

Cheering Charms

by MMADían

A set of humorous drabbles and flashfics featuring our Hogwarts Charms master, beginning with "Trunks." Filius and Pomona each have a surprise waiting for them.

Trunks: June 1959

Chapter 1 of 5

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June 1959

Filius whistled as he entered his cottage. A glorious summer stretched out before him. He had plans to travel, but first he'd spend time in his cottage in Berkshire, just relaxing. He skipped up the stairs, tossing a small box over his shoulder, then flicking his wand. Another quick swish, and the unshrunk trunk bobbed happily behind him.

The sun streamed in through the south-facing windows. His charms had held nicely: the air was still fresh, and all the furniture, dust-free. As soon as he'd unpacked, he'd hardly feel as though it had been months since he'd been in his little home. Filius settled his trunk at the foot of the bed, noting that it seemed a little worse for sitting in a Hogwarts storage room for the last ten months or so, but he ignored that and waved his wand with a flourish, casting his own efficiently elegant unpacking charm.

The trunk opened and garments began to fly toward the wardrobe and dresser. Filius's mouth fell open as he gaped. . . .

Pomona watched the last students disembark from the Hogwarts Express. Albus liked to have a teacher take the train with them whenever possible. She hadn't minded, since she planned on visiting Colleen Murphy, anyway. Colleen and Pomona had been apprentices together under old Dimmity, and Colleen now was the first assistant to Professor Gold at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Wizarding Division, so Pomona was looking forward to her visit.

The only thing Pomona didn't like was arriving at King's Cross Station. Disapparating from Platform Nine and Three-Quarters was prohibited by the Ministry, so Pomona Levitated her trunk behind her and set off to find a Muggle trolley to put it on before she walked through the barrier.

As she settled her trunk onto the trolley, it struck her that it was a bit . . . cleaner than she remembered it, but Hogwarts house-elves were always looking for ways to be useful. They'd probably polished it up for her. The brass fittings fairly shone. At least when she arrived at Colleen's flat, the trunk would make a good impression even if she was a little unkempt. Though she'd cast cleaning charms on her robes afterward, her early morning work in Greenhouse Two had left its traces.

Pomona ignored the stares of the few Muggles who weren't cosmopolitan enough to pretend not to notice her unusual garb, and she trundled her trolley out into the hubbub of King's Cross. Glad that she had thought to put a Featherlight Charm on the trunk before loading it on the trolley, she found a cab, declining the cabby's offer to help her with her trunk. She closed her eyes and dozed, her feet up on her trunk.

When the cabby told her they had arrived, Pomona woke and found her Muggle wallet to pay him, again declining his offer of help. For the benefit of the Muggle driver, she made a show of wrestling the trunk up the front steps. She turned the bell handle, and moments later, Colleen was there. Colleen always seemed all elbows and sharp angles, but her smile was bright and her eyes, warm, as she welcomed Pomona with a hug.

"Let's get that to your bedroom, then we can have a good natter over a cup of tea," Colleen said cheerfully, Levitating Pomona's trunk and leading her to the guest room.

"I'd like to put on a fresh robe, if you don't mind," Pomona said as Colleen set the trunk down inside the bedroom. "It'll take just a min —" Pomona stopped, speechless as she opened the trunk and saw its contents.

Many miles away, frilly underthings rained down on Filius's bedroom floor as his unpacking charm failed for the first time ever.

Note: Set in late June 1959, just before "Now is Perfect."

Challenge word: Trunks.

Up a Tree: June 1960

Chapter 2 of 5

After giving in to an impulse one afternoon, Filius finds himself in an awkward position.

Takes place in late June 1960.



June 1960

Filius looked around. He'd overheard Pomona saying she was going to be in the school's small orchard that afternoon, one last time before she left the school later in the evening. He had thought that he might take a walk and just happen to run into her. But where was she? It was early still; perhaps she was on her way down.

Filius wasn't sure why Pomona had stopped seeing Preston, but she had, so she was between boyfriends at the moment. Of course, he'd recently begun seeing Caroline, but just casually. She was a very bright, attractive witch, and they had fun together, but she wasn't Pomona.

This was silly, hanging about the orchard. He shouldn't even be out there, Filius thought with a sudden sense of foreboding. He should simply owl Caroline for a date. Now that it was summer, his time was his own, and he could see more of Caroline—but that also meant he'd see little of Pomona over the next several weeks. It couldn't hurt to catch just a glimpse of her before they each left on holiday.

Whether Pomona was already there or on her way, he'd like to catch sight of her either coming or going. He could at least see her as she passed by—provided, of course, that he *could* see her. Filius looked at the gnarled old apple tree he was standing beneath, its branches low and weather-bent. He hadn't climbed a tree in years—decades, in fact—but he could gain a better view, just watch her as she passed by. No harm in that.

