them to do such things? If he tortured them? If he teased them with prizes only to take them away? The man had no heart, and from what Harry had told her already, he never did have one...even as a small child.

Hermione's thoughts blurred, and sleep came to her once again. When she woke sometime later, she saw Snape sitting near the fire, leaning forward, rocking back and forth, head resting in his hands...the stance of a broken man, filled with guilt. Part of her wanted to tell him that it was all right and that he'd had no choice, but the embittered part of her that hated him wanted him to suffer and relished in his guilt. He should have never betrayed Dumbledore. He should have never devised that plan to capture her. Was she truly so easily manipulated? How could she not have known that "Charlie" was an imposter? Wormtail spent years with the family, though, so he knew their mannerisms perfectly and nearly everything about them. But how did they get recent information about the Weasleys? Had they tortured Charlie somehow?

She didn't want to think of that and continued spying on the man before her. He wasn't crying, but he seemed lost in despair. Before she could open her mouth to say anything, a loud hum coming from near the entrance began reverberating around the room. Sitting up quickly and clutching the duvet to her body, she asked, "What is that?"

Snape sprung up quickly, clad in only underpants. "Keep quiet," he said, casting a warning glance at her as he made his way to the side of the bed. Once there, he sat at her side. "Calm down," he warned, voice low and steady. "We are about to have company."

Her heart began beating wildly. Who was coming to see them? Voldemort? Was it some other Death Eater expecting to join in? Tears came to her worried, frightened eyes. *Please... no. Please... no.*

His hand slid beneath the duvet and rested on her thigh, causing her to startle and stare down at the duvet as if she could see through its fabric. Just as she was about to ask what he was doing, she heard a high-pitched cackle from behind him.

Voldemort.

"So, Severusss, I see you've taken to your task much easier than you would have liked," Voldemort said, moving closer to them.

Hermione's eyes met his briefly before she looked down in shame. Her hands clutched to keep the duvet up over her breasts.

"Fear not, girl. You won't temp me with your filthy Mudblood body," he said hatefully.

"It seems that her body is a most satisfying vessel, my Lord," Snape said, rubbing his hand along her thigh, back and forth, rapidly. "I should not have doubted your wisdom in delegating this duty to me."

A long, pale hand grasped Hermione's chin and forced her to look up and into Voldemort's red, narrowed eyes. She hated the tremble that passed through her body and continued while he had his hand upon her face, eyes clashing with hers. She tried to force herself to look away, but it seemed that she couldn't. Severus' hand, which was still rubbing her thigh, seemed to have slowed down, squeezing her flesh reassuringly now and again. Images of what had happened so far flashed through her mind.

"Very good, Severusss," Voldemort finally hissed. "However, she's not broken yet. Do what you will to break her. I don't like this... determination I see sparkling in her eyes. If you go too far, causing her to die in the process, it certainly won't be a big loss, will it?"

"No, Master, it will not be." Snape turned to gaze at her, a slight sneer on his face.

"Excellent. You may carry on."

Hermione watched as Voldemort's flat nostrils flared slightly as he released her face and turned away. Once he'd left the room, Snape pulled his hand from beneath the duvet and turned his gaze towards the fire.

"Professor... are we going to have to..."

"Yes," he interrupted, adding, "I cannot defy him, Miss Granger. I hope you can understand that."

Suddenly deciding on a different approach, she asked, "Why did you do it?"

"Do it? You heard him as well as I, or are you simply daft?" he asked in irritation, crossing over her to sit back against the headboard.

"No," she said, gathering her courage. "What I mean to say... Why did you betray us?"

The silence stretched between them for a long time. She felt him shifting about and realized that he was sliding beneath the duvet next to her and removing his underpants. Had she gone too far? She slid down and closed her eyes to prepare herself for the invasion to come.

He didn't touch her.

Finally, she turned to look at him and was surprised to find him lying on his side, propped up on an elbow and gazing at her expectantly. Heat flushed her cheeks. "Did... did you say something? I didn't hear it." When his eyes closed, as if staving off a wave of pain, she felt emboldened and maneuvered to her side to watch him. She'd never seen this side of Snape before. He'd always been so closed off, so cold before. It was just a little shocking to know that he was a real man with emotions behind his cool exterior.

When his eyes opened again, he said, "I did what I was ordered to do."

Her voice was soft as she replied. "I just don't understand how you could betray all of us. We believed in you." She shook her head sadly. "All those times that you saved us... You've always been a bit cruel, but I thought that beneath that..."

