

# The Language of Flowers

*by Lady Strange*

**\*Now Complete\*** A polite romance and comedy of manners based loosely on the WIKTT 'Regency Challenge'. This is intelligent fluff, or so I would like to think. It goes on for 22 chapters and has many pairings. I hope you enjoy reading it.

## Preface

*Chapter 1 of 23*

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### THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS

#### Preface

I would like to think that is a thinking Regency romance à la Harry Potter. There will be magic, but the setting is Regency England. I have taken some liberty with the ages of some characters, as well as the names of a few clubs and such. For instance, the famous gentlemen's club, White's is renamed Black's in this story. Black's is so named after Sirius Black, whose ancestors in the context of this story, were the founders of this illustrious club. Hogwarts is comparable to Eton as a school for young men of Quality. Garswoth is a select seminary for the young women Quality. For purposes of this story, Argus Filch and Hermione's father are squibs. Regency London still exists, but instead of the London that we are used to reading in Georgette Heyer and Jane Austen, I have recreated parts of it along the spirit of the Harry Potter books. In short, in this story, the Harry Potter world is transposed into Regency London. This means that it is quite normal for everyone to be wizards. Squibs and muggles, in this story at least, are the minority in the society within this plot.

The purpose of such liberties is to render the Regency novel as Harry-Potterish as possible. If it offends your sensibilities, I apologise and recommend that you read Miss Jeanette's A Bluestocking Thing (henceforth abbreviated as Bluestocking), which is Regency romance as popularised by Avon romances and other such book companies. Miss Jeanette has an inimitable style and her Bluestocking is truly a joy to read. If my writing style and manner herein offends you, please read Miss Jeanette's Bluestocking in lieu of this.

I also will use some colloquialisms popular during the British Regency period. I will explain them wherever possible in footnotes at the end of each chapter. My semi-philosophical style is tempered here by a strong Jane Austen influence. Where possible, I have consulted my mother, who is an expert on peerages and the forms of addresses, as well as Regency fashion. Thus, it should be noted that I strictly adhere to the British tradition of titles. To avoid confusion, permit me to give you a basic primer on this.

*Do not* skip this section long and tedious it maybe, as I have no desire of explaining how my characters are addressed and why different characters call a certain fellow X and others call him Y.

What you will see below is mainly taken from <http://www.chinet.com/~laura/html/titles12.html>. Where possible, I have simplified it and made it easier to understand. I have also used certain examples to further explain some facts.

#### Peerage and Forms of address

In a nutshell, this is how the who's who is to be addressed:

Social ranks from highest to lowest are (1) Duke, (2) Marquess [or Marquis if you follow the title from elsewhere on the continent or Scotland], (3) Earl, (4) Viscount, (5) Baron, (6) Baronet, (7) Knight, (8) Gentleman, (9) Commoner. Scottish peerages are slightly different from the British. This will be explained (if necessary) in the context of the story. Baronets and Knights are not considered part of the peerage.

In speech, with a few rare exceptions for extremely formal occasions, all ranks below duke are called "Lord" and "Lady", i.e. the Lord and Lady Sutherland rather than the Earl and Countess of Sutherland. A peer of the realm is one who holds one (or more of five possible) title(s) of nobility and the estate(s) bestowed upon him or his direct ancestor by the monarch. Although other members of his family might be addressed by "Lord This" and "Lady That," *none* of them are peers; their titles are *all* courtesy titles, including his wife's (although she is usually acknowledged as a nominal peeress this is again only by courtesy). I will explain courtesy titles a little later. A duke or duchess is addressed as "Your Grace" by social inferiors, and as "Duke" or "Duchess" by social equals. Social equals who address Dukes and Duchesses simply as "Duke" or "Duchess" are people who do not know the ducal family very well and are within the peerage. Social equal are people ranked from Duke to Baron. Baronets, their wives and children would call Dukes and Duchesses "Your Grace". Example: In Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, the Elliot family is related to the Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple, and her daughter, the Honourable Miss Carteret. Miss Carteret and her mother would call a Duke they didn't know very well "Duke". Sir Walter Elliot and his daughters would call him "Your Grace".

All other peers and peeresses are called by "Lord" or "Lady" prefixed to the title, for example, Lord Spencer or Lady Thatcher.

As you'd expect from the ranking, dukes have always been the rarest British noble title. There have never been more than 40 non-royal dukedoms in being at any one time, and ordinarily there have been fewer than that. I have followed this in my story with only 3 ducal families: Malfoy, Dumbledore and Weasley.

Barons, being the lowest rank of nobility, have usually been the most numerous of the five degrees. The next most numerous in dignity has usually been that of Earl; Marquesses and Viscounts have always been comparatively less numerous, though not so rare as dukes.

In 1818, however, there were more earls than barons. There were 25 non-royal dukes, 31 marquesses, 212 earls, 69 viscounts, and 193 barons. These numbers include 21 peeresses in their own right (this includes one of the haughty patronesses of the Almack), 6 countesses and 15 baronesses, but they do not include subsidiary titles (i.e., only the highest-ranking title held by the peer is counted). I have followed this tradition in this story. Both Hermione Granger and Luna Lovegood stand to be peeresses in their own right. Hermione is heiress to the Barony of Orthod, and Luna is heiress to the Barony of de Quib. I will explain how women can become peerages in their own right. Generally, titles that originate uninterrupted before the restoration of Charles II (especially between the years 1100-1600) can go to daughters if there are no sons. Scottish titles may also devolve upon daughters. If a Scottish lord produces no sons, his eldest daughter inherits the title even if the Lord has brothers who have produced sons. So, by this logic, we assume that in this story, the Barony of de Quib and the Barony of Orthod go back to at least the medieval period. Titles like these follow the mode of the monarchy. For instance, Queen Elizabeth II came to the throne even though her uncle, the Duke of Kent was alive and had produced sons.

It should be noted that most members of the peerage, i.e. the Earls and above, hold more than one title, as such, only the highest title owned is addressed. Any secondary titles will be given to the elder son. Example: In Georgette Heyer's novel *The Foundling*, the hero, Gilly, is introduced as "the Most Noble Adolphus Gillespie Vernon Ware, Duke of Sale and Marquis of Ormesby; Earl of Sale; Baron Ware of Thame; Baron Ware of Stoven; and Baron Ware of Rufford..." This tells us that Gilly's surname/last name is Ware. His highest title is the Duke of Ware. If he produced a son, that son would take his second highest ranking title by courtesy. Therefore, Gilly's eldest son would be Lord Ormesby. Any other sons after the eldest would be Lord first name surname (e.g. Lord Lionel Ware). If Gilly is still alive when his son produces an eldest son, Gilly's eldest grandson would be called Lord Sale, after the third highest title. I hope this is clear.

Notice that he is introduced with his (full) name first, followed by a comma, followed by his string of titles, greatest to least. The thing about titles, is that non-Brits, Americans or any non-Brit overly enamoured of the British peerage that they exaggerate the Lord and Lady X business. So, in this example with Gilly, even if he were merely Baron Ware, he would *NEVER* be introduced as "Lord Adolphus Ware." He would be "Adolphus, Baron Ware." This is a very common error by people who know nothing of the peerage, but love it too much -- but you *can't ever get* from "Lord Lionel Ware" to "Lord Ware." *Peerages don't use first names* The very fact that the "Lord" comes before his first name tells you that it is a courtesy title, not a peerage. And the children of younger sons of Dukes and Marquesses do not get the "Lord/Lady" courtesy, they are plain the Honourable Mr/Miss Surname (first name is included if they are not the eldest son and daughter). Example: Gilly's uncle is Lord Lionel Ware, his eldest son is Mr Ware.

This is also true for ladies. A peeress is *never* "Lady Caroline Holland"; she is simply "Lady Holland," because, again, if the "Lady" title precedes the first name, that tells you that the title is a courtesy title which derives from her father's rank, not her husband's (or her own, if she is a peeress in her own right, but she may sign herself as Caroline Holland I will explain this later). So before she married, Lady Holland was Lady Caroline Lennox. There is an exception to this rule concerning peers' daughters who are married to the heirs of peers who also bear courtesy titles. This will be explained later.

One of my betas and dear Laiagarrien told me that some readers still might be unclear on the forms of address and titles. On the Duke's death, his eldest son would inherit the dukedom. Let's say Gilly is the Duke and he dies. His eldest son who let us pretend is named Adolphus, was Lord Ormesby. Now that Gilly is dead, he becomes the Duke of Sale. The new duke's son would therefore be the new Lord Ormesby. The title is in your immediate family and when the person directly above you in the table of precedence dies, you step into his shoes.

Indeed, when I say "peer" I mean people with titles from baron to dukes. Technically, "my lord Duke" would be used only in a very grave circumstance. Usually, a Duke's peers would just call him "Duke" if they are not very close friends. Or, if they are close friends, they would call the Duke by his title alone as if it were his name. This means Lord Ronald can call the Duke of Sanguine, "Duke" or "my lord Duke" (if he wishes to be stupid and challenge Sanguine to a duel). Lord Sterne, being closer to the Duke of Sanguine and his godson, would be given more leeway and can call him either "Duke" or "Sanguine". Sir Harry and Neville would have to call all the Dukes they meet, "Your Grace". If you are still confused, email me and I will explain in all the gory detail.

#### Important Notes

Only a peer may be said to hold a title "in his/her own right." All other titles are courtesy titles. There are five types of peerages in Great Britain: peers of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom. This makes a great difference in precedence and privilege. The higher the rank, the more likely it is that the peer holds several peerages (cf. the Gilly example above), which may be distributed throughout the five peerages, depending upon their dates of creation.

Women were not allowed a seat in the House of Lords, even if they held a peerage in their own right until the 1963 Peerage Act granted them that right. Nonetheless, before then they held all of the other privileges which attended their specific peerage, although often if the peerage carried with it some special office, the office would be fulfilled by the peeress's husband. In addition, wives of peers enjoyed many of the privileges of peers, including a trial in the House of Lords rather than by jury. A baronetcy is a dignity that passes down from generation to generation within a family, like a peerage. But a baronet is *not* a peer; he does not sit in the House of Lords or enjoy the privileges of peers. A baronet's style would be, for example, Sir Adolphus Ware of Rufford, Bart. This is distinct from a peer, who would be styled "Adolphus, Lord Sale" (if a baron, viscount, earl, or marquess) or "His Grace, the Duke of Sale." It is similar to the style of a knight, but unlike a knighthood, the baronetcy can be inherited. Baronets and knights are not lords and are never addressed as "my lord"; however, their wives are called "Lady" prefixed to their husband's surnames only, and can be called "my lady" depending on the social circumstances. However, this gets complicated if the lady who marries a Baronet or Knight is the daughter of an Earl or above because she is already born Lady first name surname. Example: In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Lady Catherine de Bourgh's father was the Earl of \_\_\_\_\_. Colonel Fitzwilliam is a younger son, so he has no Lord in front of his name. Before Lady Catherine and Lady Anne married Sir Lewis de Bourgh and the late Mr Darcy, they were known as Lady Catherine Fitzwilliam and Lady Anne Fitzwilliam. After their marriage, they bring their birthright to the marriage, hence, because they are not ordinary title-less maidens, they are called Lady first name, husband's surname. Thus, we have Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Lady Anne Darcy.

#### Ranks and Correct modes of reference

There is always a distinction between the name of the peerage and the surname. For almost all peerages above viscounts, they are different, but of course it's very easy to get them confused, especially since there are several exceptions

## ***Knight/Baronet***

Always Sir first name surname. The only time "of" may be used is when the Baronet has a family estate. Example: Sir Thomas Bertram of Mansfield Park. This may only be used in writing, never in speech, unless people demand to know where your estate is.

## ***Baron***

Often it is Baron Surname. Never Baron of Surname or Baron of Place, but often a territorial addition is made to the title, e.g., Baron Holland of Foxley. Often called Baron Surname, but often a territorial addition is made to the title, e.g., Baron Trevor of Bromham. In rare exceptions, it is sometimes Baron Title. Example: Henry Fox was created Baron Holland of Foxley. In this case, the title is by territory because Holland is named after his residence, Holland Park. The only time you use "of" with the title if you refer to the barony, i.e. the title itself without reference to any person. So, you call it the Barony of Strange and so on.

## ***Viscounts***

Never Viscount of Place or Viscount of Surname. Always Viscount Surname or Viscount Place. Usually post William and Mary era, it is Viscount Surname, but old viscounties are called Viscount Place. The only time you use the "of" with the title is to refer to the viscounty, i.e. Viscountcy of Portsmouth. Often a territorial addition is made to the title, e.g., Viscount Leinster of Taplow. Often Viscount surname, e.g., Viscount Courtenay. If not, it is Viscount Place, e.g. Viscount Melville.

## ***Earls***

You call someone the Earl of Place if and only if the Earl's title is not a surname. The late Princess Diana's brother, Charles Spencer is known as Earl Spencer because his surname is his title. He cannot call himself (and neither can we) call him Earl of Spencer. But usually, Earldoms are tied to a place. So, you can say things that Earl of Coventry, never Earl Coventry.

## ***Marquesses/Marquises***

At present, all but 5 Marquessates are by territory/place. The English and Welsh nobility of this rank is a Marquess, for Scottish or any other continental nobility will be a Marquis. So you can say, Marquess of Place, except for the 5 that are Marquess Surname. If it is Marquis Surname, e.g. Marquess Wellesley, you do not say Marquess of Wellesley.

## ***Dukes***

You always use the "of"; they are always called Duke of Place/Surname. There are 3 such Duke of Surname in the peerage of Scotland: Duke of Hamilton (also Duke of Brandon in England); Duke of Lennox (also Duke of Richmond in England); and Duke of Gordon. This is only time you can use the "of" vis-à-vis a title. Why? Because for Dukedoms, the Surname is also the place name. You can find County Lennox and Hamilton etc, but you cannot find county Spencer.

## ***Inheriting Titles***

A peerage passes from father to son, but sometimes a peer dies without a son to succeed him. For example, the 6th Duke of Devonshire (1790-1858) never married. When that happens, go back one generation, to the peer's father, in this case the 5th Duke (1748-1811), and trace the next eldest male direct lineal descendant. In this case, that would be 5th Duke's other sons, if he had any. He didn't (at least, not a legitimate one), so we go back one more generation, to the 4th Duke (1720-1764). The 4th Duke had at least two sons: William, who succeeded him as 5th Duke, and Lord George Cavendish (1754-1834). Lord George died during the 6th Duke's lifetime, but if he had survived him, he would have become the next duke. However, he left a son, Mr William Cavendish (1783-1812), who also died before the 6th Duke, but left one son, Mr William Cavendish (1808-1891). This man became the 7th Duke of Devonshire.

But if Lord George's line had died out, then the dukedom could be traced back up to three more generations, all the way to the 1st Duke, and descend through the eldest of his other sons who had surviving legitimate male issue. If there was no legitimate surviving male descendant, then the title of Duke of Devonshire would become "extinct." However, if there was a legitimate surviving male descendant of his father, the 3rd Earl of Devonshire, then that person would inherit the earldom. In this way distant cousins can sometimes inherit lesser titles while the highest peerage dies out.

What's most important to remember is that if a man inherits a peerage, it is because he is the eldest surviving legitimate male who can trace a direct (father to son) lineage back to an earlier holder of the peerage. In other words, he doesn't inherit because he was the brother or the cousin or the uncle of his predecessor, but because his own father, or grandfather, or great-grandfather, or great-great-grandfather, etc., was an earlier holder of the peerage. ["Eldest" in this context doesn't mean that he happens to be the oldest of several different living men who can trace a direct line back to an earlier holder of the peerage, but rather that his *line* is the eldest, i.e., eldest son of eldest son; all other lines senior to his have died out.]

There are three types of peerages. The first, and most ancient, is a peerage held *by writ*, which is a direct summons by the Monarch to attend the Parliament; the second is *Letters Patent*, which institutionalized the writ and ensured successors of the right to attend Parliament; the third is *by tenure* (a pre-Parliamentary barony by tenure -- now considered non-existent in modern times though it happened once in 1969).

Peerages by writ are almost all baronies and earldoms (there are 2 dukedoms in this as well), because none of the other titles were invented then (except earls, which then were exclusively sons or cousins of the sovereign). The ones which survive are naturally the most ancient titles. A writ entitled the peerage to pass to the "heirs general," not the "heirs male" as specified in almost all Letters Patent peerages. Occasionally, a peerage created by letters patent allowed a special remedy so that the peerage could pass to a brother or even a daughter if the new peer had no male heir.

I will not deal with titles becoming extinct or royal titles and royal dukedoms. I will explain them in the story if and when the need arises. But at this point, I sincerely doubt it.

## ***Peeresses in Own Right***

Only a peer may be said to hold a title "in his/her own right." All other titles are courtesy titles. The 1st Duke of Marlborough's eldest daughter, who inherited her father's peerage (via Parliamentary and royal warrant), was Duchess of Marlborough in her own right. But before her father died, she was not Lady Henrietta "in her own right." She was Lady Henrietta by courtesy. When her husband became the Earl of Godolphin, she was the Countess of Godolphin by courtesy (even though she was then called a "peeress"). Her husband, the earl, *did not* become Duke of Marlborough by courtesy; he remained a mere earl (much like the husband of a queen is not a king by courtesy) -- husbands of peeresses in their own right are not granted the use of the title for themselves. When a woman holds a title in her own right, she is said to be, for example, *suo jure* Countess of Sutherland. There are exceptions to this, especially is the title is very old (i.e. created between 1100-1600 and passed down from father/mother to child in unbroken succession), the peeress's husband may take her name (i.e. her surname) and assume her duties in the House of Lords. A younger son of the first Duke of Leinster married the Baroness de Ros (in her own right) and he took her name and became Lord First name wife's surname and represented his wife in the House of Lords.

So in this story, when Luna Lovegood becomes Lady de Quib (i.e. suo jure Baroness de Quib, her husband will remain as he is and she will keep her name). Children of such a match may bear the father's surname only if the monarchy and House of Lords permits it.

However, before the Peerage Act of 1963, husbands of peeresses acquired an important right from their wives' peerages: they executed any hereditary office which accompanied their wives' peerages. For example, in 1818 Lady Willoughby de Eresby's husband fulfilled her role as Hereditary Great Chamberlain of England.

Marriage among peers usually occurs as you see in the tables herein. However, should the woman inherit a title in her own right, her husband **DOES NOT** inherit her title. In this story, Luna stands to be Lady de Quib in her own right. She marries Ron, but Ron will still be plain Lord Ronald Weasley and she will be Lady de Quib because she out ranks him. She does not take his title which is a courtesy title (given to him because his father is a duke) if she was a plain "Miss" whose father had no title, she would

have been Lady Ronald Weasley (yes, that's how peerages by courtesy work). Since Ron's title is only a courtesy title, Luna gets to keep her title. But in the story, her father's codicil insists the children be Lovegoods. It's like the queen you see. When a woman inherits the throne, she is queen, but her husband is not king, he is called "Prince consort" (in Victorian times) or created a dukedom that will die with him when he dies.

With Hermione, it is different. Let us pretend she marries Lord Sterne. Since the title she will inherit is a barony, Sterne's title (marquess) outranks her. She will be known as Lady Sterne. But she will still be Lady Orthod in her own right. Sterne cannot absorb the title, because it is not his by law or writ. Should she and Sterne have children, the Orthod barony would pass to the eldest child when *she dies*. But say Sterne dies, Hermione lives and there's an eldest son. The eldest son can only inherit the Orthod barony *if and when* Hermione dies. Say Hermione dies and the eldest son, let's call him Ulysses, inherits all his father's titles and his mother's barony. Ulysses' brothers will be Lord First name surname, i.e. Lord Telemachus Snape and so on. Pretend Ulysses has no sons, only daughters, while his younger brother, Telemachus has sons. When Ulysses dies, his eldest daughter will inherit Hermione's title and Telemachus (and his sons) will get Sterne's other titles. Why? Because titles created after 1660 mainly go to males. Titles that are very old, created during 1100-1600 could be inherited by heirs general (which means that so long as you are a child of the titleholder, you stand a chance to inherit the title). Hermione's title is very old (as I stated) and as such, it can pass to females.

## Forms of Addresses

A peer's wife and children are granted the use of certain titles, depending upon the rank of the peer. Here is an *extremely oversimplified* chart, so *please* read the explanations which follow carefully.

<http://www.chinet.com/~laura/html/titles05.html>

\* It was a 17th century custom to throw in a number of new lesser titles to "fill in" when creating a new higher title, so the older a dukedom or an earldom, the more likely the second title is to be a much lower one, skipping steps, if you will: the eldest sons of the Dukes of Norfolk, Grafton, St. Albans, Richmond, Buccleuch, Newcastle, and Northumberland are earls, the Dukes of Dorset's and Manchester's are viscounts, and the Duke of Somerset's only a Lord. But since Dorset's and Manchester's eldest sons are viscounts, their eldest sons cannot take a barony as a courtesy title. If there is no courtesy title available, the eldest son of a duke, marquess, or earl takes the family name as a courtesy title.

\*\* Eldest sons (heirs) of earls, marquesses, and dukes are allowed to adopt their father's next-highest title as a courtesy, which they use in every way as if it were a "real" peerage.

Several marquesses have the same title as marquess and earl, e.g., the Marquess and Earl of Hertford and the Marquess and Earl of Salisbury. In these cases, the heir skips the matching peerage, and takes the next highest title as a courtesy title, to distinguish him from his father. The heir of the Marquess and Earl of Salisbury is thus Viscount Cranbourne, and the heir of the Marquess and Earl of Hertford is thus Earl of Yarmouth (whose father happens to have two earldoms at his disposal).

It is important to note, however, that *an heir of a peer who is not a direct descendant of that peer* (i.e., his eldest son or his eldest son's eldest son) *does NOT take any secondary title as a courtesy title*. He remains known by whatever title (if any) he derived *from his own father* until he accedes to the peerage. This is a common mistake in historical romances, especially the cheap ones and the ones written by non-Brits.

For example, the 6th Duke of Devonshire never married. Since he also had no brothers, his heir was a cousin. The cousin was a great-grandson of the 4th Duke; before the 6th Duke died, he was plain Mr William Cavendish. Even though the line of succession was clear, Mr William Cavendish was never given the courtesy title Marquess of Hartington. Similarly, after Mr. William Cavendish succeeded and became the 7th Duke, he was in turn succeeded by his eldest son, who became the 8th Duke. But the 8th Duke had no son, and he was succeeded by his nephew, a son of his younger brother, Lord Edward. Before he acceded, the 8th Duke was plain Mr. Victor Cavendish. Hence, Neville Longbottom in this story is the heir to the Earldom of Fluxweed. But he is plain old Mr Longbottom because his father (younger brother to current Earl) is a knight.

## Modes of Address among friends and family

First names were almost never used in speech, except in extremely limited circumstances, before this century. I have studied memoirs and letters of the late 18th/early 19th centuries and have formed a tentative hypothesis that use of first names was restricted almost exclusively to children growing up together, or in some cases boys at school together. They would continue to use their childhood forms of address throughout their lives. Parents might also ignore titles when addressing their children, but very often if there was a title available, say an eldest son's courtesy title, even a mother would use it, albeit alone, e.g., Hartington. In Lady Harriet Cavendish's letters to her family, she always refers to her brother, the Marquis of Hartington, as "Hart" or "Hartington," as did their mother. She calls her cousin, Lady Caroline Ponsonby, "Caro" or "Caroline," as she likewise called her half-sister, Caroline de St. Jules. She also calls many of the Lambs by their first names. They were all raised together. (Both Carolines married Lambs, and so after their marriages Lady Harriet would distinguish between them as "Caro-William" and "Caro-George," respectively.) But Lady Harriet never refers to anyone outside this close circle of people she knew from infancy by their Christian names; she always uses their correct titles.

Among men, rather than first names, intimacy was usually shown by using the title alone, e.g., Sherringham, Wrotham (or some diminutive of it, like "Sherry" or "Hart"), or by using the last name alone, e.g., Fairfax. Occasionally first names were used among very close friends who, as mentioned above, attended boarding school together from a young age, especially if the boy didn't have the peerage while he was in school, but inherited it later.

Among children of the same family, Christian names are used, unless the eldest son has a courtesy title. So in this story, the Weasleys all address each other by their first name, except their eldest brother, whom they all call Dragonlaire because that is his courtesy title. I gave the Duke of Ofally the secondary titles before I decided to jumble up his sons. I wanted one of his sons to be in law (a lawyer) and usually, since the eldest son inherits, he does not have law as a profession. In those days, you took Law as a profession if you want to distinguish yourself (and you could very well be on your way to the House of Commons, as Henry Fox and his sons were). So, it was decided that Percy would be a dilettante, who then became the dandy about the town. Then I looked through the title list of Arthur Weasley (who is the Duke of Ofally) and say that his next highest title is Dragonlaire, and since Charles is a dragon trainer, I moved him up the table of precedence, as it were.

Even spouses often maintained more formal modes of address than Christian names, even in private. Most often a lady would call her husband by his title alone, as his intimate friends or his family would, e.g., Chatham. Obviously it would depend upon the couple, and many factors might contribute, such as age disparity or actual intimacy, but a wife would almost always refer to her husband this way, even to her closest friends and relations, and in company they would call each other "my lord" and "my lady," or perhaps some diminutive like "my dear" or "my love." This is why in *Pride and Prejudice*, Mrs Bennet calls her husband Mr Bennet. This is often as familiar as the people in those days got. In private, however, the couple could address each other by name if their pre-marriage ranks were near each other's and if both parties were extremely close.

Due to the tables not showing, please refer to this website on the correct forms of address. <http://www.chinet.com/~laura/html/titles12.html>

It is imperative that you understand why I'm calling characters what I do.

## Rights & Privileges of Peers

Peers enjoy many privileges, although not as many as they once did. Until 1948, they had the right to be tried for treason and felony only in the House of Lords. I have incorporated this fact into my story. They do not have to serve on ordinary juries (neither do convicted felons, lunatics, or undischarged bankrupts); they cannot be arrested for forty days before and after Parliament is in session. A peer is barred from voting in parliamentary elections and from sitting in the House of Commons (again in the company of lunatics and felons). But the principal right of a peer is to a seat in the upper house of Parliament, the House of Lords.

An English peer (before 1963, unless she is a woman) sits in the upper house of Parliament -- the House of Lords. You may notice in Heyer and others that when a peer dies and his son inherits, one of the rites of passage he must go through is to "take his seat" in the House of Lords -- he shakes the hand of the Lord Chancellor and then literally takes a seat on one of the benches. There are a few more qualifiers: a peer may not take his seat if he is bankrupt, if he is a lunatic, if he is under the age of twenty-one, or if his peerage is not granted in England, Scotland, Great Britain, or the United Kingdom. Finally, he may not take his seat until the monarch has issued a Writ of Summons to him.

Until very recently, Scottish peers (i.e., those created before the Act of Union in 1707) were not automatically entitled to a seat in the British House of Lords. Instead they elected from among themselves a body of sixteen representatives who then sat in the House. Scottish peers created since the Act of Union in 1707 are peers of the United Kingdom, and are equivalent in all respects to peers of England created subsequent to 1707 (who are also, technically, peers of the United Kingdom), including a right to a seat in the House of Lords. Therefore, the number of Scottish peerages to which this restriction applies was rather small; most of them were created between James I's accession in 1603 and the Act of Union in 1707. Furthermore, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, many holders of older Scottish peerages were granted lesser English peerages, which entitled them to a seat in the House of Lords as a Peer of England or (after 1801) of the United Kingdom.

Irish peers, unlike all other British peers, are not barred from voting in general elections or from being elected to the House of Commons. Like Scottish peers, Irish peers used to elect a group of twenty-eight representatives to the House of Lords, but with the 1921 Irish Free State declaration of independence from Britain, this election ceased. The House of Lords allowed those Irish peers who were sitting in the House of Lords at that time to continue to do so for life, but no further elections took place, and the last of those peers died in 1961. Most Irish peers also hold an English or British peerage, often of considerably lower rank, which allow them to have a seat in the House of Lords; for example, the Duke of Leinster (Irish) is also Viscount Leinster in the English peerage. By 1982, only 71 Irish peers were left out in the cold. Of them, only eighteen actually live in Ireland.

Heirs and younger sons of peers can sit in the House of Commons. A "commoner" is defined as anyone who is *not* a peer. Peers usually considered themselves to "own" certain House of Commons seats -- those from the district around their estates, for example -- and often the "election" of their sons or nephews to those seats was mere formality. It is easy to see that with this sort of system, the peers could control House of Commons votes and thereby pretty much control government. This was a major reason for the reforms of the 1830s, and for the "radical" Whigs under Charles James Fox in the 1780s and 90s. This is reflected in my plot where Draco, who is the heir to his father's dukedom is the House of Commons.

A peerage was considered to be "of England" or "of Ireland" depending upon the intentions of the granting monarch, and usually reflected in the location of the place from which the peer took his title.

According to Debrett's, "*a dowager peeress, or widow of a baronet, takes precedence of the wife of the incumbent of the title only while remaining a widow*". So you have to hope your mother-in-law remarries someone of lower precedence if you want to sit above her at a formal dinner.

*Precedence of ladies is always derived from the father or husband, except in the case of a peeress in her own right.* The case is more complicated if the woman is a peeress in her own right and marries a peer. As this will take too long to explain, I shall not cover it here. If you are still interested, email me and you will get the gory details.

A wife bears a rank that is truly *equal* to her husband's in every respect except in actual comparison to him. She stands in the line of ladies in place of her husband. The baronesses are sorted out by date of creation, whether theirs or their husbands'.

### Miscellaneous

I have omitted explanations on entails, marriage settlements and dower on grounds that they will only have minimal impact on the plot. I have converted many diminutives of names to their original forms. For instance, Frank is short for Francis, Bill is short for William. I have kept Harry as it is and did not change it to Henry, even though Harry is a corruption of Henry. For purposes of this story, Charles and not William is the oldest Weasley son.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS & BACKSTORY

To better illustrate all that I have said in the preceding section, permit me to lay down our cast of characters, both *on-stage* and *off-stage*:

♦ represents deceased characters mentioned frequently

♣ represents characters that are 'off-stage' and never seen

#### ***Albus Dumbledore, the Duke of Sanguine.***

Secondary titles: Marquess of Tranquil, Earl of Philia, Viscount Dumbledore of Counsel, Baron Dumbledore of Sherbert and Baron Dumbledore of Thame.

He is the Headmaster and head of the board of directors of Hogwarts School for young men (à la Eton). At the opening of this novel, the old Duke is a bachelor and likes to think of himself as forever 100, even though he is older than that. When not at Hogwarts or his estates at Sanguine and Thame, the Duke is found at his London residence at Half Moon Crescent. He is best remembered for being the head of the Order of the Phoenix that brought down Lord Voldemort.

#### **♣ *Lord Aberforth Dumbledore, the Duke of Sanguine's younger brother.***

He is married and presently living in Scotland, on a small estate somewhere near the popular elopement capital of the British Isles called Gretna Green. While the total number of his children is unknown to the authoress, it is certain that he has two sons. One of whom is the honourable Mr Wulfric Aberforth Dumbledore, the Archbishop of York.

#### ***The honourable Mr Wulfric Aberforth Dumbledore, Archbishop of York***

A son of the Lord Aberforth Dumbledore. He is the second highest ranking clergyman in the country (the highest is the Archbishop of Canterbury). He has lately married the widowed Lady Arabella Figg. Lady Arabella was born Lady Arabella Fletcher, daughter of Earl of Finch-Fletchley and was married to a Mr Figg, a famed parliamentarian who was very keen on obtaining Scottish taxes for Scotland.

#### ***Lady Minerva McGonagall***

She is the eldest daughter of the 5th Earl of Transfig. The earldom has since passed to her brother. Her younger sisters all made excellent matches, Hera married Earl Trelawney of Sussex, and Hestia married a German Grand Duke. Lady Minerva is the Headmistress and head of the board of directors of Garswoth seminary for young ladies of Quality. At the opening of the novel, she is unmarried by choice and is approaching her 77th year. She has been close friends with the Duke of Sanguine since her coming out many, many moons ago.

#### ***Severus Snape, the Marquess of Sterne***

Secondary titles: Earl of Glare, Viscount Carsm-Blundt, Baron Snape of Linchpin and Baron Snape of Waryderry.

Godson to the Duke of Sanguine and the Lady Minerva, Lord Sterne is of an unsociable and taciturn disposition. It is rumoured that he has £10,000 a year; as such, he is the subject of much speculation among matching mammas. However, he appears to be in deep mourning and has been so for the last twenty-odd years. He presently teaches part-time at Hogwarts and Garswoth whenever the London Season lapses. It is widely acknowledged that he does so to soothe his ennui. He enjoys writing, researching and reading; and is a regular contributor to the journal *Ars Chemica*. During the wars, he served his godfather's Order of the Phoenix as a spy in Lord Voldemort's camp

#### ***Sir Harry Potter, Baronet***

His parents were Sir James and Lady Potter. Lady Potter was formerly, Miss Lily Evans, granddaughter of the 3rd Duke of Gryffindor. Although Sir Harry is an orphan, he is a well-adjusted young man very much attached to his friends and some of his mentors. Ever since the demise of Lord Voldemort, he is noticeably happier. The second biggest matrimonial catch of the season due to his annual income of £15,000, Sir Harry is the ultimate prize of any fortune-hunting debutante and matchmaking mamma.

He is best friends with Lord Ronald Weasley and Miss Granger. On completing his education, he enjoyed a stint in the navy, where he obtained the rank of Captain. The cessation of the war called an end to his glittering naval career.

#### ***The Honourable Neville Longbottom***

A contemporary and friend of Sir Harry and Lord Ronald Weasley, Neville was educated at Hogwarts and Cambridge. His parents, Sir Francis (knighted in the first war) and Lady Longbottom, unfortunately are in Bedlam (due to a duel with the late Lord and Lady Lestrangle), have been there since his infancy. Though shy at times, he is a bright young man with a pleasing countenance and agreeable manners. Upon graduating from Cambridge, he embarked on a military career and was made Captain during the civil war. On obtaining that promotion, he tendered his resignation when he learned that he would have to be posted to the Spanish peninsula. Having no desire to leave his grandmother, the Lady Fluxweed, he has since made the church his profession.

#### ***Horace Longbottom, Earl of Fluxweed***

Eldest son of the Dowager Lady Fluxweed and elder brother to the mad Sir Francis, Lord Fluxweed is unmarried and appears unlikely to enter the happy state of matrimony. He is disappointed in his nephew's decision to make the church his profession, as Neville is the heir to his title.

#### ***Arthur Weasley, Duke of Offaly***

Secondary titles: Earl of Dragonlaire, Viscount Muggleton, Baron Skint of Kind.

The Duke of Offaly is a progressive Whig, who is unfortunately the head of a large and impecunious family. The little he earns from the interests in his plantations in the East Indies go to maintaining the family estate of Kind in Richmond, Surrey. He is very well respected in the House of Lords and had fought against the usurper, Lord Voldemort, under the banner of the Duke of Sanguine's Order of the Phoenix.

#### ***Molly Weasley, Duchess of Offaly.***

The Duchess of Offaly is a kind, likeable lady who is head of several charities. While she may be viewed as a skinflint by the ladies of the haute ton, she knows that her habits of making clothes for the members and economy do much to contribute to the maintenance of Offaly Manor and their London residence. The charities that enjoy the Duchess's patronage are the Weasley Ladies' Reformatory, the Weasley Society for Good Works and the Weasley Foundling Home. She too was part of the Duke of Sanguine's Order of the Phoenix.

#### **♣ *Charles Weasley, Lord Dragonlaire.***

He is the eldest son of the Duke and Duchess of Offaly and is a formidable dragon trainer. As the eldest son, he takes his father's second highest title as his own courtesy title before he comes into the dukedom. It is believed that he may re-establish the family fortunes through his fame as a dragon tamer. Though he is of an adventurous disposition, he is not an adventurer. Society is bound to give this young man a second glance because he was part of the Duke of Sanguine's Order of the Phoenix. Then I looked through the title list of Arthur Weasley (who is the Duke of Offaly) and saw that his next highest title is Dragonlaire. Since Charles is a dragon trainer, I moved him up the table of precedence, as it were.

#### **♣ *Lord William Weasley***

He is the chief legal advisor to Gringotts Bank. He is usually based in the colonies in Egypt. Presently, he is in London to oversee some of his clients' interests on the continent (i.e. Europe). His father has hopes of securing him a seat in the House of Commons. He assisted the war effort by serving in the Duke of Sanguine's Order of the Phoenix as their international liaison. Lord William is very popular with ladies of the *ton* because of his rakish good looks and gentlemanly manners.

#### ***Lord Percy Weasley***

He is the acknowledged 'intelligent one' in his family, as he had secured a scholarship to study at Balliol College at Oxford. However, he is presently estranged from his family whom he views as living below their status as a ducal family. His family (at least his siblings) view him with similar uncharitable sentiments. His parents, who had destined him for the church, are still disappointed by his arrogant behaviour in the civil war some 5 years ago where he joined forces with one Lord Voldemort in attempting to usurp the Crown. Society has speculated that he has interest in politics, but he denies it and prefers to dabble in the law. He is the dandy of the family and can more often than not be found at Black's, Waiter's and the metropolis's many gaming halls discussing the merits of his cravat and tailor. Though he believes himself to be an arbiter of society à la Beau Brummell, he is anything but. In actuality, he is more of a fop than a dandy. Quick with his words, temper and money (that he obtains from his mistresses), he is popular with the patrons and proprietors of London's gaming establishments. (i.e. when I saw gaming, I mean gambling.)

#### ***Lord George Weasley and Lord Frederick Weasley***

He and his twin, Lord Frederick, scandalised polite society some 7-8 years ago by leaving Hogwarts halfway through their final semester. ~~The~~*ton* was even more shocked to discover that the lads had done the unthinkable and have gone into trade. Their store of bric-a-brac for mischievous children is a favourite among the younger set of the ton and the middle classes. It is not a well known fact that the twins were also a part of the Duke of Sanguine's Order of the Phoenix.

#### ***Lord Ronald Weasley***

The family's only sporting man, Lord Ronald (the youngest son to the Duke and Duchess of Offaly) is patron and captain to the Chudley Cannons, a local Quidditch team, found east of Chelsea. Unlike his elder brothers who have established themselves in bachelor apartments, he has taken the unusual step of remaining with his parents. However, he can occasionally be found at the residences of his best friend, Sir Harry Potter and Lord Lupin. Sometimes, he can be found at Black's. He can most often be seen escorting his sister, the Lady Ginevra, around town. During the wars, he served in the navy with his schoolmate, Mr Longbottom to secure the sea forces for the Duke of Sanguine's Order of the Phoenix.

#### ***Lady Ginevra Weasley***

The youngest child of the Duke and Duchess of Offaly, the Lady Ginevra, is a kind soul who seeks to reform Haymarket ware by inducting them into one of her mother's charities. Though she is not held by younger members of the ton to be a great beauty, the older members of the Almack have labelled her the jewel of the season's debutantes, much to the chagrin of fashionable fops and dandies everywhere. Despite this label, her hand is at present unsolicited. She is bosom friends with Sir Harry, Miss Granger, Miss Lovegood and Lord Ronald's other friends. Though she may appear sweet tempered, she has shown herself capable of governing her brothers with an iron fist, very much like her mother's. She, Miss Granger and Miss Lovegood can be often found assisting the less fortunate at her mother's charities.

#### **♦ *Thomas Riddle, the Earl of Voldemort (deceased)***

The late Lord Voldemort had a tenuous claim to the crown on his mother's side, as his great grandmother was Princess Royale. He was killed 5 years in a civil war, in which he sought to seize the Crown for himself. However, he did not prove to be as successful as Oliver Cromwell. He was killed most ignominiously when he tripped over the late Peter Pettigrew (son of Sir Simon Pettigrew) and a miscast spell from Lord Percy Weasley's wand augmented the spells of the Duke of Sanguine's *Order of the Phoenix for the preservation of the anointed wizarding monarchs of the British Isles* (Order of the Phoenix for short) and rendered his demise inevitable. Among Lord Voldemort's former Knights of Darkness (also known as the Death Eaters), who were supposed to assist him a new era in the British wizarding monarchy, were Peter Pettigrew, Severus Snape (Lord Sterne), Lucius Malfoy (the Duke of Mallefille), Lord Percy Weasley, Draco Malfoy (Lord Villiers), the Baron and Baroness Lestrangle (now deceased), and members of the aristocratic Crabbe, Goyle and Nott families.

#### ***Henry Granger, Baron Orthod***

He is an elderly statesman and has been ailing since the untimely death of his wife. Although he is generally held by society to be eccentric, he is well known as an indulgent father.

#### ***The Honourable Miss Granger***

Miss Granger, or Hermione, as she prefers to be simply addressed is the heiress to her father's fortune and title. Upon his death, she will become the Baroness Orthod in her own right. She is held by society to be an eccentric bluestocking and is well known to be a recluse. She wants nothing better than to establish her own seminary for young women where they will be taught to be useful rather than ornamental. A former student of Garswoth, she corresponds regularly with Lady Minerva. She is often seen in the company of Sir Harry, Lord Ronald Weasley, Lady Ginevra Weasley, Lord Lupin and Miss Lovegood.

#### **♣ *Lionel Lovegood, Baron de Quib***

The Barony of de Quib can be traced back to 1107. Most of society holds him to be quite mad, but Lord de Quib knows better. He is the proprietor and editor of the leading alternate society newspaper, The Quibbler. An indulgent father, he wants nothing more than his daughter's happiness.

#### ***The Honourable Miss Lovegood***

Miss Lovegood is known as Luna among her friends. Though she knows that she will one day inherit her father's barony, she prefers not to think about it. Like her friend, Miss Granger, she is not held to be a beauty. However, she is held to improve on further acquaintance.

#### ***Lucius Malfoy, the Duke of Mallefille (in exile in France)***

Secondary titles: Marquess of Villiers, Viscount Contempt and Baron Malfoy of Northumberland

Formerly an elite member of Lord Voldemort's Death Eaters, along with his boyhood friend, Lord Sterne, the Duke is presently exiled in France. He owes his continued existence among the living to the Duke of Sanguine and Lord Sterne. Prior to his exile, he was part of the conservative set (known as the New Tories) in government. He is known to be very wealthy and acknowledged to be very handsome. Although his tastes may be somewhat dated for the times (he enjoys wearing powder and patches), no one can fault him for his masculine beauty and beautiful pale long blond hair. The family fortunes have not suffered much and his annual income approaches £20,000.