Glad he'd long ago mastered self-levitating spells, Filius Levitated himself easily to the lowest branch. After that, it wasn't difficult to climb up a little further. He looked around. He still couldn't see very well, so reaching up, he swung himself higher. Beginning to slip, he grabbed his new branch and hugged it tightly with his arms and legs. Perhaps this wasn't such a good idea, after all, Filius thought. But he *could* see better.

Filius inched his hands back until he was sitting up. Yes, he could see quite well now from his new vantage point. And hear, too. Pomona and someone . . . a male someone. All he'd wanted was to catch a glimpse of Pomona. But what if she caught a glimpse of him, he suddenly thought with alarm. And up a tree, in such a foolish position without a single excuse to be had, not when the fruit wouldn't be ripe yet for months. Glad he had worn his green robes and afraid to move even enough to Disillusion himself, Filius hoped that remaining still would keep him unnoticed by the couple.

Pomona was with a tall, handsome wizard. They seemed quite friendly, laughing and talking together, Pomona's hand on the broad-shouldered wizard's arm . . .

A half hour later, Pomona and her friend on their way to the greenhouses, Filius let out a breath he felt he'd held since they'd entered the orchard. At least he hadn't been seen, and the two had done nothing but talk and laugh, well, nothing but *flirt* and laugh, it seemed. Filius looked down; the ground now seemed very far away, much further than it had when he'd first climbed up. There was a rustling above him. Surprised, he watched as a tabby cat gracefully climbed and leapt down out of the tree they'd apparently been sharing.

With a pop, Minerva appeared below. "Like a hand, Filius?"

Filius nodded silently, loosening his hold on his branch. Minerva waved her wand and gently lowered him to the ground.

"I've learned some very interesting things when I nap in the trees." She quirked a small smile. "Not always things I particularly wanted to know, however."

Filius blushed. He could hear Pomona's laughter in the distance. He could only imagine what Minerva had thought when she'd seen him climb up into the tree and watch Pomona and her new beau. She was right, though, he certainly hadn't wanted to learn that Pomona was seeing someone new.

"I think it's going to rain. Come join me for a game of Go," Minerva said briskly. "We can help each other with strategy. We'll have a good afternoon, Filius, you'll see."

Note: Written in response to a Charming Roots flashfic challenge. The prompt word was "Tree." Takes place in late June 1960, in the midst of "Now is Perfect" (also posted here on TPP).

Snow: 31 December 1960

Chapter 3 of 5

Filius creates a surprise.

Written for the CR board Yule Drabbles. Prompt word: "snow."
100 words, exclusive the titles.



31 December 1960

Resisting the urge to push the blindfold aside, Pomona brushed some hair from her face.

"How far?"

"Not very!"

Under instructions, Pomona concentrated on *not* melting a path for them. There had been a heavy snowfall, and afternoon winds had created some drifts well over knee-high. For Filius, they must provide quite an obstacle, but he wasn't complaining.

"Steps!"

Pomona climbed. Her blindfold vanished.

"Oh, Filius!"

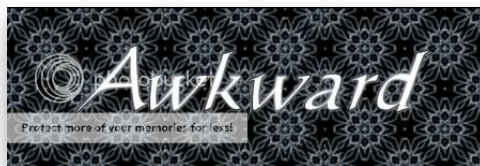
She stood atop a miniature tower; a large castle of glittering snow lay at her feet, sparkling in the moonlight. Charmed fairy lights glowed blue and green against ice turrets.

"Happy New Year, Pomona!"

Awkward: 4 January 1961

Chapter 4 of 5

Poor Filius is suffering from a cold and then finds himself in an awkward spot when someone comes to visit.



"Awkward"

~or~

"The Tale of the Witch's Knickers"

Wednesday, 4 January 1961

Filius Flitwick had a streaming head cold, complete with sore, scratchy throat, laryngitis, ringing in his ears, runny eyes, and a desire to do nothing more than lie in bed until it passed. Even the Pepper-Up Potion that Poppy had brought him earlier in the morning had done little to alleviate his symptoms or his feelings of abject misery. She had left him with a pot of tea and directions to stay in bed for a few days, saying something about a particularly virulent strain that year. Disappointment compounded his misery. He was supposed to have been taking Pomona out to dinner that evening in Diagon Alley, their first real date. He wanted to cry, but he just sniffled, then blew his nose into his big red hanky and resigned himself to his fate.

Paris, the lively young man in his door portrait, popped into the still life hanging above the fireplace in his bedroom. "There's someone to see you. Professor Sprout. Should I let her in?"

"Oh, I don't want her to see me like this," Filius moaned. His nose was red, his hair was matted on one side and sticking out in random directions on the other, and his voice was a hoarse whisper.

"She has something for you," the portrait said. "I could say that you're asleep, but she'll only return later."

Filius sniffed.

"I'll let her in, then," Paris said. "Just the ticket to have you back on your feet—a visit from your lady love!"