"Not everyone believed in me," he said bitterly. "And those few who did... Well, let's just say that I'm certain they didn't truly respect me. Not as I deserved."

"We did," she insisted.

"And Potter?"

"Harry always had his suspicions, what with the way you two never got on, but deep down, he trusted you, too. When Dumbledore and he left that cave..." She put a hand over her mouth as his eyes lit up.

"Cave?"

"I mean... I don't know. Please, I don't want to tell you anything about what they were doing." She saw his slight nod. "Anyway, he drank something that was poisoning him, and he told Harry that he needed you...only you...to save him. Harry was going to get you and believed that you would save him." She jutted her chin up slightly. "So, yes, even Harry believed in you whether or not he'd admit it out loud."

There was a slight sigh before he spoke. "Sometimes we have to do what we must in order to survive."

"I would rather die than betray those I love," Hermione said adamantly.

"Yet you are lying in bed with me," he pointed out.

"This was not my choice," she retorted quickly.

"Indeed it was," he said. "Were you ready to die for Potter when the Dark Lord swooped down to cast the Killing Curse on you? You know as well as I that if you'd caused enough trouble in the Lord's chambers, he would have killed you."

She swallowed thickly. "I didn't want to die, but I would have, rather than betray Harry or cause him any pain."

"Yet you exuded relief when you realized that your life would be granted, albeit with a large sacrifice on your part." His mocking smile faded. "Can you deny it?"

"If I can live to help Harry and the others, then, yes, it's worth the sacrifice," she said resentfully.

"Then you can understand that I will do what must be done to see things through."

"But he trusted you. He cared about you! And you killed him," she blurted, suddenly angry. "How could you do that ~~to~~him?"

"How can you be so sure that I've not done exactly *as*he requested? That I am not a traitor as you've been led to believe?" he asked dangerously, eyes glittering. "Don't you dare assume that you've the right to question or lecture me, girl!"

"Wait...what do you mean by that?"

"Mind your own business," he said in annoyance, turning to lie on his back.

"You don't mean to say that the headmaster wanted you to... to do that... to kill him?"

He turned away from her, but she could hear his voice clearly. "To tell you the truth would be the death of both of us... and those whom you care for. Leave it alone."

Hermione allowed silence to linger as she thought of his words. Dumbledore would never give such an order. Would he? Harry's shimmering green eyes flashed through her mind. Dumbledore's grandfatherly face came to mind. Snape had always done as asked. Dumbledore had asked him to return to Voldemort...for them. Dumbledore had forced him to do things that he hadn't wanted to do...teaching Harry Occlumency or even being sociable, if one could call it that, with Sirius and Lupin.

Suddenly, she remembered the conversation that Hagrid had overheard between Dumbledore and Snape. It all fit. Perhaps there was a reason behind the headmaster's decision to let things end. Harry had said that supposedly Dumbledore and Snape knew about Malfoy's attempts all along. Had they made plans to let Snape be the one if it came down to it? Some last ditch effort to save Malfoy from himself?

A quiet voice broke into her thoughts.

"I see his face all the time... so exhausted, so beseeching."

She said nothing, but she did place a hand upon his arm, willing him to talk more.

"I can hear him still... voice so weak."

She scooted closer and rubbed his arm reassuringly like he'd rubbed her leg when Voldemort was near.

"His final words were, 'Severus... please....'"

Hermione swallowed away her words. How horrible. Harry had told her as much, but hearing it from Snape was so much worse. Whether he was forced by Dumbledore or Voldemort to end the headmaster's life, he was living with much guilt. His normally hardened spine was slumping. His cold, uncaring voice was laden with emotion. It must have been somewhat of a relief to voice as much as he had to her. Strangely enough, she was glad to have been the one to witness his breakdown and confession.

There had never been a day in her life when her heart hadn't gone out to anyone or anything that seemed so defeated... so downtrodden. She felt extremely sorry for Severus Snape and wished that he'd chosen a different path in his life...no matter what the Order had gained from having him on their side.

"No matter who wins this war," he continued, "there will never be any freedom for me."

And it was the truth. How could she comfort someone with no future? How could she help someone who wouldn't accept it? There had to be some way to let the others know that there was more to the story than they knew. She needed to get Harry to speak to Dumbledore's portrait alone. Maybe she could help him. Maybe she could get Harry to help him. In that moment, her plan came to her. She knew what she must do and say when she was returned.

Without thinking, she placed a small kiss on his arm and immediately felt him stiffen.

"I don't want your pity," he mumbled.