#### ***Narcissa, Duchess of Mallefille.***

A cold blonde beauty, the Duchess is also the sister of the late Baroness Lestrangle. Deeply attached to her exiled spouse, she seeks to overturn her husband's sentence so that he can return to her side. While she may be called an indulgent mother, she barely tolerates her son's indiscretions and is constantly badgering him to marry someone of rank, breeding and fortune.

#### ***Draco Malfoy, Marquess of Villiers***

Only son to the Duke and Duchess of Mallefille, he has taken the courtesy title of his father's second highest title. He takes after his parents in outward beauty. Though formerly a Death Eater, he is quite reformed and has taken one of his father's seats in House of Commons, where he hopes to lighten to his father's sentence of exile. A bit of a rake, he has caused his mother a great deal of distress over his many bits of muslin. He used to be a chief patron of all the town's gaming hells (of these, Hades is the most famous). If his godfather, Lord Sterne had not bailed him out, he would have been sent to the round house (debtor's prison). After Lord Sterne's lecture on poverty and a fear of ending up like the impecunious Offaly family, he is now put off gaming. Unfortunately, he still visits these haunts and is known to be quick to anger. He is well versed at duelling with rapiers, pistols and wands. Despite these setbacks to his unsteady character, he is held to be the beau of the season and the greatest prize on the marriage market.

#### **♦ *Rodolphus and Bellatrix Lestrangle, Baron and Baroness Lestrangle (deceased)***

The late Rodolphus Lestrangle was an old school fellow of the Duke of Mallefille. Famed for his temper and tendency towards violent, he was nonetheless known to be generous towards his wife, friends and mistress. His wife, Bellatrix, was a sister to Mallefille's wife. Lord and Lady Lestrangle are widely known to be responsible for the lunacy of Sir Francis and Lady Longbottom. They died in violent circumstances at the end of the civil wars in the service of Lord Voldemort.

#### ***Remus Lupin, Baron Lupin***

A school friend of Lord Sterne, Lord Lupin is a handsome middle aged gentleman with impeccable taste in clothes. He teaches Defence Against the Dark Arts at Hogwarts and Garswoth. While society has not paid much attention to him in the past, it is now taking another look at him because he has recently come into his great-uncle's fortune and title. He is a humble man and has a patient disposition. Although many women are enamoured of him (due to his recently acquired fortune), they are put off by his constant ill health.

#### ***Alastor Moody, Count Moody from St Petersburg***

He is a Russian Count and a great scholar in theoretical dark arts. Whenever he is in London, he frequents the Academy, the Libraries, Black's and the Duke of Sanguine's residence.

#### ***Lady Sybill Trelawney, daughter of the Earl Trelawney.***

Despite approaching her 37th year, Lady Sybill is still held by many to be pleasant to look at. Her hair is naturally curled and she is always tastefully arranged in the latest gowns and trinkets. Her general favourites are rings and bracelets. This unfortunate lady has been in pursuit of Lord Sterne for the past 20 years. Her mother, Lady Trelawney (the former Lady Hera McGonagall) is Lady Minerva's sister and as such, she frequents her aunt's residence in hope of catching a glimpse of Lord Sterne. Lady Sybill is only unmarried daughter of the Earl and Countess Trelawney and is held to be an ape-leader. Though blessed with the gift of foresight (i.e. divination), the unfortunate Lady Sybill is frequently held to be a fraud. However, she is famed for accurately predicting the daily weather.

#### **♣ *Sir Rubeus Hagrid, Knight***

He is a big man with an equal large heart. Only the insular old families have anything nasty to say about him. Formerly the gamekeeper at Sir Harry's country estate, he was knighted for his services in the civil war and has recently married Madame de Beauxbaton.

#### **♣ *Madame la Marquise de Beauxbaton.***

An aunt to the royal wizarding family in France, Mme de Beauxbaton has recently wed Sir Rubeus, with whom she had a long time understanding. However, it was not until recently that he agreed to assume her name that they were married.

#### ***Miss Lavender Brown***

Originally a foundling from the Chelsea Foundling Home, she is one of Lord Villiers's bits of muslin, she met Lady Ginevra while seeking another protector at Haymarket. Lady Ginevra brought her to the Weasley Ladies' Reformatory where she was given an education. At present, Miss Brown, or Brown as she is known in Lord Orthod's household is Miss Granger's abigail.

#### ***Miss Millicent Bulstrode***

The illegitimate daughter of an opera singer, Marianne Bulstrode and the late Lord Lestrangle, has always wanted to be a real 'lady'. When Lord Villiers was captivated by her dark eyes and well rounded figure, she thought that her fortune was made. Although intelligent and composed of good manners, she allowed herself to be persuaded to leave the ballet corps with Lord Villiers because he had promised her many silk frocks and pretty baubles. However, she was his mistress for a brief period of only 6 months. When he tired of her and paid her off, she wandered for days outside the dance halls. The Duchess of Offaly and Lady Ginevra took an interest in her and took her to the Ladies' Reformatory. At present, she is Lady Ginevra's abigail.

#### ♣ *Nymphadora, Countess Tonks*

A Countess in her own right, she is a distant cousin to the Malfoys and the Weasleys. An eccentric personality, she is the first woman to take her place in the House of Lords. Presently, Lady Tonks is the English Ambassador to France. She is based in the Embassy in Paris and can frequently be seen jaunting about Dijon.

#### *Mr Goyle*

A former friend of Lord Villiers during their school days, Mr Goyle has since fallen out with his Lordship. Mr Goyle's father, Sir Gregory Goyle was a knight in Lord Voldemort's service. Although Mr Goyle was also a member of this organisation, he managed to escape persecution by turning his coat. Since his father's death in the wars, he has been frittering away his fortune at the gaming hell, Hades. His late mother was a bosom friend of the Duchess of Mallefille; as such, he is always welcome in the Duchess' parlour. However, it is to be noted that he does not visit her whenever her son is home.

#### *Mr Crabbe*

A former friend of Lord Villiers during their school days, Mr Crabbe has since fallen out with his Lordship. Together with his late father, Mr Crabbe served Lord Voldemort in the latter's failed usurpation of the throne. After witnessing his father's death at the hands of that said nobleman for failing to execute a mission, Mr Crabbe came to the conclusion that the wars were pointless and left Voldemort's service. In these times of peace, he can most frequently be found at the gaming hells where he is working towards the rebuilding of his family's lost fortune.

#### *Mr Nott*

This young man's father was known to Lord Sterne and the Duke of Mallefille as part of Voldemort's Death Eater corps. A scholar, he decries violence and unnecessary death. Little wonder then that he did not join his father in Lord Voldemort's service. He goes to the gaming hell, Hades, now and then, to observe people (to supply him with characters for his novels) while gaming.

#### *Lord Macnair*

An acquaintance of Lord Villiers, Lord Macnair has only recently been granted his title as Viscount. A sensible and unassuming fellow a few years older than Lord Villiers, his friends are struck by how different he is from his late father. The late Mr Macnair was a violent man who was famous for changing sides and religion during the wars. He had at one point served King Richard V (cf. chapter 1) as his Master of the Horse. When Mr Macnair turned to Voldemort and urged his son to do the same, the two men fell out. The son elected to serve the Houses of Parliament that were then in exile and the father looked forward to riches and lands in the service of Voldemort.

#### *Cornelius Fudge*

Valet and Butler to the Duke of Sanguine

#### *Argus Filch*

Valet to Lord Sterne

#### *Rosier*

The head footman in Lord Sterne's employ.

#### *Zabini and Avery*

Proprietors of the gaming hell, Hades.

#### **MATRIMONIAL CATCHES**

As Laiagarien and one of my betas did not understand my few lines on matrimonial catches, let me explain them here. Sir Harry is the largest catch of the Season because of (1) his money, (2) his baronetcy, (3) his agreeable manners and charming ways, (4) his fortune is his own to spend as he has no parents to tell him how much of what he can spend and give to his wife as pin money. Lord Sterne, however, has (1) a title, (2) a money, (3) his own fortune. But he is seen as being in perpetual mourning. However desperate a woman might be, one is not to ensnare a man while he is STILL in mourning. Furthermore, Sterne has a nasty temper, poor manners in society, cares little for the things that Society cares for. So he lives on the fringes of polite society by choice. He is not a smart choice for a woman who wants to be the centre or the new leader of the fashionable world. The largest matrimonial prize is, Lord Villiers, the son of the Duke of Mallefille.

My betas and preliminary readers seem to have difficulty understanding why Neville is not a considered a good catch. Let us forget about the earldom that Neville stands to inherit. The thing about Neville is that he is the son of a younger son. In the old days, the eldest son inherited everything and the younger sons receive the younger son's portions, which when compared the eldest son's inheritance is nothing. Now, Neville being technically the next in line to the earldom has nothing. His parents are still alive, though mad and in Bedlam (the asylum in London); this means he cannot touch his parents' money. This means he has no money of his own; he has to earn his own money. This diminishes his chance in the marriage market. Furthermore, should his uncle die, Francis Longbottom, Neville's father would inherit the earldom, not Neville. Neville can act on his father's, the new Earl's, behalf because he is mad, but he does not have the title. This diminishes his chance in the marriage market. Neville is NOT the DIRECT HEIR to the earldom, otherwise he would have a courtesy Viscountcy and his position as heir to the earldom is secure. He is the son of a younger son. He has no courtesy title and is a plain clergyman. The earl can choose to marry and have children, with these children, Neville goes lower in the line of succession. This diminishes his chance in the marriage market, if you want to marry a title. Until the Earl of Fluxweed dies without marrying or having children and Frank Longbottom dies, Neville will never inherit the earldom. It is stated that the Earl of Fluxweed is unmarried because old grandmamma Longbottom is still around and known as Lady Fluxweed, not the dowager Lady Fluxweed. I hope this explains things.

## **Chapter 1 - Warring White Pinks on Creeping Cereus**



As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined>. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

For the lovely Miss Keladry Lupin

## Language of Flowers

### Chapter 1 Warring White Pinks on Creeping Cereus

Ten years ago, the Honourable Miss Granger had the good fortune to be admitted into Garswoth, a select seminary that housed and educated young ladies of the highest rank, and was inculcated thereby with what most of fashionable Society considered a large quantity of useless knowledge. Though most of the other young ladies' parents marvelled at Miss Granger' turn for books, they allowed her to possess a certain elegance of deportment, second only to their daughters' charms naturally. Her noble parents, Lord and Lady Orthod, however, did not share this view. Their daughter's achievements, they felt, would only serve to elevate her status in society. Instead of following fashionable Society's lead in condemning Miss Granger's parents as eccentrics, Garswoth regarded Lord Orthod as one of its warmest patrons in revising the curricula for female education. Indeed, Garswoth's Headmistress and head of the seminary's board of directors, Lady Minerva McGonagall, daughter of the fifth Earl of Transfig, was extremely proud to have at last produced a student who was adept in skills that did not serve to highlight feminine delicacy. A spinster by choice for over seventy winters, Lady Minerva was extremely pleased to learn that Miss Granger had wanted to stay a further three years with the school to assist in the younger ladies' education.

Fate and her half-sister, Politics, however, decided otherwise, and after the first year of Miss Granger's position as Alchemy Mistress, civil war erupted in the country between the descendents of the twentieth Dunseof king.

The Dunseofs had ruled wizarding England since 1254 and until 1660 the succession had generally passed fairly peacefully from father to son. But Salazar IV, who died in 1650, had several sons and one daughter, whom he endowed with dukedoms, thus calling into being a race of magnates or aristocrats related by blood to the King, some of whom ultimately became intent on claiming the throne. The first was Richard of Ravenclaw, son of Princess Rowena, the Duchess of Ravenclaw in her own right, eldest child of Salazar IV. In 1660, Ravenclaw deposed his childless uncle Codric II and usurped the throne himself as Richard III, thus founding the royal House of Ravenclaw and overlooking the claim of Codric II's designated heir, his second cousin Edmund Riddle, then a child of eleven, who was descended from Henry, Duke of Hufflepuff, eldest surviving son of Salazar IV. Richard III's title to the throne was therefore dubious, but what he had taken he held on to, and the reputation of his successor, Richard IV, seemed to ensure that the House of Ravenclaw would continue to reign gloriously after his death. But Richard IV died young unexpectedly in 1725, leaving as his heir, a baby, Richard V. Richard V survived his minority, but he was a very ignorant and almost simple man, which cared little for the riches and show of this world. His reputation was saintly rather than regal, and as a ruler he was weak, possibly even mentally defective, being easily manipulated by his strong-minded Queen, Eleanor de Beauxbaton (from the Royal Wizarding family of France), and his factious magnates. Prominent among these magnates were the Evans, dukes of Gryffindor (later dubbed the House of Gryffindor), descended from Salazar III's by his fourth wife, Rose Evans, but born before their marriage. Richard III had in 1689 confirmed Codric II's Act of Parliament legitimising the Evans, but had issued a royal patent barring them from the succession. By Richard III's death in 1700, it would be argued that Letters Patent could not prevail against an Act of Parliament, and that the Evans did indeed have the right the British Wizarding Crown. Then there was Thomas Riddle, Earl of Voldemort whose mother, the Duchess of Slytherin in her own right (granddaughter of Salazar IV through his third son, Ambrose Salazar, Duke of Slytherin) had been executed by Richard IV in 1717 for plotting to seize the throne on behalf of Edmund Riddle, whose younger brother Marvold, Earl of Voldemort, had been the late Duchess of Slytherin's husband. This son, Thomas Riddle, was heir to the Hufflepuff-Slytherin claim on the throne, since Edmund died childless in 1770. That claim was based doubly on descent through a woman from the Slytherin side of the royal House and a man through the Hufflepuff side. As the Salic Law barring women from succeeding or transmitting a claim to the throne did not exist in Wizarding Britain, Thomas Riddle, Lord Voldemort's, was indeed a superior claim to the throne to that of Ravenclaw. His lordship certainly shared this view and began styling himself heir to the House of Slytherin (thereby completely sublimating the Hufflepuff claim) and the rightful heir to the throne.

Richard V's ineptitude in government meant that by 1789 men were beginning to question the title of the House of Ravenclaw to the crown. There were those who held that Voldemort and his House of Slytherin had the better claim. The problem was that there was no written law appertaining to the succession. Later events would show that the dubious title did not matter if the monarch was strong and able to hold on to the throne. Thus might could and did triumph over right, that is, until stopped by a claim that had both might and right on its side. In 1800, Richard V suffered from what can be best diagnosed as an attack of catatonic schizophrenia total mental withdrawal. This lasted eighteen months, during which Voldemort acted as Protector of Wizarding Britain and the Queen bore a son, Richard of Ravenclaw, whom the King acknowledged as his heir when he recovered. York's supporters, known collectively as the Death Eaters, however, did all they could to cast doubts on the child's paternity. After his illness, Richard V's health remained feeble, which gave rise to more jostling for power between the court factions on the one hand the Queen and the Evans, and on the other Voldemort, the powerful Lestrangle, Nott, Goyle, MacNair, Crabbe and Malfoy families and his Death Eaters. Ousted from power as Lord Protector, Voldemort took the field and was victorious at the Battle of Moray in 1803, after which there was a precarious peace for four years. But by 1808, the Queen, according to the Death Eater Chronicle, was "ruling realm as she liked", promoting enemies to the House of Slytherin, welcoming squibs and enlightened muggles to the government and plotting to crush her rival, Voldemort, by force. Civil war broke out again and in July 1810, after several indecisive battles, Voldemort marched on London, and in a move popular with both sides, claimed the crown for himself, basing his claim on the right of the heir-general over the heir-male. While intimated into passing an Act of Accord to disinherit Prince Richard in September, Parliament would not agree to recognise Voldemort's demand to execute the young Prince or recognise his own superior claim to the throne. This provoked an incensed Voldemort to murder Prince Richard and mobilise his Death Eater corps to launch another war against Queen Eleanor and the House of Gryffindor. This sixth civil war in January 1811 marked Lady Orthod's death and Miss Granger's departure from Garswoth when she was recalled home to the country after a year as Alchemy Mistress. Safely ensconced at Richmond, she remained secluded in mourning for her mother and safe from the ravages of war at the Anglo-Scottish border.

Three years after the sixth civil war in May 1814, the House of Gryffindor and its Order of the Phoenix (founded by an obscure scion of a descendent of the fifteenth Dunseof king's illegitimate son) scored another victory in the Scottish wizarding county of Moray, and had annihilated Voldemort's Death Eater corps at the bloody and decisive Battle of Kilwinning on 29th December 1814 where Richard V was accidentally slain by a stray hex. Voldemort remained a fugitive until captured, imprisoned and executed in April 1815. His demise heralded the ascension of the last blood claimant to the Dunseof line to the throne. Thus on 30th April, Charles Henry Evans, the aged, war-fatigued and half-demented Duke of Gryffindor came to the throne as Henry VI and ended the War of the Cousins. Due to his indifferent physical and mental health, he was soon committed to the north-northwest wing of the Winter Palace. Citing the King's present incapacity to rule, Parliament passed an Act and declared his son, Henry, the Prince Regent, thus heralding a new age in wizarding history where trade and the arts flourished. Since the conflict had touched the lives of the aristocratic participants only, the country was by and large barely affected. Indeed, in Miss Granger's erudite study of the Wars of the Cousins (written under the nom de plume Hiero Gravitans), she wryly noted that there was no mass annihilation of the nobility as often claimed by sociological scholars for only five of the great aristocratic families became extinct as a result of the wars.

As the veil of peace fell across the land, the shroud of unhappiness engulfed the Orthod household when the Baron was struck by ill-health. However, his coughs did not deter him from securing his daughter's belated coming out. The society that had been so quick to forget Miss Granger at the outbreak of the sixth civil war soon was abuzz with gossip about the reclusive and pedantic Granger family. While her father's contributions to the tactical war effort were acknowledged, it was widely rumoured that Miss Granger had planned the Gryffindor attacks from the comfort of the Orthod estate at Richmond. Furthermore, most of society doubted openly as to her accomplishments, for unlike many of her contemporaries, Miss Granger and her father decided against circulating the extent of her actual inheritance. This oversight did not detract her merits from the eyes of her friends and former teachers; and despite three offers of marriage from the youngest son of the impecunious ducal family of Ofally, Lord Ronald Weasley, she vows she will have nought to do with marriage.

Miss Granger had other plans for herself, and considering the fact that she was regularly contributing articles to *Ars Chemica* under her nom de plume Hiero Gravitans, she earnestly believed that she had a future in writing or at least, teaching. She had spoken to Lady Minerva on this matter, as she had intended to seek a position at either Garswoth or Hogwarts School for Young Men to acquaint herself with the manner in which a school ought to be administered. As sole heiress to her father's fortune and all, she decided that she would use her inheritance to establish a school for young women where they would be taught to be useful rather than ornamental. Lady Minerva, who had done almost the exact same thing some forty years earlier, applauded the idea, secretly wishing she could override the decisions of all the other school directors and abolishing the basic feminine arts for a more rigorous education. Unable to meet most of Miss Granger's queries, she showed her former student's letter to her old friend,

Albus Dumbledore, the Duke of Sanguine, and Headmaster of Hogwarts.

"It is all very well if she is truly set on this course," said the Duke, who kept his blue eyes affixed on the letter. "Yet, I cannot help but voice my reservations. She is young. Furthermore, she will encounter difficulties in the management of her plans when she inherits the Barony. There will be much talk when it becomes known that the Lady Orthod in her own right is administering and teaching in her own school."

Lady Minerva looked sternly at her friend, pursed her thin lips together and sought to keep her mild annoyance in check. "She will not be known as Lady Orthod when she teaches, Sanguine. By Nimue, you do not use your title in your administrative duties either. Your teaching staff are just as discrete as to their birth. Lord Lupin is still known simply as Mr in the confines of Hogwarts. And Filius too he teaches in both our schools! You do not give Miss Granger credit for her powers of observation. Surely, she knows of their birth and situations in life; yet, they remain silent on it. She will exercise the same silence on her own position."

"Minerva, my sweet," chuckled her companion as he popped a lemon drop into his mouth. "Teaching without one's title is one matter, being Headmistress with one is another. People in our position who are a part of the *ton* yet apart from it vex society. It may not care much of Filius because he is a younger son of an Earl or Remus because he has come into money, but I know the difficulties too well. There isn't a day where I am constantly reminded of my Dukedom or my Order of the Phoenix. I may insist strongly that I am to be known quite plainly as Professor Dumbledore in the confines of Hogwarts, but my *interests* in politics render that piece of land in Sanguine useful. Miss Granger would have to find a place between the Baroness and the common lady if she wants to succeed." He stroked his snowy long beard for a moment in thought and continued, "It will undoubtedly be too much for her, given her youth and inexperience with politics and society."

"Do you think so little of my students, Sanguine" asked Lady Minerva indignantly as she set down her teacup.

Sanguine's eyes twinkled slightly. "I've been inviting you to address me by my given name for the past fifty years, my dear. But to answer your question no, I do not doubt Miss Granger's earnest ability or modest intellect. I fear she may have chosen this path out of pique or disappointment." He placed his hand on Lady Minerva's gently. "I've seen it happen before."

Lady Minerva quickly withdrew her hand and thought that her friend looked momentarily disappointed. As he sighed, she carefully stated her opinion. "There is *no private disappointment* as far as I can see."

"Are we speaking of her disappointment or yours?" enquired Sanguine who hovered his hand over Lady Minerva's before he decided to place it on his teacup. Pushing his half-moon spectacles up his nose bridge, he looked meaningfully at his old friend, who glared a warning at him.

"She is not like your godson!"

"He is yours too! You were with me at the altar when he was christened. It was the only time I could coax you near any altar, come to think on it."

The lady smiled quietly in spite of herself. "Not quite, I accompanied you to Gretna Green once..."

"To purchase kid gloves for my brother's wedding," he interposed with a laugh. "Still," he continued, hoping that his companion's mood had lightened somewhat. "Miss Granger seems to have a great deal of parallels with our godson."

"Nonsense! For one, she lacks his private disappointment."

"It is unusual for a lady her age to be so set on this course; there has to be a deeper explanation than a strong desire to teach and be useful," he reasoned. "Severus was the same when he came to us..."

"Sir James and Lady Potter are dead, Sanguine," she reminded him in a warning tone. "We do not speak ill of the departed, whether in the context of Severus's twenty odd year disappointment or no."

"Ah, but we must speak on the Potters, my dear, they were the indirect reasons for Severus's disappointment."

"And it provided him with a reason to adhere to this noble cause of education. It has made him stronger and he has since moved on from that incident."

"You may think so," murmured the Duke of Sanguine, folding his long gingers into a steeple, "if it gives you comfort." He smiled wryly at his friend as she poured herself another cup of tea. "You know, my sweet Minerva, we men," he paused as he caught her lower her eyes and purse her lips into a tight amused little smile at his phrase. "We men," he repeated with something resembling a wistful sigh, "are rather poor creatures. If the lady of our affections chuses another, we can do nothing. Left powerless, what can we do? We watch and try to be happy for her choice; then seek to be constant to her image in our hearts and minds."

"You assume all the members of your sex are gentlemen. The rakes and rattles would beg to differ. Moreover, Sanguine, you neglected to consider the feminine perspective. If there is no real declaration, we remain ignorant and cannot react accordingly," she said in a slow and deliberate manner, attempting to outstare his searching blue gaze.

"Declaring himself, you say," muttered the Duke in apparent absent-mindedness. "I think I may have hit on something for your Miss Granger when she comes to town next week."

"I do not like that smile in your eyes, my lord Duke! This is not one of your meddling schemes I hope?"

"Do you think so poorly on me?" he chuckled. "I will be nothing more than the bird with the suggestion; whether he takes up the proffered hint is entirely his business."

"Really?" questioned Lady Minerva flatly, clearly unimpressed with her friend's notion.

"Yes, really," he answered and brought her hand to his lips. "Thank you for tea, my dear, but I must be off. I have to catch Severus before he's incommunicado for the day. Do you think I'm presentable enough to step out onto the streets?"

Lady Minerva smiled slightly and adjusted his hat, beard and cravat before deciding that he was indeed presentable. As the Duke of Sanguine bounded down her steps into the streets, she knew it was futile to hope to hope that his new scheme would be abandoned.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) A pink is a type of flower. A white pink is rare and stands for "talent and ingeniousness".

The term "pink" was invented in the 17th century to describe the light red (yes, pale red) flowers of flowering plants in the genus *Dianthus*. They were named thus because these flowers had "pinked" edges on their petals which looked as though they had been cut with pinking shears. The pinks (flowers) that we know today are come under the species *Dianthus plumarius*. There is a school of thought however that says the word "pink" is a derivation of the Dutch word "pinck". From my limited knowledge of Dutch, I know that "pinck" has two very different meanings. It can be small as in "pinck oogen", which means small eyes. The other meaning is "hole". In those days, they had all kinds of gardening scissors; some of these had fanciful designs and when used to cut flowers, created exotic lace-like effects on flower petals. Lest you think that the

flowers are called pinks because of their colour, I must disabuse you the *Dianthus plumarius* are not mostly pink, they come in many other colours as well.

See them here [http://shiraz.me.uk/site/flowers/D/dianthus/plumarius\\_sonata.jpg](http://shiraz.me.uk/site/flowers/D/dianthus/plumarius_sonata.jpg) and <http://www.laden.dk/Billeder/d/dianthus%20plumarius%20diamant%20D21.jpg>.

(2) The creeping cereus represents modest genius.

This is what it looks like <http://www.antiquemapsandprints.com/p-8813.jpg>

(3) Readers who can identify the derivation of Garswoth will be given 5 points.

Readers who can identify the derivation of Dunseof will be given 5 points.

(4) In those days, if you were of the *ton*, you sent your children (of both sexes) to school when they were 9 or 10. If the family has a governess to teach the girls then they will not be sent to school. Girls are only "out" when they are about 16 or 18, sometimes a little later.

(5) The civil war mentioned above is taken from my understanding of the Wars of the Roses.

(6) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the *ton*.

(7) Minerva mentions "rakes" and "rattles".

A rake is a somewhat subjective term often used in historical romances to describe the hero. Webster defines a rake as "a dissolute person; a libertine" -- in other words, not a very nice character. In romance novels, however, a rake seldom exhibits behaviour that puts him beyond the pale. The term "rake" is most often used in the same way as "playboy" or "womaniser" but without the other implications of drinking, debauchery, and general lechery which inform the literal definition. A typical rakish hero will often have a number of women in his past, but the love of one special woman will cause him to give up the field forever. My understanding of "rake" is a cad or blackguard who threatens a young lady's reputation for propriety and chastity. These men are usually characterized by high spirits and carelessness for the consequences of their actions.

(8) The rattle, a considerably lesser threat than the rake, is unlikely to have designs on a lady's chastity, but he may compromise her reputation by involving her in his jokes or his general vulgarity of manner. Best represented by John Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey*, the rattle is likely to be an aspiring rake, a lout who represents himself as moving in a "fast set" in fashionable society. He is too obviously a fool to succeed in seducing any woman of sense, but his foolish prattle may compromise a woman's reputation, and his show of intimacy with any sensible woman inevitably makes her appear less judicious to others; just to be seen with a rattle shows lack of taste and judgement. Thorpe's teasing, presumptuousness and loose tongue are typical of the rattle and are more the marks of a fool than a knave, but he still manages to ape the part of the more sinister villains of the Gothic novel. The rattle, a comically diminished type of Gothic villain (for more information on Gothic villains, email me), is nevertheless a realistic social threat in 18th-19th century England, where young ladies are judged by the company they keep.

(9) Those of you who skipped my introduction and preface will undoubtedly be furious with me for calling Albus Dumbledore "Sanguine" and Severus Snape "Sterne" in this story. Permit me to inform you that I am only following the etiquette of address among peers and the gentry in this story.

If you are still confused, I will give you a very brief primer here. If you want more information, kindly refer to the introduction/preface. I am not inclined to explain it in all my chapters repeatedly because it is very tiring.

I anticipate that some of you make take issue with my spelling of the rank "Marquis/Marquess". Strictly speaking, if a title is spelt "Marquis" then it is either Scottish or French. "Marquess" is the spelling for the rank in Ireland, Wales and England.

A duke or duchess is addressed as "Your Grace" by social inferiors, and as "Duke" or "Duchess" by social equals. Social equals who address Dukes and Duchesses simply as "Duke" or "Duchess" are people who do not know the ducal family very well and are within the peerage. Social equals are people ranked from Duke to Baron. Baronets, Knights, commoners, their wives and children would call Dukes and Duchesses "Your Grace".

A Baronet is *NOT* the same as a Baron. A Baronet is also *NOT* the same as a Knight. While a knight is also a "Sir", the baronetcy can be passed down to his sons (and only sons), a knighthood cannot. A Baronet will be referred to thus in Burke's: Sir William Percy, Bart. Think of the baronetcy as a hereditary knighthood. The baronetcy is a useful way of rewarding persons who deserved recognition but should not be cluttering up the House of Lords; in the Georgian era, Irish peerages were most often granted to Englishmen with no connection to Ireland, for much the same reason. But in this story, the Duke of Offaly is an Irish Peer from a very long line with links to the House of Lords. That's why he has a seat there.

First names were almost never used in speech, except in extremely limited circumstances, before this century. Its use of first names was restricted almost exclusively to children growing up together, or in some cases boys at school together. They would continue to use their childhood forms of address throughout their lives. Parents might also ignore titles when addressing their children, but very often if there was a title available, say an eldest son's courtesy title, even a mother would use it, albeit alone, e.g., the Duchess of Offaly would call her eldest son, Dragonlaire, not Charles and not Lord Dragonlaire.

Among men, rather than first names, the tendency is to use the title alone, e.g., Sterne, Sanguine, or the last name alone, e.g., Weasley. Occasionally first names were used among very close friends who, as mentioned above, attended boarding school together from a young age, especially if the boy didn't have the peerage while he was in school, but inherited it later (which is why Lord Sterne's friends and godparents call him "Severus," while they call Arthur Weasley, who is the Duke of Offaly in this story, "Offaly". What does that mean? Offaly had already inherited his peerage when he met them, while Severus inherited his after he had left school.

Following this rule then, Lucius Malfoy is known as Mallefille because he is the Duke of Mallefille. He is known by Mallefille to all except Severus, who knew him before he inherited the dukedom. However, this does not mean that Severus addresses Lucius by the title he knew him as before he inherited the Dukedom. Why? Because Draco now has that courtesy title, which is the Marquessate of Villiers. Thus, Severus addresses Lucius by his first name or if they are in company, by his ducal title. This also interestingly hints at something else. If Sterne called Lucius throughout their childhood, it means that when they were children, Lucius was plain Lord Lucius Malfoy, which means that he had an elder brother. When this elder brother died, Lucius stepped into the Marquessate, but to Severus, he will always be Lucius.

Even spouses often maintained more formal modes of address than Christian names, even in private. Most often a lady would call her husband by his title alone, as his intimate friends or his family would, e.g., Chatham. Obviously it would depend upon the couple, and many factors might contribute, such as age disparity or actual intimacy, but a wife would almost always refer to her husband this way, even to her closest friends and relations, and in company they would call each other "my lord" and "my lady," or perhaps some diminutive like "my dear" or "my love."

"The" is a designation only used for peers and their families. It is not used, for example, by baronets, knights, or commoners (except when referring to the widow of a baronet). The wife of a baronet or knight would be Lady Burke, and never The Lady Burke, while the wife of a peer would be The Lady Melgum, and a peer's daughter who is entitled to use the "Lady" designation would be The Lady Serena Carlow. However, when the usage is not formal, "The" may be dropped.

When "Miss" is used alone with a surname, it refers to the eldest unmarried daughter. Other daughters must be distinguished by using their Christian names. For example, Miss Bennet, Miss Elizabeth Bennet, Miss Mary Bennet, Miss Catherine Bennet, Miss Lydia Bennet. Or, collectively, the Misses Bennet. In conversation, where none of her sisters are present, a younger sister may be addressed as Miss Bennet. If Jane and Lizzie are standing together, however, they are addressed as Miss Bennet and Miss Elizabeth.

When "Mr" is used alone with a surname, it refers to the eldest son (of a Viscount, baron, baronet, knight, or commoner). His younger brothers are distinguished from him in speech by using their Christian names, similarly to the use of "Miss." Their wives adopt precisely the same usage, only with "Mrs" instead of "Mr" Mr Plowden is the eldest

son, and Mrs Plowden is his wife; Mr Thomas Plowden is a younger son, and Mrs Thomas Plowden is his wife.

\*Note In British English, there is no full stop (I think Americans call it the 'period') after the Mr and Mrs.

If you are curious as to why Draco has a title when Lucius isn't dead. Let me explain brief. *Eldersons* (heirs) of earls, marquesses, and dukes are allowed to adopt their father's next-highest title as a courtesy, which they use in every way as if it were a "real" peerage (when it isn't). It was a 17th century custom to throw in a number of new lesser titles to "fill in" when creating a new higher title, so the older a dukedom or an earldom, the more likely the second title is to be a much lower one, skipping steps, if you will: the eldest sons of the Dukes of Norfolk, Grafton, St. Albans, Richmond, Buccleuch, Newcastle, and Northumberland are earls, the Dukes of Dorset's and Manchester's are viscounts, and the Duke of Somerset's only a Lord. But since Dorset's and Manchester's eldest sons are viscounts, their eldest sons cannot take a barony as a courtesy title. If there is no courtesy title available, the eldest son of a duke, marquess, or earl takes the family name as a courtesy title. So, in this story, the Duke of Mallefille's next highest title is the Marquess of Villiers and the Duke of Offaly' next highest title is the Earl of Dragonlaire.

It is important to note, however, that *an heir of a peer who is not a direct descendant of that peer (i.e., his eldest son or his eldest son's eldest son) does not take any secondary title as a courtesy title*. He remains known by whatever title (if any) he derived from his own father until he accedes to the peerage. That's why Albus Dumbledore's brother, does not hold his next highest title he is just plain Lord Aberforth Dumbledore.

**All Children** of barons and viscounts and younger sons of earls are known by their First and family *Surname* (not their father's *title*), prefixed by "The Honourable," for example, The Honourable Miss Granger. Sometimes, Honourable is abbreviated as "Honble" or "Hon." It is correct to call such children members of the Father's Title's Household Family or Surname family. E.g. The Weasley children in this story can be said to be of the Weasley Family or the Offaly Family.

**Younger Sons of dukes and marquesses** prefix "Lord" to their First and family *Surname* (not their father's *title*), for example, Lord Ronald Weasley.

**Younger Sons of earls**, however, only get to be called "The Honourable," not "Lord," for example, The Honourable Sir Francis Longbottom.

**All Daughters** of earls, marquesses, and dukes similarly are known as "Lady First name Surname," for example, Lady Ginevra Weasley.

## Chapter 2 - Extracting Achimenes Cupreata from Wolfsbane

Chapter 3 of 23

In the 2nd chapter, we get an insight into Sterne and Lupin's friendship, and learn a little about Sterne's past. Why did Sanguine summon his godson (Sterne) to dinner? Read on?

**Author's note a:** As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. This story is set sometime between 1814-1817.

**Author's note b:** Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined.

**Author's note c:** This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

**Author's note d:** I sometimes repeat endnotes/footnotes because it is my experience that readers very rarely refer back to a previous chapter where I have explained something, and ask me something that I have already explained before.

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 02 Extracting Achimenes Cupreata from Wolfsbane

The youthful looking middle aged gentleman in the blue coat with black facings and silver lace, who was seated in the window of a slightly darkened dressing room idly looked down into the street of Hanover Square, ceased for a moment to bother about his host's reticence. Among the passers by a strawberry blond in pale green caught his eye. She looked vaguely familiar when she put her arm on a similarly coloured gentleman's arm and disappeared down the street.

"Really, Severus, I do not see why you are making such a ruckus over nothing," exclaimed the gentleman in the blue coat after he waved his wand and lit a few more candles in the dressing room.

"Nothing?" hissed the pale figure before the mirror. "*Nothing!?! My mind informs me that there are at least four definitions for nothing and in this situation, my Godfather's 'nothing' will invariably turn out to be something.*"

"It is only an invitation to dinner," replied his friend, as he moved to the sofa near the mirror. "You could always claim indisposition and remain home. Just tell your man, Filch, to give the 'You're not home' line."

"My Godfather would know, Lupin! You are acquainted with his singular talent for omniscient visions," answered the tall pale gentleman as he struggled with his cravat before the mirror.

Lord Lupin idly stroked his moustache. "You could come to the opera with Harry, Ron and I. I still owe you a dinner for curing my condition." On his companion's indignant snort, he laughed lightly. "Oh, pardon me, monsieur le marquis, you have been expecting an invitation to our *odious club* or a gaming hell."

Satisfied with his cravat at last, the Marquess of Sterne signalled to his valet to assist him into his black coat. "Lupin," began the gentleman with a low sneer as he looked over his full mourning clad self in the mirror. "Since those two are too dense to be corrupted with philosophy, dissipation seems to be the only option. By the bye, I did not recall *inviting* to my residence today or at any time."

"Ah, Severus Xenophon Snape," exclaimed Lord Lupin with a cheerful smile. "Neither did you turn me away."

"Yes. An oversight on my part," drawled Lord Sterne coolly as he flicked his hair irritably from his face. "What did you want? To borrow a book?"

"To invite you to our club, old boy. It had been in Sirius's family for years and now that he's gone, we might as well be its patrons."

"Spare me your sentiment reminiscences!"

"Count Moody will be delivering a lecture this evening at Black's. I know you admire his work on continental dark arts theory."

"Prior to listening to the old bore from Saint Petersburg, I would have to endure two and a half hours of Potter and Weasley's company at the opera while they attempt to make impressions on the Season's debutantes."

"And why shouldn't they?" laughed Lord Lupin. "Harry has the command of his fortune and Ron needs to look about for another lady ever since Miss Granger turned him down thrice."

"She is an intelligent woman then!" Lord Sterne said, ignoring his companion's laugh. "Spare me your analysis of Sir Harry 'hero of our times' Potter, Baronet, and Lord Ronald 'the sporting captain' Weasley," snapped the Marquess testily as he fastened his cloak. "Your young charges are your business, not mine. Besides, Lupin, you owe me nothing."

"Back to your interest in *'nothing'*, old bean?" Since this is from the mouth of a man in perpetual mourning, I shall take it with a large handful of salt. Well," said Lord Lupin with forced cheer as he consulted his pocket watch. "I had better leave you to your fate. I'll drop by to accompany you to Flourish and Blotts tomorrow."

"Suit yourself," was the clipped reply. "Don't bother Apparating outside, I'll have my carriage deposit you at the opera."

Without waiting for a reply, Lord Sterne left the dressing room and was on his way to his Godfather's dinner party.

Silently arriving at Half Moon Crescent, he slowly made his way up the path to the stately town house of the Duke of Sanguine. The evening was unusually cool and as such, it managed to soothe his distemper somewhat, enabling him to better reflect on the circumstances that led to his summons at his Godfather's.

Five days ago, the Duke of Sanguine had called on him. Lord Sterne paused in mid-thought and grimaced. No, it would be more accurate to say that Sterne had arrived home from his weekly meeting with the editor of *Ars Chemica* to find the wretched old man happily whistling an old Welsh air as he sat in the antechamber of Sterne's modest bachelor's chambers. That old man certainly had a way of cajoling others, mused Lord Sterne. Within fifteen minutes, the Duke of Sanguine had all but extracted his godson's reluctant promise to dine with him at Half Moon Crescent in five days time.

"Perhaps, it is something to do with multiples of five," muttered the pallid pedestrian in a dark undertone to himself. While he did not know nor care for his godfather's off-kilter schemes, he privately wondered as to his purpose in the wider schema of the Duke's plans. What exactly was the Duke planning that it required a tête-à-tête at a dinner party?

"Intimate dinner party," Lord Sterne reminded himself, as he saw a carriage with the Earl of Transfig's coat of arms materialise some distance ahead of him. What could be the matter of discussion or as he suspected, speculation that required Lady Minerva McGonagall's presence to temper the Duke's intents? Could it have something to do with his controversial decision not to deliver a paper at the Academy or any of the clubs on his lycanthropy cure?

"No," thought the Marquess of Sterne as he shook his head, "that was illogical." He knew that his preference for personal privacy did not preclude his gnawing vanity or his godfather's pride in his serialised account of the lycanthropy cure in *Ars Chemica*. He paused in his steps and leaned slightly on his malacca cane as if struck by something in his thoughts.

Damn his own self-reflection! That very vanity would be the curse of his existence for this reason and the many seasons yet to come. *Sothat* was why his godfather had summoned him! It was so bloody obvious that he had wrongfully discounted it from the beginning. His own desire for recognition and vain appearance of intellectual modesty had brought him to the notice of matchmaking mammas of the *ton*. Merlin forbid! Confound the tyranny of his desire to be the top of his field of research. Curse the *on-dit* columns for highlighting his so-called modesty in chusing to publish his work rather than launch on a lecture tour! Reminding himself to send a scathing howler to the on-dit columnist, one Miss Rita Skeeter, he resumed his walking pace in a bid to calm himself.

"I should have known that my tyranny predicated on my vanity! I wonder which accursed mother, no, sow wants to prostitute her daughter to the dubious fame of being the wife of the eccentrically reclusive research and some time educator, Lord Sterne!" he muttered in an angry hiss. However, he could not resist his urge to smirk at the stupidity of fashionable Society. His godfather would undoubtedly find it droll and would, naturally, given his meddlesome streak, want to *'discuss'* the matter with him. Old Fool! Did not he realise that there would be no marriage or tender flirtation? He would be true to the memory of the vivacious, headstrong and intelligent Lily Evans. So what if she had thrown herself away on a mere baronet? It had been more than twenty years since her passing, no-twenty-four years to be exact and he persuaded himself that he would never find her equal. It was only for her sake that he tolerated her son and it was for her sake that he never took himself out of full mourning.

"Dear Lily," he thought, swallowing his resentment of her late husband bitterly, "a pity I could not have offered for you. That blasted Voldemort and his hollow schemes to reform the monarchy and government! To what end? His demise when it turned out that his utopian dream was a modern-day tyranny? His ignominious end at the hands of the Duke of Sanguine, Lily's damnable son, Sir Harry Potter and the members of the Order of the Phoenix, the self-styled nobles for justice?"