"Shhh! Don't say that too loudly!" Filius replied. He didn't want to scare Pomona off, after all, make her believe he'd been pining for her. Which he had been, but it wouldn't be prudent to let her know that when they'd not even had an official first date yet. But Paris was already gone, presumably to admit the Herbology teacher to his suite.

They'd been seeing more of each other socially over the last few weeks, and in an awkward moment on New Year's Eve, Filius had manoeuvred himself so that he was perched on the arm of Pomona's chair just as midnight struck. As he had leaned in to kiss her, their first kiss, they had hit their foreheads together so hard, he fell off the chair arm. Suave, very suave. But at least it left no doubt in Pomona's mind that he was interested in her as something more than a friendly colleague. And later on after leaving the party, they had had a very nice little canoodle on his sofa. She was as warm and wonderful as he had ever imagined—better, even. But now he had to cancel their first date because of an inconvenient cold. He sniffled again, this time feeling more sorry for himself.

"Filius! Filius!" Pomona's voice rang like a bell through his quarters.

"I'm in here," Filius managed to croak, pushing himself up to sit against the headboard and running his fingers through his unruly hair.

"Poppy told me at breakfast how sick you were," Pomona said as she bustled into his bedroom, "and then I got your note about this evening, and I was worried. I brought you some chicken soup!" She held up a picnic basket.

"Oh, thank you! I'm so sorry about dinner—"

"You just get better! You look as though you must feel absolutely miserable," Pomona said sympathetically as she set the basket down on his bedside table. She opened the basket and pulled out a vase of flowers. "I thought these might cheer you up a bit."

"They're beautiful, Pomona. Thank you." He sniffled and wiped his eyes.

"I'll just set them over here so you can see them easily," Pomona replied. "Now, no need to cry! This is only a little something to brighten your room. You'll be over this nasty cold in no time!"

Filius cleared his throat. "I'm not crying. It's this cold." He blew his nose. He did have a tendency toward tears when he felt moved, but this wasn't one of those moments.

"How would you feel about a nice bowl of soup?"

"That sounds wonderful. Thank you." His eyes welled with tears, this time from gratitude. "It's very good of you. I hope you don't catch this cold from me."

"Don't you worry about me! I almost never get colds. All the fresh air I get, I like to think," Pomona said as she ladled some steaming soup into a bowl. "All fresh herbs from the greenhouses—made it myself this morning. Better than Pepper-Up, I say!" She conjured a little tray table over Filius's lap and set his soup down on it, then handed him a spoon and a napkin. "You look as though you could use a fresh handkerchief."

"Yes, I have one here someplace," Filius said, feeling about under his pillow, but only finding one in worse shape than the one in his other hand. He blushed.

"Where do you keep them? I'll pull out a few fresh ones for you," Pomona said.

"Top drawer in the dresser, on the left-hand side. But that's all right. I have my wand here somewhere . . ."

"No trouble at all," Pomona replied cheerily. She opened the drawer and moved aside some socks. Suddenly, she was still, staring into his drawer.

Filius felt himself grow warmer and his heart beat uncomfortably fast. He suddenly remembered what else he kept in that drawer.

Slowly, Pomona's hand lifted something from the drawer. She held it in front of her and stared.

"Um, Pomona, I can explain—"

"Are these *my* knickers in your drawer?" she asked, not turning around, still transfixed by the sight of her own lacy black knickers, found in a completely unexpected place.

Filius swallowed past his sore throat. His face glowed. "Yes," he croaked. "After that mix up that summer, uh, with our trunks, I, um, I just, um—"

"You decided to . . . to keep a souvenir?"

"No, no, not that, not exactly. I found them later. They were caught on the top of my mirror. Up high. I didn't notice them until I'd already sent the wrong trunk back to Hogwarts. And then, um, I found out it was your trunk and you had mine and it seemed awkward to try to return them by post. And after that, every time I thought of it . . . it just . . . I felt embarrassed . . . I'm sorry, Pomona." She'd probably think he was some sort of crazy maser now, collecting witches' undergarments and doing bizarre things with them. He wiped his nose miserably.

"Oh, well, yes, I see how that could be awkward," Pomona said, dropping them back into the drawer. She turned around, this time with several clean handkerchiefs in her hand. She was blushing almost as brightly as Filius felt he was. "How's the soup?"

"Um, uh, it looks fine," Filius replied, confused. He picked up his spoon and tasted it. Steamy and flavourful enough to taste through his cold. "Mmm, perfect. Went down a dream."

"Good." Pomona set his clean handkerchiefs beside his pillow.

"About the, um, the under, um, the knickers," Filius said with a blush.

"Oh, don't worry about them. When I couldn't find them, I went out and splurged on a few new pairs. They were my only black ones, so I noticed."

"But, um, don't you want them back?"

Pomona smiled and caressed Filius's cheek, smoothing back some of his hair. "Oh, yes. But I think perhaps you might return them under less awkward circumstances." She winked. "I can hope for that, anyway."