"I... I don't know why I did that," she said, adding, "and unfortunately, I do sympathize with your situation." She gathered her courage. "Th-the sooner that I can get home, the sooner that I can start helping you. There has to be something that I can do."

He turned over to face her. "Enough." He smirked hatefully. "I refuse to become one of your projects."

Like it or not, Professor, you've become one. I will help you. She paled for a moment, realizing that she was wanting to help the very man who had forced her to... no, who had been forced to force her to have sex. *We're both being forced. That's the key here. He would never have touched me had his life not been on the line. I will not let all of Dumbledore's work suffer because of my feelings.*

The only way she'd be able to return to her friends and family was if Voldemort thought that Snape had used her enough and had broken her. She would have to have sex with him again, possibly allow him to hex her to play the part, and she'd definitely have to seem damaged when Voldemort called upon them again. Closing her eyes as her defilement at Wormtail's hands came to mind, she tried to will herself to push down the hate, bitterness, regret, and sense of loss that she was feeling. She'd survived the experience with Snape, and although it had left her feeling even more tainted, it had also given her a sense of hope. *It could have been worse. All I have to do is allow it to happen for my freedom.*

Opening her eyes, she saw his sullen expression, and something in her went out to him. He truly understood what she was feeling because he felt it, too. Her only comfort

at the moment was that she could try to give comfort, and in doing so, she could find some twisted sense of comfort, of kinship.

"I'm ready again," she said boldly, placing a hand upon his chest, swallowing her indecision.

"Excuse me?" he asked incredulously.

"Well," she said, trying to sound business-like, "if we carry on again, You-Know-Who might let me leave soon." She saw the disbelief on his face. "I don't want to do this. Not really. And I know that you feel the same way, but we have to." She nodded back towards the door. "You heard what he said. I-I don't want to stay here any longer than I have to, and I don't want him thinking up other ways to... you know..."

"Very well," he said, eyes boring into hers as he turned over completely to face her, one of his hands moving to rest on her bare arse. "I'm afraid that I am not quite ready yet."

"Oh, er..." She noticed that there was much more light this time. Neither of them could allow the darkness and mind to block away exactly who their partner was. "What should I do?"

She was shocked to hear his soft response.

"Touch me."

Of course. She might have known. She'd wondered if maybe seeing her breasts might help, but then she remembered that he didn't exactly find her attractive. Peeking at him, she saw that he'd closed his eyes. She did the same, and the hand that she'd placed on his chest slid down his stomach slowly, following the trail of hair down his abdomen to where it thickened and surrounded his flaccid penis.

Nibbling on her inside of her mouth to calm her nerves, she began fondling him clumsily, nails scratching at his pubic hair, palm of her hand rubbing against his skin. After a few moments, she felt it twitch beneath her, and it seemed to grow. She cupped him as best as she could and began to stroke him until she felt him harden even more. She nearly told him that she was finished, but she remembered that he hadn't wanted her to speak, so as to not remind him that it was *she* he was bedding.

Instead, she decided to explore a little more, pausing her strokes to dip down and trace his testicles and perineum. As she continued to do this, she felt his body shift and press more closely against her hand, his penis definitely ready. At this moment, she realized that her center felt quite warm and somewhat damp. Her exploration had aroused her a little. Shame filled her. How could she be aroused by doing something that she didn't truly want to be doing?

A naughty voice whispered, *The damage has been done already. Do it. What does it matter now?*

Agreeing with the voice, she moved away from him, shifted to her back, and wordlessly placed the hand that was on her arse between her slightly spread legs. He didn't need instructions to know that she was allowing him to touch her. His practiced hand immediately cupped her, one finger sliding into her wet heat while his palm ground against her clitoris. She sucked in a sharp breath as the damp finger that had delved into her moved out and began circling her clit quickly.

Her hips lifted slightly, both to get closer and to get away. One of his legs moved over one of hers to keep her in place. So many things were going through her mind. She didn't know what to think. *Stop. Continue. Wait.* She scooted back nervously as she felt the all too familiar sensations building within, only to have him put more weight over her to keep her steady. Would it be all right to have an orgasm? She done it many times to herself, but she'd never allowed anyone to do this to her, much less... *him*. It felt wrong. Yet, she wanted to feel it. It would ease the unpleasantness... so she hoped.

"Oh," she murmured uncertainly, destroying her ability to think.

"Relax," he whispered quietly. "Let it come."

At the sound of his voice, the feeling ebbed, and reality set in. "I can't," she murmured. "It went away, the feeling."