No, he shook his head firmly as he arrived at the doorstep of his godfather's townhouse; it was all over and pointless to dwell on the miseries of the past.

Just as that thought passed his mind, the door opened and his godfather's man, Fudge announced, "His Lordship, the Marquess of Sterne."

Without waiting for him to remove his beaver skin hat, malacca cane and cloak, his godfather bounded up to him warmly clasping his hand. "Glad you could make it *mon enfant!*" he said with a good deal of good humour.

Lord Sterne smirked and wryly noted a daub of rouge on the old man's left cheek where he must have demanded his godmother kiss him. "As if I had a choice?" he muttered sotto voce, "where is my charming godmother? I must pay my obligatory respects to her."

"Supervising Dobby and Winky as to the table settings," replied the Duke of Sanguine, as he led Lord Sterne into the dining room where Lady Minerva was adjusting the wine glasses with a flick of her wand.

She silently commanded her old friend, the Duke, to seat him at the head of the table with a dart of her shrewd eyes and another flick of her wand to indicate a chair, before turning her attention to Lord Sterne. "Severus," she cried coolly, extending both her hands to her godson.

"Madam," he acknowledged, receiving her hands and bowing low over them. "Your devoted servant. Are we expecting any other guests this evening? The Shacklebolts mayhaps? Or Mme de Beauxbatons and Sir Rubeus?"

"So, you've heard about Hagrid's nuptials to the half-sister of the French Wizarding King?" enquired the Duke of Sanguine, as he watched his godson pull out a chair for Lady Minerva, who signalled for Lord Sterne to be seated.

"Indeed, it is difficult to notice such a piece of information when my godson flashes the society pages under my nose so often. Furthermore, it isn't everyday a mere knight weds a French duchesse and takes her name," sneered the dark haired young gentleman.

"Alas, it seems our Severus is already acquainted with the latest news," sighed the Duke, snapping his fingers to signal that the first course should materialise on their plates. "Then, *mon enfant*, you must have heard that Remus, Harry and your godson, young Villiers, are quite the beaux of the season, as are you, might I add."

Lady Minerva shot her friend a warning glance as she replaced her soup spoon.

Ignoring the lady's private looks, the Duke continued, "Have you given the matter any thoughts *mon enfant?*"

"Other than the fact that it is incongruous to place old confirmed bachelors like Lupin and I next to Sir Harry and Lord Villiers, I have no desire to dwell on society's idle gossip."

"You do realise that without your intervention, Lord Villiers would have forfeited his title, fortune, lands and seat in the Lords to the Crown after the war?" asked the elderly man with his blue eyes twinkling lightly.

Lady Minerva silenced the Duke with a scathing look.

"Duke," said Lord Sterne quietly, tightly clenching his napkin. "Kindly inform me as to the reason why I have been summoned here today?"

"Pity, Moody couldn't make it this evening; he's delivering a lecture at Black's later this evening," said the Duke to Lady Minerva.

"Well," came the insistent voice of Lord Sterne, "Sanguine?"

Dabbing his mouth delicately with his napkin, the Duke smiled. "Have you ever considered that a life like mine is lonely? Have you ever thought of doing anything for companionship?" Lord Sterne did the next best thing he scowled at his godfather and narrowed his eyes in annoyance. The Duke took his godson's silence as an invitation to continue, "Act like a man of sense, Severus. You need a quiet, well bred female who won't have her head full of romantic notions or expect you to be caught up in the transports of passion over her. I know you're till mourning for Lady Potter; as such, I know it would not suit you to offer for some out-and-outer expecting you to dangle after her forever or some other flummery."

Lord Sterne spat his wine into his napkin to contain his ironic laughter. "Who said anything about offering for anyone?" he asked his godmother. "Was someone stupid enough to offer for me? Don't tell me, godmother, your niece, Lady Sybil Trelawney is *still* dangling after me?" Angrily swallowing the rest of his wine, which he angrily coughed up again, he ranted, "I am going to die constant to the memory of Lily Evans. Your half-baked schemes are better left with the *on-dit* columns, Duke!"

Lady Minerva rose to pat her godson's back to ease his choking fit. "Sybil's *tendre* is not issue here. Sanguine has a grand scheme about my protégé. Though I see no reason why Sybil should be passed over she is beautiful in her own way and witty too, at times..."

"And worthy of so much more than I could offer her," Lord Sterne snarled in a dangerously low, his eyes glittering in controlled irritation.

"Ah," interjected the Duke. "But Miss Granger has not a romantic disposition!"

"What!" exclaimed Lord Sterne in disbelief and some amusement, "The twenty-five year old blue-stocking whom society has christened La Philosophe? I have too much respect for another intellectual to put her through this mockery!"

"*Not* court her, my boy; but *escort* her. Her father, the Baron Orthod is very ill and will be unable to escort her around town as much as he would like. Minerva, has under, er..., my persuasion, er..., volunteered your name. After all, you are a confirmed bachelor and will arouse no real suspicion. Minerva will accompany you if need be. And there is an additional incentive to this."

"What?" spat Lord Sterne, narrowing his eyes suspiciously at his godparents as he traced his lips with a long finger in thought.

"Sybil would invariably cease pursuing you if you were perceived to be ostensibly courting another," Minerva added quietly.

"I've taught the insufferable know-it-all at Garswoth and I cannot abide by her. Find Potter, Lupin or that young Weasley idiot to play suitor."

"I'm afraid that would not be possible, for Miss Granger will undoubtedly be in need of your assistance, as does your godson," said the old man.

"I have heard *enough*, Sanguine," announced Lord Sterne testily. "Thank you for dinner. Godmother, I trust you will knock some sense into his bloody skull."

Watching their godson bellow for Fudge to retrieve his cloak, hat and malacca cane, the elderly couple stood side by side without looking at each other. "I told you it would be a disaster," commented the lady.

"Not quite," replied the gentleman, as he heard the door slam. "Not quite."

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

#### On the Plants mentioned in this chapter

***Achimenes Cupreata*** means "such worth is rare".

This flower is now known as the flame violet (*Episcia cupreata* (Hooker/Hanstein)). It is a gesneriad, a member of the Gesneriaceae. The family is best known for the African violets with their white, pink, or purple flowers. Flame violet flowers are brilliant orange-red. Yes, I know my dating for this flower is incorrect, but there was no other flower with the symbolism and the meaning as this one. If you need to take issue, let me remind you that even the immortal Shakespeare used occasional anachronisms.

William Jackson Hooker originally named the plant *Achimenes cupreata* in 1847. The species epithet, *cupreata*, is Latin for 'copper', and is a reference to the colour of the underside of the leaf of the original wild plant. Under cultivation, the flame violet has given rise to numerous leaf colorations; these cultivars are grown for their foliage. Although flame violets produce seeds, they mainly reproduce by stolon or runner. A new plant grows at the tip of the stolon. In good conditions, a flame violet will colonize bare, shaded soil which gave the plant another common name, carpet plant. Johannes Ludwig Emil Robert von Hanstein was one of the first experts in the study of gesneriads. In 1865, he reclassified the flame violet as an *Episcia*, a genus established by C. H. Persoon and an allusion to the plant's deep shade habitat. Flame violets do not tolerate direct sunlight. Preferring shade, they readily adapt to cultivation as houseplants.

Now, think about what I have just said vis-à-vis this remarkable plant. How does it fit in with Miss Granger and Lord Sterne's characters (more so with this gentleman)? Think about it.

***Wolfsbane*** represents "misanthropy".

You may be surprised that Wolfsbane (also commonly called *Aconite* and *Monkshood*) are of the buttercup family. Look at the pictures closely and you will notice that the plant has 5 blue or yellow sepals. One of these sepals is shaped like a hood or a helmet. And in the old days, think old fashioned mages, monks and whatnot they had this hood over their heads. This is why the English called it Monkshood. The flowers as you notice are rather showy, but at least it warns you not to mistake the plant's roots for horseradish. If you really must play Potions Master with Wolfsbane, please be careful. The juice of the wolfsbane root produces a feeling a numbness and tingling when tasted (as in a lick if you swallow it's your own funeral).

As to why wolfsbane represents "misanthropy", let us go into the meaning of "misanthropy". A misanthrope is someone who feels an intense dislike of people and wants to be alone. This begs the question that the person is already in society and cannot fully escape from it. After all, it is only in society that one meets people and only when one

has met people can one decide to dislike them. Wolfsbane is very ornamental garden plants. Someone once told me that aconites are hardy perennial. They thrive very well in any ordinary garden soil (Americans call soil "dirt" if I am not mistaken), but ONLY if they grow beneath the shade of trees. Because they thrive under trees, shaded from the sun, livestock are very fond of eating them. And when the animals eat aconite, they die. Now, think how this applies to Severus...

Aconite/wolfsbane has been ascribed with supernatural powers relating to werewolves and other lycanthropes either to repel them or induce their lycanthropic condition.

Just in case you're wondering, let me say that the meaning Monkshood conveys is completely different from the meaning conveyed by Aconite and Wolfsbane. Aconite and Wolfsbane means "misanthropy". But Monkshood has two meanings: (1) A deadly foe is near, and (2) The chivalric acts of knight-errantry.

#### Miscellaneous Notes

*On-dit* is French for "we tell". In the context of Regency speech, it meant gossip about the town that is usually published in the newspapers. It has since come to be in use in English.

In those days, "chusing" was how they spelt "choosing".

#### What is Black's? What is a gentleman's club?

There were many **clubs** in London during the Regency period. The oldest and most famous of these was White's. But within this story, I have renamed White's. I call it Black's (after Sirius Black). If you are curious as to name of Black's and these sorts of gentlemen's clubs, read on. I have modelled Black's heavily after White's.

**White's** can be found at 37-38 St James's Street. It was founded 1736. White's is the oldest club in London, growing out of White's Chocolate House which opened in 1698. The building burnt down in 1733 and so the club moved a few doors up St James's Street and then to its current location around 1755. It was sometime around 1736 or just after that it established as a club and included among its membership of the time such great personages as the Duke of Devonshire, Earl of Rockingham, Bubb Doddington and Sir John Cope.

There was such a clamour for membership that by 1745 it was decided that a second club would be established under the same roof, and this was called the 'Young Club'. The original group were called the 'Old Club'. Vacancies in the Old Club were filled by members of the Young Club. It wasn't until around 1780/81 that the unwieldy system of administration between the two clubs was amalgamated. In Regency times, it faced its great rival, Brookes's, across St James's Street and while it was regarded as a Tory club. This distinction meant little in practice as gentlemen were generally members of both. It was one of the few clubs that set itself up with premises of its own. White's, like Brookes's had restricted admission, with members being elected. It was remarked that no man was refused entry who 'ties a good knot in his handkerchief, keeps his hands out of his breeches pockets, and says nothing.' White's is most famous for its Bay Window which was built in 1811 and quickly became the preserve of Brummell and his friends. Other noted members who frequented Whites, and the notorious bow-window, were Lord Alvanely, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Worcester, Lord Foley and Lord Sefton.

Whist had been voted a dull game by the members and deep gambling was made in hazard, faro and other games of pure chance. The betting book, like the one at Brookes's, was always open on the table for bets of the most trivial nature to be laid at any time.

#### On Hanover Square

Severus's townhouse is at **Hanover Square**. It is bounded by Oxford St. on the north, Regent St. on the east, on South and West by the backs of the houses on Conduit and New Bond Streets. The square is the center of Millfield Close Estate. Layout began after the accession of George I in 1714. The Whig magnate Lt. General the Earl of Scarborough developed it who leased it from Sir Benjamin Maddox. It was the first of the great Mayfair Squares. The Church of St. George, built on St George St., was immediately fashionable. Retired Generals and other persons of distinction inhabited the homes here. Learned societies and clubs moved in as it became less fashionable. Robert Adam remodeled No. 13 Roxburghe House for the 3rd Duke of Roxburghe, famous for his book collection, in 1776. The House later passed into the hands of the Lascelles family and was thence known as Harewood House.

#### What is a malacca cane?

When I say "**malacca cane**", I do not mean that the cane came from Malacca (a state in West/Peninsula Malaysia). The word "cane" had not been applied to the fashionable walking stick up to the 16th century. During his period, however, the thick, jointed stems of tropical grasses known as bamboo and cane, and the reed-like stem of several species of palm and rattan were introduced for the stick. These were called "canes." From that day forth, the walking stick of the past merged into the cane of the future. Today the terms are used interchangeable, though the saying, "One strolls with a walking stick and swaggers with a Cane!" tend to give greater dignity to the former. (Katherine Morris Lester and Bess Viola Oerke, *Accessories of Dress*, The Manual Arts Press, Peoria Illinois, p. 392.) A cane was an important accessory for a man from the late 17th century through the early 20th century. A cane made of quality wood, with a silver or gold handle, told of wealth and importance. Cane shafts usually were made of wood such as ebony or rosewood or malacca.

#### On Pocket Watches

**Pocket watches** were very special things in the fashionable Regency world. To show you why let me give you a history.

In 1675, Charles II of England introduced long waistcoats. This became the fashion, and men's watches were then worn in pockets of the waistcoat instead of pendant style from the neck.

In 1704, English watchmakers Facio de Duillier and P. and J. Debaufre developed methods for using jewels as bearings. By 1715, this practice was still rare. After about 1725 it was common to find a fairly large diamond endstone mounted in the time piece.

The commonest watches of the early 1700's had pair cases in gold or silver, both of which were plain. The gold cases of the period are 22 carat. Silver cases were rarely hallmarked before 1740, although gold hallmarks are fairly common. Dials were mainly champlévé, but were slowly replaced by white enamel dials with block numbers.

The earliest enamel dials were somewhat dull and pitted, but after 1725 they are smooth and polished. The markings on the face included bold Arabic numerals for the hours. Most of the minute markings had disappeared or made very small, and at 15-minute intervals. However, by the end of the eighteenth century the markings on the faces became much lighter and more elegant. The maker's name never appeared on the dials before 1750. By 1775, champlévé was rare. In English watches the hands were usually of the beetle and poker style, although the hour hand sometimes had a tulip pattern. The hands were usually made of black steel, although better class watches had blued hands. English watches had the hour and minute hand, whereas the continental watches of the same period tended to only have the hour hand. The watches were wound by opening a hinged back to reveal a second fixed bottom pierced with a winding hole to accommodate the key.

By 1800, the pocket chronometer was a readily available accurate watch. With the newer, more accurate escapements, other changes occurred to timepieces. A seconds hand was added to the watches. Jewelling was more extensively used, with some extremely large jewels being placed on the visible plate. Dials were usually of white enamel. Roman and Arabic numbers were both used, but Roman numerals were more common. After 1800 dials in four-colour gold became popular. Stopwatches were first made in 1821. Pocket watches were all hand made works of art owned by only the wealthy until the 1840's when inexpensive machined parts became widely available.

# Chapter 3 - Juniper sprouts on the Box Tree

Chapter 4 of 23

On leaving the Duke of Sanguine residence's in a huff, Lord Sterne returns home to find his godson, Lord Villiers (son of the Duke of Mallefille) requesting his assistance. What advice does he give this young man who declares himself in love with Lady Ginevra Weasley?

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined>. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

## Language of Flowers

### Chapter 3 Juniper sprouts on the Box Tree

Severus, the Marquess of Sterne, arrived home still in a huff and instructed his man to turn away all unimportant callers (if any) for the evening. Arriving at the realisation that the more he thought on his godfather's ridiculous plot for plot it must be called the crosser he became. To palliate his mood, he decided to retreat into his private interconnected library, study and laboratory. Working always eased his soul, and tonight, his mind needed to be soothed.

"Ha! What does he take me for?" he spat while pounding wormwood extract with a dried bat's wing. "As if I was unable to keep Sybill Trelawney at bay! Haven't I done so for the past twenty years? Humbug! I've even kept that old man of hers at bay when he constantly thrust his blasted seer of a daughter at me. Old Lord Trelawney must be as senile as my godfather! If he weren't Lady Minerva's brother-in-law, I would have hexed him! Bloody Godfather! Escort Miss Granger around indeed! Ha! That will be the day!"

As he glided to his worktable to check on the by-products of his latest extraction project, he was alerted to Filch's presence at the door of his private sanctuary. Without looking up at his man he rolled up his white sleeves and kept his eyes on the distiller. "Well, Filch, what is it?" he hissed impatiently.

"Milord," said the manservant slowly in his thick Scottish brogue, shifting his weight uneasily between his feet. "Young Lord Villiers to see ye. 'E won't go till 'e's seen ye, 'e says. I couldn't turn the young'un away when 'e looks so wild, ye might say."

"Is he dressed in rags?" sneered Lord Sterne, as he lifted a vial and swirled it gently before his eyes.

"Nay, milord, he ain't been in a fight, but 'e's mighty upset."

The alchemist-Marquess sat down at his worktable and started writing. "Send him up, Filch. *And no more visitors this evening, you understand?* Or I'll hex you into a spittoon."

The young gentleman leaning against the wall in a most despondent manner watched Filch exit the study in a cringingly servile manner and his eyes lit up with cruel glee that the manservant had been told off. However, Filch soon cast him a dirty and penetrating look that brought him back to the purpose of his visit. Filch roughly thrust a candle into the young visitor's hand and cackled his way upstairs. This gentleman, who was dressed as befitted the Pinkest of the Pinks, was still clad in his very long and voluminous silk lined driving coat that was embellished with several shoulder capes and secured by large mother of pearl buttons. Standing at the corridor along the area his would-be host chillingly dubbed *'the dungeons'*, he remained cold and felt, for the first time in years, very much alone. Removing his gloves of York tan from his hands to his pockets he checked his pale blond hair, which was carefully anointed with Russian oil and swept completely away from his prepossessing face so as to cling neatly to his scalp. After hearing Filch lock the heavy front doors of Lord Sterne's house for the night, the young Marquess (for it was the young gentleman's rank) inhaled sharply so as to gather the courage to knock on the doors to his host's study.

On hearing a non-committal grunt from the interior, the young man let himself in. "Good evening, godfather," he greeted in a small voice as he saw the figure in the shadowy flickers of the candlelight writing.

Lord Sterne waved for him to sit down. "So, what can I do for you, my Lord Villiers? To what do I owe ~~the~~*unexpected pleasure* of this *unsolicited visit*?" he enquired in a low voice. "Did the Duchess throw you out for your gaming debts again? Or is this about another one of your birds of paradise? Or worse yet, your by-blows?"

Lord Villiers laughed nervously. "I've given up the gaming hells when you last bailed me out. I have no desire to end up like the Offaly family," he paused in his affected mirthful tone and added in the barest hint of a whisper, "even if I have a *tendre* for their daughter."

"Did you say something?" asked the older Marquess carelessly, as he labelled a bottle from the distiller and replaced it on the table. "Specifically about the charms of a Lady Ginevra Weasley, only daughter of the impoverished Duke of Offaly?"

The young man twitched his lips into a sad smile. "I might have."

"Is there some rabid disease in the air?"

"Sir?" quizzed the young man curiously, as he cast his eyes around the office.

"Do not tell me you have caught the disease of fancying yourself in love with a penniless nobody?" Lord Sterne continued to stopper and label his bottles of flower extracts.

"Mother said the same thing about her, Godfather. She even asked me what I thought Father would say?"

"And what did you tell Madame la Duchesse?" came the cold disinterested question as the Marquess arranged his newly distilled essences into their trays.

"That he isn't around in British Isles. He is exiled in France. After all, you and the Duke of Sanguine had arranged it; for which, I am thankful, I realise now that our family could have been executed for treason. It is only through your influence that I have my present place in parliament, acting in Father's seat in the Lords."

The older man waved his hands in a dismissive gesture before he started tracing his lips with a long, thin index finger. "Yes, yes. How does this fit in with your *amour* for Lady Ginevra?"

"I want you to help me."

"Which is to say you *need* me to help you because you have no one else you trust. I assisted you twice once so that your family could retain the lifestyle it was accustomed to; and second, when I extracted you from that gaming hell. Can't you ask someone else with nothing better to do than help young couples thwarted in lust, I mean, *love*?"

Villiers ignored his godfather's words. "Please help me! I've tried reasoning with Mother that Lady Ginevra's blood is as good as ours. I am next in line to a dukedom and she is the daughter of a duke; we are equally matched. But all Mother can say is, 'I will not have Mallefille Manor polluted.' She would rather I court the Granger creature for her money. I think it could be the Irish blood of the Weasleys"



The dark haired Marquess smirked and raised a brow in amusement. "You are a credit to your Mother; you do justice to her manner of speech."

"Will you help me?" asked the younger man insistently.

"No. You can court her yourself. Go to her house, declare yourself and inform her family of your intent. Do so the honourable way and you will have no problems."

"But, Mother..."

"Oh, let the devil take your mother! She is the daughter of a knight, a mere knight ennobled for being the last King's gentleman of the Stables! She who is a daughter of that illiberal ancient house of Black. It is your life, Draco!" ejaculated Lord Sterne.

"Until Mother relents, I can do nothing. Hence, I require your assistance."

"To convince her of your so-called passion? For that chit just out of finishing school?"

"No! To help convince my strawberry blonde beauty that my affection is real," said Draco in exasperation.

Lord Sterne shuddered in mock disgust. "Spare me your abhorrent sentiments of lust!" Then turning to the younger man with a sinister smirk, he brought a tray of unlabelled distilled essence bottles before him. Leaning in on his young guest and trapping him in the chair, the older Marquess's glittering eyes danced menacingly as he quietly issued a challenge. "Pick a bottle, Draco."

"Sir?" murmured he in uncertainty, noticing that his godfather had addressed him by his name.

He mocked in a low quite voice, as his eyes narrowed slightly, "Pick the right one and I will see what I can do. Pick the wrong one and I must bid you goodnight." He caught his godson's hand hesitating and curled his lips into a smirk. "Well? I thought you were *a gambling man*, my dear Lord Villiers?"

In response, Villiers shut his eyes, held his breath and randomly picked a bottle, which the older man immediately took. Opening his eyes to see a frown briefly alight on his godfather's brow, he knew he had been successful. "What did I pick?" he asked, watching the Marquess with the hooked nose mix his selected bottle's contents with that of a larger decanter.

"Extract of juniper," was the scathing reply. A glass was hastily thrust into the young man's hands. "Drink!"

"What is it?"

"Poison, of course! I want to see if it works."

The young man laughed nervously after sniffing the contents of the glass. "You are actually informing me that you wish to poison me?"

"Do you mean to say you wouldn't extend me the same courtesy, Villiers? Rejuvenating gin does not kill, at least my notes do not indicate death. Well? Drink it, man! I want to be proven wrong! Let's see if you fall dead!"

Realising that Sterne was being his usual mordant self, Lord Villiers cautiously took a sip of the so-called gin. "How is this significant to me?"

"A new potion, I am trying it should help you to help yourself."

"I don't follow."

Lord Sterne rolled his eyes and curled his lips in annoyance. "I must record this in my log extract causes stupidity upon consumption! Have you learnt nothing from me! Juniper is a flower. It imparts its distinctive flavour to gin and its berries are known for their rejuvenating effects. As a blossom, it represents protection and succour. As a potion, it may ward off epidemics. Thus, it ought to mean *everything* to you. You may now swallow the gin."

As soon as the empty glass was returned to him, the older man begrudgingly revealed that he would see what he could do to assist the young Marquess. After a few more shared gins, he thoughtfully asked, "You do realise you may bankrupt yourself assisting her family?"

"Not if I assist Offaly in politics?"

"Good Lord, don't tell me you're a Whig now?"

"No!" protested Villiers. "I mean assist the Duke's rise to a prominent position in governance where the chances of improving his fortune are greater."

"What about the other creature your mother wanted you to marry?"

"Miss Parkinson may be a Baron's daughter but it would be a shocking *mésalliance* to marry a woman whose family fortune was obtained through trade. That would be no different from allying myself with a *cit*."

Sterne curled his lips in repugnance at his godson's ugly words. The Malfoys were still inexorably proud of their money and standing. Still, it was refreshing to learn that his godson would rather marry a lady without a dowry rather than a lady with £30,000. Perhaps the lad really was in the throes of a passion. He made a mental note to casually bring this matter to Lord Lupin's attention; it maybe the cause of good sport to come. A nudge and a question from Draco brought Lord Snape back from his reverie.

"Why weren't you at the opera? Lady Sybill was asking after you."

The darker man made a face and curled his lips contemptuously. "I was dining with Sanguine and Lady Minerva. And I see you left the opera after Act One."

"Touché," laughed Villiers, "I don't envy you having Lady Sybill run after you."

"May you be blessed with a Sybill Trelawney of your own," commented Lord Sterne in a dead tone. "Enough of my lack of romantic liaisons, tell me about your Lady Ginevra."

At the prospect of highlighting the qualities of his love, Draco brightened up considerably. "Her skin is good, her teeth are even and her hair a perfect strawberry blonde. The weather bows to the commands of her smiles and when she goes riding in Park, she is Artemis incarnate. She may be rather simply attired but instead of rendering her common, she resembles an angel an Irish angel. I first saw her outside Lincoln's Inn a year ago where she was waiting for the eldest brother, Lord Dragonlaire to collect the post for her. She helped some street children peel an orange. I had thought her rather common at first, until someone in the crowd threw a pebble at me for my family's involvement in the civil war. She immediately cast a total body bind on that person and told him off. I can still recall the manner in which she declared me a somewhat respectable creature even if I appear to be a neck-or-nothing young blood of Fancy. She is so kind, and so good. She maybe a tad *outré* like her mother, but she is so mature and never judgemental that I cannot help but like her. Lately, it has been getting difficult to even get a glimpse of her. Previously, I could see her at large social events and exchange greetings. Now, she is almost always accompanied by either a member of her family or Miss Granger or Miss Lovegood. I saw Lady Ginevra today at the opera in the box with her parents, but because she looked at me with such suspicion when I caught her eye, I did not dare speak to her or them."

"Very interesting," replied Lord Sterne, leaning back into his chair. "We were speaking of your Lady Ginevra's friendship with Lord Orthod's daughter, are we not?" Draco nodded. "Offaly's English estates are in between the Potter and Orthod's country seats; they've been friends since their childhood."

"I have two suggestions, Draco. First, you must apprise Miss Granger of your intent towards Lady Ginevra. Second, you and your lady (if she is stupid enough to want you)

must learn the language of flowers so that you are better able to communicate with each other. Miss Granger should assist in both your plans as well as your education in the language of flowers, if my assessment of her character is correct."

"Any recommendations?" asked Draco earnestly.

"Start by sending her sweet alyssum and yellow acacia. Stay the night, if you wish. It is fast approaching one in the morn. You know where the best guest room is. Ring for Filch if you need anything." With these words, Lord Sterne left the study for his own room where he pondered on the connection between his godson's visit and his godfather's dinner party.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Juniper stands for "succour and/or protection". This is a particular recurring theme in this story, which I drew from an old Christian legend that the infant Christ was hidden from Roman soldiers beneath a juniper bush during the Holy Family's return to Egypt. Furthermore, hunters in Leicestershire, where fox and hare hunting is quite a sport, never chase foxes and hares when these creatures run amongst juniper. It was believed that the foxes and hares would remain hidden in the juniper until they should to leave that sanctuary. What is the juniper's significance in this chapter? What is the juniper's significance to the Malfoy family as a whole in the schema of this plot? You must discern it yourself.

See a juniper here <http://www.angelfire.com/blues/deborah/images/juniper.jpg>

(2) The Box Tree represents "stoicism".

In the Italian Renaissance, the box tree was frequently used a background in paintings because it symbolised the Resurrection of Christ. Given Christ's behaviour throughout the New Testament, the box tree soon also acquired the meaning of stoicism. See it here [http://www.2020site.org/trees/images/box\\_tree1.gif](http://www.2020site.org/trees/images/box_tree1.gif). Consider its significance in what has yet to come...

(3) Sweet alyssum means "worth beyond beauty".

When it was first discovered, the flower was crushed and drunk in a sort of tea by those deemed "insane" as it was believed to remedy raging madness. See it here <http://www.calflora.net/bloomingplants/sweetalyssum.html>

(4) Yellow Acacia means (a) "secret honourable love" or (b) "I dare not declare". Both meanings are implied in the text and the situation at hand. Think about it.

See it here [http://alba.web.infoseek.co.jp/yellowseason/acacia\\_baileyana.jpg](http://alba.web.infoseek.co.jp/yellowseason/acacia_baileyana.jpg) and here [http://www.alchemy-works.com/Resources/acacia\\_illust.JPG](http://www.alchemy-works.com/Resources/acacia_illust.JPG). The Yellow Acacia is a small graceful tree well adapted to growing inside; it is also a very good greenhouse plant. It has a profusion of beautiful flowers covering the entire plant. The small yellow puff-like flowers are very fragrant and appear in clusters during late winter, these will be followed by seed pods. However, there are some varieties of Acacia that may bloom all year. The plants have compound leaves and are well branched. Be aware some varieties do have nasty thorns. If you grow Acacia as a bonsai culture it requires special attention to make them bloom.

Why does it mean "declare I dare not?" Because the flower will not stand freezing. If the woman of your dreams denies you, you will be frozen and so die like the yellow acacia. It stands for "secret honourable love" because it flourishes in warm weather. Your love for your beloved is secret and you do not want to sully her name; it is enough for you to see her and be near her. You bask in the warmth of her friendship and you thrive in warm weather so to speak.

(5) "Bird of paradise" is one of the many Regency slang words for mistress or woman of easy virtue.

(6) "By-blows" is one of the Regency slang words for illegitimate children.

(7) Draco refers to "the Lords". This is a reference to the House of Lords.

(8) Whenever "Commons" is mentioned, I am referring to the House of Commons.

(9) "Neck-or-nothing young blood of Fancy" is Regency slang for sporty and fashionable young nobleman.

(10) "Pinkest of the Pink" is Regency slang for an extremely fashionable young man.

(11) Hell is the abbreviated name for "gaming hell". A gaming hell is a gambling establishment. It's kind of like a casino without all the neon lights and loud music. A young "pigeon" was more likely to fall victim to a dishonourable "shark" at a hell than at an elite gentleman's club.

(12) Cit is a contemptuous term for a member of the merchant class, one who works in or lives in the City of London, i.e. the central business area of London.

(13) Some readers might take offence at the phrase "tendre" used here. I understand that some might look on it as a bastardisation of the French. I know the original phrase is "tendre penchant". In Regency English, the term "tendre" is usually understood to mean a strong liking for. The term "tendre" was used by W. M. Thackeray, who wrote, "You poor friendless creatures are always having some foolish tendre" in *Vanity Fair*. So you see, in English, it is perfectly acceptable.

(14) Anti-Irish prejudice is a very old theme in English culture. Despite this explanation, my betas and prelim readers were still confused as to reason why. This warrants a little lecture, so bear with me. If you want more information, email me. But I might take a while to reply. I've a lot on my plate right now. The written record begins with Gerald of Wales, whose family was deeply involved in the Norman invasion of Ireland.

In his 12th-century *History and Topography of Ireland* Gerald wrote contemptuously of the people, portraying them as inferior to the Normans in every respect:

"They live on beasts only, and live like beasts. They have not progressed at all from the habits of pastoral living." He condemned their customs, dress, and "flowing hair and beards" as examples of their "barbarity". He also vilified the religious practices and marriage customs of the people:

"This is a filthy people, wallowing in vice. Of all peoples it is the least instructed in the rudiments of the faith. They do not yet pay tithes or first fruits or contract marriages. They do not avoid incest." (cf. Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, Penguin Classics 1982)

British contempt for the Irish was part of an increasing disdain for foreigners in general. The Swiss traveller de Saussure observed them in 1727:

"I do not think there is a people more prejudiced in its own favor than the British people, and they allow this to appear in their talk and manners. They look on foreigners in general with contempt, and think nothing is as well done elsewhere as in their own country." (cf. J.H. Plumb, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, Penguin, 1950, p. 33)

\* Released this chapter early as I have to invigilate (americans call it proctor I believe) exams next week.

# Chapter 4 - Pressing a Moss Rosebud on a bed of White Roses

Chapter 5 of 23

The ladies are introduced in this 4th chapter. We learn a little of Lord Villiers's past when he calls on Miss Granger. How will this forward his cause to recommend himself to Lady Ginevra?

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

## Language of Flowers

### Chapter 4 Pressing a Moss Rosebud on a bed of White Roses

The morning which had began on an optimistic pink, orange and pale blue note at his waking soon disappointed Lord Orthod. Within half an hour of rising from his bed fully invigorated from a night's rest, his lordship felt his rheumatism creeping up on his knees. However, as he had arisen free from his racking coughs and the fine weather looked set to remain moderately warm, Lord Orthod hazarded to take the air by walking to St James Park. Despite the protests of his daughter, who proclaimed that it would rain, he pooh-poohed her notion and ignored the slight pain in his knees and ankles, and went out. As soon as the thin, tall and elegantly dressed bespectacled gentleman arrived at his destination and hailed Lord Lupin, he was greeted by a burst of rain. It seemed that his daughter had been right, as she usually was. Sighing quietly in between his presently returned coughs, he allowed Lord Lupin to lead him away to Black's to wait out the rain as they breakfasted. As he linked arms with Lord Lupin, the younger man offered him a handkerchief so that he could cough with a modicum of dignity. Smiling kindly at the young Baron, Lord Orthod resolved to pay more heed to the urges of his weak knees and his daughter perspicacity.

Ironically, Lord Orthod's daughter was at that moment pacing in the drawing room in agitation at her father's departure from the house without an umbrella. "I told him that the wizarding weather forecast predicted rain and he refused to listen to me, Ginny!" ranted a female of middling height, as she twisted and secured her thick bushy brown hair into a bun at the top of her head using a long oriental hairpin decorated with dangling iridescent beads. "He laughed and told me felt a great deal better this morning." This apparently formidable young lady started pacing. "He did not even pay attention to the fact that the wizards' weather bulletin is accurate ninety-five percent of the time. Does not he realise that these forecasts are acknowledged as Lady Sybill Trelawney's *only accurate predictions*? It may be rumoured that she has other accurate predictions vis-à-vis the late wars, but I am not inclined to believe such dribble."

"Please, Miss," came a polite stammer from a tallish young woman in a mob cap. "Please, Lady Ginevra," pleaded this brown-eyed personage. "I know I'm just a lady's maid and this is not my place to say anything to you two who've been so very kind to me. While I hate to say anything to you two who've been so very kind to me, I hate to see Miss Granger fretting over Lord Orthod like this."

The mistress of the female with the mob cap shot her a sharp look. "That is quite enough, Brown," she interjected sharply just as Lady Ginevra was about to speak. "Have some tea, Brown."

That injunction only brought more words of worry from the young abigail.

"Lavender Brown," declared her employer in an unevenly controlled tone, "if you do not cease your snivelling, I will leave you to do the mending of the *dresseby hand without magic* for a month!"

At this sharp rebuke from Lord Orthod's pacing daughter, Lavender Brown retreated into a nearby armchair next to Lady Ginevra's abigail and proceeded to pour herself a cup of tea.

Leaving the two abigails to gossip quietly, Lady Ginevra followed her friend to the window where the latter was staring intently at the rain. "There was no need to be harsh on the lass, Hermione," said Lady Ginevra in a calming voice, as she placed squeezed her friend's shoulder.

Placing her hand on Lady Ginevra's, Miss Granger slowly replied, "I know, I know; I am just worried about Papa."

"I realise that. But you have to understand that he is a grown man and able to take care of himself."

"It was unjust of me to speak to Brown in that unfeeling manner," conceded Miss Granger. "I'll apologise to her later and speak to Neville when he calls in the afternoon, he knows how best to allay her insecurities. Though I think, we had better inform him that we've invited him to tea with your Bulstrode as well. He's better at relating to people than I am."

Lady Ginevra giggled. "He has to be for he's a man of the cloth."

The two ladies laughed quietly in shared amusement. The butler, one Seamus Finnigan by name, entered at that moment and handed a note to his lordship's daughter. "From the master," he said.

"What does Lord Orthod say?" enquired Brown.

Bulstrode, a graceful well-built dark haired maiden in the simple and severe hairstyle favoured by Miss Granger, said, "It must be important if his lordship arranged to have a message sent. Tea, my lady?"

Lady Ginevra accepted the teacup from her abigail with a slight nod and a smile. "Well, Hermione, what does your father say?"

"Only that he's at Black's with Lord Lupin and is having breakfast there," she answered as she say down near the window and started writing in the papers that she had unlocked from the *escritoire*. Lady Ginevra wandered over to her friend's writing table just as the butler entered and brought in a calling card. "Set it down, Finnigan," instructed the chocolate eyed hostess, as she surreptitiously cast a spell over her writing to disguise what she had written.

Finnigan coughed uncomfortably. "The gentleman is the antechamber; he insists on seeing you."

Glancing at the clock at the mantelpiece, Miss Granger saw that it was only half past ten in the morning. Reluctantly, she looked at the card and raised a brow in curiosity. Hiding the interest of the gentleman's visit from her voice, she coldly commanded Finnigan to send the caller up to the drawing room.

When Lord Villiers was announced, she was slightly bemused to observe Lady Ginevra stare pointedly out the window and the two abigails turning quite ashen.

As soon as the young Marquess stepped into the room, the glib compliment on his tongue died. Miss Granger was truly amused and could not resist staring at Draco's

eyes which were darting furiously from the abigails to Lady Ginevra's back.

Bowing to the palely shaking abigails, he said with a practised rakish grin, "Millie; Ducky." However, he soon recollected his manners and bowed stiffly to the abigails. Noticing that Lady Ginevra still stood staring out the window, Hermione rose and extended her hand coldly to her guest. "Lord Villiers, how kind of you to come. Will you have some tea and cake?" she paused, noting that he was still gaping at the abigails. "Your former light o' loves' present situations surprises you, I see."

"Miss Granger," he murmured through his teeth, whilst bowing over her hand. "Lady Ginevra," he called out and received no answer.

"You've met our abigails, I see," said his hostess, bridging the silence as she invited Villiers to sit opposite her.

"How did they come here?" he asked incredulously, as his face assumed a calm insouciant veneer.

Miss Granger saw through his artifice and chuckled to herself. Disguising it as a weak cough, she swallowed the rest of her laughter and continued, "Millicent Bulstrode arrived with Lady Ginevra. And Lavender Brown or Ducky, as you so enthusiastically addressed, is my abigail."

The Marquess moved his mouth to form words but found that his tongue had suddenly become parched and on its own volition, seemed inclined to remain stuck to the roof of his mouth.

"Have you suddenly acquired remorse?" came the half-strangled voice of Lady Ginevra. Turning sharply around to face him, she went on, "I see that I was wrong in my assessment of your character. For all your claims of charitable sentiment, you've abandoned your ladybirds without a penny! And to think that I had believed you to be worthy of redemption! If Mamma's charity didn't take them in, they would have become common Haymarket ware."

Bulstrode trembled violently and was about to speak (though it is not known to whom) when she collapsed deeper into the sofa in agitation.

Watching Brown tend to her friend's maid, Miss Granger looked at the silent and downcast young man and said coolly, "Yes, we are all aware of Lord Villiers personal proclivities. So tell me, Lord Villiers, have you come to exercise some discretion now? It is said that you no longer frequent Vauxhall with your birds of paradise. Or have you decided to follow the mode established by other gentlemen of installing your new acquisitions at Cheapside? I wonder if Lord George and Lord Frederick Weasley have seen you in the vicinity?"

Villiers closed his eyes at Miss Granger's observations. Fingering his cravat cautiously, he reflected on his past debauched lifestyle. Indeed, he ought to be ashamed of himself; his godfather had frequently told him so. As he was about to explain his present course of action to the ladies, it dawned on him that no well-born lady ought to express knowledge of a man's bits of muslin. He blinked and silently cursed his godfather for sending him to the formidable Miss Granger he could see that she was no ordinary well-born lady, neither was his Lady Ginevra.

"Actually, ladies, I am here purely on a matter of business; a private matter that I must discuss with Miss Granger alone. However, if I am expected to make amends for my past..." He paused and inclined his head towards the abigails. "I shall."

"Expect?" laughed Miss Granger in an ironic tone. "Ha! What *do you* want to do about your past would be a better question."

With the blood rushing to his head, Villiers had the urge to inform her of his change of heart when Finnigan announced and introduced the entry of Miss Lovegood to the party.

Pointedly ignoring the tense atmosphere in the drawing room, the new arrival headed straight to the Marquess and extended her hand. "Lord Villiers! Fancy seeing you here and at this hour? We are well met indeed! I would have left a message for you at Black's had I not met you here. I must thank you for your contribution to my father's efforts to protect our world's endangered species. Your voice in the 'Protection of Crumple-Horned Snorkack' Effort has improved the crown's patronage of the Crumple-Horned Snorkack Society! My father would have written personally to thank you for your voice in Court as to the protection of Snorkacks hunted for sport, but alas he is occupied with many other matters."

At that revelation, all the other ladies fell into an astonished silence. Fortunately, Miss Granger quickly gathered her wits and bade the pretty blonde guest in cerulean blue to soothe Lady Ginevra's mood, as she discussed business affairs with Lord Villiers in the library. As soon as they were safely secreted in the library, she began, "It seems Lord Villiers, you have been cultivating two disparate sides to your character, what do you mean by them? You have never been anything more than a mere acquaintance in my circle, why have you singled out my company today?"

Taking his time to gaze around the library as he lowered himself into a chair, he gave his glowering questioner a fair imitation of his father's self-satisfied smirk. Calming himself by the great show of opening his snuff box, he replied in a neutral tone, "I wish to change." He raised a pinch of snuff delicately to his nostril. "So that I can be more deserving of a lady."

"And who is this unfortunate maiden? Is it someone *within my circle*? Do you wish to issue her a carte-blanche just because her family is not as prosperous as yours?"

"Miss Granger," he snapped. "I do not ruin women in *our class* if you do not already know. I am trying to emulate my father. The Duke of Mallefille has many faults, but unfaithfulness to his wife was never one of them! I wish to render myself amiable to Lady Ginevra."

"Explain yourself."

"She is the only person who would dare chastise me. She was kind to me. She is an angel. I wish to make her an offer."

Miss Granger snorted in a mixture of incredulity and amusement. "Have you considered what will be said? Her brothers are presently in trade; they reside in Cheapside, next to their warehouse. Does that bother you? Her portion is small. Does that bother you? Her roots are Irish. Does that bother? And what does the Duchess of Mallefille say to this match? The Duchess surely does not look on your intent kindly?"