"Oh." Filius's eyes grew wider. "O-o-oh!" He smiled. "It will probably still be awkward," he said.

"We'll simply have to wait until it's not, then," Pomona replied. "I look forward toward our overcoming our embarrassment together. Now, eat your chicken soup! I want that date of ours before the students return on Sunday!"

Filius smiled and ate his chicken soup.

Note: Written in long-overdue response to the Charming Roots Board challenge prompt, "awkward." This is a follow-up to the challenge-prompt flashfic, "Trunks," which is also part of the "Cheering Charms" series of Filius Flitwick flashfics. ;)

It's not the heat . . . : January 1962

Chapter 5 of 5

Filius and Pomona are on holiday. Filius has a longing. Can Pomona help? January 1962.

Author's Note: This fic was inspired by FFPS flashfic challenge #17 set by Stefdarlin on the CR board. It turned out longer than the other flashfics, but I hope you enjoy it!



January 1962

Pomona looked over at Filius, who had just renewed his fly-shooing charm. Despite his broad-brimmed straw hat, thin pale-blue calf-length robe, cooling charms, and even sandals...which he hated wearing...perspiration ran down his face and his robe was damp. He blotted his forehead and turned the page in his book. Pomona felt hotter and more uncomfortable just looking at him. The climate of a tropical rainforest did not suit Filius, it seemed.

"You could go back to the hotel," Pomona suggested.

"Hm, no, no! I'm fine! We're on holiday here together, after all," Filius said. "No point in me spending the entire time in a hotel room . . . a nice, cool, climate-controlled hotel room." He swatted at a long blue and green insect, which flew away only to return and buzz around his hat brim.

"I'll be at least another half hour, though," Pomona said. She stood and wiped her hands on her robe. She looked down, drew her wand, and cleaned the dirty hand prints from her cotton print robe. "And I have to move soon...I need samples from a different area."

"I'll come along," Filius said brightly. "It's easy enough to bring my chair and umbrella with me."

"Well, if you insist."

"I do. You know, they're right. It's not the heat, it's the humidity. And the heat, too," Filius said. "And the bugs. I need a better Shoo-fly Charm, I think." He shooed away some mosquitos that were coming too close to his tantalizing bare ankles. He cast a Cooling Charm, then hesitated and cast a second one.

"It will be cool in the auditorium this afternoon," Pomona said. "I'm looking forward to the symposium. The topics sound fascinating, and the speakers...would you mind if we stayed for the cocktail hour afterward? I really want to meet R.J. Singh and talk to him about the effects of magical microbial activity on Charmed environments. He's the only one doing any research in magical microbes in Herbology."

"Of course, sweetling," Filius said agreeably, waving his wand to freshen himself up. "I think we both need to have a shower before lunch, though."

Filius waved his program, creating a slight and completely ineffective breeze. The symposium had been lovely. The auditorium had been cool, the chairs, well cushioned, and the drone of the speakers, soothing. He'd had a pleasant little nap, only rousing when the audience had applauded the various speakers. Now, though, he was developing a headache. The organisers of the conference had decided that it would be a good idea to have the reception out on the hotel veranda. It was shaded, and the hotel had cast effective insect repellant charms, but their idea of a Cooling Charm definitely needed some work. Granted, it was cooler on the veranda than it was in the surrounding tropical gardens, but it was still at least eighty-five degrees, and they'd done nothing about the robe-drenching humidity. To amuse himself, he cast a thermometer charm. Thirty degrees. Yes, he was right. Still hot. If only it were thirty degrees Fahrenheit rather than Celsius, he thought with a sigh . . .

"Lo, there. You must be a husband. Or some other hapless relative, friend, or companion dragged along to this godforsaken place." The florid-faced gentleman took a large swallow of his tall drink. It looked as though he'd already had a few.

"Friend. Companion," Filius said.

"Thought as much," his new acquaintance said. "Can always tell. Can always tell the dragged-along! Let me buy you a drink." He waved to one of the wait-wizards. "A Collins for my friend."

"Er, thank you," Filius said. He was fairly certain that the drinks were free at the reception, but he had decided not to have anything, since in his experience, he didn't do well with alcohol in the heat. He would have preferred a lemonade or even ice water...and he normally never drank ice water. But perhaps he wouldn't drink it. He could

just pour it over his head.

A meaty hand was thrust toward him. "Brentwood, Jeremiah Brentwood. Gems trader."

"How do you do, Mr Brentwood," Filius replied, shaking his hand. "I'm Filius Flitwick. Er, Charms master."

"Hm, hm. Yes. Fascinat' stuff, charms. Bit useful, too. I'm more of a Lapidomancy man, myself. Hence the gems trading." He showed large white teeth. "Good solid things, stones. Most o' the time, anyway. Some of the magical opals I've handled, though...they can be a bit tricky. But that's their beauty, doncha think?"