In an instant, he was quickly over her, his thin body covering hers and nestling between her thighs. She felt his hand guiding his erection to her labia, rubbing it between them before pushing in slightly. Without the shock of the situation to numb her mind, she more acutely felt his entrance and her body's attempt to expel him.

"Let me in," he murmured.

"I'm not stopping you," she replied, uncertain what more he wanted.

He paused for a moment and tried again, only pushing in a little further. It was then that his lips found hers. As she opened her mouth to allow his tongue's entrance, she could think of nothing but the feel of his nose digging into her cheek and the wetness of his kiss.

"Ow!" she yelped, ending their kiss abruptly. He'd thrust all the way into her while she'd been distracted.

"Shhh," he soothed, moving almost all the way out and back in again, giving her a filling sensation.

"Ow," she murmured again as he jabbed at her sharply once more.

His lips found hers again, and this time, she was able to concentrate on the rhythm of his tongue moving with hers, coinciding with the steady rocking against her body. They kissed for many minutes until he threw his head back, eyes closed, breathing heavy, thrusting more rapidly. She buried her face against his shoulder and held onto him, not even trying to move with him.

Snape's hand moved between them, teasing her clitoris again and causing her to move against him a little more, wanting that added friction so that she could also feel something from their coupling. To her added frustration, he removed his hand and changed his strokes, trying to grind his pelvic area against hers and giving her minimal sensation. She found that if she met his thrusts and ground herself back against him, she could find pleasure.

"Oh, dear God," she murmured as she realized the feeling was coming to her again. This time it wouldn't be stopped. Even as she thought it, sensations began washing over her, forcing her to move against him rapidly and roughly. He never stopped moving, continuing his deep, quick pace. As her convulsions stopped, his started. Her eyes opened widely as she watched his face contort as if in pain while his strokes slowed.

When his thrusts finally stopped completely, he looked down at her lazily and seemed a bit smug that they'd been able to have a productive...if that is what it could be called...shag. He rolled off of her and settled onto his back.

She turned away from him to look at the wall. A thought came to her. "I've not been taking any contraceptive potions, you know."

"Is that so?" he asked blandly. "I can see to it that you have something before you go."

"No, it doesn't matter."

"Pardon?" Surprise laced his voice, and he shifted faintly.

"I'm not ovulating. That was about eight days ago."

"I see," he replied, relaxing.

"Should I take something just in case?" she asked, knowing that it was unnecessary.

"If you'd like," he offered, voice quiet. "Hermione... if I could change how things have worked out, I would do so. I hope you can understand that."

She turned over to face him, nodding as she said, "I do understand. We all have choices to make." She made certain that he was looking into her eyes before she spoke again. "This situation might not have been what we chose, but I feel we've made the most of something horrible. While unpleasant, you allowed me to have choices and a say in what happened, though the end results would be the same. I will always appreciate that." She smiled shakily. "This was my choice... what we just did." For some reason, it was important that she voiced that aloud. She could have laid back and waited for him to make the first move, but she'd taken matters into her own hands. That was something that no other would have allowed her. Feeling that she had the power to make her own choices lessened the disgust she felt for her situation.

He nodded. "So it was."

"And yours?"

"I would say so," he said, finally removing his gaze from hers. "I think that by this evening I can bring you back."

"Really?" she asked, sitting up in excitement, duvet forgotten.

"Yes, perhaps we could work out something to where a statement is put in the *Prophet* saying you were found beaten and exhausted? You've only a few bruises that I've seen."

"For Voldemort," she said, agreeing internally. "He'll think that you've resorted to hitting or cursing me that way, right?"

"Yes."

"I will," she promised. "And there is something else. A plan I have." She knew that once she explained her decision to him, he would also feel better about what they'd been forced to do.

"What's that?"

"I have decided that I won't tell Harry about this," she said pointing to him and then herself. "Voldemort would only get what he wanted if I did so because Harry would definitely never forgive you and the need to find you would be moved to the top of his list."

"What will you say if not the truth?" he asked curiously.

"The truth can still be told, and I'll just leave a few things out. I'll tell them that Wormtail disguised himself as Charlie and brought me here. He tried to defile me, but you saved me and helped me escape."

Surprise lit his eyes, and his mouth opened and closed. Shrugging, he said, "But... I... I don't know what to say."