Not allowing his interlocutor to see his surprise at her perspicacity, he presented his best sardonic smirk. "She does not approve. In fact, she bade me to make myself agreeable to you. For your money and future title." Laughing a little as Hermione flinched slightly in repugnance, he continued, "She thinks you are wealthy enough, but you may be disappointed to learn that my intentions remain fixed on Lady Ginevra. Thus, I require your assistance."

She laughed haughtily. "And you believe I will help you?"

"I know so," said he confidently, dusting a speck of snuff off his sleeve. "A reliable source informed me that you always try to live justly."

The lady smiled knowingly to signal that she was fully cognisant with the identity of Villiers's source. "I don't see what I can do. If Lady Ginevra does not like you, there is no hope for your so-called affections."

"I want to court her honourably, I need you to play chaperone, and give my mother reason to believe that I am courting you."

"Why not say this to her parents?"

"Because I want to be secure of her affections before I declare myself to them."

Miss Granger stopped pacing and turned to the bookshelves to mask her thoughts. While she had her doubts as to his character and disposition, the manner in which Luna Lovegood had greeted him partially allayed her doubts. She had never known Luna to be wrong in her judgement of people. If Draco Malfoy, the Marquess of Villiers was indeed contributing to Lord de Quib's campaigns of protecting all manner of obscure wizarding wildlife, perhaps he really has embarked on a change. And if Lord Sterne (if it was indeed he as Miss Granger had hypothesised) had sent his godson to her, the young man must be in earnest.

"Lord Villiers, you must first inform Lady Ginevra of your intent. When we re-enter the drawing room, I would like it very much if you made plain our case and allow all of us, including Brown and Bulstrode to judge you. Nodding to signal his assent to that condition, his lordship dared not hope when he followed his hostess back to the drawing room.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) A moss rosebud means "confession of love".

(2) White roses stand for "I believe I am worthy of you".

(3) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? You will see why when I reveal Millicent Bulstrode's parentage...

(4) "Light o' loves" is one of the Regency slang phrases for "mistress" and it is meant in the derogatory sexual sense of the word.

(5) "Ladybird" is one of the Regency slang words for "mistress" and it is meant in the derogatory sexual sense of the word.

(6) "Bits of muslin" is one of the Regency slang phrases for "mistresses" and it is meant in the derogatory sexual sense of the word.

(7) "Haymarket ware" is Regency slang and a genteel way of saying low class prostitutes. The women are called 'Haymarket wares' because the ladies hang around there (at Haymarket) and solicit clients.

(8) "Carte-blanche" refers to an offer by a gentleman that includes living under his protection, but not marriage.

(9) I am assuming in this chapter (and story) that the things that Luna believes in actually exist.

(10) In this chapter, you would have noticed that Draco takes snuff just in case, you're curious it is a habit that he shares with his father. Snuff is a preparation of finely pulverised tobacco that can be drawn up into the nostrils by inhaling. It was also called smokeless tobacco. The quantity of this tobacco that is inhaled at a single time is no more than a pinch literally. However, not all snuff-takers used it for fashion (it was then seen as a fashionable activity). Some people with nose trouble (blocked and/or running noses) used a special kind of 'snuff' which was a powdery substance, such as a medicine, taken by inhaling.

Taking snuff was a popular, widespread pastime among the upper class and middle class English of the 18th century. Snuff boxes were made by silver smiths who specialised in tightly closing boxes. Most English snuff boxes were made in Birmingham.

(11) St James Park is a famous park. St James's Park is the oldest Royal Park in London and is surrounded by three palaces. The most ancient is Westminster, which has now become the Houses of Parliament, St James's Palace and of course, the best known, Buckingham Palace. The Park was once a marshy water meadow. In the thirteenth century a leper hospital was founded, and it is from this hospital that the Park took its name. In 1532 Henry VIII acquired the site as yet another deer park and built the Palace of St James's. When Elizabeth I came to the throne she indulged her love of pageantry and pomp, and fetes of all kinds were held in the park. Her successor, James I, improved the drainage and controlled the water supply. A road was created in front of St James's Palace, approximately where the Mall is today, but it was Charles II who made dramatic changes. The Park was redesigned, with avenues of trees planted and lawns laid. The King opened the park to the public and was a frequent visitor, feeding the ducks and mingling with his subjects. During the Hanoverian period, Horse Guards Parade was created by filling in one end of the long canal and was used first as a mustering ground and later for parades. Horse Guards Parade is still part of St James's Park. The Park changed forever when John Nash redesigned it in a more romantic style. The canal was transformed into a natural-looking lake and in 1837 the Ornithological Society of London presented some birds to the Park and erected a cottage for a birdkeeper. Both the cottage and the position of birdkeeper remain to this day. Clarence House was designed for the Duke of Clarence, later to become William IV and was also the home of the late Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother. Outside Buckingham Palace is the Queen Victoria Memorial, which celebrates the days of the British Empire. The memorial includes not only the marble statue of Victoria and the glittering figures of Victory, Courage and Constancy, but also the ornamental gates given by the Dominions. These are the Australia Gate, South Africa Gate and Canada Gate.

An 1819 guide entitled Leigh's New Picture of London, has this to say about the park, "In the time of Henry VIII, St James Park was a complete marsh. That prince, on building St. James's Palace, enclosed it; laid it out in walks, and collecting the waters together, gave to the new enclosed ground and building the name of St. James's. It was afterwards much improved by Charles II., who added several fields to it, planted rows of lime trees, laid out the mall, which is a vista half a mile in length, at that time formed into a hollow smooth walk, skirted with a wooden border, and with an iron hoop at the farther end, for the purpose of playing a game with a ball, called a mall. He formed the canal, which is 100 feet broad, and 2,800 long, with a decoy and other ponds for water-fowl. Succeeding kings allowed the people the privilege of walking in it; and King William III., in 1699, granted the neighbouring inhabitants a passage into it from Spring Gardens. It affords a very pleasant promenade, being continually diversified by the numerous structures surrounding it. ... There were great celebrations in this park to celebrate the return of peace. There was a grand Temple of Concord built in the Green Park, which was magnificently illuminated, and round which fire-works and cannon were discharged during the evening and night. Across the canal was built a wooden pagoda bridge, which still remains for the advantage of passengers; but great part of the pagoda tower was burnt on the night in question. That portion of it has not since been rebuilt. This bridge, however, it not being built of very durable materials, is very considerably decayed; and to remedy this evil, as well as to preserve to the public so commodious a road, it is about to be replaced by a cast-iron bridge now preparing at Woolwich."

## Chapter 5 - Among the Mundi Roses

### Chapter 6 of 23

While Villiers is calling on Miss Granger, her father is at Black's, discussing politics and *Ars Chemica* articles with the gentlemen there. We also get a glimpse of Percy.

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

#### Language of Flowers

## Chapter 5 Among the Mundi Roses

While the ladies at Lord Orthod's townhouse were occupied in interrogating Lord Villiers, the owner of that fine residence was safely sheltered from the unyielding rain at Black's. Sighing slightly, Lord Orthod earnestly wished that he had heeded his daughter's words. Oh well, he thought, turning briefly away from his conversation with Lord Lupin, at least it is dry in here and my coughing has stopped.

"How the heavens pour!" he muttered, as he stared out the window. "What is that lady doing there in the heavy rain without an umbrella?"

"What lady?" asked his companion, as he hesitated over his muffin.

Pointing to the forlorn figure in a dark puce pelisse and matching bonnet across the street from the club, the Baron replied, "That one. Do you think she's lost?"

Squinting to make up the features of the woman through the window pane and the heavy rain, Lord Lupin confessed that could not discern her visage. "Do you think she's looking for someone at the club?"

"That is irrelevant, Lupin. The rules of this club have remained misogynistic long enough. I surmise that the young lady must have been separated from her party and sought to seek shelter here. However, since Black's is *only a gentlemen's club*, she was turned away. Whatever happened to compassion and human goodness?" asked Lord Orthod, repeatedly jabbing at his half eaten toast.

Before Lord Lupin could answer in kind, a mellow silky voice from the shadow purred, "By saying that, my dear Lord Orthod, you have made the assumption that human nature is intrinsically good rather than avaricious and cowardly."

"However, sir, in assuming that my beliefs are an assumption, you have made an asinine assumption yourself," replied the older man.

The shadows soon elongated and yielded a dark haired man with a hooked nose who was clad in full mourning. "Lupin," he greeted in a careless sneer, "and Lord Orthod, I presume?" He executed a flawless bow to the aged Baron.

"Your opinion has finally been replaced by knowledge," answered Lord Orthod by way of acknowledgement. "Lord Sterne, I am pleased to have met you at last. I know you by reputation, of course. My daughter is a keen admirer of your published work."

Lord Sterne bowed slightly. "She was my best potions student at Garswoth. If rumours are to be believed, Miss Granger is as reclusive and tenacious as I am taciturn and unsociable."

Feigning a cough to dispel the men's verbal sparring, Lupin quickly added, "We are all aware of Miss Granger's intellect. Clearly, she inherited her spirit and wit from you, my lord."

Having no desire to further antagonise a man who was obviously unwell, Lord Sterne took his cue from Lupin and changed the topic adroitly, "Forgive my intrusion, Lord Orthod, I could not help but notice that you were discussing a young lady's plight in this rain."

"Indeed, she's still there," exclaimed an auburn haired dandy at a nearby window. "Devil take it! Her face's obscured by the rainwater on the window." He turned around and everyone at Black's fixed their eyes on to the young fop who had the effrontery to interrupt a conversation to which he was not invited to join.

Lupin took in the fop's elaborately tied cravat and well polished black Hessian boots with a quiet snort of derision. Lord Orthod merely rolled his eyes at the embroidered yellow waistcoat and blue coat before he directed his attention to the lady in the rain. Lord Sterne scowled at the dandy and wondered why the haughty Almack's patronesses would call this fool who wore his collars so high up on his cheeks a Pink of the *Ton*.

"Do you realise," drawled Lord Sterne in a slow and deliberate voice, which Lord Lupin knew heralded certain trouble. "Hessians are only worn when the weather is fine and for the expressed purpose of promenading at Court."

The young auburn haired dandy, Lord Weasley, only laughed at the acidic remark (which he had completely failed to grasp) and replied, "You're not in any condition to dispense fashion advice to me, my Lord Sterne. I am quite the arbiter of fashion!"

"I noticed," said Severus in a chillingly quiet tone, looking out at the rainy scene. "Good Lord! Lupin, I think it's the Weather Oracle!"

"The one haunting you?"

"The very same!"

"Blast her!"

"What's wrong with her?" asked Lord Orthod as he picked up a copy of *Ars Chemica*.

"She's apparently one of Severus's long-term admirers, that is, if rumours are to be believed," answered Lupin with a grin at his friend.

Orthod laughed and turned to Sterne as that gentleman was about to withdraw his wand at Lord Lupin. "Come now, my Lord Marquess, sit with us and tell us about your new article."

"Has he published again this month?" came a wizened voice from the door.

"Duke, Count Moody," greeted Lord Sterne in a harsh murmur as the two gentlemen came into the room.

"Bonjour tout le monde!" declared the Duke of Sanguine cheerfully, shaking hands with all his acquaintances. "Ah, mon enfant!" he cried as he warmly shook Lord Sterne's icy-cold hand. "I see you've taken pains to become acquainted with Lord Orthod!" Lord Sterne's eyes narrowed and his lips curled disdainfully at that comment. Ignoring his godson's expression, the Duke's eyes twinkled slightly as he continued, "Lady Sybill was asking for you downstairs."

Lord Sterne groaned inwardly. "I trust you have sent her on her way?" said he with a great air of disinterestedness as he drew Lord Orthod's attention to the anaesthetic properties of the unstrained wolfsbane brew in his article.

"That, I have already done, mon enfant!"

Lord Sterne was prevented from making any further enquiries and he had to be satisfied with the opinion that she had indeed gone home. To his immense relief, Lady Sybill Trelawney was no longer at her post across the street. He smirked lightly at the sight of Lord Percy obsequiously addressing the Duke. He wrinkled his large hooked nose with scorn at the young man's vituperative remarks against his younger twin brothers' foray into trade.

"Insufferable snob!" he muttered and received an approving nod from Lord Orthod and Lupin. He turned to Lord Orthod to avoid laughing aloud at Lord Percy's fatuous denial of his being related to owners of the Weasley Wizard Wheezes.

"Very interesting theory you have on the wolfsbane potion, Lord Sterne," complimented Lord Orthod as the Duke of Sanguine sat down beside Lord Lupin.

"Oh, is it in the new edition of *Ars Chemica*?" asked Count Moody, picking up the copy proffered by Lord Lupin. "Cured you, didn't he?" blustered Moody in his forceful well-meaning Slavic way. Receiving a nod of acknowledgement from the patient and the Duke, he continued, "So what did you modify?"

"I've combined flower extract into the wolfsbane potion, using the extract as the active binding reagent. To do so, one had to substitute the one hundred percent aconite abstract for the eight percent pure abstract. But I do not expect Lord Orthod to understand this," said Lord Sterne with a slight unmistakable sneer. "Seeing how, you're a squib who only begun your collaboration with the state during the war."

Fortunately, the bespectacled Baron did not take offence. He smiled pleasantly at the Marquess and said, "Well said. I haven't a head for all these magical things; my daughter has a better notion. She's read all the debates surrounding this adaptive wolfsbane brew of yours." He turned a page of the journal. "Interesting, Hiero Gravititas has responded to your article of the last issue. It's in this edition."

"What's the premise?" enquired the Duke, popping a bonbon into his mouth. Moody responded by handing him the journal opened at Gravititas' article. "Quite interesting," commented Sanguine, "this should cross Sterne's cravat rightly. Rather ironic when you consider how he prefers to be known as Snape in publication. Still can't temper your vanity, mon enfant?"

Watching that belligerent look in his friend's eye, Lupin brushed aside a buzzing insect that must have flown in through one of the doors when the club members entered or exited. "What does it say, Lord Orthod?"

"Shall I read a section to you? Oh, jolly good!" cried Orthod with so much pleasure that Severus narrowed his eyes in disdain. *"Sterne's Fennel-Wolfsbane brew,"* he read aloud, *"though acclaimed for curing the condition of werewolves, places too much stress on Pliny's fennel remedies. Yet, without explaining his rationale behind this dosage in his brew, his lordship uses the exact composition of fennel to tuber ratio that snakes imbibe at the point of casting off their skins so as to sharpen their eyesight. In so doing, he did not consider the actual effects of fennel. Granted that it is a praise of strength; granted that it successfully removes the taint of lycanthropy from human blood; it does not address the adverse effects the former sufferer might face aside from his previous ailment. In my experiments, ceteris paribus, I have calculated the adversity factor and used camomile in lieu of fennel. The results were astounding when applied on wererats. The creatures did not suffer much pain and their brain activity decreased as their bodies were gradually purged of their infected blood. After an hour's slumber, the wererats returned to their normal state as rats. If his lordship would be so enterprising as to attempt his cure with my suggested ingredient as a substitute, his lycanthropy cure can be improved."*

"Impudent young cur!" hissed Lord Sterne in a low dangerous voice as he clenched his balled fists and flicked his left hand dismissively to drive away what he presumed was a fly. Privately, however, he made a mental note to reread that article in its entirety so as to replicate Gravititas' proposed camomile-wolfsbane brew. As he was mentally determining how the camomile extract would bind to the strained wolfsbane extract, Lord Sterne caught his godfather's twinkling eyes and he was immediately filled with a sense of slight unease. The Duke evidently knew something that he did not and *that* made him uncomfortable.

"Know what's strange?" asked Moody.

"The colour of your waistcoat?" responded Lupin. "Lilac is very becoming on you."

Harrumphing at Lupin's joke his expense, Moody replaced his quizzing glass before his revolving glass eye. "This Hiero Gravititas character did not supply Ars Chemica with his writer's profile." He waved the journal emphatically to emphasise his point, then repeated that same gesture to chase away a buzzing insect (which Lord Orthod had declared to be a beetle) before his nose.

"Is it a blank?" asked Sanguine placidly as he gestured the house elves for more tea and to attempt to remove the annoying beetle. "Is his history *really* a blank? What do you think Lord Orthod?"

"Perhaps he values his privacy," suggested the bespectacled Baron, deliberately staring out at the rain-splashed window again. "I am certain Lord Sterne appreciates that sentiment and desire."

Lord Sterne bowed slightly in acknowledgement.

"Still," said Lupin, watching Lord Percy leave at the entrance of two figures. "One must admit that five years of writing has not yielded the author's identity. It is suspect." He made an attempt to catch the beetle and knocked over his empty teacup.

"What's suspect, Lupin?" came the stout voice of one of the new arrivals.

"Yes, what is?" asked the other newcomer.

"Hiero Gravititas," said Moody simply, shaking hands with the two gentlemen.

Lord Sterne drove away the beetle from his face with an impatient wave and curled his lips contemptuously at the freckled redhead who was guffawing at Moody's decidedly serious tone and the bespectacled fellow with unkempt dark hair next to him.

"Duke, my lords," greeted the stocky redhead. "Some rain, isn't it? Harry and me couldn't possibly race each other today."

"I believe the proper manner of speech would be 'Harry and I', Lord Ronald," corrected Lord Sterne peevishly. "Grammar is important use it."

Instead of putting them in their place as he intended, Lord Sterne was disappointed to learn that Sir Harry saw it as a comment of good will and chose to slap him in the back with a hoot of laughter.

"What race?" asked Lupin, chasing away the beetle.

"Curric to Portsmouth," said Lord Ronald.

"If you're lucky, you might break your neck," drawled Lord Sterne rancorously, shocking the young men into silent pouts of displeasure.

"So," began the bespectacled one with unkempt dark hair, wisely changing the topic. "What's so suspect about Hiero Gravititas?" Lord Ronald waved the beetle aside before his friend could catch it. "Ron! I could have caught it!"

"Sorry, Harry!" murmured Lord Ronald, scratching his head by way of apology.

"Other than the fact that Gravititas is an alchemical scholar of the Quality, we know nothing of him," replied Count Moody.

"So?" asked Lord Ronald, "I don't see why this Hero chap is so great."

Lord Orthod started slightly.

"Hiero," corrected the Duke of Sanguine placidly. "Hero is a woman's name."

The old Baron's discomfited laugh at that comment elicited a curious look from Lord Sterne. He asked himself the reason for Lord Orthod's start at Lord Ronald's foolish and innocent slip of the tongue. At that moment, the poor bespectacled old gentleman was thinking the same thing as he silently berated himself. It would not for him to be distressed by such careless comments made by a callow youth. While he did not deny that he felt a surge of pride in reading that brief paragraph to the assembled company, he had to respect the author's wish for anonymity. However, his resolution to calm his nerves was shaken by Sir Harry Potter and Lord Ronald Weasley's queries after his daughter's health. The Duke of Sanguine looked at the exchange with interest. Lord Sterne, on the other hand, was still pondering on the matter posited by Gravititas' article in Ars Chemica.

Increasingly sickened by the sight of Sir Harry and Lord Ronald, Lord Sterne swatted Lupin's back with his gloves to signal that he was ready to leave for Flourish and Blotts. Informing the aged Baron that the rain had stopped, and bidding the rest of his company farewell, Lord Sterne left Black's with a scowl on his face. As soon as he stepped out onto the pavement in front of the club, he thanked his own perspicacity for asking Lupin to walk with him, for Lady Sybill was waiting for him. Once the lady had forcefully commandeered Lord Sterne's right arm, the assailed man used his free arm to grab Lord Lupin. Turning to Lupin, he whispered, "Don't just stand there staring at her, man! *Distract her!*"

Since there was no response from his friend, he attempted to extract himself from the woman's clutches. "Release me, woman! I have an urgent appointment with Lupin!" he hissed in a vitriolic voice.

She only adjusted the bangles on her arms and smiled. "I can wait, Lord Sterne. My inner eye informs me that your business will not take long. Where are we going? Shall we go to a lecture? I predict you will not turn it down. I have billets to a wonderful one..."

"You!" he said in a quiet purr. It was not lost upon him that Lord Lupin was intently studying the lady's features and clothes. "You are going nowhere!"

"Don't be silly, I am very free today and can accompany you anywhere. I will be happy to meet all your charming friends. I predict that I will like them very well." She smiled sweetly at Lord Lupin.

"Spare Lupin and I your coquetry. Tell me, Lady Sybill," said he in a most uncivil tone. "Have you contemplated either suicide or entering a nunnery?"

The lady only giggled and muttered something about his wicked wit.

Prying her hand off his arm, he extended his wand and commanded sharply, "Leave *ME ALONE!*"

Stunned by his harsh manner, Lady Sybill released his arm. Lord Lupin (fortunately for Lord Sterne) regained his powers of speech and made his salutations to the lady. Clearly struck by the lady's vivacious manner, easy elegance and remarkable way of speaking on the futures of the other passers by, Lupin soon engaged her for a promenade at the park. Noticing Lupin's success in distracting the lady, Lord Sterne quickly disappeared into the apothecary until Lady Sybill and his friend went away in the direction of the park.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Mundi rose stands for "variety".

(2) Aconite/Wolfsbane stands for "misanthropy".

You can see it here <http://www.beatylandscaping.com/wolfsbane.gif> and

<http://www.mconegal-botanical.co.uk/images/wolfsbane.jpg>

You may be surprised that Wolfsbane (also commonly called *Aconite* and *Monkshood*) are of the buttercup family. Look at the pictures closely and you will notice that the plant has 5 blue or yellow sepals. One of these sepals is shaped like a hood or a helmet. And in the old days, think old fashioned mages, monks and whatnot they had this hood over their heads. This is why the English called it Monkshood. The flowers as you notice are rather showy, but at least it warns you not to mistake the plant's roots for horseradish. If you really must play Potions Master with Wolfsbane, please be careful. The juice of the wolfsbane root produces a feeling a numbness and tingling when tasted (as in a lick if you swallow it's your own funeral).

As to why wolfsbane represents "misanthropy", let us go into the meaning of "misanthropy". A misanthrope is someone who feels an intense dislike of people and wants to be alone. This begs the question that the person is already in society and cannot fully escape from it. After all, it is only in society that one meets people and only when one has met people can one decide to dislike them. Wolfsbane is very ornamental garden plants. Someone once told me that aconites are hardy perennial. They thrive very well in any ordinary garden soil (Americans call soil "dirt" if I am not mistaken), but *ONLY* if they grow beneath the shade of trees. Because they thrive under trees, shaded from the sun, livestock are very fond of eating them. And when the animals eat aconite, they die. Now, think how this applies to Severus...

And yes, aconite/wolfsbane has been ascribed with supernatural powers relating to werewolves and other lycanthropes either to repel them or induce their lycanthropic condition.

Just in case you're wondering, let me say that the meaning Monkshood conveys is completely different from the meaning conveyed by Aconite and Wolfsbane. Aconite and Wolfsbane means "misanthropy". But Monkshood has two meanings: (i) A deadly foe is near, and (ii) The chivalric acts of knight-errantry.

(3) Camomile means "energy in adversity". It is a tradition feature of English gardens through the ages. It seemed to thrive especially when it grew in paths and lawns and was walked upon. Planting camomile amongst other flowers helped keep them healthy. Camomile extract is believed to prevent nightmares. The Spanish call camomile *manzanilla*, which is used to flavour a kind of sherry, named after the plant.

See it here <http://www.camstar.co.uk/images/camomile-1.jpg>, <http://www.annettejohnson.co.uk/Etchings/camomile.jpg>, and <http://www.artflower.pe.kr/images/gallery/pot-0405-1.jpg>

(4) Fennel has two meanings: "worthy of all praise" and "strength". Pliny wrote that there are 22 remedies to fennel. Pliny was the one who wrote that snakes ate fennel (1) when they cast off their skins, and (2) sharpen their eyesight. In the Middle Ages, fennel was believed to ward off spells and evil spirits. In some parts of Britain, fennel is used in stables to repel fleas. See it here <http://www.mrcophth.com/plants/fennel.html> and [http://www.prairiepoint.net/journal/images/Img\\_1312.jpg](http://www.prairiepoint.net/journal/images/Img_1312.jpg)

(5) Lilac represents "humility". This is the colour of Moody's waistcoat.

See it here <http://www.crystalmountain-aromatics.com/oils/lilac.jpg>, <http://www.stewo.no/P/Phlox%20douglasii%20Lilac%20Cloud%20SL.jpg> and <http://dahlia.france.free.fr/producteurs/Lilac%20Times%200.jpg>

Believed to have originated in 13th Century Persia, the Lilac is considered the embodiment of spring's perfection because of its sweet smelling blousy flowers and breathtaking beauty. Yet, the blossom is unassuming in looks; as such, it came to represent humility.

(6) I have been informed that auburn has many definitions. In the context of this story, I take auburn by its 16th early 18th century meaning, viz., reddish-brown, with more red than brown.

(7) The "is it a blank" line is adapted from Twelfth Night's "Her history is a blank." Think on the significance of this.

(8) Hiero is a Greek name. I've taken it from a treatise on tyranny by Xenophon (430 BC-352 BC) entitled Hiero: Or On Tyranny. Xenophon is one of my favourite ancient Greeks. He was a biographer, historian, essayist, soldier, political philosopher, novelist, and rhetorician. He was born in Athens between 431 and 427 BC, at the start of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (431 to 404 BC). Xenophon lived a life as tumultuous and full of contrast as his written works. Having grown up during the most flagrant excesses of the Athenian democracy, he was an admirer of Sparta and a critic of rule by the demos. A cavalryman for Athens around 409 BC, he later applied



the principles of military command learned during brutal combat to history, biography, education, economics and philosophy. Having left Athens to fight with a mercenary army in Persia, he devoted himself to writing in the sublime style of Plato's Academy. He is the first extant prose writer who demonstrates a clear awareness of his own methods on a wide range of closely delimited subjects: his works pour forth as monologues, Socratic dialogues, technical manuals, essays and panegyrics. He approached each with a style that is spare and yet compelling, displaying a range of literary tools and subjects that allow us to read him as history's first professional writer. Xenophon is important (I feel) to understanding Hermione's character in this story. If you have no interest in him, please go to next footnote *NOW*.

Xenophon's *Hiero*, based on a Sicilian tyrant who ruled from 478 to 467 BC, completes a trilogy of works in which biographical information becomes a means to the didactic presentation of moral ideas. In no case can these works be dated with any reasonable certainty. Xenophon leaves us a series of technical treatises, none of which challenged the basic dualities underpinning Greek thought, but each of which carries a didactic value into the present day. His two treatises on wealth, unique in Classical literature, adhere to the familiar *polis* (city) and *oikos* (homestead) dichotomy that permeated Greek life. The *Oeconomicus* (trans.: Household Economy) deals with the management of family resources. The most important job of the household manager is to assure that good actions are rewarded and improper actions punished, so that the consequences of doing a good job matter to the person doing the job. Women, for example, are vital to the management of household resources. Like all human beings it is important that they understand their role and how their work benefits them. Xenophon's decidedly paternalistic ideas, especially his view that the wife must be educated if not tamed, turn to a mutually-beneficial partnership between the husband and the wife, in which each has a vital role in the household. The *Oeconomicus* is an important literary source for the Greek family and the relationship between wife and husband. Xenophon approaches that relationship from the same perspective as he considers military command and the training of horses: in terms of education, goals and rewards.

His *Poroi* (trans.: Ways and Means), directed to the management of wealth in the Greek city, may have been a proposal to re-invigorate the economic vitality of Athens after her wars with her allies ended in 355. Rejecting the view of wealth management as a zero-sum game that is concerned solely with distribution, he urges the city to put in place the proper conditions whereby people will come to Athens, to work and produce. He runs counter to protectionist, anti-immigration views we know today, recognizing no limit to wealth and claiming that the city can prosper if people are allowed to benefit from their work. Despite Xenophon's failure to integrate *oikos* and *polis* wealth-management into a single science of economics, these treatises call upon human motivations common to an estate manager and his workers, a farmer and his slave, a general and a soldier, and a husband and his wife.

Such principles are also evident in his shorter technical treatises. The *Hipparchos* (trans.: The Art of Cavalry Warfare), possibly written on the eve of a war between Athens and Thebes in 365 BC, is timeless in its practical relevance to the problems of military command. "To put it short, a commander will little incur the contempt of the men under him if he shows himself more capable than they of doing what he needs them to do" (6.4). His work *Kunegetikos* (trans.: Hunting with Dogs) also exhibits a military focus: "I charge the young not to hold hunting, or any other education, in contempt. For these are how they become good at war . . ." (1.18). Anyone dealing with horses should read his treatise *Peri Hippikes* (trans.: On Horsemanship), which is a case study of how an intellectual from Classical Greece would teach technical skills. These works rank with the best of Greek prose works in the sense that the reader can learn not only about them, as matters of historical interest, but also from them, as guides that remain relevant to this day.

Xenophon attains happy notoriety among students of the ancient Greek language for being one of the few Greek writers who is easier to read in Greek than modern German. I am serious about this. Take my word for it. Try reading Hegel in German. It's ghastly. He seldom uses two words when one will do, even when lapsing (usually briefly) into rhetoric or encomium. His language may seldom attain the heights of beauty presented by Plato, but neither does it divide the writer from his reader by claiming a place in the sun apart from those trapped in a cave. Xenophon has achieved his goal: he remains accessible and practical for all time.

It is almost certain that he spent his own youth under the tutelage of Socrates, either formally or informally, and he absorbed the rhetorical and dialectical arguments permeating Athens in the late fifth-century. He often demonstrates a self-conscious use of the Socratic method of searching for a definition of his subject that transcends the particular object of his discussion. His *Oeconomicus* (trans.: Household Economy) applies this to the management of wealth in a private estate:

*"I once heard him [Socrates] discuss the subject of household management in this way: 'Tell me, Critobulus, is household management the name of a branch of knowledge, like medicine, smithing or carpentry?'"*

From here, the subject of household management is dissected and analyzed. It is not, says Xenophon, limited to one's own family; it is a distinct subject of inquiry, and a recognisable science (*episteme*) that can be defined and considered in the abstract. Principles of human action apply to this science as they do to military, political and educational affairs. We cannot fault Xenophon for failing to achieve the depth of Plato, the seminal philosopher whose dates mirrored his own; we can only thank him for leaving us this unique picture of a late fifth / early fourth century Athenian intellectual.

His *Apomnemoneumata* (trans.: Recollections of Socrates) follows a similar path, attempting to isolate the subject of investigation while offering an insight that augments the deeper meditations of Plato and counters Plato's idealism. Xenophon's creation of a conversation between Pericles and Alcibiades (1.2.41-46) is the kind of unhistorical treatment of definitions that would have engaged classical intellectuals. Their concern for questions of "nature versus custom" (*phusis / nomos*) often followed the same manner of Socratic argumentation. Xenophon uses the character of Pericles to embody the dilemma of the Athenian: the thinker, subtle in his youth, has grown to a mature weariness, a symptom of the problems faced by Greek philosophy and of the general disillusionment that welled up in many Greek intellectuals after the defeat by Sparta in 404. Xenophon's attempts to form abstract definitions may too often fall flat, but few prior to Aristotle did as well.

Xenophon's attempt to bring realism to the figure of Socrates continues in his *Symposium*, a snapshot of a drinking party in Athens. Written around 380 BC, while the author was living in exile in the western Peloponnese, the account is forty years removed from the event it immortalises; Xenophon is presenting a child's perspective on conviviality. Socrates is at his most relaxed. Although the language does not soar to the heights of Plato's own *Symposium*, the account further distinguishes Socrates from Plato's idealized portrait and returns him to his place as a regular guy in Athens, having a good time as the Athenians were wont to do, discussing matters of interest in an atmosphere of benevolent give and take.

But Athens was wracked by political excesses that prevented Xenophon from considering the Athenian democracy to be a good thing. The Assembly, he tells us in the "Recollections of Socrates," is made up of "fullers or cobblers or builders or smiths or farmers or merchants, or traffickers in the marketplace," "men who never gave a thought to public affairs" (3.7.5-6). In his *Hellenica* (trans.: History of Greece), the history that takes over where Thucydides leaves off, he recounts the infamous Trial of the Generals in 406 BC, in which the Assembly illegally usurped the authority of the courts and condemned to death the generals who had won an important battle for Athens. The affair was a blatant attack, for narrow pragmatic reasons, on those very men who had just saved the city. Xenophon's account pits Socrates, who refuses to sanction the illegal trial, against an unknown voice in the mob who screams that it is monstrous that the people cannot do whatever they wish. The subordination of a man of virtue to an uncouth loudmouth must have been personally abhorrent to Xenophon. The rule of law or the rule of the mob is the alternative Athenians faced at the end of the war, and there is no doubt where Xenophon stood. He elevates his history beyond the mere recording of events by presenting the motivations that led the Athenian democracy to become what Aristotle would call a "composite tyranny."

In 404 BC the war with Sparta was lost, the inevitable consequence of mob rule. The victorious Spartan commander placed Athens under an oligarchical regime, the so-called "Thirty Tyrants". Some of these men were students of Socrates. In the atmosphere of fear and distrust that followed the swift restoration of the democracy, enemies of Socrates filed charges against the philosopher for impiety and corrupting the youth of Athens. Socrates was convicted and sentenced to death. He took hemlock rather than flee the city. We have two accounts of his *Apologia* (trans.: The Apology of Socrates) before the jury: that of Plato, and that of Xenophon.

Xenophon was in Persia at the time of the trial, and his version of the *Apologia* was likely written from later exile; the date is unknown. He defends Socrates against the charge that he was a supporter of the tyrannical regime merely because he was a teacher of the tyrants. In fact, says Xenophon, the tyrants used Socrates for narrow political purposes, failing to understand his wider message that moderation in all things is best. The amnesty ("forgetting") that Athens invoked after the restoration of the democracy was intended to prevent the Athenians from taking revenge against their enemies for their actions during the tyranny. Socrates' trial may have been a way to evade the amnesty. This brings to mind the attacks, decades earlier, on the sculptor Phidias (architect of the Parthenon) and the philosopher Anaxagoras, friends of Pericles who were prosecuted and exiled in order to get at the powerful statesman.

Xenophon's *Apologia* avoids entirely the subject of life after death, which Plato made the basis for Socrates' acceptance of the jury's decision (and which Plato explored in other works). Socrates' motives for taking the hemlock, according to Xenophon, were more in tune with common-sense Greek views: a desire to avoid a dreadful old age wracked by disabilities. It was, to put it simply, time for Socrates to die, and a timely death should not be shunned. Xenophon's account, of course, trivializes Socrates' relationship to the political state and lacks the timeless significance of Plato's great works. But it is difficult to believe that Xenophon would have intentionally minimised

Socrates' problem. Possibly the conclusion came from a witness or a commentator; at minimum, Xenophon demonstrates that not everyone shared Plato's vision of Socrates.

In 401 BC, two years before the trial of Socrates, and in reaction to the same uncertain atmosphere, Xenophon had chosen to leave Athens. He joined his friend Proxenos and 10,000 Greek mercenaries in an expedition into Persia. King Cyrus had died, leaving his kingdom to his oldest son Artaxerxes. But, as too often occurred, there was to be a power struggle between the heir and his younger brother, in this case Cyrus (the younger). Spartan sympathizers, with the clandestine support of Sparta herself, may have marched in order to thank Cyrus for his assistance during the war with Athens. Despite the help of the Greeks, Cyrus died in battle at Cunaxa, leaving the Greek mercenaries stranded and their command structures decimated. Xenophon, elected a general, became commander-in-chief and led the Greeks out of Persia...at least, he did in his own account. Their cry "The sea! The sea!" crowns the Anabasis (trans.: The March Up-country), one of the most stirring military adventure stories of all time. Written after 400 BC, this account of a foray of Greek mercenaries through Persia helped dispel the notion of Persia as an unbeatable power, and presaged Alexander's march into Persia some 65 years later. In literary terms the Anabasis is also one of the first autobiographical works ever written.

The army did not disband after returning to Hellas. In 396 BC, Agesilaos, one of the kings of Sparta, was given command of an expedition against Persia, and Xenophon served under him until the army was recalled in 394. Xenophon fought with the king at Koroneia against those of his fellow Athenians who supported Boetia. He was exiled, and lived on a farm in Spartan territory until Athens realigned herself with Sparta after the battle of Leuktra in 371. His relationship with Athens, then, was dependent upon the Athens' political relationship with Sparta, and can be understood only in the context of democratic / oligarchic political factions and the state of the shifting Greek military alliances. Although Xenophon's movements after 371 are unclear, his history continues until the battle of Mantinea in 362, when one of his sons, serving in the Athenian cavalry, was killed. His banishment from Athens was likely repealed after this time, although he probably died at Corinth. The year is not known, but 354 may suffice. Later commentators, of dubious reliability, claim he lived until age 90, or approximately 340 BC.

Later editors attributed to him a work of anti-democratic rhetoric, the so-called Athenian Politeia (trans.: The Athenian Constitution). This work crudely describes the Athenian mode of government as far from ideal, given that the best men are subordinated to the worst, but as effective given that the mob provides the naval strength of the city and has a say in how it is run. The writer cannot condone the democracy, but he can respect how the Athenians preserve it. This work, however, is totally lacking in the grace of Xenophon's other works and is undeniably not by him but editions of the Athenian Politeia continue to be published under his name and the fact that ancient editors attributed it to him is evidence for his reputation as a critic of democracy and a supporter of oligarchy. It may represent Xenophon's sentiments if not his actual words.

Xenophon's Lacedaimonian Politeia (trans.: "Laecemodian Constitution" or "Constitution of the Spartans") is a different matter. Generally accepted as authentic, this serves as one of the very few Classical sources on affairs inside Sparta. Xenophon, like every Greek, saw politics as intimately connected to the moral characters of the citizens, and in the case of Sparta he was in a position to judge such matters. He heaped the greatest praise on Lycurgus, a semi-legendary figure from centuries earlier, whom tradition credits with establishing the city's constitution through a revolution in citizen virtues:

Lycurgus, who gave them both the laws they obey and their prosperity, I do regard with wonder; he reached the utmost extreme of wisdom. For rather than mimicking other cities, he devised a system different from theirs, and in this way made his land prosperous (1.2) Lycurgus' reforms seem totalitarian to us: laws on the bearing and raising of children, requiring women to take physical exercise so that children would be strong enough to fight, separating husbands from wives so that lust would increase the strength of the children, and most of all mandating a system of education that stretched from birth to age 29. All of this had one end: the production of good, virtuous soldiers. In order that the boys would never lack a ruler, Lycurgus "gave authority to any citizen who was nearby to order them to do what he thought was right, and the authority to punish them if they err." The deeper reason for Xenophon's decrying of the Athenian democracy, then, was its amoral appeal to whims rather than rules. It left the citizen without clear standards of conduct, without a moral point of focus for his actions, and allowing him to act "as he wants" rather than as the polis requires. Sparta did not make this error. His own view is no better shown than in his decision to send his sons to school in Sparta.

But Xenophon's own understanding of education, or paideia, is not totalitarian. He leaves us a case study of ancient learning, Cyropaedia (trans.: The Education of Cyrus), a work that is arguably the first full-length work of biographical fiction. Set in the context of sixth-century Persia, he uses historical facts as a background for his portrayal of the life and principles of a political despot, Cyrus the Great. Ostensibly about the education of a Persian prince, like all of Xenophon's works it is difficult to see where Greek values end and those of Persia begin; more closely, one cannot always see where the Athenian intellectual gives way and the Spartan soldier takes over. This problem is intensified in his Agesilaos, a work dealing with the Spartan king of the same name and with whom Xenophon was intimately familiar.

(9) "Pink of the Ton" is one of the Regency slang words for fashionable gentleman.

(10) To cross someone's cravat rightly is to annoy him a great deal.

(11) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the *ton*.

(12) Moody uses a quizzing glass. The quizzing glass is also known as a lorgnette. During the period of Louis XV the lorgnette became an instrument for the close and unashamed observation of female beauty. Having originally been used for this purpose in the theatre it soon became popular in a variety of situations. (On this subject Mercier wrote an article entitled «Les Lorgneurs», published in the Tableau de Paris in 1793: «Paris is full of these lorgneurs, setting their eyes on you, fixing your person with a steady and immobile gaze. This behaviour is so widespread that it is not even considered indecent anymore. Ladies are not offended when they are observed arriving at the theatre or whilst taking a walk. But should this happen when they are amongst themselves the lorgneur is considered uncouth and accused of insolence». The criticism becomes more severe in the chapter dedicated to the lorgnette: «...they are quite an offence to fashion. Lorgnettes encircle hats, they are contained in fans and in all manner of strange objects. Even the snuff boxes of the era of the XVIII and XIX centuries often contained small spyglasses. French fashions were soon followed in London. Beau Brummell popularised the quizzing glass in England and used a sceptical look through it at a gentlemen as a set down.

(13) Almack's is mentioned in this chapter. The club was originally a gaming establishment but underwent a transformation with smart new assembly rooms in King Street, St James's. As a gaming club with an attraction for the Macaronis in the eighteenth century, it had been in Pall Mall where the stakes had been high, it had been customary for gamblers to play for rouleaus of coins worth 50 pounds and there was often 10,000 pounds on the table. Charles James Fox and his brothers had been known to lose many thousands of pounds in a single night of gaming there playing hazard. Each gambler had a small neat stand by him to hold his tea, or a wooden bowl with an edge of orrmulu to hold the rouleaus.

Almack's in this story is not the gaming house. After the heavy gaming days of the club lapsed, the club changed. In its new lease of life, Almack's became the exclusive marriage mart for eligible daughters of the *ton*. The Assembly room were on the South side of King Street in St James's and were opened on February 12, 1765 with an Assembly. At the time the subscription was ten guineas for which there was a ball and supper each week for the twelve weeks of the season. There was a large ballroom of 100 feet by 44 feet decorated in gilt columns and pilasters. The largest assembly at the rooms is recorded to be 1,700 square feet.

(14) Hessians is a style of man's riding boot that is calf-length in the back and curves up in front to a point just below the knee, from which point hangs a tassel (if you like that kind of thing. If you don't, you can remove it). To see what it looks like, please refer to this fashion plate - <http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/brummell.jpg>. It is generally made of black leather and the boots sometimes had a narrow border at the top in a different colour, e.g. white-topped Hessians.

(15) A Curricule is a fashionable open-air two-wheeled sporting vehicle designed for a pair of horses and seating for two (i.e. the Regency equivalent of a two-seater convertible sports car).