"Oh, yes, quite," Filius replied, taking his newly arrived Tom Collins from a tray that had appeared in front of him. He took a sip. It was icy cold, refreshingly lemony, and it went down beautifully. He took a longer sip.

For the next half hour, Filius drank Collinses and listened to his companion discuss his experience trading magical gemstones in various parts of the world. He mentioned an opal mine in Australia.

"We're going . . . we're going to Aushtalia next . . . Think sho, anyway," Filius slurred. "Eucalyptush . . . kiwis, no that's New Zealand . . . we're going to Aushtalia . . ."

"Think it's hot here, wait till you're in the Outback," Brentwood said grandly. "Sun's relentless there. Dryer, of course, as if that makes much of a difference. Never minded it much, myself, though. It's the glare that gets me. Here's nice, the trees. Bugs are a bit worse, though. A few charms could help with that, I'm sure."

"Mm, charms are nice," Filius agreed. "Cooling charms, shoofly charms, fresh of breath air charms . . . I mean, breath of fresh air charms. All very nice."

"Filius! Filius?" Pomona was at his elbow.

"Pomona, my shweet, shweet, apple dumplin'," Filius said, putting his hand out to gesture toward Brentwood and almost over-tipping himself. "I'd like you to meet my new friend. Pomona Shprout, this is . . . um, Brentwood. He does shtones. Buy's 'em, shells 'em, shteals 'em, digs 'em up. Pretty gems."

"Ah, pleased to meet you, Mr Brentwood," Pomona said.

"Likewise," Brentwood said, wholly unperturbed by Filius's description of him.

"Filius, how many of these have you had?" Pomona asked, taking his glass from him.

"Um . . . three. Four." He giggled. "It is very warm, Pommy-dumplin'. These are very nice and cool."

"Yes, I'm sure," Pomona said. She nodded at Brentwood, who was gazing glassy-eyed across the veranda.

Pomona took Filius's shoulder and steered him through the thinning crowd and into the hotel.

As they stepped into the lift, Pomona said, "I'm cancelling our dinner reservations. We can order room service tonight."

"Oh, shplendid idea! Room shervice. Very...*hic*...romantic. And cool. No more going outside. I don't think I like the shun any longer. It's very nasty here." Filius pouted.

"Mm."

Two hours later, Filius opened his eyes. There was a cool cloth across his forehead. He took in a breath and let it out carefully. His head was splitting, his muscles felt like melted butter, and his stomach seemed to be rising up into his throat. He closed his eyes again and suppressed a moan.

"Fil? Awake yet?"

"Mmhm." He kept his eyes closed.

"You said not to pack any potions, but I didn't pay attention, thankfully," Pomona said. She helped him to sit up, and held a small vial to his lips. "Drink up. This will help."

He swallowed, and his nausea eased.

"And here's some Headache Potion," Pomona said.

Filius lay back down after the second potion. A few minutes later, he opened his eyes and saw Pomona sitting at the table across the room, reading and taking notes. He cleared his throat.

Pomona looked over. "Feeling better?"

"Yes." He paused, embarrassed. "Did you, um, have any dinner?"

"Not yet. I had a package of peanuts. I think there were about twelve in it. The hotel will no doubt charge us a Galleon for it."

"I'm sorry."

Pomona waved off his apology. "I shouldn't have abandoned you like that. I'm sure you were bored silly."

"No. I drank myself silly. I was a bit bored, though. And hot. I should have stuck to lemonade."

"Avoid ex-pats with drinking problems," Pomona said. "Learned that myself one summer during my apprenticeship. It was a very educational summer."

"Yes, but I'm old enough to know better than to drink so much in the middle of the afternoon, especially in the heat like that. I can't blame Brentwood."

"Don't worry about it. Want to order some supper?"

Filius swung his legs over the edge of the bed and Summoned his wand. "Yes, I am quite hungry now, actually." He flicked his wand and the menu flew to his hand. "Anything in particular you have an appetite for?"

"Oh, some kind of curry. Indonesian, Thai, whatever. With coconut milk. Maybe some kind of seafood . . . or tofu. Just order something you think I'd like." Pomona made one more note on her parchment and closed her book.

Although Filius felt better, he didn't think he should overtax his stomach with a curry. He decided on a mixed vegetable salad with cold chicken and hard-cooked eggs. He stepped over to the wall and waved his wand. A black horn-shaped object dropped down into his hand.

"I could get used to these conversation tubes," Filius said. "Clever things."

Pomona smiled. "We have the Floo Network. They are convenient, though."

"Hello? Hello?" Filius called through the tube.

"Yes, sir. May I direct your call?"

"We'd like to order room service."

"One moment, please."

Filius grinned broadly. This was a fabulous Charmed instrument, no doubt about it.

Even better, their suppers arrived at their door twenty minutes after Filius ordered, delivered by a skinny hotel employee in a white and blue uniform robe. Filius was so pleased, he tipped the young wizard three Galleons, prompting a bit of tut-tutting from Pomona, which she promptly forgot when she tasted her tofu in coconut curry sauce.