"It's my choice. What happened here was forced upon us, and I don't want anyone else to know about it. That's my decision. Harry doesn't need this to add to his list of worries," she said adamantly, sounding braver than she felt. She bit her lip before adding, "And maybe we can find a way to save you from maximum punishment. If you've helped me escape uncertain death and abuse, that has to count for something, right? We'll talk to Dumbledore's painting. Anything."

"I told you that I would not become one of your projects," he said firmly.

"For me to do anything else but try to help you would be something uncharacteristic of me," she said, pulling the duvet up and burrowing below it. "I'll think of something. We'll get through this. This... *this* will be forgotten."

He was silent for a long moment, and she finally heard him say, "Very well." He got up and used his wand to cast a Cleansing Spell on their bodies before he quickly dressed. "I will get something for us to eat. We'll talk more when I return."

After he was gone, she made her way to the bath where she could physically wash away her shame and any lingering evidence of their coupling. "Some sacrifices must be made for the good of war," she reassured herself shakily. Even as she said these words, she caught sight of her face in the mirror. Tears began flowing down her cheeks once again. She knew life would never be the same for her. Some sacrifices were just too much.

Southern's Notes: I'll be adding the epilogue in a day or two. I just have a couple of paragraphs to rework and something small to add. I'll also post the challenge prompt so that you can see the one I had to answer and why I chose this subject matter.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of 3

Post HBP tale where Snape captures Hermione on Voldemort's orders. Things happen. Plans are made. Does Voldemort get what he wants or has he been outsmarted once again?

Disclaimer: I've borrowed some characters, but I'm making no money for it. Blast!

Thanks go to CocoaChristy for beta reading this.

A loud pop shattered the night's silence just outside of the Burrow. Harry and Ron looked at each other, drew their wands, and ran out the door. Harry's eyes widened as he took in the familiar stiff stance of Snape as he placed Hermione down before him out near the shed.

"Get away from her!" he yelled, wanting a clear shot at Dumbledore's murderer.

"Bloody hell," Ron muttered, pointing a shaky wand in their direction. "Snape!"

"Harry, no! Ron, wait!" Hermione said while twisting around and looking at them, arms extended in front of her to stave off their speedy advance.

"Get out of the way, Hermione," Harry said firmly.

Instead of doing as he'd asked, she looked back to Snape and nodded, allowing him to simply Disapparate away as she blocked him from the path of their wands. The last thing Harry saw was the mocking expression on his pallid face.

"What did you let him get away for?" Ron asked, moving towards her. "Where have you been? We thought... Fucking hell..."

Harry quickly went to her as she started to sway. He grabbed her just as she went limp and held her closely. "Ron, get your mum! Quick!"

As Ron ran off, Hermione mumbled, "He helped me get away. Snape helped." She sniffed loudly. "I'm free, Harry. I got away!" Her sniffing turned into genuine sobs that caused her whole body to shake. "Free... oh, God..."

He patted her back awkwardly in hopes of soothing her.

"D-don't touch me," she said, moving from his grasp.

When she nearly fell, he pulled her to him again. "Calm down, Hermione. It's just me. It's Harry. Snape can't hurt you anymore," he said softly.

"N-no, he's not..." Her cries grew louder again, and her words were jumbled together.

"When Mr. Weasley came back without you, we knew something was wrong." Harry slowly helped her towards the doorway. "I was afraid that I'd never see you again. We didn't know if Death Eaters had found you or... what."

"Pettigrew," she bit out. "He was Polyjuiced as Charlie. I was fooled into going with him..."

"Hermione!" Mrs. Weasley shouted, running up to help. "Oh, girl, we've been so worried. We've been searching for you everywhere. We feared that you were dead or worse..."

"Mum," Ron said, widening his eyes, "don't say that. She's fine." He looked at Hermione and tried to take over for his mother, hoping to help her inside. "A little bruised and dirty... but you're all right. Aren't you?"

She shrugged away from him, only to relent and allow her best friends to guide her inside. "M-mostly," she replied solemnly, sagging against both of them momentarily as they led her to a chair.

Molly gave her a handkerchief. "Here you are, dear."

"Why was that bast... er... Snape carrying you?" Ron asked, eyeing his mother's worried face.

"O-oh," she stammered, "my foot was hurt on my way out, and Snape fixed it, but he..."

"He killed Dumbledore!" Harry said, unable to contain himself. "If you'd just moved over, I could have hexed him and kept him here for the Aurors!" Noticing her worn expression and the new tears shimmering in her eyes, he lowered his voice. "I just don't understand why he would murder Dumbledore and then help you. It doesn't sound right to me."

Ron tapped Harry on the shoulder. "Do it."