(16) There were many clubs in London during the Regency period. The oldest and most famous of these was White's. But within this story, I have renamed White's. I call it Black's (after Sirius Black). If you are curious as to name of Black's and these sorts of gentlemen's clubs, read on. I have modelled Black's heavily after White's.

White's can be found at 37-38 St James's Street. It was founded 1736. White's is the oldest club in London, growing out of White's Chocolate House which opened in 1698. The building burnt down in 1733 and so the club moved a few doors up St James's Street and then to its current location around 1755. It was sometime around 1736 or just after that it established as a club and included among its membership of the time such great personages as the Duke of Devonshire, Earl of Rockingham, Bubb Doddington and Sir John Cope.

There was such a clamour for membership that by 1745 it was decided that a second club would be established under the same roof, and this was called the 'Young Club'. The original group were called the 'Old Club'. Vacancies in the Old Club were filled by members of the Young Club. It wasn't until around 1780/81 that the unwieldy system of administration between the two clubs was amalgamated. In Regency times, it faced its great rival, Brookes's, across St James's Street and while it was regarded as a Tory club. This distinction meant little in practice as gentlemen were generally members of both. It was one of the few clubs that set itself up with premises of its own. White's, like Brookes's had restricted admission, with members being elected. It was remarked that no man was refused entry who "ties a good knot in his handkerchief, keeps his hands out of his breeches pockets, and says nothing." White's is most famous for its Bay Window which was built in 1811 and quickly became the preserve of Brummell and his friends. Other noted members who frequented White's, and the notorious bow-window, were Lord Alvanelly, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Worcester, Lord Foley and Lord Sefton.

Whist had been voted a dull game by the members and deep gambling was made in hazard, faro and other games of pure chance. The betting book, like the one at Brookes's, was always open on the table for bets of the most trivial nature to be laid at any time.

## Chapter 6 - The Effects of Scarlet and Wild Geraniums

*Chapter 7 of 23*

We meet Neville and his family in this chapter and follow him to his charitable deeds. Along the way, we see that Miss Granger and Lord Sterne have come to exchange a few terse words as well. What does it mean for Lady Ginevra and Lord Villiers? What do Lord Sterne and Miss Granger's observations herald?

A number of readers have asked me why Lord Orthod and Lord Sterne were unacquainted? Wasn't there some social function that they met before?

**Ans:** Girls in boarding schools in those days did not have parents visiting them. Parents, especially aristocratic ones usually sent servants and a carriage to pick up their children from boarding school at the end of the semester. They had no interaction with any of the teachers. Parents were informed of their children's progress by the principal's office. If you reread the chapter. Sterne explicitly states, "Seeing how, you're a squib who only begun your collaboration with the state during the war." I'm sure you can join the dots from here. Moreover, in Chapter 1, we are told that Orthod is a private man, very much so. Now, on with the chapter.

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books & ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 6 The Effects of Scarlet and Wild Geraniums

"Neville!" screeched the shrill voice of a plump valetudinarian, silencing the breakfast table at Fluxweed House at Berkeley Square. "Don't slouch! Remove your elbows from the table. I will not have you behaving in front of me in that slovenly manner so early in the morning."

"I am tired, Grandmamma," explained the contrite man of the cloth without obeying the old lady in all her injunctions. "I have had only four hours of sleep. The conditions in the workhouses are truly ghastly."

Hearing his mother harrumph indignantly at the young man's words, Lord Fluxweed hastened to add, "He's just a lad, Mother; don't be too harsh on him. Look at him *bless my heart* dark circles under the eyes and constant exposure to the squalor of the city, administering to his flock at Chelsea and Portsmouth; it is little wonder he..."

The aged Lady Fluxweed silenced her eldest son with a snort and a testy stomp of her foot. "Speak for yourself, Horace! You were the fool who dangled him out a window to see if he was a squib!"

Casting her eye on the middling figure, half-closed eyes of her mild-mannered grandson, Lady Fluxweed privately owned herself delighted that the wars had made Neville into a better man. He had been a mousey child until his fifteenth year, and by the time he left Hogwarts for Cambridge, he was almost as dashing a figure as his father. Upon graduating from Cambridge, he embarked on a military career and was made Captain after the civil wars. On obtaining that promotion, he learned that he would have to be posted to the Spanish peninsula; as such, he tendered his resignation. Though she was a little disappointed at his decision not to follow the drum (and further distinguish himself in uniform), she could not help smiling slightly at the recollection of his filial regard for her. He told her that he had no desire to leave her unattended. And here the lad is now with the church as his profession! Her reverie was shattered by the sounds of a ringing cup balancing imperfectly on a saucer. "I'm not saying the boy has no pluck, Horace," she railed at her son, "I'm saying he ought to have more table manners! What will his parishioners say if they saw their vicar slouching at the table nibbling at his buttered toast!"

"That I am a simple man, quite like them," replied the young Reverend.

"Where are you off to today?" enquired his only uncle.

"Two of the Duchess of Offaly's charities, the Weasley Foundling Home and the Weasley Ladies' Reformatory."

"Well," began the redoubtable matriarch, heaving her equally formidable bosom in indignation. "You are heir to the earldom. Instead of being a gentleman, you chuse to endanger yourself by descending to the bowels of the city and assisting the filth!"

"There are many people suffering in the world, Grandmamma," answered Neville in a quietly determined voice. "I have taken Orders and I must help humanity. Just because we are well-to-do does not mean we can pretend the unfortunates of society do not exist."

The Earl looked proudly at his nephew and then with some unease at his mother who surprised him by giving a hoot of laughter. Dabbing her eyes with her napkin, she murmured with great feeling, "How like your father you are now! Isn't he, Horace?"

His lordship quickly agreed with his mother.

"We could all visit papa and mamma at the Bedlam branch of St Mungo's tomorrow, grandmamma; and you can call on one of your friends after," suggested Neville, as he finished his coffee.

Taking a teary look in her eyes as a mark of assent, the Reverend Mr Longbottom kissed his grandmother on the cheek, saluted his uncle with a nod and left to spread the goodwill of humanity to his flock.

A day begun on this note was instantly set up to inspire other similarly noble sentiments in the minds of the young clergyman's friends. Indeed, the day was so kind as to bestow him the company of his school fellows, Sir Harry Potter and Lord Ronald Weasley. These two notable whips of the *ton* accosted Neville outside the Weasley Foundling Home.

"Oh ho!" cried the redhead as he ran his fingers through his windswept hair. Neville laughed to see him toss his reins carelessly to his tiger.

"Good day, Ron," he began. "Harry!" he continued, waving to be bespectacled baronet with the blowsy hair.

"Shame you didn't come with us!" Sir Harry said with visible excitement. "Ron's Chudley Cannons are improving under his rigorous training! Divine intervention, do you think?"

The Reverend merely laughed and received the two gentlemen's friendly claps to his back.

"Ron's team looks set to upset all the gamesters this season," continued Sir Harry merrily, as he linked arms with Neville. To his surprise, he felt his friend stiffen.

"Do you mean to say you two have been gaming?" asked Neville in a mixture of disapproval and disappointment. "Ron can ill afford it as it is. Do you want to ruin your father? What His Grace must think!"

Harry allayed his friend's fear as the vicar opened the door to his office at the Foundling Home. "Not us, Neville. People are betting on Ron's Chudley Cannons."

"If people contributed more money to worthy causes such as foundling homes, orphanages, workhouses, reformatories and the like, the city would be a better place! I honestly don't see what good gambling does other than frittering away one's fortune and bringing debt and ruination to one's family," Neville averred earnestly, as he walked along the corridor on his morning rounds. "Don't you two go down this path! It is very difficult to stay away from the hells once you've started."

"Lord!" cried Ron with a hearty guffaw. "You sound an awful lot like 'Mione, Neville, so upright and proper!"

Sir Harry stifled a chortle. "But...But he means well," said the baronet in between near hysterical laughter. Realising somewhat belatedly that they were making a fool of themselves, abusing Neville's good nature, annoying the head matron of the Home and possibly even frightening the children, the two young gentlemen sobered up and very soon acquired looks matching that the colour of their fine grey coats.

"Besides, Neville, it isn't me Father ought to be worried for it's Percy."

"Oh?" murmured the clergyman with interest.

"A scholarship at Balliol and look at him now a ruddy dandy, that's what!"

"Language, Ron! Not in front of the children!" cautioned Sir Harry, as he reminded all present of their location.

"He studied the law, yet he will not take it up as a profession," continued Lord Ronald vehemently, colouring as much as his hair. "He won't go into the church because he says it is not smart enough for him. It does not care that it is the dearest wish of his parents. He is barred from politics due to his involvement on Lord Voldemort's side in the war. He won't join the navy because he claims the rough sea air will spoil his complexion. And he now declares the army too smart a profession for him. He even presumes to tell me that my career in sporting Quidditch is a failure! Ha! I'm the one with an independent income the last time I checked! Then stupider yet, he wants to join the Barouche Club!" Wants to race Harry and me! Ridiculous, Harry and me, we do it for the thrill of the race not for money. But not Percy money runs in his head like a fine Spanish gelding. I don't see how he can fancy himself a Corinthian! He's nothing more than a dandy. What's worse is that since he's become a regular dandy he thinks he's too good to acknowledge my mother our mother on the streets. Not satisfied with disappointing the family, he's even turned to gaming. It is common knowledge that he's living with his current slip of muslin and visits all the fashionable gaming hells. He's such a greek in his methods that he's even managed to part a Malfoy from his money!"

"Stuff!" laughed Sir Harry on hearing the last portion of his friend's tirade. "Lord Villiers is quite a cardsharp himself."

"Much like his father, the Duke of Mallefille," rejoined the young Reverend dryly. "But if Lord Percy has descended to such levels and has greeked Lord Villiers, he is beyond sense."

"That is a brilliant thought," remarked Lord Ronald. "Perhaps he is beyond salvation too, eh, Neville?"

He received no reply because Mr Longbottom and Sir Harry were then engaged in playing with three very young children. Grinning sheepishly at the sentimental scene, he allowed himself to be drawn into memories of his happy childhood. "Poor ruddy children," he sniffed, holding back his tears.

Fortune, however, had long favoured Lord Ronald and as such she prevented his tears from staining his freckled cheeks. She chose that moment to direct the entrance of a group of soberly clad young ladies. As all but two were veiled, he could not initially discern the veiled ones from each other. While the presence of the two abigails, Millicent Bulstrode and Lavender Brown told him that he was in the presence of his sister and Miss Granger, he chose not to exercise his mind in speculating on the ladies' identities. It did not matter that one was dressed in aquamarine, another in charcoal grey and the last in pale maroon with a matching peacock plume bonnet. How could young Lord Ronald pay attention to ladies who had seemed so familiar to him when Bulstrode's gentle charms and simple manners presented themselves. Now, there's a fallen woman turned good, thought his lordship, even if she has eyes like a hawk.

Neville stood up at the sight of the ladies who were surrounded by children. The young ones were clearly excitable. All but the one in grey lavished caresses on the children. Neville immediately approached that figure with a "My dear Miss Granger, how do you do."

After extracting her greetings to the rest of the company, Miss Granger instructed Brown to distribute the toys and sweets that they had brought. "Heavens, Ron! You are insupportable! Stop gaping at Luna's bonnet. She's all the crack! Peacock plumes have only just started to replace ostrich feathers."

Sir Harry laughed in response at Lord Ronald's silent and puzzled look. Replying to the lady in the same tone of ironic levity, he said, "I thought ladies only reserved feathers for court."

"Or was it Hessians for court?" answered Miss Granger in her best imitation of Lord Percy. Her excellent impersonation drew laughter from all present.

"That's a big quiz of a hat, Miss Lovegood," said Lord Ronald belatedly, as Neville murmured something about determining how Brown and Bulstrode were coping with life outside the Reformatory.

"My Lord, is that an insult to my taste?" quipped Miss Lovegood with a mischievous glint in her eyes. "I could also remark that your collar is worn much too high. And unless I am mistaken, you are presently unable to turn your head properly."

"That's only Percy," protested Lord Ronald, laughing a little uneasily. "Not with your abigail, I see."

"I have two friends to escort me. Or do you think I have what was it you shouted at Hermione the other day? Oh yes, a show of conceited independence?"

"Oh no!"

"Then explain why I am apparently praised for my eccentricities and Hermione is censured for hers."

At Miss Lovegood's blithe comment, both Sir Harry and Lady Ginevra shot Lord Ronald dangerous looks of warning for they could sense he was about to make a terrible

social gaffe. Not one to disappoint, Lord Ronald told the party that the disparity of opinion towards Miss Granger and Miss Lovegood was due to their difference in beauty. "Hell! Stuff! I shouldn't have said it was because Miss Lovegood was pretty!" he blustered.

"We all know what you mean, Ron. You are among friends, no one will reproach you," answered Miss Granger coldly, before she engaged Sir Harry in conversation.

Miss Lovegood arrested his attempts to pacify Hermione with a firm shake of her head and noted that Neville was discussing something very earnestly with Bulstrode and that Lady Ginevra was playing with some of the children.

Amidst this bustle of activity, Lord Sterne and Lord Villiers sauntered in arm-in-arm.

"Remember, Draco, you are my secretary for a week; that is the dues for this favour. You know how I despise children. Smelly little things!" he said disdainfully. "There is the object you seek, among her other worshippers."

The Reverend very soon stepped forward to greet the newcomers after a final smile at Bulstrode. "My lords, this is an honour," he said, quivering slightly before Lord Sterne.

Severus was saved from more of Neville's commonplace platitudes by Sir Harry and a gaggle of children who needed the clergyman. Sensing a kindred spirit in Miss Granger who evidently held herself aloof from the children, he paid his respects to her and enquired after her father. Instead of answering his questions, Miss Granger directed him to sit beside her with a careless wave of her hand and said with some annoyance, "It is about time you arrived with Lord Villiers. This is only the first assignation they had and I am tired of all the planning already."

Surprised but intrigued by her brusque tone and forthright manner, he feigned ignorance. "What do you mean, Miss Granger?"

"Your godson, Lord Villiers, informed me that you had given him some advice."

His disinterested expression remained fixed on his face. "I have."

"Why did you advise him to turn to me?"

"Because of your friendship with the lady, or was that too obvious?"

"Has the besotted young man considered other factors?"

Sterne raised a brow in sardonic humour. He had not considered other factors and wondered as to Miss Granger's analysis on these other features. "Such as?"

Miss Granger smiled indulgently at her abigail as she watched her rescue Sir Harry from playing mule of labour to the children. "Lady Ginevra has only £2000 at five percents. Her roots are Irish and two of her older brothers have caused a scandal by leaving Hogwarts and entering trade."

"He is aware of the material shortcomings of her family," he answered plainly, while staring at Draco's offer of a mignonette to Lady Ginevra.

"And?"

"We had called on their establishment at Gracechurch Street earlier today."

"Did they throw him out?" she asked tonelessly.

Struck by her blunt manner, Sterne smirked and answered, "Lord George and Lord Frederick behaved more civilly than their younger brother would have were he in the same circumstance. They took the news of Draco's intent very well."

"Ah," Miss Granger replied with a knowing smile. "Then they subjected him to an agreement and made him eat a canary cream."

"Which he did willingly in an attempt to prove his sincerity."

"All this to satisfy the stirrings of his loins?"

"Sorry, Miss Granger?" murmured Sterne, hoping that he had misheard her indelicately expressed opinion.

"Is it not plain? I wonder if he will regard her like a trophy and use her cruelly upon marriage because of her family's situation."

"Unlikely," said Lord Sterne, scowling at a child that dared approach him. "She is as formidable as her mother and I will personally join Lord George and Lord Frederick in tearing him limb from limb if he adopts any dastardly manner. He is not unlike his father, Mallefille."

"I cannot comment as I do have the pleasure of the Duke's acquaintance."

"No, he is presently in France."

"I know."

A pregnant pause fell between them, until she laughed. He looked askance at her curiously. "Lord Villiers blushed," she laughed, inclining her head forward at the scene she had witnessed. "All because of a mercury from her bonnet. He's too far-gone in love then. I commend you on your godson, Lord Sterne, he is an apt pupil."

"He had a harsh taskmaster," he replied coldly in a slow drawl. "You only gave him two days with the book on flowers."

"Do not reproach me," she said testily.

"I am not reproachful." He curled his lips in contempt at the sight of Draco taking a turn with Lady Ginevra in the garden. "At least, he is not as mercenary as Lord Ronald."

"Don't you mean Lord Percy?"

"They could be the same in one respect."

She snorted lightly in scorn. "I would believe Percy of it. Ron is too impulsive to consider such an ignoble option. Why do you think he wants to court Luna, Miss Lovegood, for her money?"

"Why not?" he purred in conspiratorially, glaring at her.

"I know Ron, and he is a helpless romantic," she said torn between indignation with Lord Sterne and with Lord Ronald's behaviour. Turning her attention to her friends once again, she continued, "It would be the match of the season because she is intelligent and rich, and he is handsome."

"Him?" asked the Marquess impassively, masking his incredulity.

"He is generally thought to be."

Lord Sterne snorted and turned to glance at the vicar who was heard audibly discussing a doctrinal tract with Bulstrode. Both Miss Granger and Lord Sterne noted the brilliance of Bulstrode's eyes as she patted a quiet child at her knee while discussing the book. Unbeknownst to Miss Granger, Sterne could be certain that there was something familiar about the dark brows and hair of the Bulstrode girl. He could have sworn that he had previously encountered those deep-set eyes, yet he had prior to the present day, never met her. Abruptly, he turned away from the intimate almost domestic scene and noticed that he had caught Miss Granger's satirical gaze intently examining him. Meeting her eyes with a hint of a challenge, he felt a flicker of something more than intelligence in this young woman. He was about to comment on Mr Longbottom and Bulstrode when Hermione broke their eye contact, leaving him to swallow his possibly rude observation. Despite the aborted observation, Severus was certain that Miss Granger was indeed a spirited young woman.

"They are innocent in spite of everything," she uttered finally, inclining her head in the direction of the clergyman and the former ballet dancer, as Sir Harry came up to her.

"We're all going to Gunter's to buy ices for the children, want to come, Hermione?" he chatted excitedly. "All of us except Villiers. He wants to write to his father." Sir Harry made a grimace of displeasure at the thought of writing a letter to the Duke of Mallefille. "Just as well, don't you think? Must say your Brown is a good sort. But I expect she's this good with children because she's from the Foundling Home herself."

"I see I mustn't detain you," said Sterne, suddenly rising and beckoning to Villiers. "Good day, Miss Granger." And without bidding goodbye to anyone else, he hurried out of the Foundling Home where he was soon joined by his dawdling godson.

While apparating to Malfoy House with his godson, Severus wondered as to the nature of Draco's letter. What did he want to report to his father? He could not make any further speculation because the Duchess met them at the door with her arms akimbo. Her pale blond locks piled on her head in the manner of the previous century and her clothes could best be described as tastefully dishabille. Looking down at her son with her icy blue eyes, she asked sharply, "Young Goyle told me you were seen with the Weasley piece today, is that true? Oh, hello, Sterne."

Sterne smirked and bowed slightly at the abrupt change in her tone.

"Yes," replied the young man coolly, pushing past his slim mother and removing his gloves and hat. "She was escorting Miss Granger. Surely, Mother, you don't want me to ruin her reputation!"

"Is that true, Sterne?" she asked, her voice almost shrill with suspicion.

"Indeed, Duchess," answered Lord Sterne as if it was the most prosaic thing in the world. He then realised the reason behind Draco's decision to write to the Duke of Mallefille; he was the only person who could manage his wife.

"Oh," she said placidly, reclining on the sofa again. "That's all right then. Your father would be pleased with the money and the name the Granger girl would bring to the match."

"Yes, Mother," said the young man blandly as he mended his pen.

"Tell him I miss him. Remember to send him the clocked stockings that I made for him. It will keep him warm."

"Yes, Mother." On finishing the completed letter, Villiers gave Sterne the letter and its accompanying package with a meaningful look that the older man interpreted as an indication to leave before the Duchess demanded to read the letter. Thus, Lord Sterne said his goodbyes and proceeded to carry out his task.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Scarlet Geranium means "comforting presence".

See it here <http://buy.overstock.com/images/products/L953126.jpg>

It has been traditionally used to treat depression, menstrual Problems, diarrhoea, diabetes, sores, neuralgia, bleeding, circulatory conditions, Sore throats, nervous tension and kidney stones.

(2) Wild Geranium stands for "steadfast piety".

For more information on it, refer to <http://www.innogize.com/wildflowers/geranium.htm>

(3) Mignonette means "your qualities surpass your charms".

See it <http://lachlan.bluehaze.com.au/spring2000/21maya2000/21may050.jpg>. Its flowers come in white, yellow, orange or green, with four to six petals. Plain looking, it is cultivated for its use in the perfume industry because its flowers are extremely fragrant. In Roman times, the mignonette was used to treat bruises.

(4) Mercury stands for "goodness".

See it at <http://british-wild-flowers.co.uk/M-Flowers/Mercury,%20Annual.htm>. The Mercury plant has many uses. In the old days, people ate mercury leaves as an emetic. They would boil it (as you would spinach) because the poison in the leaves was allegedly destroyed through heat. The whole plant, and especially the juice, is emetic, emollient and purgative. It is used externally to treat women's menstrual complaints, ear and eye problems, warts and sores. By the High Middle Ages, mercury was used to treat rheumatism, dropsy, diarrhoea and disorders of the gall bladder and liver. Ironically, it is a common weed in Britain and flourishes in the light.

(5) The earldom of Fluxweed, is named after another plant. Fluxweed stands for "sporting", as in fair and honourable. Quite apt for the Longbottoms, don't you think? See it here <http://www.magdalin.com/herbal/images/thumbs/flxweed1.jpg>.

What little I know of Fluxweed comes from Culpepper's 1652 work, The Complete Herbal. In case the link doesn't work, let me describe the fluxweed to you. It rises up with a round upright hard stalk, four or five feet high, spread into sundry branches, whereon grow many greyish green leaves, very finely cut and severed into a number of short and almost round parts. The flowers are very small and yellow, growing spike fashion, after which come small long pods, with small yellowish seed in them. The root is long and woody, perishing every year. There is another sort of it with broader leaves, but has a certain foul smell and dry taste. They flower and seed quickly in June and July. They flower wild in the fields by hedge-sides and highways, and among rubbish and other places. Culpepper says this about the fluxweed and I quite from the original text, "This herb is saturnine also. Both the herb and seed of Flux-weed is of excellent use to stay the flux or lask of the belly, being drank in water wherein gads of steel heated have been often quenched; and is no less effectual for the same purpose than Plantain or Comfrey, and to restrain any other flux of blood in man or woman, as also to consolidate bones broken or out of joint. The juice thereof drank in wine, or the decoction of the herb drank, doth kill the worms in the stomach or belly, or the worms that grow in putrid and filthy ulcers, and made into a salve doth quickly heal all old sores, how foul or malignant soever they be. The distilled water of the herb works the same effect, although somewhat weaker, yet it is a fair medicine, and more acceptable to be taken. It is called Flux-weed because it cures the flux, and for its uniting broken bones, &c. Paracelsus extol it to the skies. It is uniting broken bones, &c. Paracelsus extols it to the skies. It is fitting that syrup, ointment, and plaisters of it were kept in your house."

(6) The term "tiger" in Regency times referred to the chap who accompanied you and helped managed your horses when you were out driving or riding. He is also your trusted carriage/curricule (fill in vehicle of choice) driver on those rare days when you are not driving. If you watch period dramas, these are the fellows behind your curricule,

carriage or whatever it is. A tiger is *MORE THAN* a footman. Your tiger would be a liveried groom, generally small, generally young. An owner-driven curricle or phaeton typically had a groom's seat between the springs on which the tiger sat. The single-horse cabriolet had a platform at the rear on which the tiger stood. He also managed the horses when his master ascended to or descended from the seat, and sometimes took the reins to exercise the horses while his master temporarily left the vehicle. A small, lightweight tiger was preferred in order to maintain the proper balance. In fact, it was something of a status symbol to have the smallest possible tiger.

Since some of my readers are curious as to vehicles of the day, here are some vehicles of choice...

Spring and perch barouche

<http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b14/mmestrange/Springandperchbarouche.jpg>

An open landau

<http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b14/mmestrange/landauopen.jpg>

A closed landau

<http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b14/mmestrange/landau.jpg>

A fashionable phaeton

<http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b14/mmestrange/georgeivphaeton.gif>

A gig (usually one horse)

<http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b14/mmestrange/stanhope-gig-driven-web.jpg>

A phaeton

<http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b14/mmestrange/phaeton.jpg>

A high perch phaeton

<http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b14/mmestrange/highperchphaeton.jpg>

A curricle with a tiger

<http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b14/mmestrange/curricle.jpg>

A coach and four [horses]

<http://i16.photobucket.com/albums/b14/mmestrange/coachandfour.jpg>

\* (7) The Barouche Club that Ron mentions is one of the names of the Four-Horse Club, a real club in Regency London. In this story, Harry and Ron are members of this club. Originally one of the clubs frequented by the notorious Earl of Barrymore, the Four-Horse club had been a wild group of young men who enjoyed bribing coachmen to give them the reins to the vehicles and then driving them at break-neck speeds along the very poor British Roads. By the early 19th century it was a respectable club for superb drivers. At its peak it only had some 30-40 members. It was often also called the Four-in-Hand Club, the Whip Club or the Barouche Club - the last from a description in "The Sporting Magazine" of February 1809. Club rules stated the barouches should be yellow bodied with 'dickies', the horses should be Bays, with rosettes at their heads and the harnesses should be silver-mounted. However Mr Annesley a club member, drove roans, Sir Henry Peyton drove Greys so the colour of the horses wasn't as strictly enforced as the colour of the carriage.

The uniform of the club was strictly enforced. Whenever its members met or raced with one another, they must each wear a drab coat that reached to the ankles with three tiers of pockets and mother of pearl buttons as large as five shilling pieces. The waistcoat was blue with yellow stripes an inch wide, the breeches of plush with strings and rosettes to each knee. It was fashionable that the hat should be 3 and 1/2 inches deep in the crown.

The first meeting of the Four-Horse club was held in April 1808 and subsequent days of meeting were the first and third Thursdays in May and June. The members assemble at Mr Buxton's house in Cavendish Square and drove to Salt Hill to dinner at the Windmill first and then the next time at The Castle alternating between the two. There was rather a long complicated time when the club could not decide which hostelry to provide give their full membership too and alternated until the matter was decided by the Windmill on one broiling hot day. The cloth had been cleared and the wine placed before them when a waiter entered and asked each man to rise, the chair was removed and cool one put in its place. This attention to detail decided the Four-Horse club in its favour.

The procession was always the same. Club rules stated that each member in single file, no overtaking was allowed, and no one to exceed a trot. The procession set out from London to Salt Hill at noon, following along the Bath Road. It was 24 miles to Salt Hill so the club lunched at the Packhorse on Turnham Green and then took further refreshment at the Magpies on Hounslow Heath. They ran to Salt Hill where they remained overnight.

There popularity of the Four-Horse club began to wane around 1815 and it was disbanded in 1820. It was revived briefly in 1822 and finally died out in 1824. The Four-in-Hand club was another driving club completely which was not established until 1856. It based on the old rules of the BDC or Bensington Driving Club. The BDC was the great rival of the Four-Horse Club during the Regency era.

\*\* (8) A Corinthian is a fashionable man about town, generally a sportsman.

(9) In Regency cant, 'to greek' is to cheat. The phrase "greeking methods" is deployed when one wants to say that a fellow has been cheating at cards. It is spelt with a lower case 'g'.

(10) Hessians is an abbreviation for Hessian boots worn by gentlemen. Hessians is a style of man's riding boot that is calf-length in the back and curves up in front to a point just below the knee, from which point hangs a tassel. To see what it looks like, please refer to this fashion plate <http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/brummell.jpg>. It is generally made of black leather and the boots sometimes had a narrow border at the top in a different colour, e.g. white-topped Hessians.

(11) Clocked stockings refer to stockings that have embroidered designs on them. They were very popular amongst fashionable men and women between the 1720s-1790s.

(12) "Stuff!" was a very popular minor swear word in Regency England. It started out as a vulgar expression in the 1750s, but gradually became quite mild and mainstream by the 1790s-1805.

(13) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? You will see why when I reveal Millicent Bulstrode's parentage...

(14) Neville lives with his grandmother and uncle at Berkeley Square. Berkeley Square is a very fashionable and expensive neighbourhood. This square was built upon the gardens of Devonshire House. Lansdowne House stands on the North side of the square. Berkeley's associations have always been aristocratic. It was named for Lord Berkeley of Stratton, a Royalist commander in the Civil War. The Square was laid out in 1730's; the north end of the Square was left open to preserve the view from

Berkeley House (later Devonshire House). Thirty large Maples were planted in the central garden in 1789.

(15) You may have noticed that I mentioned Harry was going to get "ices" at "Gunter's". Gunter's Tea Shop was a real place in Regency London situated at 7-8 Berkeley Square. Founded in 1757 by an Italian pastry-cook, Domenico Negri, Gunter's specialised in the "making and selling all sorts of English, French, and Italian wet and dry sweetmeats". The shop sign was a pineapple. Pineapples were the usual emblem of 18th Century confectioners. Negri took James Gunter into partnership in 1777, and by 1799 Gunter was running the business as sole proprietor. His shop, centred on the east side of Berkeley Square, and soon became a fashionable Mayfair rendezvous.

The beau monde flocked there to eat his ices and sorbets. The custom grew up that the ices were enjoyed, not in the shop, but outside in the Square itself. The ladies would remain in their carriages in the shade of the Maples. Gentlemen leaned against the railings sharing their company and the ices. For many years when it was 'not done' for a lady to be seen alone with a gentleman in a place of refreshment, it was perfectly respectable for them to be seen at Gunter's. The beau monde were served in the Square. The waiters dodged across the road taking and carrying their orders.

(16) Hell is the abbreviated name for "gaming hell". A gaming hell is a gambling establishment. It's kind of like a casino without all the neon lights and loud music. A young "pigeon" was more likely to fall victim to a dishonourable "shark" at a hell than at an elite gentleman's club.

(17) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the *ton*.

(18) It goes without saying that whenever a gentleman or lady of the ton (you don't have to be titled to be one of ton, you have to be of genteel birth that's enough) goes out riding and driving, he/she will be always be accompanied by a groom. If one goes riding, one's groom will follow at a respectful distance away to give you some privacy. Should the master/mistress stop at a place to have tea after riding, the groom would be obliged to hire a private parlour for him/her to rest and take refreshment. While the master/mistress is in the private parlour, the groom takes himself to the stables and rest and to await his master/mistress's orders. If one is driving (the type of vehicle be it curricule, gig or whatever is immaterial), one can either have a groom or tiger. Whether you have a groom or tiger depends on how fashionable or how rich or how eccentric you are. The groom and/or tiger will be at the back of vehicle in a box. If your vehicle has no groom/tiger box or spare driver seat, you have a groom who follows you at a respectful distance away to give you some privacy. However, by 1818, it was all right for members of both sexes to drive a phaeton or a high perch phaeton without a tiger or groom in attendance provided one was at the famous promenade areas to be seen by other ton members. Some really eccentric heirs and heiress could be tolerated by Society if they were to drive/ride alone. They were tolerated because of their birth (especially if they were from aristocratic families famed for a touch of madness and/or eccentricity) and money. Keep this in mind, it will become significant in a later chapter.

(19) 'All the crack' is Regency cant for being very fashionable. The modern equivalent is 'all the rage'.

## Chapter 7 - Conversations among the viscaria occulatas

Chapter 8 of 23

After 6 chapters of questions and more questions, Fudge enters the scene to provide some comic relief. He's preparing for a party at the Duke of Sanguine's, and he fears it will not be a success. No matter, the party goes on without him and an incident that evening shows that it will be an event to talk about.

My apologies for the delay real life is very messy at the moment, with my academic career swinging like a yoyo. This will be a 'tide-over' post. I'll post again after X'mas. Meanwhile, if you want to read my X'mas murder mystery, go to the Petulant Poetess.

And Keladry, I hope this cheers you up! Get well soon! \*air kisses cheek\*

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

Extensive footnotes (more so than usual) follow the chapter. References to Hobbes's Leviathan and Locke's Two Treatises of Government are based on my reading of the text. Readers who are antipathetic to them have been warned.

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 7 Conversations among the viscaria occulatas

Cornelius Fudge, the self-professed major domo of the Duke of Sanguine's household frowned at his master's instructions for the ball he was throwing that evening in honour of Lady Minerva's name day. He could not see how the cooks, the butlers, under-butlers, maids and steward were to make of his Grace's *vague* orders when he, Cornelius Hercule Fudge, could not. Oh, how he longed to be someone important in the household! He undertook the tasks of the under-butlers so as to bring himself to the notice of his employer. Instead of appreciating his efforts, the old Duke only laughed at him. The old man had the temerity to laugh at the best valet in town (another title he had coined for himself)! Not only were his efforts the object of humour, they were also seen in entirely the wrong light. Fudge considered that he was a reasonable man without notions above his station. He was not naturally vicious, he thought ruefully, he only wanted to save His Grace unnecessary expenses. His Grace only needed him to wait on him. Instead of accepting this wonderful scheme of economy, the Duke of Sanguine laughed and told him to leave well and well alone. He must not deprive the house-elves of their occupations. Reflecting on these thoughts and a poorly digested piece of bacon had placed Fudge in high dudgeon. It was in this mood that he snatched His Grace's written instructions for the ball from Fletcher, the butler. It was also on this mood that he burst into his Grace's study to confirm the instructions.

Schooling his features into a servile manner, he began his long practised speech. "What do you mean, your Grace, by asking for incense to keep out insects? Won't the smell reek and linger on the guests' clothes? Pheasant is out of season, your Grace. It will not do! Might I suggest quails; they are so much more nutritious. And the little troupe of musicians you hired must be very respectable for the gentry and common folk, but we cannot allow Mr Flitwick's recommendations to cloud our judgement. As our former colleague, Mrs Umbridge once said..."

Without warning, the Duke raised his left hand and flicked out his wand. "Silencio! Petrificus Totalus!" he commanded and successfully silenced and immobilised his valet. "Not bad for a spare wand wielded by a supposedly right-handed wizard, n'est ce pas?" he muttered, continuing his writing. Only when he had sealed his letter and put away his spare wand did he speak to his now statue-like manservant. "Such opprobrious behaviour! One might accuse of all sorts of things, Fudge! You're allowing too many things to go to your head. While I do not care much for the airs you give yourself, they do not bother me as much as your usage of the royal pronoun. I beg of you never to associate yourself with it again. It might give the other servants *ideas above their station*."



His blue eyes twinkled slightly before hardening a little. "It may interest you to learn that I am not accustomed to being spoken to in this fashion by my servants. I discharged Mrs Umbridge *without references* for this reason. It would behove you to bear that in mind."

Retrieving the list of instructions from the valet's hand, he continued, "I'll hand this to Dobby now, if you don't mind. He is quite capable, you understand. You had better rest in your room." Waving his right hand, the Duke soon deposited Fudge in his narrow chamber and magically bolted the door from the outside for a few hours. As he sat down and gave the eager house-elf the instructions for the evening's ball, he wondered aloud whether his soiree would be inhospitable enough to any insects that might stumble upon it.

Regardless of the Duke's private doubts on the abilities of ox-eye scented insect repellent incense to perform its duties, he did not neglect his. Standing at the head of the receiving line at eight o'clock, he personally greeted the first few guests to arrive. Lord Sterne, famed for his punctuality scowled at him and muttered something under his breath about hexing his host if he heard another *'mon enfant'* that evening. The old man's sharp eyes had, however, caught a small cluster of scabious at his mourning evening coat. Lady Minerva arrived next to help him receive her guests; she reasoned that since it was a ball in her honour on her name day, she should play the role of the hostess at such a function. Most of the Weasley tribe arrived next together with Sir Harry, Lord Orthod, Miss Granger, Lord de Quib and Miss Lovegood. Lady Minerva and the Duke of Sanguine approvingly noticed that Miss Granger had conveyed the Duke and Duchess of Offaly as well as Lady Ginevra in her carriage, Sir Harry had driven Lords Ronald, George and Frederick in his, and Miss Lovegood had taken Lord Dragonlaire, Lord William Weasley and Lady Ginevra's Bulstrode in hers. It was soon discovered by the host and hostess that the Duke of Offaly's carriage wheel had come off rather badly earlier in the week and the family had forgotten to repair it.

Bulstrode, as it transpired, was invited by Lady Minerva, who had heard the young abigail sing during her visit to the Duchess of Offaly's household three days ago. The abigail was to entertain the party with an aria or two later in the evening; and according to the Duke of Sanguine, it would bring him much joy to uncover the truth about her. The invitation had also been extended to Miss Granger's Brown, but it was politely declined. The young lady's unfortunate previous liaison with Lord Villiers still shamed her and she could not bear exposure in a public crowd. This reason was accepted by Mr Longbottom with approval and the rest with alacrity. Pushing that thought and Sir Harry's strange blank look at Brown's absence out of his mind, the Duke of Sanguine continued to greet the rest of his guests the Misses Patil, the honourable Mr and Mrs Shacklebolt, Count Moody, Lord and Lady Trelawney, Lady Sybill Trelawney, Lord Lupin, the honourable Mr Flitwick, Lady Sinistra and her niece, Miss Vector, Lord Percy Weasley and quite a few others. However, it was at the exact moment at the end of the second cotillion when the Duke of Sanguine had despaired of having the Duchess of Mallefille and Lord Villiers presence that they arrived. Sanguine smiled at hearing the Duchess of Mallefille's boast that she was fashionably late to Lady Parkinson, soon died when he realised that Miss Granger and Bulstrode were seated and unsolicited for the first two dances. He was about to claim Miss Granger for a dance after depositing Lady Minerva in a chair when he saw his godson conjure a poesy of throatwort for the young lady and engaging Bulstrode for a dance. As his curiosity was piqued, he wandered over to Miss Granger.

"No desire to dance, my dear girl?" the Duke of Sanguine asked, chuckling at her intent study of the poesy and Draco's attempts to see to his mother's comfort.

She smiled gently at him, "I have a waltz with Lord Sterne later. Perhaps, you would like to stand up with me now, Duke?"

"Oh no!" he laughed merrily, tapping his nose with a conspiratorial wink. "I have to attend to my guests and ensure that all is fair in the card room."

Miss Granger caught his wink and its implied meaning and smiled wryly. "You could encourage Neville to ask Bulstrode to dance. I think he wants to but is too diffident."

"I will do so." He paused and looked at his godson's graceful dancing form. "Sterne asked you to dance yet?"

"He's reserved an allemande."

"Why do you think my Lord Sterne ask you for a dance?"

"My educated guess would be this a keen desire to escape from Lady Sybill's assiduous embraces."

As they shared a laugh, the Duke observed Villiers approaching them with a look resembling desperation in his cold eyes. "Lord Villiers has come to claim you; you won't be needing me for a while. However, that lady," he paused and indicated the Duchess of Mallefille, "might get cross. Look how she stares at Miss Bulstrode so intently why, one would think she had seen a ghost. She was deeply attached to her sister, Bellatrix. You might know her as the late Lady Lestrangle, wife of the late Lord Lestrangle. Despite her airs, Narcissa Mallefille is an affectionate woman, much attached to her husband, some would say too attached. I do not blame her at all. He was and by all accounts still is extremely uxorious spoiled her it seems. Now, what I want to know is her interest in young Miss Bulstrode. I've heard the rumours of course, but..."

However, he did not allow himself to finish as he was within the hearing of the haughtily handsome Lord Villiers. Slapping Villiers's back affectionately as he vacated his seat, the Duke made his way to the pale blonde beauty in a gold court dress favoured by the queen of the previous reign.

"Miss Granger," saluted Villiers, bowing low over her extended gloved hand. "Might I interest you in a little social intercourse?" He swept his free hand in the direction of the ballroom.

"Not as yet, Lord Villiers, I am not inclined to dance now," said she, as she arose from her seat and took his arm. "However, you may have the next if you take me for a turn around the room." Her eyes darted significantly at the Duchess of Mallefille before resting briefly on Millicent Bulstrode.

The young Marquess smirked conceitedly to show that he understood. Miss Granger, on the other hand, was sure that he hadn't. The old Duke of Sanguine was intimidating at a fact, that had young Lord Villiers known, would have made him reconsider his past action towards Bulstrode. However, she was in an equable mood and had no wish to disabuse her companion of his conceptions. She allowed herself to be led to one of the French windows and waited for him to speak.

"Mother wants to know if I have made any progress with you."

"Inform her I am retiring and shy; that I do not trust easily and all that other gibberish about maidenly modesty."

"I have to be careful not to have more than two dances with Lady Ginevra."

"Recall that this is a ball. It will not do for me to be seen monopolising you. It shows a want of propriety," reminded the young lady.

"I have to arrange another meeting with Lady Ginevra, she will inform you of the details."

"Villiers! You cannot continue with her in this way. You could endanger her reputation! You should make a firm stand where your affairs are concerned!"

He violently flung her hand off his arm in exasperation and hissed desperately, "That's why I'm speaking to you. You're a woman of resources *help me*, please."

"To do what?"

"To marry her and appease my mother," he whispered harshly.

"Write to your father. I am sure that the Duke is a reasonable man," she said frostily, as she replaced her arm on Villiers's and led him around the room once again.

"I have! But..." he muttered with much anxiety.

"But?" asked Hermione impatiently.

"My post owl has not returned," was the lame reply

"Then wait!" she hissed irritably, as they passed by the Weasley twins demonstrating their latest toys to the society mammas. "Better acquaint yourself with Ginny first. You must allow her to trust you first. Once those two things are in place, I'll think of something to assist in your union."

"I shall hold you to your word, Miss Granger," declared a now less agitated Villiers. The movement of the dance brought Bulstrode to their notice. "That brooch that Miss Bulstrode on her throat is familiar. Have you seen it?"

Miss Granger shrugged. "No. She's always had it as far as I know."

"And who was..." Villiers's words were truncated by the obsequious attentions of Lord Percy and Miss Granger slipped away to Lord Lupin's stand by one the chairs without so much as a backward glance at Lord Villiers.

"Something caught your attention, Lord Lupin?" she asked playfully.

"Someone," he answered with a little welcoming smile.

"Who is the happy lady?"

"The one in the pale blue lace fichu."