"Are you looking forward to seeing Australia?" Pomona asked.

Filius nodded. Another round of tours of magical botanical gardens and Herbology lectures. But they would have some free time together, and there were side trips, too. To Pinnacle Towers, for example. In the middle of a desert. They say a dry heat is more comfortable, Filius thought to himself. He sighed slightly and took a bite of cold chicken.

"You know, Fil, you don't need to go to every single Herbology talk with me, or on every single garden tour. I know that you want us to spend time together, but I also know that what I find fascinating isn't as interesting to you. I hate to think of you being bored."

"Well . . . the gardens do all seem a bit alike after a while. And the Herbology lectures are interesting in small doses, but after the first few, I am afraid that my curiosity about the cutting edge of Herbolological research was sated for the next decade," Filius admitted.

"We are in fascinating countries with so many interesting sights, Filius! Take advantage of it! You could even do a Muggle tour or two if you wanted. We can do some things together, and some things separately...like the lectures, which I completely understand your being bored with."

"All right, as long as you don't feel neglected."

"You're always welcome to join me, just don't feel you have to."

"It's a deal!" Filius held out his hand and Pomona shook it.

Six days later, Filius was sitting in another hotel room, this time a Muggle hotel, since there were no wizarding accommodations remaining available in Adelaide, and neither Pomona nor Filius were interested in the wizarding campground that had been set up to accommodate the overflow from the Herbology tour. Many of the same witches and wizards were on this tour as had attended the previous conference, and Filius had made friends with a pair of American witches who were there with their husbands, who had been speakers at the conference. They had been happy to have the little Charms wizard along, and the three had had a good time seeing the sights in Sidney and Melbourne, though they had also joined the Herbology group for some of the nature tours. Australia certainly had some beautiful and diverse scenery, and Filius had enjoyed seeing it with Pomona.

Now, though, Filius was just tired. Tired of being away from home, tired of the funny looks from Muggles, tired of waiting for Pomona to get out of yet another lecture, but most of all, he was tired of the heat. The temperature outside the hotel was in the eighties, but it was hardly any better in the hotel room, although the hotel had air conditioning. It didn't seem to work very well, however, and Filius itched to cast cooling charms on the room.

The door to the room opened, and Filius perked up.

"Why are you sitting here in the dark?" Pomona asked, walking over to the window and pulling the curtains back to let in the late afternoon light.

"It feels cooler," Filius said. "So, are we still going to dinner with the tour group this evening?"

"You know, I heard that there's a wonderful little Italian restaurant just a few blocks away," Pomona said. "They have some of that local wine we've liked, and they serve all kinds of fresh seafood. Neapolitan cuisine, mostly, Professor Painter said. How would you like to do that instead?"

"That sounds wonderful!"

"Do you mind if we meet Professor Painter and her husband in the hotel bar for drinks first?" Pomona glanced at her watch. "I'd like to take a shower first, and I said we could meet at six. If you were available. But if you'd rather not..."

"No, that's fine. They seem like a nice couple. And while you are taking your shower, I will see if I can find something a little more Muggle to wear." He'd only packed Muggle evening dress, and that was far too formal, especially when they were out during the day. He thought with a few spells, he could alter some of his clothes so that he would fit in better. He'd look in one of the Muggle travel magazines in the hotel room for ideas on an appropriate Muggle outfit.

"Thank you, dear," Pomona said. On her way to the bathroom, she stopped and kissed his cheek. "I am so glad you came with me on this trip, and I'm sorry you haven't enjoyed it more."

"I have, I really have, Pomona. I wouldn't have missed it for the world," Filius said. And that was true. Whatever things he disliked about the tour, it was more than made up for by all of the new things he had seen, as well as the time he'd been able to spend with Pomona.

The restaurant may have had an uninspired name..*Mangia! Mangia!*...but the menu was inspired and the food, delicious.

During dinner, Pomona reached over and took Filius's hand. "Thank you so much for coming with me. I wouldn't have enjoyed the trip nearly as much if I'd had to come alone."

"You and Colleen would have had a good time together, though, I'm sure," Filius said.

"Yes, and then maybe she wouldn't have met Richard, and she wouldn't have had nearly as good a time!" Pomona said. "I really enjoyed being able to share this experience with you, seeing all of these new things...the Taj Mahal, Angkor Wat, the Pinnacles! And I certainly would have missed you at night." She squeezed his hand.

"I would have missed you, too, all alone at Hogwarts...well, I wouldn't have been alone, of course. I do hope my Ravenclaws are all right."

"I'm sure that Albus or Minerva would have contacted us if there were anything wrong with anyone in either House," Pomona said reassuringly. "You only had a few students staying over the holiday, anyway. Did you miss the New Year's fireworks in Hogsmeade? Or having Christmas in the Great Hall?"

"No...I did miss decorating the Great Hall, though. That's always fun."