"Do what?" Hermione asked.

"We should check to see if you are under the Imperius Curse," Harry said evenly.

"Boys!" Molly admonished. "She needs a cuppa first."

Pops of Apparition signaled the arrival of others. Moments later, Mr. Weasley, the twins, and Charlie came through the door.

"We came as soon as we heard. Minerva Flooded me just now," Arthur said. "Hermione! Glad you're all right!" he added.

Harry jumped when Hermione screamed, stumbled from her chair, and scooted back frantically, pointing at Charlie. Ron reached her and pulled her away while Harry drew his wand on Charlie.

"What are you on about, Harry?" George asked, pulling his wand and pointing it at Harry.

"Why's she upset to see Charlie?" Harry asked, backing towards the doorway where Ron had taken Hermione. He could still hear her panicked crying. Hearing Hermione reduced to a sobbing mess was something that was hard for him to bear. He should have been the one to go for her. He could have protected her somehow. When everyone paused, he added, "She said that Peter Pettigrew was Polyjuiced as Charlie. How do we know if that's the real Charlie? Or how did they get a bit of Charlie to use in the Polyjuice?"

"We've just come from St. Mungo's," Fred said, nudging George, who then put his wand away. "Charlie was attacked and hexed real good. Been in the hospital, he has. Dad didn't want to tell Mum because she was already worried so much about Hermione and the wedding being put off."

"You didn't tell me that MY son was at St. Mungo's?" Molly ranted. "Minerva knew, but I didn't? No wonder she acted so strangely! Why, she must have Flooded you instantly. I only just stopped talking to her in the grate when Ron told me the news!" She quickly hugged her son, giving him a scrutinizing once over.

"If Pettigrew was parading as me when she was captured," Charlie began, "then I don't blame her for not wanting to see me right now, especially if he... if he harmed her." He looked around. "Did he?" He ran his fingers through his hair in frustration when no one answered. "I'm going to go upstairs and get out of sight for right now. I'm the last person she needs to see. Tell Bill to come up when they get back."

"How do we know you are Charlie?" Harry asked, not putting away his wand.

"Put your wand down," Molly said firmly. "I think I'd know my own son if I saw him." She turned to him. "What did I tell you privately when you first came home days ago?"

"You said that I should have brought a date for my brother's wedding," he said easily.

"That's right. And?"

His eyes darted to Harry. "You said that I should at least give Harry a talking to about Ginny," he said quietly.

"Is that good enough?" Molly asked, looking at Harry's drawn wand pointedly. "Arthur asked him enough questions when he first returned to know that it was truly him, so don't go thinking that it might have been someone else."

"We'll talk about *that* later," Harry said. "Right now, it's Hermione who needs us. She's more important." Harry noticed a flash of red hair and the spin of a skirt as Ginny fled

the kitchen; she'd apparently just entered and had obviously heard what he'd said. "I think maybe Charlie should do like he said." He nodded to the ceiling. "Go above until we sort Hermione out."

"We?" Molly asked incredulously. "I'll sort her out," Molly said, striding forward with a cup of tea. "She may very well need a woman to talk to, and seeing as her mother isn't here, I will have to do." She brushed past Harry and entered the living area. A moment later, Ron was pushed out, the door closing with a snap behind him.

"I couldn't make out what she was going on about," Ron said quietly, eyeing Charlie's retreating back as he and the twins left the room. Both boys leaned towards the door to listen.

"You two shouldn't be spying," Arthur admonished, placing his hat on the table before going to the stove to look in the pot.

"We won't," Ron said, beckoning for Harry to follow him. They went to the doorway near the stairs and sat down. Ron pulled a set of Extendable Ears from his pocket, offering one to Harry, who took it immediately. Together, they listened to Hermione's tale.

"I questioned him, and I really thought he was Charlie. I followed him down into Knockturn Alley because he said..." A few sobs broke through her words.

"It's all right, dear. We've all night," Molly said in a soothing voice. "Take your time."

"I was Stunned, my wand was taken, and I woke up in a dirty cell with Charlie...rather, who I thought to be Charlie. He was touching me. I was naked."

Harry saw Ron's thunderous expression and noticed his hands clenching tightly. Needing to show that he felt the same, he whispered, "Bastards will pay for this."

Ron merely nodded in reply.

Hermione's tale resumed. "I was bound and couldn't move." She sniffed loudly and blew her nose. "When he touched me, I'd hoped that my own protective magic would Disapparate me away or burn him, but it didn't. His hands were on me. I kept asking, 'Why, Charlie? How could you? You're Ron's brother,' not knowing that it wasn't him. He was so rough, so eager."