"Don't be a tease! At least three ladies here matching that description, Lupin."

The Baron chose not to answer; instead he straightened his posture as the present dance set came to an end. Noticing Lord Sterne striding purposefully towards them, they both rose.

"Miss Granger, you promised me *this gavotte*," the Marquess hissed insistently, as he extended his gloved right hand.

Taken aback, Miss Granger began to protest slightly. Puzzled, she looked behind Lord Sterne and heard Lord Lupin chuckle at Lady Sybill's approach. Taking in Lady Sybill's gown of pale blue and the lace fichu, she cast Lupin a sly look before turning to Lord Sterne with a mirthful smirk.

"Miss Granger," growled Sterne in a low dangerous voice, his eyes narrowing at the presence of danger. *The gavotte*."

"Why there you are, Sterne. I was beginning to despair that you would not be here. Shall we have the next to dances? You can sit beside me at the dinner," chimed Lady Sybill in a singsong voice as she draped herself on the Marquess's arm.

Assessing the situation, Miss Granger knew what must be done she placed her hand in Severus's extended one, looked at him knowingly before addressing Lady Sybill. "Unfortunately, my lady, Lord Sterne has already engaged me for the next two dances." Nudging Lord Lupin with her other arm by swinging her ridicule into his chest, she continued, "Lord Lupin, however, was admiring your fine eyes and had not the courage to ask you to dance. He kept asking about that lovely lady with eyes like quicksilver. Since he is so taken with you, you could oblige him with a dance or two. Since Lord Sterne has already arranged to be of my party, I am afraid I must leave you in the capable hands of Lord Lupin."

Pretending not to notice the tell-tale flutter of envy playing at Lady Sybill's lips and light flush of disappointment upon her cheeks, Lupin quickly seized both the initiative and the lady's hand for the dance and led away to the far corner of the room.

"Thank you, Miss Granger," murmured Sterne in a barely audible drawl as he turned noticeably paler.

"Cross with me for being so overbearing?" she asked lightly as they began the set.

"Only with myself," was his quiet response.

"How singular! I did not know you would feel the loss of Lady Sybill's company and great enthusiasm for you so keenly!"

His eyes flickered in a moment of amusement. "It is a great loss," he muttered gravely.

"It is too late now, my lord, Lupin seems to have captivated her attention."

They shared a mutual knowing glance after observing Lupin and Lady Sybill laugh at one of her comments.

"Was that magnificent piece of knight errantry necessary, Miss Granger?" he asked with a scowl, his expression belying the backhanded compliment.

"It was masterful, I know," she answered frostily.

He arched a brow in interest at the fact that she no longer blushed over compliments (regardless of their execution) and accepted them matter-of-factly. Staring at the confident young lady, he enquired as to her day and learnt that she had been reading and studying all day. "Anything of note struck you?" he asked

"Many things...Your observations on camomile extract and how well it describes your character."

"I advise you not to take my likeness, Miss Granger, or you will be petrified."

"But I must!" the lady insisted seriously. "The mind is the only constant in human affairs, Lord Sterne. While you present a disagreeable, truculent face to the world, your work acts like camomile, does it not?"

He curled his lips contemptuously in response so as that she would not see him biting his tongue and holding back the words there were there. He longed to inform her that her analysis had him utterly.

The lady, however, took his scowl as a sign of encouragement and was emboldened to continue as soon as the movement of the dance united them once again, "To soothe and comfort man's fear of violent death\* from within was a property of camomile, you acknowledged this in your last article."

"It was in response to a critique."

She feigned a look of surprise. "I did not know you drew criticism."

"It is part of the educational project."

"Ah yes, the truth behind paideia. It seems well established in your article on the merits of flower and plant essences."

"Plants, simple plants are often overlooked in favour of more exotic ingredients."

"Hear, hear!" agreed Miss Granger. "It is a lost art. There is something extremely mathematical and poetic about the properties of plant extracts. Plato made quite a study of it in his academy. *Ageômetrêtos mêdeis eisitô* it highlights a relationship between mathematics, philosophy and alchemy that has often been close but not always easygoing. Sadly, it is a neglected field of study. I am surprised you had not pointed it out. The beauty of this study is that it reveals much about the researcher..."

"How so?" he enquired, baring his uneven teeth in a gesture of challenge. "One chooses one's ingredients based on the purpose of the brew."

"The purpose of the brew is always clear enough from the name. I'm speaking of a more thorough analysis on the brewer, the methodology and the selected ingredients. The purpose of the potion is predicated on his or her knowledge. This knowledge shapes the underlining reasons for his selection of particular plant substances."

"Mere speculation, Miss Granger, you are using vanity as a base."

"Yet *amour propre* and *amour de soi* have the same root," she retorted, her eyes dancing with the refreshing intellectual exercise. "One is drawn to the familiar because one knows what it is capable of. For instance, you are fond of using wormwood in your concoctions."

"Because it is a versatile binding reagent," he snapped defensively.

"I am merely stating a fact," she answered coolly, staring into his obsidian pools without blinking or flinching at his harsh glowering eyes and the firm grip at her hands. "Wormwood represents absence and it is a very apt description of you for you rarely grace social occasions."

"I am only one person; it is an inefficient study."

"Count Moody favours swamp magnolia not only for its abilities to brew potions of an even consistency, but also to highlight his ill-temper. His choice of this reagent encourages him to persevere. But fear not, his skill is nothing next to your. And the Duke of Sanguine favours the American starwort for its abilities to soak up any excess causal reagent. It also adequately elicits his weltenshaung."

Lord Sterne rolled his eyes not completely convinced. "And what about you?"

She laughed lightly (he thought she was laughing at him and frowned). "I have not been brewing potions for a while, so it is impossible for me to tell."

"You lie," he said a little maliciously through his teeth.

She, however, smiled coldly at him, continued dancing and replied, "So you say."

"I can remove your gloves to check your fingers."

"And you will cause scandal."

"I will see your hands at the dining area."

"You will notice that they are spotless."

Their eyes held a gaze that was longer than permitted in polite society but they seemed oblivious to the short-sighted stares of Lady Sybill. The unyielding chocolate pools stared back at his smouldering obsidian ones.

"Keep dancing," Miss Granger commanded as soon as she felt Lady Sybill's eyes on them. "Or your admirer will rescue you from me."

"Ah," he conceded, keeping his anger in check, realising that he was unable to retort.

Despite the verbal sparring, Sterne was far from insulted. He was intrigued. He did not remember Hermione so confident and radiant at Garswoth. Clearly, her private studies have augmented her mind and her sharp wit. He knew she was no beauty, yet the way she spoke and carried herself seemed to him a proclamation of her quiet neglected brand of beauty. Although she differed vastly from Lily Evans (he could not think on her as Lady Potter without a sour pang), Miss Granger shared the late beauty's grace and intellect. As soon as the dancing recommenced after the dinner intermission, he immediately claimed her for a waltz before Lady Sybill could accost him. Seeing how his godmother's niece had quickly accepted Lord Percy's arm, Sterne turned to his partner without displaying any sign of relief.

"Miss Granger, do not be shocked at the proposition I am to offer you," he drawled silkily.

She carefully avoided his eyes and looked at Lupin cutting in Lord Percy's waltz with Lady Sybill. "Is this a *carte-blanche*? Should I feel insulted or honoured?"

"Neither," he said with the utmost gravity, as he caught her bite her lower lip. "I will help you with Villiers and his Lady Ginevra, if you help me with Lady Sybill."

Her composure returned, she looked coolly into his eyes and asked, "How may I be of assistance? If it is *indeed* assistance you require?"

"I will pretend to pay court to you, giving us more time to think on Villiers's dilemma, thus opening the route for Lupin's pursuit of Lady Sybill."

"Yes, he does appear taken with her."

"Is that a mark of assent, Miss Granger?"

"You do honour me with your confidence. I must think the matter over," she answered. "For the sake of the beautiful throatwort pinned to my gown, I will agree to this scheme. After all, it is only pretend."

"Indeed," he murmured, spinning her in tune to the waltz rhythm as his eyes darkened and glittered coldly with a silent prayer that the soul of the late Lady Potter would forgive him for neglecting her memory.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) *Viscaria oculata* poses the question "Will you dance with me?"

View it here <http://www.butchartgardens.com/Merchant2/graphics/00000001/seedsViscariarlarge.jpg>

(2) Ox-eye means "patience". In Regency times, it was spelt thus. View it here <http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/wedtri4.jpg> and <http://www.monasheetourism.com/PlantsandFlowers/T%20132%20Oxeye%20Daisy.jpg>

Now, it is known as the oxeye daisy. It is a flower that is both loved and hated. It was a plague on pastures and crop fields across Europe. The Scots called the flowers "gools". The farmer with the most gools in their wheat field had to pay an extra tax. Now the gools have invaded this continent from coast to coast. The oxeye daisy is a short-lived perennial originally brought here from Europe. The dainty flowers have escaped cultivation and now crowd out other plants on many rangelands. A vigorous daisy can produce 26,000 seeds per plant, while smaller specimens produce 1,300 to 4,000 seeds per plant. Tests have shown that 82% of the buried seeds remained viable after six years, and 1% were still viable after 39 years. Oxeye daisy requires cold winters to initiate blooming. The plant also reproduces vegetatively with spreading rootstalks. Daisies are resistant to many herbicides.

The oxeye daisy is mildly aromatic, like its close cousin, chamomile. The leaves and flowers are edible, though palatability may vary. A tea of the plant is useful for relaxing the bronchials. It is diuretic and astringent, useful for stomach ulcers and bloody piles or urine. Also used as a vaginal douche for cervical ulceration. The daisy is aromatic,

used as an antispasmodic for colic and general digestive upset.

Sheep, goats and horses eat the oxeye daisy, but cows and pigs do not like it. The plant spreads rapidly when cattle pastures are managed with a low stock density and continuous grazing regime. Under these conditions, cows repeatedly select their preferred plants, while ignoring unpalatable species like the oxeye daisy.

Switching to higher stock densities and shorter grazing periods does encourage cattle to eat and trample more of the plant. Intensive grazing and trampling slightly reduces the number of seeds produced, and presumably injures younger rootstalks. Trampling also brings dormant seeds to the surface and removes the canopy cover so those seeds will germinate with mid-summer rain showers. In normal years, those seedlings will dry-out and die before becoming established, further reducing the number of seeds in the seed bank. It should be noted, however, that intensive grazing in wet summers may increase the number of successful seedlings. As many as 40% percent of the seeds consumed by cattle may remain viable after passing through the digestive tract, so care should be taken to avoid spreading the seeds when moving stock.

(3) Scabious means "unfortunate love".

View it here <http://homepage.eircom.net/~hedgerow4/devils-bit-scabious.JPG> and [http://www.ernest-charles.com/acatalog/field\\_scabious\\_350.jpg](http://www.ernest-charles.com/acatalog/field_scabious_350.jpg)

This pretty blue flower's name has unfortunate origins in the Latin word scabies, a kind of skin disease, and 'scab', these and similar conditions it was thought to heal. The herbalist, Culpepper, also applied the fresh plant to carbuncles which would virtually disappear 'in three hours space'. The Devil's Bit scabious bore the descriptive country name 'pincushion'. The root of this variety looks like a truncated finger and it was said that the Devil bit it off hoping that the plant would die and be of no benefit to the human race.

(4) Throatwort means "neglected beauty".

The throatwort is also known as the fig-wort in some cultures. You will notice from the pictures [http://www.californiagardens.com/images/Trachelium\\_caeruleum\\_aspect\\_c.jpg](http://www.californiagardens.com/images/Trachelium_caeruleum_aspect_c.jpg) and [http://www.flowers.org.uk/images/flowers/aut03\\_tracheliumclose\\_lrg.jpg](http://www.flowers.org.uk/images/flowers/aut03_tracheliumclose_lrg.jpg) that the plant has diverse great, strong, hard, square brown stalks, three or four feet high, whereon grow large, hard, and dark green leaves, two at a joint, harder and larger than Nettle leaves, but not stinking; at the tops of the stalks stand many purple flowers set in husks, which are sometimes gaping and open, somewhat like those of Water Betony; after which come hard round heads, with a small point in the middle, wherein lie small brownish seed. The root is great, white, and thick, with many branches at it, growing aslope under the upper crust of the ground, which abides many years, but keeps not his green leaves in winter. It grows frequently in moist and shadowy woods, and in the lower parts of the fields and meadows. It flowers about July, and the seed will be ripe about a month after the flowers are fallen.

Some Latin scholars during the High Middle Ages called the throatwort/fig-wort, "Cervicaria" because it is appropriated to the treatment of ailments in and around the neck. However, by the 15th-16th century, the English gave it the name "throatwort" because it was found suitable to treating throat complaints. Culpepper's *The Complete Herbal* (that I am quoting in its medieval English) says, "Venus owns the herb, and the Celestial Bull will not deny it; therefore a better remedy cannot be for the king's evil, because the Moon that rules the disease, is exalted there. The decoction of the herb taken inwardly, and the bruised herb applied outwardly, dissolves clotted and congealed blood within the body, coming by any wounds, bruise or fall; and is no less effectual for the king's evil, or any other knobs, kernel, bunches, or wens growing in the flesh wheresoever; and for the hæmorrhoids, or piles. An ointment made hereof may be used at all times when the fresh herb is not to be had. The distilled water of the whole plant, roots and all, is used for the same purposes, and dries up the superfluous, virulent moisture of hollow and corroding ulcers; it takes away all redness, spots, and freckles in the face, as also the scurf, and any foul deformity therein, and the leprosy likewise."

(5) Wormwood stands for "absence".

View it here <http://www.xanatos.com/earthshine/image/digital/wormwood1.jpg>

The Wormwoods are members of the great family of Compositae and belong to the genus *Artemisia*, a group consisting of 180 species, of which we have four growing wild in England, the Common Wormwood, Mugwort, Sea Wormwood and Field Wormwood. In addition, as garden plants, though not native, Tarragon (*A. dracunculus*) claims a place in every herb-garden, and Southernwood (*A. abrotanum*), an old-fashioned favourite, is found in many borders, whilst others, such as *A. sericea*, *A. cana* and *A. alpina*, form pretty rockwork shrubs.

The whole family is remarkable for the extreme bitterness of all parts of the plant: 'as bitter as Wormwood' is a very ancient proverb. The genus is named *Artemisia* from Artemis, the Greek name for Diana. In an early translation of the Herbarium of Apuleius we find these words, "Of these worts that we name *Artemisia*, it is said that Diana did find them and delivered their powers and leechdom to Chiron the Centaur, who first from these Worts set forth a leechdom, and he named these worts from the name of Diana, Artemis, that is Artemisias."

The Common Wormwood held a high reputation in medicine among the Ancients. Tusser (1577), in *July's Husbandry*, says:

While Wormwood hath seed get a handful or twaine

To save against March, to make flea to refraine:

Where chamber is sweeped and Wormwood is strowne,

What saver is better (if physick be true)

For places infected than Wormwood and Rue?

It is a comfort for hart and the braine

And therefore to have it is not in vaine.'

Besides being strewn in chambers as Tusser recommended, it used to be laid amongst muffs and furs to keep away moths and insects.

According to the Ancients, wormwood counteracted the effects of poisoning by hemlock, toadstools and the biting of the seadragon. The plant was of some importance among the Mexicans, who celebrated their great festival of the Goddess of Salt by a ceremonial dance of women, who wore on their heads garlands of Wormwood.

With the exception of rue, wormwood is the bitterest herb known, but it is very wholesome and used to be in much request by brewers for use instead of hops. The leaves resist putrefaction, and have been on that account a principal ingredient in antiseptic fomentations.

The root of wormwood is perennial, and from it arise branched, firm, leafy stems, sometimes almost woody at the base. The flowering stem is 2 to 2 1/2 feet high and whitish, being closely covered with fine silky hairs. The leaves, which are also whitish on both sides from the same reason, are about 3 inches long by 1 1/2 broad, cut into deeply and repeatedly, the segments being narrow (linear) and blunt. The leaf-stalks are slightly winged at the margin. The small, nearly globular flowerheads are arranged in an erect, leafy panicle, the leaves on the flower-stalks being reduced to three, or even one linear segment, and the little flowers themselves being pendulous and of a greenish-yellow tint. They bloom from July to October. The ripe fruits are not crowned by a tuft of hairs, or pappus, as in the majority of the Compositae family. The leaves and flowers are very bitter, with a characteristic odour, resembling that of thujone. The root has a warm and aromatic taste. As can be anticipated, wormwood likes a shady situation, and is easily propagated by division of roots in the autumn.

You may even be interested to learn that wormwood is used a very Old Love Charm. It goes like this:

"On St. Luke's Day, take marigold flowers, a sprig of marjoram, thyme, and a little wormwood; dry them before a fire, rub them to powder; then sift it through a fine piece of lawn, and simmer it over a slow fire, adding a small quantity of virgin honey, and vinegar. Anoint yourself with this when you go to bed, saying the following lines three times, and you will dream of your partner "that is to be":

"St. Luke, St. Luke, be kind to me,

In dreams let me my true-love see."

Culpepper, writing of the three Wormwoods most in use, the Common Wormwood, Sea Wormwood and Roman Wormwood, tells us: 'Each kind has its particular virtues' . . . the Common Wormwood is 'the strongest,' the Sea Wormwood, 'the second in bitterness,' whereas the Roman Wormwood, 'to be found in botanic gardens' - the first two being wild - 'joins a great deal of aromatic flavour with but little bitterness.'

The whole herb - leaves and tops - gathered in July and August, when the plant is in flower and dried. Collect only on a dry day, after the sun has dried off the dew. Cut off the upper green portion and reject the lower parts of the stems, together with any discoloured or insect-eaten leaves. Tie loosely in bunches of uniform size and length, about six stalks to a bunch, and spread out in shape of a fan, so that the air can get to all parts. Hang over strings, in the open, on a fine, sunny, warm day, but in half-shade, otherwise the leaves will become tindery; the drying must not be done in full sunlight, or the aromatic properties will be partly lost. Aromatic herbs should be dried at a temperature of about 70 degrees. If no sun is available, the bunches may be hung over strings in a covered shed, or disused greenhouse, or in a sunny warm attic, provided there is ample ventilation, so that the moist heated air may escape. The room may also be heated with a coke or anthracite stove, care being taken that the window is kept open during the day. If after some days the leaves are crisp and the stalks still damp, hang the bunches over a stove, when the stalks will quickly finish drying. Uniformity in size in the bunches is important, as it facilitates packing. When the drying process is completed, pack away at once in airtight boxes, as otherwise the herbs will absorb about 12 per cent moisture from the air. If sold to the wholesale druggists in powdered form, rub through a sieve as soon as thoroughly dry, before the bunches have had time to absorb any moisture, and pack in tins or bottles at once.

Its chief constituent is a volatile oil, of which the herb yields in distillation from 0.5 to 1.0 per cent. It is usually dark green, or sometimes blue in colour, and has a strong odour and bitter, acrid taste. The oil contains thujone (absinthol or tenacetone), thujyl alcohol (both free and combined with acetic, isovalerianic, succinic and malic acids), cadinene, phellandrene and pinene. The herb also contains the bitter glucoside absinthin, absinthic acid, together with tannin, resin, starch, nitrate of potash and other salts. It is often used as a nervine tonic, particularly helpful against the falling sickness and for flatulence. It is a good remedy for enfeebled digestion and debility.

In the Middle Ages, wormwood tea was taken to relieve melancholia and treat jaundice. Monks in those days also burnt the plant and made tea from the ashes to treat dropsy. The people then believed that wormwood flowers, dried and powdered, are most effectual as a vermifuge, and used to be considered excellent in agues. The essential oil of the herb is used as a worm-expeller, the spirituous extract being preferable to that distilled in water. The leaves give out nearly the whole of their smell and taste both to spirit and water, but the cold water infusions are the least offensive.

The intensely bitter, tonic and stimulant qualities have caused Wormwood not only to be an ingredient in medicinal preparations, but also to be used in various liqueurs, of which absinthe is the chief, the basis of absinthe being absinthol, extracted from Wormwood. Wormwood, as employed in making this liqueur, bears also the name 'Wermuth' - preserver of the mind - from its medicinal virtues as a nervine and mental restorative. If not taken habitually, it soothes spinal irritability and gives tone to persons of a highly nervous temperament. Suitable allowances of the diluted liqueur will promote salutary perspiration and may be given as a vermifuge. Inferior absinthe is generally adulterated with copper, which produces the characteristic green colour.

The drug, absinthium, is rarely employed, but it might be of value in nervous diseases such as neurasthenia, as it stimulates the cerebral hemispheres, and is a direct stimulant of the cortex cerebri. When taken to excess it produces giddiness and attacks of epileptiform convulsions. Absinthium occurs in the British Pharmacopoeia in the form of extract, infusion and tincture, and is directed to be extracted also from *A. maritima*, the Sea Wormwood, which possesses the same virtues in a less degree, and is often more used as a stomachic than the Common Wormwood. Commercially this often goes under the name of Roman Wormwood, though that name really belongs to *A. Pontica*. All three species were used, as in Culpepper's time.

Dr John Hill (1772) recommends Common Wormwood in many forms. He says:

'The Leaves have been commonly used, but the flowery tops are the right part. These, made into a light infusion, strengthen digestion, correct acidities, and supply the place of gall, where, as in many constitutions, that is deficient. One ounce of the Flowers and Buds should be put into an earthen vessel, and a pint and a half of boiling water poured on them, and thus to stand all night. In the morning the clear liquor with two spoonfuls of wine should be taken at three draughts, an hour and a half distance from one another. Whoever will do this regularly for a week, will have no sickness after meals, will feel none of that fullness so frequent from indigestion, and wind will be no more troublesome; if afterwards, he will take but a fourth part of this each day, the benefit will be lasting.'

He further tells us that if an ounce of these flowers be put into a pint of brandy and let to stand six weeks, the resultant tincture will in a great measure prevent the increase of gravel - and give great relief in gout. 'The celebrated Baron Haller has found vast benefit by this; and myself have very happily followed his example.'

(6) Swamp Magnolia stands for "perseverance".

View it here [http://www.georgian.edu/pinebarrens/bi\\_p\\_mvi.htm](http://www.georgian.edu/pinebarrens/bi_p_mvi.htm)

Magnolia virginiana 'Sweetbay' also called Laurel or Swamp Magnolia is a small, multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub of loose, open upright habit in the North and deciduous, semi-evergreen forming a large pyramidal tree in the South. It is a graceful tree known for the sweet fragrance of its flowers. In the landscape the Sweetbay Magnolia is excellent as a specimen tree or large shrub or as a patio plant. The foliage is bright green on the upper surface of the leaves with the undersides a white to silvery colour that looks frosted. The autumn foliage is a mix of yellow, brown and green. The creamy white, lemon-scented flowers bloom late May to June and will continue to bloom sporadically during the summer. The 2 inch long aggregate fruit which ripens typically in August changes from green to red as it matures. The fruit is very handsome where the bright red seeds are exposed.

(7) American Starwort represents "Cheerfulness in old age".

View it here <http://lachlan.bluehaze.com.au/usa2002/june2002/16jun2002a/mvc-013f.jpg>

This plant is a very valuable diuretic, and has been found advantageous in some *affections of the kidneys and bladder, dropsy, and gonorrhoea*. A decoction of it may be drank freely, according to its diuretic influence. In dropsy, a tincture made with whiskey is preferred. The plant deserves more attention than it has heretofore received.

(8) Between the years 1780-1820, the little bag/purse thing that ladies carried was called a ridicule. It was only in 1820-1860s that it was called a reticule. I have kept the old-fashioned spelling in this plot. Why was it called a ridicule? Because it seemed a ridiculous notion in the late 18th/early 19th century to carry outside the dress those personal belongings formerly kept in large pockets beneath the dress. When waists rose and skirts narrowed, bulky pockets could no longer be accommodated without spoiling the line of the dress, and so the ridicule became an essential accessory. The term "reticule" seems to have come into use around the mid-19th century.

(9) The phrase "you have me utterly" was then understood as "you have utterly caught my likeness". Do not allow your modern minds to misread the old-fashioned phrases.

(10) Paideia is ancient Greek for education or learning.

(11) In this chapter, we are told that Dumbledore throws a soiree for Minerva's name day. A Name-day is the feast day of your Patron Saint. Patron Saints are men and women who have been honoured by the Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox and Ancient Anglican Church (the Anglican Church is actually very catholic in form the only difference is that there is no elevation of the host. Anglicanism is not the same as Protestantism). These are men and women who have lived through the centuries in such a holy manner as to have been declared by the Churches mentioned above to be Saints or Blesseds. If we bear the name of one of these, this Saint is known as our Patron. Each Saint has been assigned a feast day by the Church. The feast day of your Patron Saint will be the day on which you celebrate your Name day. In Romanov Russia, the aristocrats had great celebrations for their name days.

\* (12) Man's fear of violent death is an idea adapted from Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan to justify the need for governance. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) was a tutor, secretary and philosopher who happened to be a sceptic, atheist and an absolutist. As you can see, he too, had a mixed reputation. He was actually almost persecuted for some of his unorthodox views on Christianity. He is shocking in that he denies the trinity and all that. He supports absolute government, especially government by one man, as he's a monarchist, but he wrote after some serious political events in England and Europe, after the English Civil War between the Monarchists and Cromwell.

That's why he's called an absolutist, because in the Leviathan, he justifies the absolute power of the sovereign. But this thinking did not endear him to the Monarchists because they denied the divine right of the king. So poor Hobbes was attacked wherever he turned, he was attacked by the clergy for unorthodox Christian ideas, attacked by the royalists for denying divine kingship, attacked by the Parliamentarians for supporting absolutism. And there was the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which marked the beginning of the Modern European state system. But that came after 30 years of warfare between and among European states. And much if that war was caused by religious intolerance, you know, the Catholics versus the Protestants that's the situation that Hobbes was responding to and his solution to this is the Leviathan. In part, Hobbes is responding to the Machiavellian problem of the new prince who must always appear religious and lead an army into battle; so part of the more important reasons for reading Hobbes is to see how he begins to respond to the problems posed by Machiavelli's new prince. There's this continuity, this tradition to remind you of some of the main tenets it's a human centred world that began with Machiavelli and this world's going to be very restless, leading to lots of change. Hobbes matches Machiavelli in almost every way. So, in part, his response to Machiavelli would be to be Machiavellian and Hobbes is very important for setting the stage for the modern liberal world because he will introduce the notion of natural rights, which will form the basis of what we will understand as human rights. So keep in mind the Machiavellian connexion all the time when you're reading Hobbes.

Hobbes wrote this book, the Leviathan, in part to resolve the problem of the civil war and not just any type of civil war, but the most destructive type of civil war. Instead of giving you an in-depth analysis of the Leviathan, I shall draw your attention to Chapter XIII: Of the Natural Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity and Misery. In this chapter, we are introduced to man's greatest fear violent death. Hobbes said something about the state of nature the thing about political philosophers is that most of them believe in some kind of state of nature. For Hobbes, it is a state prior to government. This is a novel concept because in the pre-modern context, there is no such thing as a state of nature the understanding of the world all derives from the bible God created the world and the Garden of Eden and he created man. The State of Nature is a completely new scientific understanding of how man goes about his business and how he came into being. Given the way we are designed, we want our desires; we are all after this one thing POWER. Naturally! In this chapter, Hobbes introduces the chapter on human involvement in the state of nature all men are important, in both body and mind. There's no such thing as snootiness because everyone has to depend on his prudence, which is his experience and this is true no matter how educated or uneducated you are and that's general and by this, Hobbes says that's we are equal in this respect, because no man is necessarily smarter than another. The most compelling argument that he gives for natural equality has to do with the notion of bodily strength. Now, this is odd. Why? Because there are big guys and small guys you think that big guys can always overpower the small guys, we all have an equal ability to kill says Hobbes. Why? Because even if you're a big guy, you need to sleep and you can't stay awake all the time; and while you are sleeping, the situation is equalised the small guy can kill you while you sleep. So, in the state of nature without government and without god, you have the ability to kill each other regardless of strength and size. And because we think we are equal in this way, it follows that we are equally able to acquire what we desire, namely our hopes and all the 'whatnots'.

Let me give you an illustration. Pretend there's only one apple left in the state of nature, we both want it to survive and thus, we are fighting over the apple. This means we'll have to kill each other because it's a war of all against all (for Hobbes, the state or nature = state of war of all against all). Why? Because humans regard every other human being as a competitor, who will try to deprive me of my desires and so you've no choice but to eliminate your competition. In the state of nature, there is no law and therefore NO JUSTICE and I then do whatever I think is necessary to preserve myself. In the state of nature, the only cardinal virtues are FORCE and FRAUD. These are Machiavelli's virtues as outlined in The Prince (cf. reference to the fox fraud and the lion force.). So, Hobbes, in other words, recreates the Machiavellian universe in the state of nature and this is in fact, Hobbes's answer to the Machiavellian problem what has Hobbes done? He's made us all into Machiavellian princes. In other words, Hobbes says, "What happens if we are all Machiavellian princes?" then it's a war of all against all. What are the consequences of this? Very simple. Under the condition of the war against all principle, life will be poor, solitary, brutish and short.

He spells out the implication and he takes Machiavelli's principles so seriously that he universalises them, Machiavelli's original teachings was only meant for the new prince who will make use of the teachings. Hobbes's solution to deal with the new prince is to make everyone into Machiavellian princes. So what happens? These are the consequences of making the world wholly and truly Machiavellian. Under these conditions of war of all against all, there will be certain passions that will incline men to peace. Earlier in The Leviathan, Hobbes mentions in mechanistic psychology chapter that great desires focus our attention (Chapter I: Of Sense). When you're terrified of something then this great passion of fear also focuses your mind because fear rationalises us. In the state of war, we are focused because we fear dying a violent death. That makes us rational and under these conditions, and these fears we can come to some agreement to end this state of war because no one wants to die. Life is motion, which is about going out and getting things we like and desire, not dying and ending our desires and wants. So enter the role of reason. There are such things as useful articles of peace. For now, you can see how important this teaching on the mechanistic psychology is. Man is a machine, put him in the state of nature and he will kill other humans; fear of death rationalises them and they will find a way to get out of the situation.

How this fits in with the plot will be seen in later chapters.

(13) *Ageômetrêtos mêdeis eisitô* is the Greek transliteration of "Let no one who is unmathematical enter." This was reportedly the motto of Plato's academy. If this were indeed the case, I would be expelled from that place within a week I cannot do calculus in my political science research methodology module to save my life. There's this section where I have to prove my definition of justice with a formula still gives me shudders.

(14) Fichu is a length of fabric, usually triangular, worn around the neck and shoulders. It is sometimes tucked inside the neckline of the bodice, sometimes crossed over the bodice. If you are still uncertain, please refer to this fashion plate <http://www.costumes.org/history/regency/boehn/BoulevardDesItaliens.JPG> and <http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/rgnclosup.jpg>. All three women are wearing fichus of the late 18th century type. This "pouter pigeon" style of fichu fell out of fashion during the Regency years, though the term was resurrected c.1816 to refer to various sorts of bodice tuckers.

(15) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? You will see why when I reveal Millicent Bulstrode's parentage...

(16) *Amour de soi* is Jean-Jacques Rousseau's term for self-love, the kind to do with basic survival.

(17) *Amour propre* is Jean-Jacques Rousseau's term for vanity of the self, often associated with vanity, occasionally anger and includes fear of violent death and economic loss. Some translators (myself included) believe it includes an excessive of spiritedness (cf. Greek *thymos*)

## Chapter 8 - Planting Belladonna

*Chapter 9 of 23*

We are treated to Lord Sterne's thoughts when he uncovers the truth behind Bulstrode and Hiero Gravitus. Also, readers' queries are answered.

Released this chapter early for my readers - Merry X'mas one and all!

**Answering Readers' Email Queries**

## About the waltz in ch 7

Some readers have emailed me regarding the waltz in the previous chapter. Two readers asked me why allowed a waltz (a supposed 'fast' dance) at a Name Day soiree. Another three asked, 'Wouldn't a waltz mean that a couple would be dancing for a long time together in close proximity? Wouldn't that be scandalous for the time?' Another lot asked, 'wouldn't that mean the couple would be alone for a long time?' Technically, a whole bunch of people waltz together. You see the ballroom is a large place and many couples can dance there. If you must know the waltz became fashionable BY 1814 and was permitted at all kinds of private parties. This story is set AFTER 1814 when the waltz was perfectly acceptable and country reels were thought as 'unfashionable'. Unless you wanted to be seen as dowd, you waltzed. At that time, there was a craze for all things German and the waltz was all the crack! The only place where the waltz was not danced was Almack's. At Almack's, there were no strong alcoholic drinks, the gambling stakes are low (so low that the gamblers hated it), and only Scottish reels and country dances were permitted. The patronesses at Almack's were strict and to be seen as Almack's was a greater privilege than to be seen at court. It was impossibly difficult to get a voucher (dispensed by the 4 haughty patronesses); once the patronesses decided that they didn't like you, your title (even if you had one) wouldn't help you AT ALL and fashionable society will regard you as a pariah. However, even the 4 haughty patronesses allowed the waltz after Wellington returned from Belgium later in 1814. So there, the Waltz was not indecent and not fast.

## About Hermione's behaviour

Several readers complained that the Miss Granger is constantly described as responding in 'chilling tones', 'coldly', 'coolly', &ca and told me that she was OOC. If you had read the disclaimer, you would know so. However, Hermione's behaviour will be perfectly understandable after this explanation. Being seen talking enthusiastically (by this I mean smiling, bright eyes, lots of laughing, talking and amusement) to a man whom one has only passing acquaintance, an unattached female of that Regency era would be seen as 'fast'. A Fast woman for readers who do not know and do not read my footnotes, means 'a loose woman' or a 'cheap woman'. Why would a woman doing so be looked on as 'fast'? Because she would be interpreted as to have encouraged a man's dishonourable intentions towards her. This is the reason why Hermione makes the 'Carte-blanche' statement in ch 7. She fears that she has appeared 'fast' to Severus hence the hauteur is more chilling than usual little does she know, he is intrigued by it. Hermione is neither cheap nor loose. She may be eccentric and cares little for the opinions of society, but she knows that once her reputation is ruined that is it for her. Furthermore, it is mentioned in ch 1 that Hermione has always been reclusive; she is not inclined to mingle. Also, if you had read the preface and were paying attention to the plot so far, you will know that Hermione has a secret she does not want ANYONE to know (her papa knows, but that's it). It is also hinted that she despises the social whirl. Reread ch 1 to get a feel of what my Hermione is supposed to be in the story; even her friends don't understand her she can't talk enthusiastically to them about anything because they wouldn't understand her and would think her mad (cf to ch 1 where Society says madness is the blood of her family and all this because she is a bluestocking). Society has always been uncharitable to her family (cf. ch 1 for society's view of Lord and Lady Orthod) Being 'chilling', 'cold', 'cool' &ca is her way of insulating herself from society and all those who do not understand her or her ideals and there are many such fools running around.

## About Ridicules

Many readers have pointed out what they believe to be a spelling error. "Why do you say ridicule when it is obvious you mean reticule? Do you even have a beta?" I was asked. First, I do not take to readers insinuating that my betas did not do their jobs. Secondly, I am most put out! How many times must I tell you! I put down extensive footnotes for this story to avoid these sort of questions that I am presently answering. I haven't all the time in the world to reply to each and every email asking me about phaetons, cartwheels (which is slang for a guinea), what is Rundel and Bridges (a jewellery house), ridicules and a housewife (a sewing roll like a jewellery roll, but for sewing.). My betas did not understand what I wrote and based on their queries, I came up with the footnotes. It is not to make you my reader feel nor look stupid far from it! I just want to avoid the sort of unpleasantness that arises if I get bombarded with emails. Now, back to the reticule/ridicule question. If you had read the footnotes to ch 7, you will note that footnote (8) explicitly states, 'Between the years 1780-1820, the little bag/purse thing that ladies carried was called a ridicule. It was only in 1820-1860s that it was called a reticule. I have kept the old-fashioned spelling in this plot. Why was it called a ridicule? Because it seemed a ridiculous notion in the late 18th/early 19th century to carry outside the dress those personal belongings formerly kept in large pockets beneath the dress. When waists rose and skirts narrowed, bulky pockets could no longer be accommodated without spoiling the line of the dress, and so the ridicule became an essential accessory. The term "reticule" seems to have come into use around the mid-19th century.'

Now, on with the story...

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

Journal article within the text of this chapter may be annoying to readers. Extensive footnotes follow the chapter. Readers who are antipathetic to them and who are resistant to the esoteric style of my journal articles have been warned. Lest you think you can skip the article, let me inform you now: Careful reading of the journal article AND careful rereading of HG and SS's conversation in Ch 7 will reveal much to you.

## Language of Flowers

### Chapter 8 Planting Belladonna

Lord Sterne could not silence the portion of his disquieted mind that Miss Granger was not all she seemed. Her poise and elegance lent her dressmaker an unnecessary and unworthy credit, but her mind was something completely her own. In that respect, she was exactly like Lady Potter. He paused in mid-thought, reflecting on the reasons for these unwarranted comparisons between the two women. Nothing but idle inclination, he told himself idle inclination and desire for the impossible. With a darkened mood on his own vacillation between the two ladies, he contemplated on Miss Granger's guillotine tongue. She did not possess that weapon when he had known her as a student at Garswoth. He leaned back into his pillows and sipped his thick unsweetened coffee, as he unconsciously played with the discarded newspaper on his pale green bed-sheet. The chit and her father did present an interesting puzzle to the Marquess's eye, as did the issue of the strange familiarity of Miss Bulstrode's look. Since the latter issue was easier to resolve, he turned his attention to it.

Undoubtedly, the abigail was a better success as a singer than a dancer. Though her station was humble, her origins did not appear so. She had that commanding air of someone he once knew when he was caught in the web of deceit and lies woven by the departed Lord Voldemort. Then, on recalling the look on Narcissa Malleffille's face and that brooch on Bulstrode's throat, he knew he had it she was a Lestrangle by blood. The brooch was the portrait of the last Lord Lestrangle's mother in her first bloom. Those who had discerned the brooch (and the lounging alchemist was certain that not many had) would have been subject to his scrutiny of the lady in question. She had the same dark heavy brows and hawkish deep-set eyes of the Lestranges. In fact, her resemblance to the miniature on the brooch was uncanny. She certainly possessed that jet-black hair of the father and Lord Sterne did not doubt that the Duchess of Malleffille had observed that the young woman had a look about her that marked her as a Lestrangle. Evidently, one of old Lestrangle's by-blows, thought Sterne with a smirk of self-satisfaction. Ironic, deliciously ironic! The Lestranges had no heirs and if it came out that Lord Villiers had an *affaire court* with his cousin without marrying her, there would be widespread scandal! One did not ruin ladies of genteel birth, however dubious the circumstances of their entry into the world. His godson's carte-blanche with Millicent Bulstrode (who had taken her mother's name) would constitute as a pre-contract. It would effectively bar his chances of matrimony with any other woman, unless Miss Bulstrode herself decided to cry off. Sterne traced his lips in thought it was an interesting development after all. It was a fortunate thing that the *on-dit* columns have nothing on the matter. If any of its columnists were at the Duke of Sanguine's soiree, they would have surely unearthed the truth, and the Malleffille line and all connected with them would be ruined. He wondered if Miss Granger had suspected the same...

Ah, Miss Granger, he thought, unconsciously tracing his lips with his finger. Now, here was a true puzzle. Lord Sterne ran his mind back to the Baron Orthod's behaviour at Black's and the young lady's comments at the Sanguine ball for Lady Minerva's name-day four days ago. There had to be some sort of connexion, he thought. Setting down his cup of coffee, he redirected his attention to the morning newspapers. He frowned upon lighting his eyes on the society pages. The news was too mundane and could have been uncovered by any fool who plied drink and money to the rattles who had a foot in the *ton*. Frustrated with the lack of political news, he flung the paper aside violently. It was too suspicious for the *on-dit* columns to be completely silent for four days. If there was no news, the "humble" columnist would cough up some fabrication to scandalise the matchmaking mammas of society. The *on-dit* columnist was far too silent and the Marquess did not like it. Although he disapproved of the news it presented, he could always extract the grain of truth from the embellished articles. This silence, however, was deafening and he was struck with a sense of foreboding. He did not like waiting for something disastrous to happen. He did not enjoy the sight of innocents suffering from ruined reputations because of malicious lies and hurtful gossip. Drumming his fingers lightly on his lips, he found himself unable to suppress a distinct sensation that the columnist, a certain Miss Skeeter, was presently engaged in a large exposé, which would unjustly ruin some respectable person. He would not allow that minor detail to perturb him. He had better things with which to occupy his mind. He had to pay a morning call on Miss Granger and chaperone the young people on a brisk ride in the Ranelagh Gardens. He wrinkled his nose

and curled his lips in scorn; he did not wish to play nursemaid to Draco and the Weasley girl, but self-preservation meant that he persisted in dressing himself and presenting himself at Lord Orthod's residence.

On his arrival, Sterne was surprised to hear raised voices within the Orthod household. He had always observed that the father and daughter were a fairly united couple and appeared to be the sorts who would amiably discuss their differences. As the butler ushered him into the drawing room, he was pleased to observe that his surmises were correct. The cause of the slight contention within the otherwise peaceful household lay with the other morning callers in the forms of Sir Harry Potter and his loyal companion, Lord Ronald Weasley. Miss Granger, he could see, was in a chestnut coloured riding habit and violently brandishing her crop at the two younger men.

From his vantage point in the early morning shadows, Lord Sterne could see that Lord Ronald was gesticulating wildly, in the vain hope that he was proving a point. "You cannot go out with Ginny accompanied by the greasy git!" he yelled.

"I have an appointment and I shall keep it," reasoned the spirited young lady as she turned to a mirror to pin a veil to her hat. After scooping up her riding train in her other arm, she addressed her father, "Please tell them to leave."

"Well, my dear," said Lord Orthod, "they are your friends."

"You cannot go out and subject Ginny to *his* company," reasoned Sir Harry in a pleading accents. "Villiers has an *unfortunate* reputation! How do you know Sterne will not abet him?"

Severus chose that moment to reveal himself to the company. "Ah, I see Lord Sterne is here. We shall both leave you now and call on the Duke and Duchess for Ginny," announced Miss Granger brusquely.

"Impossible, dear child, you cannot go without a chaperone," protested the Baron weakly.