"I wonder if it snowed," Pomona said as she speared a bit of Filius's fish and proceeded to pop it in her mouth.

Filius shrugged and stole one of Pomona's mushrooms. "One thing I wouldn't have missed if I had stayed at the castle: the heat. I don't think I will ever complain about it being too cold again." He ate the mushroom. "Mmm. Oh, mmm, this is heavenly!" He took another. "It must be in a wine sauce. Oh, Merlin, these are, mmmhmmmm." His words were lost in his mouth's appreciation of the mushroom.

Pomona grinned. "I definitely wouldn't have wanted to miss this meal...even with you stealing my food!"

Filius laughed and stole another mushroom.

When they returned to their hotel room, the two were pleased to find that the air conditioning seemed to have been fixed, and the room was a tolerable temperature. They soon heated it back up, though, and Filius cheated a bit and cast a charm to freshen their sweaty sheets. Pomona curled up around Filius and kissed his ear.

"I love you," she whispered. "I love you."

"I love you, too, my sweet." Filius brought her hand to his lips and kissed it.

The next morning, Filius woke and was surprised to see that he was alone in the bed.

"Pomona?" He sat up and looked around. "Pomona?"

He rolled out of bed and padded over to the bathroom door. It was ajar, and he tapped it as he pushed it open. Pomona wasn't in the bathroom, either. Puzzled, he stepped over to the window and drew back the heavy room-darkening curtains and looked around at the empty room.

Then he spotted it. There was a note stuck to the door.

Filius...

Had to step out to do a few errands before the morning lecture. I'll grab some breakfast while I'm out, and you should, too! So sorry not to be here to have breakfast with you, but you looked quite peaceful in your sleep, and I didn't want to wake you.

Meet me for lunch at the Opaleye Dragon restaurant? It's that or lunch at the campgrounds after the tour of the Adelaide Wizarding Botanical Gardens, and I think the food at the Opaleye would be much better! I'll invite Colleen and Richard along, too...and that way you can feel free to make other plans if you want without worrying about abandoning me! Otherwise, we can meet at the Botanical Gardens at eleven, or you could meet me at the restaurant at one.

Love, kisses, and looking forward to more sweaty sheets tonight!

...P.

Filius picked up the tour program. The lecture was at ten, followed by the eleven o'clock tour of the botanical gardens (which Filius always found a redundant designation, since he assumed gardens were by nature botanical, but he wasn't an expert). He was sure that the newly established magical botanical gardens were fascinating, but he had seen so many gardens in the last two weeks, they all seemed to blend together. He would take Pomona's advice and meet her at the restaurant later.

In the meantime, he thought that a bath and breakfast were in order, followed by a walk through Muggle Adelaide, perhaps a visit to Muggle museum, and then down to the small Adelaide wizarding district to meet Pomona for lunch.

A few hours later, Filius stepped through the wall at the back of a cobbler shop into Adelaide's wizarding district. After asking a passing wizard for directions, Filius found the Opaleye Dragon easily. Pomona and her friends, Colleen Murphy and Richard Johns, were already there, and they waved to him from their corner table.

The three had all enjoyed the tour of the botanical gardens, and Colleen had taken snapshots, which she promised to share with Pomona.

"It's a pity you missed the lecture this morning, Pomona," Richard said as they all perused the menu. "I think you would have found the discussion of mandrake very interesting."

Filius looked over at Pomona. "You didn't go to the lecture?"

"I got caught up in my errands, which took a little longer than I'd thought, and I didn't want to walk in late, so I went on ahead to the botanical gardens a little early."

"Ah." Filius nodded, but he still was puzzled. He would ask Pomona more about her errands later, when they were alone.

The meal was pleasant, and after they left the restaurant, Colleen and Richard Disapparated for the campgrounds, where they were staying, and Pomona and Filius took a walk through wizarding Wallaroo Way, looking at the different shops, most of which were closed.

"What kinds of errands did you do this morning?" Filius asked after a while. "You should have woken me; I would have been happy to go with you."

"Oh, just a few little things. I wanted to drop into the travel agency, too, recheck our plans," Pomona said as they walked past the Whitby travel agency.

"Ah. The last stop, Tasmania," Filius said. Probably another very hot country. He'd heard it was desolate. But Pomona had really wanted to visit it, for some peculiar reason.

"I know you had hoped to fit Japan into our trip, but I think you'll agree, it just wouldn't have fit," Pomona said, "not if we want to make it home in time for the first day of classes next week."

"You are right. Four countries was already a stretch. But maybe sometime, we could take a couple weeks and only visit Japan. There's so much to see, after all."

"We should keep that in mind when we're planning our holidays," Pomona agreed with a nod. "We can talk more about the Tasmania side-trip tomorrow morning."

"To be quite honest, though, Pommy-dumpling, I have to say that I've had enough travelling for a while."

"Well, this summer, we'll stay home and just take occasional daytrips to the seaside," Pomona said. "And we won't leave the country, either."