"No, Charlie would never hurt you that way," Molly said. "I can understand, however, why seeing him would be hard for you. This is still quite fresh in your mind."

"Yes, it just brought it all back, seeing him," she said sadly. "His hands were on me... in me. He touched me *there* and broke my hymen, saying that I should beg him."

"I'm so sorry, child, so sorry."

"When he tried to kiss me, I did the only thing that I could. I bit him as hard as I could, and he slapped me. I think that's when he was going to start hexing me."

"Did he not?"

"No, Snape came in and stopped him. He unbound me and let me get dressed."

"And then?"

"There were other Death Eaters and Vol... You-Know-Who. They were discussing killing me or just torturing me. Uh, and oh, pushing on me and debating my fate. Snape, he bought me some extra time by suggesting that I not be killed. He ended up hiding me and getting me away safely, p-putting the blame on Wormtail."

"Well, I don't know what to think about Severus. It's what I would expect of him normally, but after what happened at Hogwarts with the headmaster, I am just as surprised as Harry and wonder if there is more to it than him just being helpful." She sighed. "Would you object to us making sure you're not under any hexes?"

"No, I won't, but I found out that Snape was forced into doing what he did."

"Yes, he's a Death Eater, dear. You-Know-Who gives orders, and they obey them."

"No, Mrs. Weasley, that's not what I mean. Dumbledore knew that Draco was trying to kill him, and he..."

"He?" Molly prodded.

"I need some time to think," Hermione finished. "I'm exhausted, and I'd like a hot bath."

"Anything you'd like, Hermione," Molly said softly. "About your assault, would you like to go out to see a Healer and be looked over?"

"No, I'm humiliated enough. I just want to forget about this until I can deal with it properly."

There was a long silence next. Both Harry and Ron looked at each other, eyes blazing with anger and indignation, both making silent vows to destroy Peter Pettigrew.

"Mrs. Weasley?"

"Yes?"

"I don't want anyone else to know right now. Harry and Ron, they might do something reckless, and I don't want to be responsible for that. There are other things more important than this that we've got to deal with. My mum and dad, please, I don't want them to know."

"But, Hermione, they are your parents and deserve to know..."

"This is my personal business, and I will decide who needs to know...if anyone should need to know any details. I'm an adult, and I want you to respect my wishes."

"Of course... of course I will, and don't you dare keep anything from me. I'm here for you." There was some sniffing. Molly began crying and said emotionally, "I love you like a daughter. I know my Ron fancies you, and I just hope that this won't stand in the way of you becoming part of the family in name one day."

As both women apparently began sobbing in earnest, Ron put away the Extendable Ears and motioned for Harry to follow him outside. He began pacing immediately. "I'm going to kill him. That dirty, rotten rat had his hands on her! He hurt her!" He flicked his wand and zapped a nearby shrub, causing leaves to blast into the air. "She didn't deserve that!"

"And Snape..." Harry tried to think of the words to explain how he was feeling about the man he hated more than anyone else.

"At least the great git got her out of there and brought her here!" Ron defended.

"Yeah, I know that, but I don't have to trust it, do I? He's done things for us before and still ended up killing Dumbledore!" Harry returned adamantly.

"No, you don't have to trust it," Ron agreed, "but I can still be grateful. He could have turned the other way and let them all have her."

Harry nodded and began thinking about what they'd heard. Snape had saved her. Why would he kill the one man who had trusted him for so long only to save the life of a Muggle-born student he'd never particularly liked anyway?

"Another betrayal on Wormtail's belt, this," Harry muttered darkly, not wanting to think of Snape's betrayal any longer. "Only this time he had an actual hand in it."

"You overheard," Hermione said from behind them.

They both jumped slightly and guiltily turned about to face her.

"We did," Ron said defiantly, moving forward to draw her to him protectively. "We needed to know."

She cringed a little and shied away, but she allowed him to loosely hold her. "I just need to think about things." She shrugged. "Please, you two, don't do anything foolish. I know you want to go off and..."

"Find him," Harry interrupted, moving to her side.

"Kill him," Ron added. "Slowly."

Hermione sighed. "I think that we all need to have a private visit with Dumbledore."

"Why?" Harry asked.

"Snape," she said simply.

Harry groaned in annoyance. "That..."

"He helped me, Harry. I've reason to believe that we've misunderstood some things. I think he could help us. Merlin knows we need it."