His daughter's eyes glittered dangerously as she shrank the writing tablet containing some of her papers and placed them in her riding ridicule. "I go around with Harry and Ron unchaperoned too and you have not such a comment. Enough, Father! I am leaving for my appointment!"

Sir Harry and Lord Ronald looked to the delicate looking Lord Orthod for support in vain. He could only smile and say that his daughter had inherited his wife's spirit.

As she stormed off with an amused Lord Sterne, the two younger men instantly appointed themselves her guardians and hurried to catch up with the departing couple.

"We'll come along too!" declared Lord Ronald stoutly. "Just to see that you're safe."

"What I am?" Miss Granger vehemently snapped. "A Queen? Why do I have this escort? Don't put your nose where it does not belong!"

"We're worried about you," explained Sir Harry, mounting his steed.

"Oh?" she laughed ironically. "Unless I am much mistaken, I believe you have designs on my abigail and I should fear for her shattered virtue. How do I know you won't use her as Lord Villiers did!"

"Miss Granger, Villiers will be at the Park in fifteen minutes," reminded the Marquess, as he scowled at the lads.

"Shut up, Sterne, no one asked you!" interjected Lord Ronald.

Raising a finger at the young man, my Lord Sterne levitated the interlocutor from his gelding and kept him hovering in the air. "It is my business, Lord Ronald," he said silkily in a dangerous low tone. "You had better pay more attention to your quarry, lest your brother claim it."

"Oi, Harry," shouted the levitated young man, "what did he mean by that?"

Sir Harry only gave a hoot of laughter and ignored his friend for the moment. "Come on, Hermione, let's go find Ginny and play billiards or have a picnic. It will cool Ron off."

Severus glared at the bespectacled young man. "As for you, Potter," he spat quietly. "Miss Granger is not one of your precious pieces of muslin that you can order about." Then, with a sharp snap of his fingers, he released Lord Ronald from the levitating spell and apparated himself, Miss Granger and both their horses to the Offaly residence, leaving Sir Harry to assist Lord Ronald in picking himself up from the dirt track.

"I'm sorry about Ron," said Miss Granger on their arrival at the Offaly residence, when they related the morning's occurrence to her.

Sterne dismounted to help Lady Ginevra up her mare before replying, "I quite understand. He's a boorish cub with the soul of a farmer."

Hermione's laughter at the aptly expressed observation led Lady Ginevra to enquire after the person of their discussion. When the personage's identity was revealed to her, she rolled her eyes with a brilliant smile. "Ron always assumes he acts for the best interests of his friends and family, but he never realises that his impulses only result in trouble. His obstinacy is to blame."

"His prejudice is a likelier culprit," opined the spirited Miss Granger, surreptitiously examining her friend's outdated moss green riding habit.

"We all have our prejudices, ladies," reminded Sterne coolly, as he reflected on his past and the way fickle society regarded him from year to year. "It is a matter of whether we allow it to cloud our judgement."

"Wise words, Lord Sterne," commended the lady on his right, as she tipped her hat slightly to acknowledge a rapidly approaching figure. "I see, Lord Villiers has decided to be punctual for once. I'll leave you in the care of your tiger and Lord Sterne, Ginny. I have some business of my father's to execute. You'll find me at the usual watering hole in about an hour."

Before anyone could question her, she reined in her chestnut mare and galloped off. Sterne arched a brow in deep thought as he reluctantly played the role of chaperone. He had not heard Lord Orthod entreating his daughter to perform a task for him in town. What was Miss Granger's business that she required complete privacy? Lady Ginevra, he noted, did not find her friend's behaviour amiss. When questioned, the strawberry blonde beauty would only say that they were to meet Miss Granger in an hour at 'The Temple of the Muses' and its adjoining tea room. The more he thought on the matter, the more it perplexed it and as he did not like things without a definite answer, he quickly came to a resolution. Instructing the young couple to restrict their exercise to the mounds of the Park's woody areas so that they would not be observed by any idle gossips, Severus left for Black's after promising to meet the party at The Temple of the Muses.

On entering Black's, he immediately made his way to the Diogenes reading room and checked whether the latest copies of *Ars Chemica* were delivered to the club. Satisfied that they were delivered there that very morning, he picked up one of the copies and methodologically sought for a section. He had only just acquired his personal copy by post the previous evening and had read several articles of interest. However, he had a theory on a certain matter and he desperately needed to refresh his memory from his reading the previous night. Nodding to Lupin who looked up from his crossword puzzle, Severus rapidly turned the pages of the journal to the article by Hiero Gravititas entitled *Mathematical and Philosophical Roots of Flower Extracts: A Platonic Derivation*.

It read:

*In his seminal article on the neglected study of plant extracts in potions making, Severus Snape revived the classical tradition of philosophy and alchemy. While this is all very well, he chooses the Aristotelian method by removing the mathematical poetics from the art. I posit that the Aristotelian view deviates from the traditional theory and as such, cannot be fully transplanted wholly into the modern context.*



Plato, it will be noted, frequently commented that as far as potions making is concerned, simple plants are often overlooked in favour of more exotic ingredients such as dragon bile and the dried caterpillars. To remedy this, he established his academy with this motto, 'Ageômetrêtos mêdeis eisitô' to highlight a relationship between mathematics, philosophy and alchemy that has often been close but not always easygoing. Sadly, it is a neglected field of study. The figure of the alchemist-philosopher with mathematical 'pretensions' the alchemist philosopher as amateur mathematician, the philosopher who wishes to instruct mathematicians concerning the proper foundations of their discipline, or even the philosopher as mathematician manqué is not rare in the history of philosophic alchemy. Thomas Hobbes, who expounded to us the frightful state of nature that has proven so voracious during the civil war, was caught up in this tripartite relationship. One of his correspondents, Christaan Huygens expressed the hope that the time he had spent on the refutation of Hobbes' geometrical paralogisms in alchemy would not be wasted if Hobbes would but keep his promise to "abandon his extremely unsuccessful study of the whole of geometric alchemy" (Huygens, Letter 149, in Hobbes 1630: vol. 2, 538).

Of course, there have been alchemist-philosophers of mathematical sophistication and competence much greater than that of Hobbes. However, the attitude toward mathematics on the part of those philosophes de alchemie who might be described as enamoured of mathematics has tended to be ambivalent. On the one hand, poetic mathematical reasoning has presented a virtually unparalleled standard of intellectual rigor and exactitude. More particularly, the paradigm of mathematical exposition, the axiomatic-deductive system of flowers or *ordo geometricus flora* that was early (ca. 300 BC) exemplified in Euclid's *Elements*, has had immense epistemological influence. On the other hand, a not uncommon conviction of those alchemist philosophers enamoured of mathematics (who have remained alchemist-philosophers) is that the intellectual outlook of the 'dedicated poetic mathematician potions master', intense though it may be, is narrow and restricted. There are more things in heaven and earth, most (but not all) such alchemist-philosophers have believed, than are dreamt of by the poetic mathematicians in their mathematics.

Plato surely stands near the beginning of this tradition. Within Plato's circle were poetic mathematicians such as Theodorus of Cyrene (born in the first half of the fifth century), who appears as a character in Plato's *Theaetetus* along with his pupil and contemporary of Plato, *Theaetetus* himself (ca. 414-369 BC). Associated with Plato's Academy were other figures of mathematical significance. Perhaps the most important of these was Eudoxus of Cnidus, who was also an alchemist-philosopher and important astronomer. The brothers Menaechmus and Dinostratus were also accomplished poetic mathematicians connected with the Academy in the mid-fourth century. Plato seems always to have associated with poetic mathematicians, and even the casual reader of Plato will be aware that mathematical references vis-à-vis flower extract potions abound in the texts of his dialogues.

While it seems obvious from his texts that Plato holds that poetic mathematics is a (perhaps necessary) preparation for philosophic alchemy and for gaining knowledge about 'what is really real' (to *ontôs on*), other aspects of the relation between mathematics and Plato's thought are less certain. The degree to which Plato himself (or other ancient philosophers such as Zeno of Elea and Aristotle) influenced ancient poetic mathematical theory and practice is a hotly contested issue. At the heart of what is probably the predominant position on this issue is the assumption that Plato's and other alchemist-philosophers' enterprise of raising (and sometimes answering) 'deep' foundational and conceptual issues must have had significant influence on the development and practice of Greek alchemical mathematical flower extract brew derivations. In reaction, some distinguished historians of Greek poetic mathematics and alchemical-philosophers have argued that Greek "mathematical studies were autonomous, almost completely so, while the philosophical debates, developing within their own tradition, frequently drew support and clarification from mathematical work". However, one may doubt how effective this philosophical "support and clarification [drawn] from mathematical work" could have been if Snape's impression of the mathematical competence of ancient philosophers is correct: "the philosophers of antiquity are, with no exception I know of . . . inept in the management of mathematical arguments" (*Ars Chemica*, April 1815, p. 114).

My general belief is that the extant texts that we have suggest that Plato (as well as of Aristotle) possessed some considerable knowledge of poetic mathematical developments in alchemical flower extract philosophy without establishing that either was what I have called a "creative practicing mathematician" (cf. Snape). It is true that Plato (unlike Aristotle) was credited in later antiquity with some significant alchemical and mathematical accomplishments. The most important of these is a solution of one of the famous geometrical problems of antiquity: given a cube a particular volume, to find the cube of twice that volume. According to tradition, Hippocrates of Chios had, in the fifth century BC, 'reduced' this problem of 'duplicating' the cube to that of finding two mean proportionals in continued proportion between two straight lines in a simple binding catalyst potion made from extract of wormwood. (With the aid of alchemical algebra, which the Greeks of course did not have, the relation is straightforward. The continued proportion  $a:x = x:y = y:b$  yields the equations  $y^2 = bx$  and  $y = ab/x$  and, thus,  $y^3 = b^2a$ . Hence, if we let  $a = 2b$ , we obtain  $y^3 = 2b^3$ . So, the cube on the mean proportional  $y$  is twice the volume of the cube on the given line  $b$ . This of course shows us how the wormwood catalyst base binds to the actual potion it will be used in.) The attribution of a solution of this problem to Plato is late, occurring in the commentary of Eutocius (first half of sixth century CE) on the second book of Archimedes' *On the sphere and cylinder* of preserving potions in philosophic solutions and in no extant earlier source. The consensus of modern scholars is that the attribution is false, not only because of the lack of extant earlier references to it but also for several other reasons. Among those reasons is the fact that the proof attributed to Plato uses a mechanical device (a sort of carpenter's square with a straightedge that slides along one side while remaining perpendicular to that side and parallel to the other side); and Plato is reported by Plutarch to have disapproved of the use of mechanical devices in alchemical geometry, maintaining that "the good of alchemical geometry especially in extracting flower essence is thereby lost and destroyed, as it is brought back to things of sense instead of being directed upward and grasping at eternal and incorporeal images" (Plutarch, *Questiones convivales flora* 718e-f).

Whatever the exact extent of Plato's technical mathematical expertise, the primary importance of poetic mathematics with respect to his thought vis-à-vis potions lies in what might be termed his philosophy of mathematical potions. According to what certainly seems to be Plato's view, poetic mathematics is propaedeutic to alchemical philosophy (which is the 'dialectic'). Why does he hold such a view? And how is poetic mathematics supposed to fulfil this rôle? Does poetic mathematics have any intrinsic value in potions making, according to Plato? Or is it merely of extrinsic value, providing a useful or necessary mental discipline for the brewer?

These last questions lead to the issue of Plato's poetic mathematical ontology. One very common view is that Plato was a mathematical Platonist in the contemporary sense of the phrase, holding that there is a realm of mathematical reality that is not constructed by but is discovered by mathematical-alchemists. Moreover, according to this interpretation of Plato, he holds that mathematical objects occupy an intermediate ontological status between the really real (to *ontôs on* or realm of the Forms of flower extract) and sensible, physical reality just as mathematical reasoning occupies an intermediate position between philosophical reasoning or dialectic in potion ingredient selection, on the one hand, and reasoning about sensible, physical reality, on the other. However, alternative interpretations of Plato's mathematical ontology in the field of flower extract selection have a long history from ancient 'Pythagoreanising' interpretations, which tend to conflate the objects of mathematics and the Forms of flower extract (or even to mathematicise the Forms of flower extract), to some contemporary interpretations, which question whether Plato actually did postulate a realm of mathematical objects ontologically 'between' Forms of flower extract (as well as the resultant potion) and sensible, physical objects of potions ingredients.

### **Pythagoreanised Metamathematics and Ancient Mathematical Practice**

It seems that the specialisation and compartmentalisation of poetic mathematics in potions ingredient selection was a phenomenon that began to be manifest as early as the fourth century BC. If one anti-Pythagoreanises, it is possible to make room, so to speak, for such mathematical specialisation in the art of brewing. Some mathematical training (the amount may be disputable) provides one with "transferable skills" necessary for moving on to the practice of dialectic (selection of flower extract potion base) and achieving understanding of value-laden reality (viz., the actual completed potion), to *ontôs on*. But the goal of such training is not 'professional' mathematical competence in extracting flower essences or an exclusive preoccupation with mathematics (as to the measurement of each ingredient) which might or might not be interpreted as a case of arrested development. However, if one Pythagoreanises, it is rather more difficult to know what to make of increasingly professionalised, technical mathematical practice in potions making which is rapidly occurring in these modern times.

Pythagoreanised, upward-directed mathematics or meta-mathematics takes us into the rarefied realm of (value-laden) static, necessary, universal being. But, as a number of modern commentators have noted, the Platonic realm of Forms of flower essences-ordered-by-the Good seems to be a singularly unsuitable domain for the developing practice of technical ancient mathematical potion formula writing. Ancient mathematics is intimately wedded to actions, constructions, and processes. Even Socrates, in the

seventh book of the Republic (527a-b), is made to complain of the opposition between the science of geometry [in potion ingredient section] and the "words spoken by those practicing it".

Plato is surely correct in claiming that geometers who use such terminology do so "necessarily" (anangkaiōs). As Euclid's proof of the 'Pythagorean theorem' (I, 47) demonstrates, appeal to a supposed Form of squareness or the-square-in-itself in extracts of non-flowering plant extract, the-triangle-itself, etc. is not much help. Rather, we are given a right triangle ABC, asked to construct squares on the hypotenuse BC and on the sides BA and AC, to draw a line through the vertex of the right angle and parallel to either of the sides of the square constructed on the hypotenuse BC, etc (constructions to be made) are just as essential to Euclidean geometry as propositions to be 'seen' or understood. Even in the supposedly Eudoxian proportion theory of Euclid V and the number theory of Euclid VII, idealised but still quasi-physical processes of manipulation (especially where choice of ingredients are concerned) figure centrally. The concept of one magnitude (megethos) or number (arithmos) 'measuring' (katametrein) another magnitude/number figures largely in these books. The idea is that of taking the smaller magnitude/number and reiterating or 'repeatedly laying it down' until it comes to 'cover' (equal without-remainder) the larger magnitude/number. And in the Euclidean algorithm for finding the greatest common measure (aliquot part) of two numbers that are not relatively prime (Euclid VII, 2), there is a process of repeated reciprocal 'taking away' of lesser from greater numbers (represented by line segments) until "some number will be left which will measure the one before it." A Greek number (arithmos) must be some definite (non-infinite) plurality of units (monades), where the unit is either some (kind of) physical object or an 'abstract' unit; and, indeed, even lowly calculation (addition, subtraction) depends on treating numbers as collections of units. If (as Plato may suggest at Phaedo 101bff), the cause of a group of five things being five in number and a group of three things being three in number is the participation of the groups in the non-composite, eternal, unchanging Forms of the-three-in-itself and the-five-in-itself, respectively, these Forms are not going to be much use in arithmetic calculation (or in ancient number theory, for that matter). Although the import of Aristotle's critical discussion (beginning in the sixth chapter of Book M of the Metaphysics) of non-comparable numbers is controversial, he seems to be making the point that 'mathematical numbers' (i.e., the numbers actually used by mathematicians) must be constituted from comparable units or monads. But with respect to the numbers posited by those who "say that numbers are separate substances and the first causes of things," (Meta. 13.6.1080a13-14) "after 1, [there is] a distinct 2 which does not include the first 1, and a 3 which does not include the 2, and the other numbers similarly" (1080a33-35). There is thus a kind of discontinuity 'disconnect', if you will between these 'higher' (Form?) numbers and the numbers encountered in the actual 'mathematical' practice of extracting flower extract for brewing.

It is curious that Aristotle is the source of what is perhaps the most direct, early evidence for the existence of mathematical Platonism in flower-potion extraction, in the contemporary sense (hereafter, just 'Platonism'). This is the doctrine that the practice of mathematics in potions lies in the discovery (not the stipulation or construction) of properties and relations of mathematical objects that have a timeless and necessary existence that is independent of the physical, material world (viz., the meaning of the blossoms transmitted through their extracts). To begin with, Aristotle countenances a sort of methodological or operational Platonism, "each thing," he says, "is best understood if one posits what is not separable as separate, as the arithmetician and geometer do" (Meta. 13.3.1078a21-23). It seems that Aristotle has here discerned a common feature of mathematical potion practice, of 'the way mathematical alchemists think'. But he claims that Plato transforms operational Platonism into an ontological doctrine.

Aristotle, of course, rejects the inference from operational to metaphysical Platonism. Although some of the details of Aristotle's own doctrine are less than pellucid, he seems to have held some sort of constructive-abstractionist doctrine of the objects of the mathematical science of potions brewing. Snape, for instance, owes much of his theory to Aristotle in this respect. Some contemporary scholars influenced by Snape's seminal article believe that the evidence that Plato himself made such an inference is so weak that they refuse to attribute a doctrine of mathematical ontological 'intermediates' in extracting flower essences to him. Not surprisingly, the result is often a very Aristotelian interpretation of Plato on mathematical potion making: For example, in Snape's estimation, "neither Plato nor Aristotle is committed to an ontology of separately existing the mathematical objects of the various flower extracts. The difference between them seems rather to be that Aristotle is able to give a more detailed account [with the aid of the 'qua operator'] of the nature of the imagination and of mathematical abstraction in the measurement of the extract needed".

Ergo, this shows, I believe, some tension between mathematical platonism and a Pythagoreanising interpretation of Plato. The postulation of a realm of ontological mathematical 'intermediates' in extracting flower or plant essences simply to accommodate mathematical practice would seem to introduce a level of ontology that has been stripped of value and, in that sense, is discontinuous with the value laden realm of forms, organised by the Good. Such an ontological discontinuity makes it even more mysterious how technical mathematical practice in potions (as posited by Snape) could substantively contribute to value laden, Pythagoreanising upward-directed mathematics of potions making (as Snape practices). I have posited a Neo-Platonist attempt to finesse the ontological problem. Mathematical reasoning in potions making (and more importantly, flower extracts) is the constructive activity of imagination (phantasia), which is constrained not by abstraction from sense experience but by Forms of the flowers themselves apprehended by nous.

## Conclusion

In our age of intellectual specialisation and compartmentalisation, there is pervasive scepticism whether 'technical' knowledge, however deep and systematic, has much to do with Wisdom. Mathematical potions began to be developed as a technical and specialised intellectual discipline by the Greeks by at least the fourth century BC. There is thus some irony in the fact that Plato, at this same time, appears to be committed to the belief that there is a profound connection between mathematical knowledge of potion making and Wisdom of the results when brews are made from flower extract. Pythagoreanising Platonism evidently early became and remains a programme for securing and explaining that connection.

Is it a plausible programme? My own view is that the historical development of mathematical potions suggests that it is not. There certainly is an aesthetic dimension to the way many mathematical alchemists (such as Snape), particularly those who work in certain areas of 'pure mathematical alchemy', conceptualise their discipline. However, I am inclined to think that the aesthetic value that they discern is very much discipline-specific. While it may well be true that there is a sense in which a mathematical alchemist such as Severus Snape has a beautiful symmetry, it does not follow that his mind's creations are therefore kalos kai agathos, "noble and good," either in the Platonic or some other, more common sense? Pythagoreanising Platonism must confront the negative answer that land, I think, most of us are inclined to give.

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After his second reread of the article, Lord Sterne could not help but frown in slight perturbation. "So, that's it," he murmured to himself. Everything now appeared clear to him. At least the pieces of the puzzle fit into a coherent sphere. Rushing out of Black's amidst Lord Percy's narration as to his abilities to marry money, Severus made his way to Lackington's Temple of the Muses.

## Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Belladonna means "hush" and "silence". Belladonna's most famous other name, 'deadly nightshade' is drawn from knowledge of its narcotic and ultimately poisonous properties. Other names for it are 'devil's cherries', 'naughty man's cherries' and 'devil's herb'. In herbal remedies, belladonna was used as a sedative. Europeans in the dark ages (especially the priests and priestesses) used to take belladonna to produce prophetic powers or to contact the spirit world. Italian ladies of the renaissance used to apply tiny drops of belladonna juice to their eyes so as to enlarge the pupils, believing that this gave them greater brilliance. View the belladonna here <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/choisy/fleurs/dessins/atropa%20belladonna.jpg> and

[http://www.giftinfo.uni-ainz.de/Italiano/images/pflanzen/Atropa\\_belladonna\\_Tollk\\_3.gif](http://www.giftinfo.uni-ainz.de/Italiano/images/pflanzen/Atropa_belladonna_Tollk_3.gif)

(2) Hiero Gravitas' article in *Ars Chemica* is not to be taken too seriously. Remove all the potions bit and it would explain to you the theory of forms in the Platonic works. If the article is ghastly, I apologise. All my beats and prelim readers didn't get this Severus figures out what he does because a certain young lady was careless in her speech and replicated some part of her article when speaking to him, please cf. to the previous chapter.

There is another meaning in the article, I leave it to you to figure it out.

(3) Some readers may ask me why I refer to Narcissa as Narcissa Mallefille in this chapter, please refer to the section on correct forms of address in the preface/introduction.

(4) *Affaire court* (pronounced ef-fair coo) means "short fling" or "short romantic liaison" in French it was popular phrase between the years 1780-1820.

(5) Hermione goes off to write in 'The Temple of the Muses'. Towards the end of the chapter, Severus thinks of it as 'Lackington's Temple of the Muses'. This was a real bookshop in Regency London. Not as famous as Hatchard's, but in those days it was the Borders of the town. It sold books, manuscripts, music sheets. Like its modern contemporary, Borders, The Temple of the Muses had a café where customers can have refreshment. The wealthier customers could have private parlours where they could eat and do their own work and whatnot (it was a haven for writers with nowhere to write).

From 1778 to 1798, James Lackington, the bookseller, had a shop at No. 32, Finsbury Place South in the southeast corner of Finsbury Square called "The Temple of the Muses". The shop had a frontage of 140 feet and was one of the sights of London. On top of the building was a dome with a flagpole, which flew a flag when Mr Lackington was in residence. In the middle of the shop was a huge circular counter around which, it was said, a coach and six could have been driven, so large were the premises. A wide staircase led to the "lounging rooms" and the first of a series of galleries with bookshelves. The books became shabbier and cheaper as one ascended. This, the first large book emporium was the pioneer of Remaindering, buying up bulk stock from elsewhere at a bargain price and selling cheap. Every one of the thousands of books in the shop was marked with its lowest price and numbered according to a printed catalogue. In 1792, Lackington estimated his profits for the year to be about £5000. At this period, he issued more than three thousand catalogues ("A Catalogue of Books, in All Languages, and Classes of Learning, for the Years 1806-7, Now Selling for Ready Money, at the Low Prices Affixed, Warranted Complete, by Lackington, Allen, & Co. Temple of the Muses, Finsbury Square, London.") every year. In 1793 Lackington sold a fourth part of his business to Robert Allen who had been brought up in the shop. The firm of Lackington, Allen and Co. became one of the largest in the book trade, selling upwards of 100,000 volumes yearly at their very extensive premises.

Lackington issued promotional tokens with a facing bust of the proprietor (this design, which was not particularly successful, yielded place to a more orthodox profile portrait in 1795). The reverse design, used with minor modifications in both years was a figure of Fame blowing a trumpet, proclaiming Lackington's firm the cheapest booksellers in the world. The edges of these tokens usually bore advice as to redemption, on several varieties, payment was guaranteed at the "Temple of the Muses". After Lackington's retirement, his nephew continued the store. Later in the early 1800s the bookstore was sold to Jones and Company for distribution of their books and other works. The shop burned down in 1841.

(6) Writing tablets were very fashionable then among the pedants. Often a gentleman's item, I have endowed Hermione with it. It was a small silver case containing a tablet and matching pencil was handy for jotting down appointments or the name of a hot tip at Newmarket (where you go to see the horse races). The case and pencil might be inlaid with dyed ivory or mother of pearl.

(7) Between the years 1780-1820, the little bag/purse thing that ladies carried was called a ridicule. It was only in 1820-1860s that it was called a reticule. I have kept the old-fashioned spelling in this plot. Why was called a ridicule? Because it seemed a ridiculous notion in the late 18th/early 19th century to carry outside the dress those personal belongings formerly kept in large pockets beneath the dress. When waists rose and skirts narrowed, bulky pockets could no longer be accommodated without spoiling the line of the dress, and so the ridicule became an essential accessory. Riding reticules were made for ladies so that their purses would match their riding outfits.

(8) The term "tiger" in Regency times referred to the chap who accompanied you and helped managed your horses when you were out driving or riding. He is also your trusted carriage/curricle (fill in vehicle of choice) driver on those rare days when you are not driving. If you watch period dramas, these are the fellows behind your curricle, carriage or whatever it is. A tiger is MORE THAN a footman. Your tiger would be a liveried groom, generally small, generally young. An owner-driven curricle or phaeton typically had a groom's seat between the springs on which the tiger sat. The single-horse cabriolet had a platform at the rear on which the tiger stood. He also managed the horses when his master ascended to or descended from the seat, and sometimes took the reins to exercise the horses while his master temporarily left the vehicle. A small, lightweight tiger was preferred in order to maintain the proper balance. In fact, it was something of a status symbol to have the smallest possible tiger.

(9) "Carte-blanche" is Regency cant for an offer by a gentleman that includes living under his protection, but not marriage. In short, it is an offer to be installed as the gentleman's mistress.

(10) "By-blows" is one of the many Regency slang phrases for illegitimate children.

(11) "Pieces of muslin" is one of the many Regency slang phrases for women of easy virtue, or mistresses that one keeps.

(12) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? You will see why when I reveal Millicent Bulstrode's parentage...

(13) Ranelagh gardens adjoining the Pensioners hospital became popular as a place to escape the city and take in the cleaner air in Chelsea. Balls, concerts, dinners and of course gossip were shared here almost daily. It quickly exceeded Vauxhall in popularity, but its popularity waned until the season of 1804 when the fashionable set abandoned it entirely. I chose this park for Ginny and Draco's rendezvous because it is unfashionable.

(14) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the ton.

(15) *On-dit* is French for "we tell". In the context of Regency speech, it meant gossip about the town that is usually published in the newspapers.

(16) There were many clubs in London during the Regency period. The oldest and most famous of these was White's. But within this story, I have renamed White's. I call it Black's (after Sirius Black). If you are curious as to name of Black's and these sorts of gentlemen's clubs, read on. I have modelled Black's heavily after White's.

White's can be found at 37-38 St James's Street. It was founded 1736. White's is the oldest club in London, growing out of White's Chocolate House which opened in 1698. The building burnt down in 1733 and so the club moved a few doors up St James's Street and then to its current location around 1755. It was sometime around 1736 or just after that it established as a club and included among its membership of the time such great personages as the Duke of Devonshire, Earl of Rockingham, Bubb Doddington and Sir John Cope.

There was such a clamour for membership that by 1745 it was decided that a second club would be established under the same roof, and this was called the 'Young Club'. The original group were called the 'Old Club'. Vacancies in the Old Club were filled by members of the Young Club. It wasn't until around 1780/81 that the unwieldy system of administration between the two clubs was amalgamated. In Regency times, it faced its great rival, Brookes's, across St James's Street and while it was regarded as a Tory club. This distinction meant little in practice as gentlemen were generally members of both. It was one of the few clubs that set itself up with premises of its own. White's, like Brookes's had restricted admission, with members being elected. It was remarked that no man was refused entry who "ties a good knot in his handkerchief, keeps his hands out of his breeches pockets, and says nothing." White's is most famous for its Bay Window which was built in 1811 and quickly became the preserve of Brummell and his friends. Other noted members who frequented White's, and the notorious bow-window, were Lord Alvanelly, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Worcester, Lord Foley and Lord Sefton.

Whist had been voted a dull game by the members and deep gambling was made in hazard, faro and other games of pure chance. The betting book, like the one at Brookes's, was always open on the table for bets of the most trivial nature to be laid at any time.

(17) It goes without saying that whenever a gentleman or lady of the ton (you don't have to be titled to be one of ton, you have to be of genteel birth that's enough) goes out riding and driving, he/she will be always be accompanied by a groom. If one goes riding, one's groom will follow at a respectful distance away to give you some privacy. Should the master/mistress stop at a place to have tea after riding, the groom would be obliged to hire a private parlour for him/her to rest and take refreshment. While the master/mistress is in the private parlour, the groom takes himself to the stables and rest and to await his master/mistress's orders. If one is driving (the type of vehicle be it curricle, gig or whatever is immaterial), one can either have a groom or tiger. Whether you have a groom or tiger depends on how fashionable or how rich or how eccentric you are. The groom and/or tiger will be at the back of vehicle in a box. If your vehicle has no groom/tiger box or spare driver seat, you have a groom who follows you at a respectful distance away to give you some privacy. However, by 1818, it was all right for members of both sexes to drive a phaeton or a high perch phaeton without a tiger or groom in attendance provided one was at the famous promenade areas to be seen by other ton members. Some really eccentric heirs and heiress could be tolerated by Society if they were to drive/ride alone. They were tolerated because of their birth (especially if they were from aristocratic families famed for a touch of madness and/or eccentricity) and money. Keep this in mind.

## Chapter 9 - Locating the Bittersweet nightshade among the red Primroses

Chapter 10 of 23

Lord Sterne confronts Miss Granger at the Temple of the Muses on Hiero Gravitass' latest Ars Chemica article. She is not amused! Will he expose her? Will she hex him? Just where are Villiers and Lady Ginevra when you need them?

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 9 Locating the Bittersweet nightshade among the red Primroses

Five minutes later, Lord Sterne entered the private parlour at the Temple of the Muses' adjoining tea room, having paused on the way to assure himself, by a swift critical debate with his mind's two halves, that he had indeed the correct assessment of the truth. He was satisfied with his analysis. He had compared his previous conversations with the person in question with the article that he had just reread. His deductions, he decided, were exactly logical, quite suited to the person he was contemplating. He had not considered that his intrusion into another's private reverie was rude and unwelcome. However, good sense held him slightly back and fortunately, instilled in him a certain diffidence of manner. The unease, he quickly dismissed, for the foremost thought on his mind was to prove his deductions right.

On entering the parlour proper, he paused for a moment on the threshold, surveying the lady in question. True to his surmises, she was indeed seated at the adjoining tea room in a private parlour writing furiously on her papers. From his vantage point, he could see that her dark hair, plainly pulled back at the top of her head, was neatly swept away from her face. The look on her face showed that she was both hard at work and deep in thought. Lord Sterne, as a man of reticent habits could appreciate her need for privacy when at work; and as such debated with himself as to whether he should interrupt her. He was loath to intrude upon the charming sight of the lady hard at work with her scattered papers and her veiled riding hat carelessly tossed on the far end of the writing surface. He smirked ruefully at himself the sight before him reminded him of himself hard at work in his study. In spite of himself, he found that he was charmed by her absentminded groping around the table for her teacup. Nothing seemed to be able to tear the woman from her papers and her rapid scribbling.

As she waved dismissively at a particularly lonely and annoying insect of sorts, Lord Sterne felt his curiosity triumphing over propriety. Thus, he quickly cast a spell to conjure a carved rose on the ceiling above the writing lady and silently stepped forward in the small parlour.\* The lady lifted her head at that moment and her dark chocolate eyes hardened coldly at the sight of the intruder. Their expression was of mingled surprise and disapproval. To Lord Sterne's amusement, she raised and passed her left hand over the papers and muttered something under her breath. The lady, on the other hand, was enraged, for to her wrath, the palely silent Marquess removed his hat and affected her a low bow without releasing her startled glare from his gaze. He seemed to be appraising her more precisely and she did not enjoy feeling exposed.

However, Miss Granger was not for nothing dubbed *la Philosophe*. She remained in her seat and arched her brows at the sight of the carved rose in the ceiling, which she instantly knew heralded a tête-à-tête. Then with a slight reluctant nod in the direction of the intruder, she said with chilling hauteur, "Lord Sterne, I believe?"

He nodded and took another step cautiously forward into the parlour. "Yes. And you are Miss Granger?" he mocked in a biting tone.

She threw her head back in a manner calculated to abash him. "Where are the two grey doves?"

"At the Park. They will be here in half an hour. Were you expecting someone else?"

It was so unexpected a comment that it elicited an involuntary nervous laugh from her. Lord Sterne scowled at her response; after all, was it not natural for a witty creature such as Miss Granger to have discerning admirers? Her surprise at the comment on her non-existent secret assignation was quickly mastered and she made another attempt to put the formidable man out of countenance by gesturing him to sit, by saying in a quelling tone, "Would you have some tea?" Gathering up her papers, she turned away from his penetrating gaze.

He smirked in response and for deftly catching her wrist, he received a reproachful glower. Pointedly ignoring her look of fearless disdain he said lowly with false hesitation, "I came to see a scholar named I am uncertain of the person's name I only know that the individual has *the initials H. G.*"

"My wrist," she said frostily and he released his grip, noting with interest that she did not seek to rub the region where his fingers had been. Glaring at him, she leaned forward and reorganised the papers on the table. "Your only clue, I presume?"

Lord Sterne smirked, unconsciously tracing his lips with his long fingers. He was intrigued that she had neither paled nor cowered at the underhanded insinuation. "Since that person is not here; I shall pretend that I came to see you, Miss Granger if you *are* Miss Granger?"

She poured him a cup of tea and kept her amused but wary eyes on his. "I am Miss Granger. Since I have had some prior acquaintance with you, you must forgive me if I ask you why you should doubt it?"

"Well, Severus Snape, my Lord Marquess of Sterne, if you do not apologise for your incivility, you will face my wrath!" she thought, waiting expectantly for his answer.

"Because the Miss Granger I know would be more civil and catholic in her behaviour," he replied. "I came here with the expectation of meeting a reasonable person."

"I am perfectly reasonable now."

"You were better equipped for reason when black has been committed on white," he drawled carelessly, before sipping the strong black unsweetened tea.

Her eyes took on almost metallic in wariness. "No doubt I should be grateful for the compliment however inelegantly expressed!"

"It was not a compliment," he growled.

"Ah no! *How stupid of me!* The Duke of Sanguine had told me of your remarkable manners and from your forcible way of drawing attention to your habits I must own that he is utterly correct you *are* famed for your incivility."

"Did he? I must thank him for being such a reliable gazette," he quietly replied. "Why are you here?"

"I might ask you the same."

"I have already revealed my business and intent," he purred dangerously.

"Have you?" Miss Granger straightened herself and glared at him.

"Yes, and it is only fair if you reciprocated the action."

"My affairs are my business," she riposted.

The flash of a sardonic smirk vanquished the scowl in his eyes. "So you say, though sometimes, one's discoveries could lead to greater repercussions."

"Are you speaking of *your discoveries*, my lord?" she asked cautiously.

"Discoveries in general," he purred, as his eyes searched her face. "Are we dagger-drawing?"

"It appears that both our weapons are at each other's throats," she replied coolly. "And I can as yet uncover no motive for your attack."

Lord Sterne raised a brow and curled his lips contemptuously. "So you say."

"I am not accustomed, sir, to listen to the sort of language you use in private!" Miss Granger frostily declared, gathering her papers once more.

"Oh, is *that* all! A thousand apologies, madam!"

"It is not so much your vocabulary that is at fault, rather your less than engaging manner in riding rough-shod over people such as myself, whom you think beneath your touch!"

He leaned forward and frowned at her, his eyes glittering in excitement and uncertainty. "I am only so to people who bore me and you are not one of those fools."

"Then why are you in such a mood with me?"

"Because you put me out of temper."

"Am I to be thus obliged to you?" she scoffed the ironic gratitude. "You have flattered me long enough, Lord Sterne. I demand to know your true business," she insisted and moved to replace her papers in her writing tablet.

"No, Miss Granger," he purred, placing his finger on the papers. "I am interested to know how your morning's work was done."

"At this table, amidst that buzzing beetle's droning and my thoughts."

"You know what I mean, Miss Granger," he said and reached out for the whole stack of papers with his wand drawn.

"Expelliarmus," she said coldly and knocked his wand of his hand, retrieving her papers with her free hand. Pointing her wand at him, she continued, "I had expected better of you, Lord Sterne. Pray, what interest do my papers generate? A woman's words are all they are; they can be of no interest to a worldly creature such as yourself."

"Call it an intellectual exercise," he drawled as he re-seated himself opposite her.

"I am not amused."

"Neither am I," he answered, silently summoning his wand to his hand. "Expelliarmus! Accio Miss Granger's papers!" Once these commands were issued, Hermione was flung back in her seat. She scowled at him when she realised her wand and papers were in his possession. She hoped that he would only see what she wanted him to see on the papers. "Very clever, Miss Granger, now, if you had been honest, this would be unnecessary."

"I am calling you out."

He laughed coldly and stared earnestly at her. "Absurd! You will not live, whatever your choice of weapon."

"And you will have to leave England upon my death. Or have you forgotten the existence of the Bow Street Aurors or the duelling laws?"

"I have not," he assured her coolly.

"Then why do you persist?"

"Why do *you persist?*"

"I only wish to confirm that which my mind has told me."

"Which is nothing at all if you are resorting to such mean tactics," she snapped

"Tut, tut, Miss Granger," Lord Sterne purred with narrowing eyes. "You reveal much more than you know."

She rolled her eyes in exasperation as she hit on her perceived reason for his odd behaviour. "You are no longer a spy. The war is over. Your feelings of suspicion are ill-placed. This is 1815! It is a modern world. The French are no longer our naval enemies and the Crown is safe."

"Politics has nothing to do with my behaviour, Miss Granger." Pointing her wand at her, he turned briefly to the papers. "A short story? Such a badly written one too, German has never been one of your stronger languages. Who would have known you were capable of writing romances."

"Sneer all you want, Sterne!" she spat, all formality abandoned. "It is my hobby and I beg you to leave me to it!"

Lord Sterne looked at her hard chocolate pupils with his narrowing eyes. "Is that a note of relief I detect in your voice?" He observed that her breathing had quickened and that the wretched insect was gone either that or it must have found a perch on which it could rest.

She laughed. "Your imagination is more vivid than mine!"

"We shall see," he murmured.

"So we shall," she said and reclaimed her wand. "Touché, my Lord Marquess." Lord Sterne's eyes flew to hers in a brief moment of startled realisation, for he was quite taken aback by the young lady's uncompromising spirit. For a perilous moment, Lord Sterne hovered on the brink of losing his temper, but his quick logic came to his rescue. Instead, he yielded to the impulse to come to points with her. He curled his lips into a condescending smirk. "How unhandsome of you to have given me such a set down," she continued.

"How unjust of you to accuse me of giving you a set down when I have made myself so very plain!" he retorted.

"It is to be hoped," said Miss Granger with great feeling, as she levelled her wand at his, "that we are not destined to consort with each other at the end of our bargain. You arouse in me an almost overwhelming desire to give you the best trimming you have ever had in your life."

He bowed slightly as if honoured by her tribute. "How can you do so when I am famed for my incivility? I should instantly meet you verbally in your own terms. Since I am an ill-mannered man and you are a well-bred woman, you would be bound to come off the loser in such an encounter."

"I do not know that for a fact; you may have to prove it first."

"Prove it, you say?" he drawled in a deliberately quiet manner, "Very well." Then, directing his attention to the papers, he countered the encryption spell there and read silently off the first page.

"Fiend!" she hissed, at the realisation that he had uncovered the truth.

Casting a stronger encryption spell on the papers before he handed them back to her, he said, "Everything appears to be in order."

She narrowed her eyes guardedly. "What do you intend to do with it?"

"Nothing. It has confirmed my deductions and I am once again at peace with the world," he answered wryly.

"Is blackmail part of your repertoire too? I have prepared myself for that eventuality. You will not get a shilling or any other object from me!" she vehemently announced.

His eyes took in the sight of the woman who maintained her dignity so well under pressure. Curling his lips into a smirk, he lowly drawled, "I expected nothing less from you."

"You really are hateful, you know."

"I know," he said with a look of supreme conceit. "These are my best talents."

"You are a misanthrope; I wonder if you even like anyone enough to respect them."

He surprised them both by voicing the truth. "Yes, the deceased Lady Potter and you."

"Still wearing the willow," she asked, ignoring his second indicator.

"It appears so."

"How do I know I can trust you?"

"You don't. I know I can't trust myself and that should be reason enough for you to do the same."

Miss Granger gathered her papers and writing tablet. After shrinking them to fit into her riding ridicule. "Arrogant caprice!"

"Insufferable know-it-all!"

"You are the know-it-all, sir; and you are insupportable!"

"I know," the Marquess answered coolly, tracing his lips in thought.

"How long have you known? How long have you suspected?"

"I have been sure since ten o'clock this morning; I have suspected for almost a week and a half."

"How?" she gasped incredulously, gripping the edge of the table for strength.

He smirked and sneered quietly, "You ought to be more careful with your spoken words; they have the tendency to appear in your black on white"

"I will rely on your discretion," came her reply, as she avoided his eyes.

Lord Sterne berated himself for giving up part of his armour at the revelation. Why had he confessed to his tendre for the lovely Lily Evans? Why had he been driven to confide in the chit before him? How could he have told her he liked her! Fortunately, she had enough tact not to allude to his faux pas.

"My lord," Miss Granger began slowly, breaking his self-reflective train of thought, "I will expect you to keep your promise."

"What I know, I know I will no longer speak on the matter."

It was just as well that their conversation ended on that note, for Lady Ginevra and Lord Villiers burst into the book shop's tea room with a tray of scones, tarts and laughter.