Filius chuckled. "We don't have to completely restrict ourselves...but I think it would be quite agreeable not to go far from home for a while. I suppose I'm just not as young and adventurous as I once was."

"Nonsense! This has been a tiring trip, and I know that the heat has bothered you. In fact, I think we should get back to our room where it's cooler." She bent closer to him. "Not that I'd mind getting a little sweatier with you!"

Filius laughed.

When Filius woke the next morning, it was again to find himself alone in bed in a dark bedroom, but he could hear Pomona in the bathroom. He sat up and rubbed the sleep from his eyes. It felt very early.

"Pomona?"

"Oh, good, you're awake!" Pomona stuck her head out the door. "Could you just look around and make sure I haven't missed packing anything? And hurry and dress!"

"What? Why?"

"Our Portkey."

"That's not until tomorrow," Filius said, his brow furrowed. Perhaps he'd become completely confused by all of the travelling and time changes.

"I changed it. We leave in a half hour...no, twenty minutes. I was just about to wake you."

Filius leapt out of bed and found the clothes Pomona had laid out for him. He hurriedly changed, then stuffed his nightshirt into one of their bags, then did the same with the heavy over-robe that Pomona had left out for him.

"You should have told me," Filius protested as he went into the bathroom to brush his teeth. "We'll be late, then we will have to get another Portkey, and Portkey changes are expensive, and you've already done it once."

"You needed your sleep," Pomona said, flicking on the light switch and looking around the room once more.

Filius came out of the bathroom carrying his toothbrush and trying to smooth down his hair with his hand.

"Here, put on your over-robe and hat," Pomona said, pulling his robe from the carpet bag and shaking out the wrinkles. She shoved them at him.

"It's too hot," Filius protested.

"We don't want to arrive with you looking like the dustman," Pomona said briskly. She pulled his hat down over his fluffy hair.

Filius shrugged on the over-robe, which he hadn't worn since the day they'd left Hogwarts.

Pomona shrank the luggage and picked it up with one hand. She immediately put it down and cast a feather-light charm on it. She took a small globe from her robe pocket and handed it to Filius.

"Here's the Portkey. It has a five-minute window, starting one minute ago, so are you ready? Professor Gold is expecting us."

"We aren't having breakfast? And I thought Professor Gold was on sabbatical from the Wizarding Royal Botanic Gardens, but I haven't seen him on the trip," Filius said, confused.

"No time. We'll have something when we arrive. Ready? Hold onto me, shake the snow globe, and say, 'Whiteshell,'" Pomona instructed as she picked up the luggage again.

Filius noticed now that the Portkey was a small snow globe. Still confused, Filius grabbed Pomona's arm, shook the snow globe, and said, "Whiteshell."

Filius felt the squeezing, whirling, pressing sensation of an activated Portkey, and after a dizzying few moments, he felt the earth beneath his feet again. Very cold earth. Still dizzy from the Portkey, Filius looked around him. It was bright daylight and there was snow everywhere. Snow, mountains, and . . . a large, sprawling complex of cabins and lodges. A wizard dressed in heavy woollen robes was walking toward them, waving.

"What? Pomona?" Filius looked up at Pomona, who was beaming. "I don't understand. This isn't Tasmania." He looked over at the approaching man, who he recognised was Professor Gold. Whose sabbatical was in . . . Canada, at the Whiteshell Academy in Manitoba.

Pomona dropped the bags and hugged him. "Snow for you, Filius, nice cold snow!" She took his hands and looked down into his smiling face. "You were miserable in the heat. I found you some snow, and we can still be on holiday for the next few days until we have to return to Hogwarts. If that's all right with you."

"That . . . that would be fine." Fine? That was an understatement. "That would be wonderful!" Filius corrected with a grin.

"Welcome, welcome, welcome to my home-away-from-home!" the cheery dark-haired, bristly-bearded wizard called out. "Ah, Pomona, it is lovely to see you again!" He patted her on the shoulder. "And Professor Flitwick! Happy New Year to you both!"

"Happy New Year!"

Professor Gold took their bags and invited them to follow him back to the school. "We're in holidays here, ourselves, but there are some older students still in residence who would be happy to meet you, and some of the faculty are here, as well. We have a guest cottage all ready for you, and lunch is in a half hour. I hope you'll be comfortable!"

"I'm sure we will be!" Filius said, gazing happily across the snow-covered grounds at the sprawling complex, where wisps of smoke curled up from the many chimneys of the large school.

Filius crunched through the snow with Pomona and Professor Gold. A few days at the Canadian school could be quite fun: he'd never visited Whiteshell before; they had a very different curriculum from Hogwarts and a large and reputedly excellent library; even the school buildings looked interesting. And best of all, they had icy cold *snow*!

The challenge prompt that inspired this fic:A 100-300 word fic on our couple in the snow or affected by snow in some way. (Charming Roots FFPS Flashfic Challenge #17.)