"No," Harry said firmly. "I won't ask him for help or accept it. He's a murderer, plain and simple. He can't be trusted."

"If it's the *only* way to defeat Voldemort, I think we should take whatever help we can get," Hermione said. "And maybe it wasn't exactly murder. Maybe it was something else." She frowned. "Tomorrow, when I'm up to talking more, I'll tell you the things I heard and what I gathered from a conversation with him."

"Maybe we should talk to Dumbledore's painting," Ron said with a shrug. "It can't hurt. We'll just have to figure out how to get McGonagall to let us do it."

"Yeah, she was right protective of the portrait last time."

"Agreed then?" Hermione asked, smiling unsteadily for the first time before moving from Ron's embrace.

"Agreed," Ron said immediately.

"All right," Harry muttered a moment later. "Just so you know, Charlie is upstairs, and we've checked him out. It's really him."

"I should apologize maybe," she said.

"He understands," Ron whispered. "Here," he extended his hand, "I'll go up with you to your room."

Harry nodded. "I'll come. I need to talk to Ginny." He followed his two best friends up the stairway with the latest event weighing heavily on his mind. What should he do? No matter what Snape had done to protect Hermione, he'd still have a score to settle with him. He didn't care what proof Hermione had. It wouldn't stop him from seeing the hate on Snape's face as he'd betrayed the headmaster. *What should I do?* He gazed at Hermione and frowned. Her shoulders were slumped as if defeated. She had an air of determination about her, false cheer...if one could call it that...but she seemed all right. Sort of. Confusion settled in. Dumbledore's portrait would know what to do.

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"Well done, Severusss," the Dark Lord said after hearing how the transfer went.

"It was perfect. She didn't allow Potter or Weasley to hex me." He grinned nastily, flashing his yellow teeth. "Granger trusts me completely, won't tell them anything more about what happened between us here, and will soon be gathering information to unknowingly pass on to me. We already made arrangements to exchange owls disguised as her parents' letters."

"You've already mentioned a cave to me from a conversation with her. That alone has been worth this ordeal, for I have a good idea already what old Dumbledore set Potter about before his death. Good plan." He paused, lost in thought, before smirking. "I can't believe the idiotic girl actually believed that you could Occlude your mind and hers at the same time, keeping your plans secret." He made a tscking noise. "Poor, naïve child. Those fake bruises wouldn't have even fooled Bellatrix, and she dares to think that you two have hoodwinked me?"

Snape nodded, smirking nastily. "Very naïve," he agreed.

"You are already my most trusted advisor. What more would you want as a reward?"

"Master, I would like the pleasure of being rid of Wormtail once and for all. I believe it would show goodwill on my part if he turned up bound and gagged for Potter's gang to seek vengeance against." Severus would love to have a part in the rat's downfall. "Completely Obliviated of anything important of course," he added quickly as he noticed a look of uncertainty on his Master's face.

"Do you think losing a loyal follower is worth this?" the Dark Lord asked, eyes boring into Severus' the entire time.

"I do, my Lord. I wasn't wrong about how easy it would be to manipulate the Granger girl." He paused for effect. "I simply acted the part of a guilt-ridden man, spouted some sentimental nonsense, and she was mine to influence." He pushed back a curtain of dark hair from his face. "Consider: I know them better than any other followers. Potter is likely still very suspicious. Weasley would be easy to sway; after all, I've saved his girl from Wormtail's clutches. And Granger, as you know, is already mine."

His Lord finished for him. "And sending Wormtail would be yet another brick removed from the wall blocking you from having Potter's... forgiveness and reluctant trust."

"Yes, my Lord," Severus replied with certainty.

"Wormtail is yours to do with as you will, Severusss," hissed the Dark Lord. "Nagini and I have business to attend."

"Good evening, my Lord," Severus said, smiling arrogantly, watching his Master's slow retreat. Once the Dark Lord was gone, his smile faded, and he sank down onto a nearby chair.

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**Author's Notes:** The bad thing about accepting these challenges is that you intend to write a quick one-shot story, but it becomes something you'd like to develop even more. Unfortunately, I doubt I will go any further with this one, allowing the reader to decide for herself if Snape is "good" or "bad" here.

Hopefully, I've met the challenge guidelines. Those are listed below. Thanks for reading. This was fun. Cheers!

**Andrian1's request:** Something set right after HBP where Severus finds Hermione through Voldemort orders, dark and angsty and with smut. Whether he is carrying out

those orders or has his own agenda is up to you. Implied, Non-con acceptable.