"Clearly, someone had a good day," thought Lord Sterne, as he deftly dissipated the sub rosa\* spell from the ceiling and nodded to Miss Granger. He had to be certain that he had assuaged the fear of exposure dancing in her expressive chocolate-coloured eyes.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Readers may ask me how did Severus know Hermione is Hiero Gravitas? Simple. Read SS and HG's conversations at Sanguine's ball in Ch 7, now reread the journal

article in Ch 8. Tell me what you see? The more careful among you will notice that HG quotes from her own article in *Ars Chemica*, a week before the journal was released to the public.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Bittersweet Nightshade represents "truth".

The bittersweet nightshade is also called deadly nightshade and the bittersweet. It is a poisonous climbing or trailing plant (*Solanum dulcamara*) native to Eurasia and a widespread weed in North America. It also has violet flowers with recurved corolla lobes and red berries. It gets its name from its roots – it was believed that the roots first taste bitter, but if you chew it, it becomes sweet. View it here <http://www.shortcourses.com/naturelog/bittersweet-nightshade.jpg> and <http://www.lightchasers.com/Content/Gallery5/CU%20Bittersweet%20Nightshade%20VT%20600%20Mat.jpg>

(2) Red primroses represent "unpatronised merit"

View it here <http://www.mooseycountrygarden.com/perennial-plants/red-primrose.jpg>. The name primrose comes from medieval French and medieval Latin, "prima rosa" which is first rose

\* (3) Roses are very strange flowers. They are not among my favourites, but are still an interesting study. I know many of you are confused as to the "sub rosa" thing that I mentioned. Very well, I shall explain. But to do so, you need a small history lesson, so bear with me.

The Romans loved the rose and used it lavishly, strewing their floors, their heroes and even wine with rose petals. The little god, Cupid, was given the rose by his Mother, Venus, and in turn, gave it to the god of silence, Harpocrates. A rose carved into or hung from a ceiling meant that the conversation held beneath it was in confidence, or sub rosa. So you see, the roses are not all above love as the romantics running around the world would have us think. Sub rosa conversations are just between you and the other person; no one else must come to know of the content of your conversation.

(4) "Dagger-drawing" is Regency slang for quarrelling.

(5) "Trimming" is Regency slang for severe scolding.

(6) References to "black on white" refers to writing. How? Paper = white; ink = black; ink on paper = black on white. Black (i.e. ink) is also a double pun – the ink of the printing press (for the journal article) and the ink that is used to write the drafts of articles.

(7) Severus's "What I know, I know I will no longer speak" line is adapted from Shakespeare's *Othello*.

(8) Writing tablets were very fashionable then among the pedants. Often a gentleman's item, I have endowed Hermione with it. It was a small silver case containing a tablet and matching pencil was handy for jotting down appointments or the name of a hot tip at Newmarket (where you go to see the horse races). The case and pencil might be inlaid with dyed ivory or mother of pearl.

(9) Between the years 1780-1820, the little bag/purse thing that ladies carried was called a ridicule. It was only in 1820-1860s that it was called a reticule. I have kept the old-fashioned spelling in this plot. Why was called a ridicule? Because it seemed a ridiculous notion in the late 18th/early 19th century to carry outside the dress those personal belongings formerly kept in large pockets beneath the dress. When waists rose and skirts narrowed, bulky pockets could no longer be accommodated without spoiling the line of the dress, and so the ridicule became an essential accessory. Riding reticules were made for ladies so that their purses would match their riding outfits.

(10) Readers may dislike the fact that I called the Aurors, the Bow Street Aurors. This is a Regency story remember? I modelled the Bow Street Aurors in this story after the Runners. The Bow Street runners were like the local policemen of the age. You may see the Bow Street Office here, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/LAbow.jpg>. In 1740 Sir Thomas de Veil, established a court house in Bow Street near the Opera House in Covent Garden. Ten years later, his successor, Henry Fielding (yes the author), formed the Bow Street Runners. Initially nicknamed Robin Redbreasts, on account of their scarlet waistcoats, the original eight Bow Street Runners were London's first band of constables. Their functions included serving writs, detective work and arresting offenders. The Bow Street Runners travelled all over the country in search of criminals and gained a reputation for honesty and efficiency. John Stafford, Chief Clerk at Bow Street, used several spies, including John Castle and George Edwards to help arrest several members of the Spencean Philanthropists, a group who were involved in the Spa Riots and the Cato Street Conspiracy. The formation of the London Metropolitan Police force by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 brought an end to their activities.

(11) Some readers might take offence at the phrase "tendre" used here. I understand that some might look on it as a bastardisation of the French. I know the original phrase is "tendre penchant". In Regency English, the term "tendre" is usually understood to mean a strong liking for. The term "tendre" was used by W. M. Thackeray, who wrote, "You poor friendless creatures are always having some foolish tendre" in *Vanity Fair*. So you see, in English, it is perfectly acceptable.

## Chapter 10 - A Sprig of Lavender

### *Chapter 11 of 23*

Miss Granger mulls over the confrontation she had with Lord Sterne over her secret identity as Hiero Gravitus. She is interrupted by a visit from Lady Sybill Trelawney. What does she want? Does she mean our heroine harm? Read on?

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books & ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

Extensive footnotes follow the chapter. Readers who are antipathetic to them have been warned.

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 10 A Sprig of Lavender

Four days and eight bouquets of throatworts later, Hermione Granger was still in shock. She owned that she was not frightened by Lord Sterne's discovery of her secret, but she would rather know for certain that he could remain perfectly silent on her writing. Hiero Gravitus was doing very well in the London scientific community. His papers were read by nearly all the students in Oxford and Cambridge; *Ars Chemica* had even granted a monthly twenty page article space to him for a generous portion of £20 a year. Hermione was unwilling to surrender all that she had worked for. However, she noted with some unease that Lord Sterne made no attempt to reveal her secret to the on-dit columns. She had been scanning the pages of *The Daily Prophet* for days and there was nothing except the 'scandal' of the opening of a new branch of Lord George and Lord Frederick Weasley's shop at Oxford Street. She was surprised that the morning newspaper had written this about her:

*The most unexpected debutante of the Season has been seen turning many heads with her witty conversation. Though initially predicted by the Almack's patronesses to be 'unremarkable', Miss Granger appears to have outshone even the beautiful but penniless Lady Ginevra Weasley. The editor has it on excellent authority that she has attracted the attentions of not one worthy admirer BUT two. Miss Granger has been seen riding in the parks and pleasure gardens with Lord Villiers, the dashing young blond heir to the dukedom of Mallefille. The Duchess is reputedly pleased with her son's choice. Meanwhile, Lord Sterne, the taciturn and disagreeable scholar long rumoured to be enamoured of the late Lady Potter, has been seen escorting Miss Granger to several societal events. Lately, he has been seen visiting Lord Orthod's residence so as to spend more time with the unusual young lady.*

Miss Granger could not fault the newspaper for its accurate report. She did receive Lord Sterne daily, as did her father. She had also frequently met Lord Villiers on his assignations with Lady Ginevra. Her natural presence of mind had rendered necessary the revelation of all to her father. Though Lord Orthod was inclined to disbelieve his daughter, her eager face and earnest eyes soon convinced him otherwise. He was not taken aback that she had elected to assist in her friend's romance, for it was in her nature to be loyal to her friends. Despite his private misgivings of Lord Villiers, Lord Orthod gradually found that the young man had some redeeming characteristics. He had undergone many changes under the positive influence of Lady Ginevra and the guidance of Lord Sterne; where Lord Villiers was previously a rake and an out-and-outer, he was now thoughtful and self-reflective. In fact, Lord Orthod had a long interview with Lord Villiers in which he gave the young man much advice and encouragement. While the Baron could condone his daughter's hand in the romance between Lady Ginevra and Lord Villiers, he could not fully approve of her 'pretended' romantic liaison with Lord Sterne. He may be a short-sighted old man, but Lord Orthod could sense that there was something more in their interactions than they could discern themselves. Oddly, his daughter and Lord Sterne were oblivious to it. He had attempted to bring it to Hermione's attention, but had thus far only incurred her dismissive laughter.

"My dear," began Lord Orthod, as he placed the political news section of the paper on the table. "You must do something about Lord Villiers."

"What do you mean, Father?" his daughter asked, sipping a cup of tea and carelessly tossing aside the society pages.

"Have you told the boy to declare himself to her family yet? I know that Offaly and his wife will be discreet."

"They will be discreet," said Miss Granger with conviction, "but their youngest son would not."

"Utter tosh! He loves his sister very much and would be happy for her!"

"Ha!" she exclaimed with a ladylike snort. "He loves her, of that I do not doubt. But he is indiscreet. He is already prejudiced against Villiers. He wouldn't even let me walk in my gardens with Villiers! He cannot be trusted to keep his tongue idle. Harry cannot restrain him all the time!"

"But surely, the Duchess of Offaly can!"

"She can yes! But her husband cannot!"

"There has to be some resolution," cried the exasperated Lord Orthod.

"Frederick and George Weasley are aware of their amour," said Hermione thoughtfully, "and they are very circumspect at least, they have remained so. I will talk the matter over with Sterne when he arrives."

Lord Orthod raised a brow and surreptitiously coughed his approval. "You can trust him, my pet, he is a nice man."

"Nice?" she laughed in ironic disdain. "He is very uncivil. He declared himself so."

"Did he? What a singular creature!" he replied as he returned to his newspaper.

"Oh, Father!" she exclaimed teasingly. "You are out of humour." Rising to kiss him on the forehead, she continued, "I will be in my study if you need me."

No sooner had she left the breakfast room when Finnigan entered it with a card for the young mistress.

"Who is it?" asked his Lordship with disinterest.

"Lady Sybill Trelawney," answered Finnigan.

"Indeed," said the Baron blandly, chastened that his presupposition on the morning guest had been incorrect. "Send her up to Miss Granger's study."

"Very good, my lord." The butler was about to leave when he was recalled.

"And Finnigan, send Lord Sterne straight up to my daughter's study as soon as he arrives."

"Very good, my lord," muttered the expressionless butler before he sent the lady caller up to his young mistress's study. Upon knocking sharply on the door of Miss Granger's book room, he promptly left the caller to her own devices. There was something about the lady in the pale puce walking dress that he did not like.

"Come in," came the slightly disembowelled voice from the room. Lady Sybill Trelawney did as the voice bade and found herself in a moderately sized room filled with books on every shelf and nearly every surface. She looked carelessly at the crammed shelves that lined from floor to ceiling and noticed a side door on the left adjoining another room. After adjusting her eyes to the various tomes in the room, Lady Sybil settled her gaze on Miss Granger, who was seated in the centre of the room at a desk piled high with books. The scholar lifted her eyes shortly from her writing and open book and soon cast her gradually hardening countenance towards her guest.

"Lady Sybill," she began, rising stiffly and beckoning to a seat opposite the desk. "Do sit down. Will you have some refreshment?"

The newcomer's lower lip trembled slightly as she took the indicated seat. "Thank you, but I do not mean to impose." She continued in a quivering voice, "I will not be long."

"As you wish," answered the personage Lord Sterne dubbed *la femme savante*. "Your general manner informs me that you are nervous. Would you mind stating your business? Or is this a rare *social call*?"

"Do you have the inner eye too?" asked Lady Sybill with much surprise, suddenly losing her anxiety.

"No, it is pure observation and deduction. Now, how can I help you?"

"By returning Sterne to me!" cried the older woman almost desperately.

"Sorry?" exclaimed Miss Granger as she knocked down her ink stand. She hoped that she had misheard the request.

"Return Lord Sterne to me," said Lady Sybill slowly, carefully enunciating each syllable.

Miss Granger smirked as she arranged her hands in a steeple at her chin. "I did not know he belonged to you. Come to think on it, I was under the impression that he is his own man. Did he sell himself to you at an auction? I am curious. May I see the title deed?"

"How can you poke fun at this matter! I love him and if you give him up; he would realise that I am ideal for him and..."



Interrupting the near hysterical lady, the scholar schooled her features into a mask of gravity. "Yes, you believe he will fall in love with you and marry you. A very interesting story, Lady Sybill but hardly probable. You see, Sterne does not return your regard. It's all part of being his own man, you see. It's a Lockean premise, shall I explain?"

"He does not return my affection yet."

"Your delusions are very amusing," replied Miss Granger, setting her ink stand upright again.

Lady Sybill's eyes flashed dangerously as she rubbed the numerous bangles on her arms in anger. "They are ~~not~~ delusions! I see all and know all."

"What if I were to demonstrate to you that you are doing three people great disservices? What if I proved to you that your course of action would result in the unhappiness of three people?" sighed Hermione, choking back a laugh

"I suppose you mean yourself and Sterne," came the sullen reply.

"Not at all, I do not appear in the schema of the affairs," said the scholar with a smile as she placed a paperweight on her papers. "Now listen and perhaps you will be sensible."

"I do not have to listen to your talk! You lack true sight!" cried the enraged woman.

"Oh no! I see moderately well, thank you. Do you want Sterne to be unhappy? For he will be unhappy if he is bound to you. You will want him all to yourself and will strive to keep him by your side. He will indubitably want to be free to be himself, but due to his deference to your wishes, he swallows his pride and subverts his spirit to your will. He will become paler, thinner and miserable. When you see him in such a condition, you would be unhappy too. Consider poor Lord Lupin he is practically wearing the willow for you. Do you see how he moons outside your father's house every afternoon hoping to catch a glimpse of you? He has threatened to shoot the young Mr Nott because he had called you an ape-leader."

Colouring with delight that anyone would consider fighting a duel for her sake, Lady Sybill gasped in horror as the implications of Lord Lupin's actions dawned on her. Wringing her gloved hands and allowing her eyes to return to their normal size, she muttered in a scandalised yet pleased tone, "No, he did not."

"He did! He asked my father to act as his Second if the need arose." Then she lowered her voice in mock mortification. "But it came to nothing when Nott apologised."

Lady Sybill coloured again. "I did not know he was in earnest. He seemed so much like a practised flirt."

"Ah, my lady, he has long had had a tendre for you."

"Yet he is not Sterne!" whined Lady Sybil slightly.

"No, he is not. Tell me, have you any points of similarities with Lord Sterne? Do the two of you meet on any level?"

"What do you mean?"

Miss Granger straightened herself in her seat hoping that Lady Sybill had not realised as she just did that she had many similarities with Lord Sterne. Choosing to mask her realisation with a smile, she asked, "Have you any common interests? Books, philosophy, alchemy?"

"No nothing!"

"Precisely! And if you persist in this course of action, Lord Lupin, Lord Sterne and your ladyship would be each done a great disservice. It would be most unjust."

"Indeed, it would," purred a low silky voice that had just let himself into a study via the adjoining door on the left.

"Lord Sterne!" Lady Sybill greeted in some embarrassment, as she rose and dropped a curtsy.

"Sterne," murmured Miss Granger, extending her hand to him, which he received with a flawless court bow.

"Miss Granger," he murmured, pressing her ink-stained fingers reverently to his lips. It was a gesture that the young lady interpreted as show for the benefit of Lady Sybill Trelawney.

Turning to Lady Sybill with his impassive expression, he curled his lips into a twisted smirk. "You see it is true; I will be the last man on earth to make you happy. Lupin, however... He's a man who shares your passion for dancing, long walks, divination lectures given by Nicolas and Perenelle Flamel. In fact," he paused and fished out his pocket watch so as to surreptitiously check his keen desire to throttle her. "If you hurry your team of horses, you will find him at a lecture in an hour. I have sent him word to escort you home after the event." He bowed at Lady Sybill when he saw her cheeks colouring and led her to the main door; Miss Granger, on her part, rang for her abigail to show the lady to the door.

Having accomplished his task, Lord Sterne collapsed into the chair Lady Sybill had just vacated and gave Miss Granger one of his thoughtful smirks. "Thank you for resolving my chief problem. How fortunate for you that Finnigan informed me of your interlocutor's presence!"

"It is payment in kind, for you have kept my secret," she answered coolly.

Playing thoughtfully with his watch fob, he cast her a disparaging look. "I am a gentleman of superlative honour."

"No, sir," she answered dispassionately, conjuring a lavender blossom, which she pinned to his coat. "You're only a nobleman."

"Only?" He quirked a brow in interest. "I am disappointed!"

"I'm not," she said and leaned forward to pluck something from the shoulder of his coat. "Have you been tramping in Hyde Park? There's a beetle on you," Opening a window and throwing the insect outside, she continued, "What do you think?"

"About what?"

She closed the window sharply and watched the beetled buzzing frantically outside as if it was desperate to be in the room again. "I am talking about my article for the next *Ars Chemica*."

"It is not a novel approach, but the presentation is interesting. It is a little too academic could appeal to the Oxford circle though."

"I'll redraft it in the afternoon. Do you want to see the emulsions?" she asked, gesturing to the door on the left.

"I've examined them in yond workroom before rudely interrupting your discussion with Lady Sybill. They appear to be in order. Noting a faraway look in her eyes, Lord Sterne asked, "Is something the matter, Miss Granger?"

"There are conflicting emotions I am sensing within myself," she revealed quietly with a lopsided smile.

He curled his lips in contempt and narrowed his eyes before saying between his teeth, "Pray, enlighten me with your *vile emotions*."

She laughed scornfully. "They are not directed at you. You may rest easy on that score. No. it is regarding my secret."

"What about it?"

"You have showed me that you are an honourable man, so I feel I must discuss this matter with you."

Lord Sterne raised a brow and hardened his eyes. "I was under the impression that I was only a nobleman."

"So you are, Sterne. You cannot help but be *noble* in spite of everything you have seen and done. Explain to me why I am relieved yet perturbed with the present situation between us." He waved a hand dismissively, which Miss Granger took as a gesture encouraging her to continue. Ignoring his distracting habit of tracing his lips with his finger, the young scholar pressed forward, "On the one hand, I am relieved to have someone with whom I can discuss my work and my research."

"The sentiment is admirably expressed. I am sympathetic to it, for I am afflicted with it too."

She glared at him for daring to interrupt her. "Then, on the other hand, I am still suspicious of you."

"Rightly so, I am a dangerous person," he admitted, carelessly flicking aside a lock of his hair. "I am capable of murder and other things that are unfit for the ears of a lady."

"What a comforting thought! I was beginning to think you were reformed like Villiers," she laughed ironically.

He narrowed his eyes at her and resisted the impulse to fence her in her seat. "Points to note, my young protégée, I ~~wæ~~ever like Villiers. I *did not ever* lead Villiers's dissipated lifestyle. However, unlike him, I am already beyond redemption."

"Forgiveness of the self is very important, Sterne," she answered, patting his hand before pressing it earnestly. "Recall our idol, Socrates we try to live like him. The contemplative life predicated on our abilities to let go of our past horrors. We are like him in our lives. We are a part of society yet apart from it. We must strive to understand society and ourselves and in so doing, we isolate ourselves. We know that we are incomplete as human being but we are supposed to differ from the masses in our abilities to accept it and live with it. Only when we have arrived on such a level can we truly help others."

The lecture drew a weak smirk from his Lordship and he withdrew his hand from hers. "Let us go for a walk in your garden. Villiers will be here in an hour," commented Lord Sterne, watching his companion transfigure a crushed paper ball into a parasol.

"As will Ginny," she answered, checking the parasol for holes.

"We have to do something about them."

"What? Buy them a special license? Do you know a bishop?"

"As a matter of fact, I do. My godfather's nephew, Wulfric Dumbledore."

"The Archbishop of York? The Wulfric Dumbledore who married the widowed Lady Arabella Figg?" she asked, her eyes agog in incredulity.

The reply came as they passed a ragged robin bush. "The very same."

"We would only use it as a last resort. I was thinking that they should tell the Duke and Duchess of Offaly."

"Why the sudden decision?"

"I spoke to my father."

"You mean he spoke to you."

"Which is the same thing in this household."

"Not by my analysis. But pray, do not let me interrupt you. You may continue," said the Marquess with a smirk.

"My father and I felt that it was time the Duchess, at least, approved of the romance."

"So that she can keep her husband and youngest son in check."

"That is the general idea."

"She is a prudent woman! We will discuss the matter with Villiers and Lady Ginevra when they arrive."

"Will they find the plan inimical?" she asked with sudden doubt, as he led her into the garden.

"Who knows? However, I am certain the lady will not be adverse to it."

"Let's take another turn around the strawberry beds. I thought I saw a few blossoms coming into being."

Lord Sterne assented by leading her to the strawberry beds and continuing their discussion on her next *Ars Chemica* article.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Lavender stands for "distrust". View it here <http://3media.initialized.org/photos/2003-07-10/06%20Lavender%20flower.JPG>. The title of this chapter draws attention to the flower, not the character of Lavender Brown. However, if you wish to apply the meaning of the flower in looking at the name of Miss Brown, by all means help yourself.

In the past, parts of the lavender flower were used to flavour food "to comfort the stomach". One medieval herbalist remarked that lavender was particularly good "for all griefs and paines of the head and brain". There is a superstition belief that if lavender grew in the garden, the daughter of the house would remain a spinster.

The historic use and recognition of lavender is almost as old the history of man. As an herb, lavender has been in documented use for over 2,500 years. In ancient times lavender was used for mummification and perfume by the Egyptian's, Phoenicians, and peoples of Arabia. Ancient Romans used lavender oils for bathing, cooking, and scenting the air, and they most likely gave it the Latin root name (either *lavare*-to wash or *livendula*- livid or bluish) from which we derive the modern name. The flower's soothing, "tonic" qualities, the insect repellent effects of the strong scent, and the use of the dried plant in smoking mixtures also added to the value placed in the herb by the ancients. Romans men also anointed themselves heavily with scents, lavender among them, at public bathhouses.

Lavender is oft mentioned in the Bible, not by the name lavender but rather by the name used at that time -spikenard. In the gospel of Luke the writer reports: "Then took

Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment."

Another ancient Christian reference to lavender involves how it got its scent. The plant is believed to have been taken from the Garden of Eden by Adam and Eve. However, the powerful perfume came later. According to legend the clothing of baby Jesus when laid upon a bush to dry by Mother Mary bestowed the scent. This may explain why the plant is also regarded as a holy safeguard against evil. In many Christian houses a cross of lavender was hung over the door for protection.

Perhaps first domesticated by the Arabians, lavender spread across Europe from Greece. Around 600 BC lavender may have come from the Greek Hyeres Islands into France and is now common in France, Spain, Italy and England. The 'English' lavender varieties were not locally developed in England but rather introduced in the 1600s right around the time the first lavender plants were making their way to the Americas. In Medieval and Renaissance Europe the washing women were known as "lavenders" and they used lavender to scent drawers and dried the laundry on lavender bushes. Also during this time lavender was grown in so called "infirmarian's gardens" along with many other medicinal herbs by monasteries. According to the German nun Hildegard of Bingen who lived from 1098-1179, lavender "water", a decoction of vodka, gin, or brandy mixed with lavender, is great for migraine headaches.

That it actually did ward off disease may have contributed to its holy reputation. During the Great Plague in London in the 17th century, it was suggested that a bunch of lavender fastened to each wrist would protect the wearer against the deadly disease. Furthermore, grave-robbers were known to wash in Four Thieves Vinegar, which contained lavender, after doing their dirty work. They rarely contracted the disease. In 16th century France, lavender was also used to resist infection. For example, glove-makers, who were licensed to perfume their wares with lavender, escaped cholera at that time.

Royal history also is filled with stories of lavender use. Charles VI of France demanded lavender filled pillows wherever he went. Queen Elizabeth I of England required lavender conserve at the royal table. She also wanted fresh lavender flowers available every day of the year, a daunting task for a gardener if you consider the climate of England. Louis XIV also loved lavender and bathed in water scented with it. Queen Victoria used a lavender deodorant and, Elizabeth I and II both used products from the famous lavender company Yardley and Co. of London.

Lavender is a unique fragrance produced by the combination of 180 different constituents and is widely used in the perfume industry to add a top or middle note to commercial products. In the world of professional sniffers it has a green, hay like sweetness and gives "fruity aspects" in perfumes and other scented products. For commercial use lavender is widely grown in England and the Provence region of France is widely renowned as a world leader in growing and producing lavender.

In the United States and Canada it was the Shakers who first grew lavender commercially. A strict sect of English Quakers who most likely had little use for lavender's amorous qualities (they were celibate), they developed herb farms upon their arrival from England. They produced their own herbs and medicines and sold them to the "outside world." Later a New York advertising firm picked them up and sold the simple products worldwide.

As an herbal medicine lavender is and has been very widely used. For soothing, relaxing qualities few herbs can be claimed as effective. Constituents of the oils found in lavender can treat hyperactivity, insomnia, flatulence, bacteria, fungus, microbial activity on gums, airborne molds, and (in mixture with pine, thyme, mint, rosemary, clove, and cinnamon oils) Staphylococcus -aka "Staff"- bacteria. Compounds in the plant have even shown promise as a treatment for certain cancers. In mice these compounds reduced the size of breast cancer tumors. Lavender may even be useful against impotence. In a study of men the scent of pumpkin and lavender rated as the scent found most arousing.

Lavender and love are an ancient match. In an apocryphal book of the Bible we again hear of the use of lavender. Here the story tells us that Judith anointed herself with perfumes including lavender before seducing Holofernes, the enemy commander. This allowed her to murder him and thus save the City of Jerusalem. This overwhelming power of this seductive scent was also used by Cleopatra to seduce Julius Cesaer and Mark Antony. The Queen of Sheba offered spikenard with frankincense and myrrh to King Solomon

In Tudor England, lavender brew was being sipped by maidens on St. Lukes day to divine the identity of their true loves. "St. Luke, St. Luke, be kind to me, In my dreams, let me my true love see." So went the chant. Lavender in the pillows of alpine girls brought hope of romance, while lavender under the bed of newlyweds ensured passion. Finally, this famous nursery rhyme "Lavender blue, dilly dilly" was written in 1680 and talks of "Whilst you and I, diddle, diddle...keep the bed warm." Lavender inspired loving strikes again.

(2) The throatwort is also known as the fig-wort in some cultures. You will notice from the pictures [http://www.californiagardens.com/images/Trachelium\\_caeruleum\\_aspect\\_c.jpg](http://www.californiagardens.com/images/Trachelium_caeruleum_aspect_c.jpg) and [http://www.flowers.org.uk/images/flowers/aut03\\_tracheliumclose\\_lrg.jpg](http://www.flowers.org.uk/images/flowers/aut03_tracheliumclose_lrg.jpg) that the plant has diverse great, strong, hard, square brown stalks, three or four feet high, whereon grow large, hard, and dark green leaves, two at a joint, harder and larger than Nettle leaves, but not stinking; at the tops of the stalks stand many purple flowers set in husks, which are sometimes gaping and open, somewhat like those of Water Betony; after which come hard round heads, with a small point in the middle, wherein lie small brownish seed. The root is great, white, and thick, with many branches at it, growing aslope under the upper crust of the ground, which abides many years, but keeps not his green leaves in winter. It grows frequently in moist and shadowy woods, and in the lower parts of the fields and meadows. It flowers about July, and the seed will be ripe about a month after the flowers are fallen.

Some Latin scholars during the High Middle Ages called the throatwort/fig-wort, "Cervicaria" because it is appropriated to the treatment of ailments in and around the neck. However, by the 15th-16th century, the English gave it the name "throatwort" because it was found suitable to treating throat complaints. Culpepper's The Complete Herbal (that I am quoting in its medieval English) says, "Venus owns the herb, and the Celestial Bull will not deny it; therefore a better remedy cannot be for the king's evil, because the Moon that rules the disease, is exalted there. The decoction of the herb taken inwardly, and the bruised herb applied outwardly, dissolves clotted and congealed blood within the body, coming by any wounds, bruise or fall; and is no less effectual for the king's evil, or any other knobs, kernel, bunches, or wens growing in the flesh wheresoever; and for the hæmorrhoids, or piles. An ointment made hereof may be used at all times when the fresh herb is not to be had. The distilled water of the whole plant, roots and all, is used for the same purposes, and dries up the superfluous, virulent moisture of hollow and corrodng ulcers; it takes away all redness, spots, and freckles in the face, as also the scurf, and any foul deformity therein, and the leprosy likewise."

(3) Ragged robin stands for "wit".

A European perennial plant (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) having opposite clasping leaves and panicles of reddish or white flowers with deeply lobed petals. It is also called cuckooflower. View it here <http://www.woodlanereserve.co.uk/IMAGES/Ragged-Robin.jpg>

(4) Strawberry blossoms represent "foresight".

View it here <http://www.positivehealth.com/permit/Articles/Flower%20Essences/devi16b.jpg> and <http://www.aviewfromthefield.com/images/p010520h.jpg>

(5) Ape-leader is Regency slang for an old spinster or an old maid. Once you had gone through 4 to 5 Seasons and still remained unmarried, you were deemed an ape-leader. In those days, they had their first Season at 16 or 18, depending on the young lady's rank, fortune, family, Father's desire to launch her, ability to find a suitable sponsor for the Season, state of her education and so on. Why were old spinsters/old maids called ape-leaders? It was believed and widely preached in church by the hellfire-and-damnation pastors that women who did not marry would be punished after death. Their punishment after death for failing to procreate would be to lead apes in hell.

(6) Out-and-outer is Regency slang for a person (usually a man) of high spirit, awake on every suit, and with enviable abilities.

(7) A rake is a somewhat subjective term often used in historical romances to describe the hero. Webster defines a rake as "a dissolute person; a libertine" -- in other words, not a very nice character. In romance novels, however, a rake seldom exhibits behaviour that puts him beyond the pale. The term "rake" is most often used in the same way as "playboy" or "womaniser" but without the other implications of drinking, debauchery, and general lechery which inform the literal definition. A typical rakish hero will often have a number of women in his past, but the love of one special woman will cause him to give up the field forever. My understanding of "rake" is a cad or blackguard who threatens a young lady's reputation for propriety and chastity. These men are usually characterised by high spirits and carelessness for the consequences of their actions.

(8) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it.

Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? You will see why when I reveal Millicent Bulstrode's parentage...

(9) On-dit is French for "we tell". In the context of Regency speech, it meant gossip about the town that is usually published in the newspapers.

(10) Hermione tells Sybill Trelawney that property rights are Locke in their premises. This follows a conversation about theft, returns and property. John Locke continues Hobbes and Machiavelli's thoughts in his work *Two Treatises of Government*. The Second Treatise of Government, subtitled *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government*, stands today as an extremely influential work that shaped political philosophy and provided a basis for later political doctrines, such as those set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. Ironically, we can say that because of this, his ideas are now embedded in a living constitution, and his ideas continued the teachings of Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes. The Second Treatise is Locke's most famous work. The First Treatise is devoted to the war against divine monarchy, and pretty much like Hobbes' latter half of the Leviathan. In the Hobbesian state of nature, which is a state of war of all against all; what's interesting about Hobbes is that this is the way we are it's not cynical to be like this it is part of our nature. It's natural that we want to preserve ourselves and this preservation; this motion in our lives is based on this conception of natural rights and reason.

Locke frequently uses the term "rights" and appeals to conscience and "calm reason", all of which reflect his assumptions about justice and morality. Locke explicitly makes clear his stance on property in chapter 5 (entitled "Of Property") of *The Second Treatise*. This chapter is the most important section of Locke's *Second Treatise* and it is also very important for the cause of modern liberalism. This would be better explained with an illustration bear with me my prelim readers and betas did not see how Locke fits into this.

Let's say, first come first serve let's say, Miss X is feeling particularly hungry today and the moment I say, "The cake is all yours, share it" and you adopt the first come first serve principle. What if she decides to eat half the cake? What would the rest of you say? Unjust! Right? Unfair! So, we are speculating whether the original separation of the earth into different parcels presuppose some kind of universal consent on how to divide the property? Do you all need to come together and decide how to share the cake or the land? Then Locke says, "That's crazy." Why? Because of this imagine yourself in the state of nature and you want this piece of land, do you have to ask everybody, "Can I have this? Is it okay to have this?" This is crazy, right? By the time you get universal consent, you'll die. So that's the problem Locke will have to resolve. Given that ideally that the land is to be distributed to all equally, how do I get a piece of nature without having to ask everybody for permission?

Now, he will come to some particular things, and by this, he means fundamental things that are also necessary for our survival food from nature. How do you make this food from nature, exclusively yours. How do I make it my property without having to ask permission from everybody else? The solution is very simple, refer to #27, it says, "Every man has a *property in his own person*." If you look at this assertion, it implies that we all own ourselves, that we are our own properties in our own person, so we are our own private property. In the exercise of my own property, I have my own person; and by that exercise, by the use of my labour, which is the extension of my property, by exercising my labour on nature, I come to have an exclusive right to that part of nature. Imagine this bottle is an apple and it is hanging on this desk, which is an apple tree. The apple tree is common, which means that everyone of you has a right to it. How can I get the apple to be my property? By exercising my labour, which is the extension of my property (my arm and hand). I mix my labour with nature in other words. And that makes this exercise of my labour an effort to go to the apple tree, seize the apple tree and pluck it out and the apple then becomes mine. And I don't have to ask anybody for permission. That means that once I have exercised my labour, this apple now is mixed with my labour and it has my individual personality on it, my thumbprint is on it. And if you try to take this apple from me without my consent, you put yourself in a state of war with me. You can go for the other apples on the tree, but not this apple that is mine because it has a bit of my personality on it because I took it by exercising my labour on nature. So this apple and my person are not simply natural things anymore. This is a very elegant solution.

Remember that in the state of nature, there are a lot of these sorts of things. This then is a reasonable way of accounting for how in the state of nature, which was given to mankind in common, I can acquire a part of nature for myself without the consent of everybody else. The law of nature thus operates in this manner. BUT, ask yourself this so there is this apple tree with lost of apples and I'm hungry, can I pluck all the apples I want and carry them away? Locke says, "No". Why? Because there is a limit to how many apples I can acquire given that there is a law of nature, which is the RULE OF REASON operating in the state of nature. There are limits to acquisition. There are two principles limiting acquisition in the state of nature and we can find it in #27 and #33. The first principle laid out in #27, we must always leave what is "enough and as good for others", which is the cake principle that I mentioned earlier. You can't just take half of it, you must leave enough and as good for others. So, if there are 10 guys you divide the cake into 10 equal parts and you take one slice, and therefore you leave enough and as good for others. The second principle is that you must let anything in your possession spoil or waste. So there are 40 of us here and there are 80 apples on this tree, this means that we can all have 2 each. I am not allowed to take 3 because I must leave as good as enough for others. BUT, while I have these two apples and I pluck them from the tree, I still keep to the law of nature; I'm not depriving anybody of his fair share of it. But on the other hand, I can only eat one because I am quite full, so what am I going to do with this other apple? I cannot keep it if it spoils in my care, I have violated a law of nature. So this is the spoilage proviso you can only take what you need and leave as good as enough for the others. As such, even though you are entitled to 2, and you know that you only need one, you had better take one. Why? Because if the other apple spoils in your care, you have violated a law of nature. And that would mean that you deserve punishment. So these two principles of leaving as good as enough for others and the spoilage proviso limits acquisition.

Interestingly in Hermione's mention of the Lockean premise of property to Sybill, the latter insists initially that Severus was stolen from her. This also, ironically, fits in with Locke and property. How and why? If I steal from you, I violate the law of nature because I put myself in a state of war with you. The law of nature permits you to punish me, so the law of nature still applies. You are not in a state of war with me because you are still working under the rule of reason you are abiding by it. You not unjust, rather I, the criminal, I am the one that is unjust. I put myself in a state of war with you. In your apprehension of me, you are actually doing a legitimate act because you are authorised by the law of nature to punish criminals. So you have NOT violated the law of nature; you have not put yourself in a state of war with me, I put myself in a state of war with you. So if I get hurt, I get what I deserve. If you are trying to catch me and I punch you, you don't get what you are deserving. I shall leave out the explanation on property and money as it has no bearing to the understanding of Hermione and Sybill's stilted conversation of thefts, return and property.

(12) Some readers might take offence at the phrase "tendre" used here. I understand that some might look on it as a bastardisation of the French. I know the original phrase is "tendre penchant". In Regency English, the term "tendre" is usually understood to mean a strong liking for. The term "tendre" was used by W. M. Thackeray, who wrote, "You poor friendless creatures are always having some foolish tendre" in *Vanity Fair*. So you see, in English, it is perfectly acceptable.

## Chapter 11 - Dried Crown of Thyme

*Chapter 12 of 23*

Another scene at the gentlemen's club, Black's. Trouble is brewing among the Weasley siblings, will their friends be caught in the cross fire? Read on?

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

**Language of Flowers**

**Chapter 11 Dried Crown of Thyme**

It was a few days before Lord Sterne had the pleasure of learning more about his godson's progressing amour. He was walking on a remarkably windy Thursday morning along St James's Street when he encountered Lord Villiers striding towards him. It immediately became apparent that he was labouring under a strong sense of resentment, for hardly had he extended a greeting to his godfather than he burst out with the rather unnecessary information that he was coming to visit him, adding explosively, "What do you think has happened, Godfather?"

"You wish to inform me, and I have no objection to hearing it," replied the older man coldly.

"I was coming to do so. You wouldn't believe it! I scarcely do myself. I mean to say, when you consider all that has taken place and how unsupportable my father was it makes me mad as that Weasley fop and so would anyone!"

"Hmm?" murmured the gentleman in black as he pushed purposefully forward.

"You could say that! But I warn you, it will likely send you up into high dudgeon when I tell you! For all the damnable..."

Lord Sterne looked sharply at the young man and interrupted him. "By Jove! Tell me or leave me be!" he hissed, his voice low against the wind.

The blond glared at his godfather and announced with stiff Malfoy indignation that he was just about to tell when he so rudely broken in on him and pointedly stopped the morose man in his tracks, saying portentously, "I have received a letter from my father, sir!"

"Is *that* all!" Lord Sterne retorted with a sneer

"How do you expect me to speak when you give me no encouragement?"

Sterne curled his lips into an impatient grimace. "I congratulate you on your powers of observation!"

"Will you listen to me?"

"If you will tell me what ails you and cease babbling like an incoherent child!"

"I am not babbling!"

The Marquess made a dismissive gesture with his right hand before flicking his hair aside. "You quarrelled with your mother over it, I expect. Or perhaps, Mallefille has disinherited you, Draco?"

"Mother might if she had the full power of the estate," he replied. "Father has no intention of doing so. He told me to elope and threatens to discontinue my allowance if I do not bring Lady Ginevra to Calais or Paris to obtain his approval. I would not have believed he could ever have behaved in such a manner! Elope indeed! He promises to arrange for a wedding at the Embassy. He has always seemed to me to be a very good father, but now, I do not scruple to say that *this* business has wounded me grievously! How dare he insult the honour and virtue of my beloved in such an uncouth fashion!"

"It certainly shows a want of propriety," acknowledged Lord Sterne. "Yet it reveals that he cares a great deal for you and your future. No doubt, someone or something has informed him that your lady is of solid character, good breeding, decent birth and winning ways. As this paragon of virtue sounds too good to be true, it is natural that he demand to inspect his prospective daughter."

Unable to think of a suitable retort, Villiers harrumphed in sullen indignation.

"Did he say anything else?"

Lord Sterne suppressed a smirk when he caught his godson's eyes flash a look of surprise. "What do you mean?" asked the young man.

"Was there anything else in the letter?"

"Nothing!" as the uneasy reply.

"Don't lie to me, boy! You would not have your tail between your legs if he did not reprimand you over something."

"How did you know?"

"It is too plainly obvious for me to inform you."

"The devil take you, Lord Sterne."

"And you too. Now, out with it," insisted Lord Sterne in a snarl.

"You know, my opera dancer?"

Sterne frowned as half-remembered memory surfaced in his mind. "You had three. Remind me of the one you speak of."

"Millicent Bulstrode," he whispered.

"Cannot say I am acquainted with her," Sterne replied nonchalantly, feeling his black cravat as they stepped into the parlour at Black's.

Following the older man into the empty reading room at the club, he added as an afterthought, "She caused a sensation at Sanguine's party for Lady Minerva. She sang Mozart that evening."

"Indeed? I did not notice." Sterne dismissed the house-elf that collected their coats, hats and canes.

"Hiding from Sybill Trelawney, weren't you?"

Sterne chose a seat where the chess pieces were newly arranged and placed himself in the shadows. He gestured for his pale aristocratic companion to sit opposite him. "I do not hide from my enemies; I employ diversionary tactics."

"Be that as it may, she was hailed as quite a success."

"Yes, yes, forget the successful/unsuccessful business. What is it about her?"

"She is my cousin," Villiers declared between his teeth, annoyed at losing his knight so soon after his opening move and his godfather's insinuating tone.

Sterne raised a brow, feigning a mild look of interest. "It appears you had committed serious blunder. Perhaps therein lies the reason for your father's suggestion of an elopement with your Lady Ginevra."

"It was an *affaire court*; she was not eligible. You know that I do not ruin ladies if our stamp!" Villiers said defensively.

"Yet you promised Miss Bulstrode your affection and your protection. Most interesting, my Lord Marquess!"

"You don't see the gravity of the situation!"

"Oh no, I see it very clearly," sneered his godfather. "She is your Uncle Lestrangle's natural daughter. She met you when she in mourning for her mother, Marianne Bulstrode, the chanteuse. You seduced her with your fancy oriental waterfall cravat and smooth ways. Until, *en fin*, you grew weary of her. Then, at Sanguine and Minerva's ball, you saw her wear her painted miniature brooch. A brooch Lestrangle left with the deceased Marianne."

"You know?"

"Yes." Sterne curled his lips into a knowing smirk.

"Does anyone else know?"

Rolling his eyes in exasperation, he muttered, "Yes."

Villiers gasped in mind perturbation. "Who?"

"Your father," began Sterne in a cruel hiss. "Your mother is aware of the girl's parentage but not of her past with you. Let's not forget *thøld man* I am certain he suspects; for all I know, he could already be aware of it."

"You mean Sanguine?"

"Is there any other as skilled in uncovering such information?"

"Yes," said Villiers with conviction. "You."

"You flatter me, Draco."

"No one has flattered you, sir."

"No? You've hurt my feelings," mocked the older man with a knowing scowl, taking the young man's bishop.

"You have no feelings," stated Villiers.

Casting a smirk at his godson, his Lordship purred coldly, "Thank you for reminding me; I was beginning to feel vaguely human."

"You? Human?" choked Villiers, struggling to keep his laughter contained in his throat. "Heaven forbid!"

However, both men gave in to the impulse and shared a brief shout of laughter that seemed out of place in the reading parlour at Black's.

Allowing his features to harden into their usual thoughtful mode, the Marquess of Sterne asked, "Tell me honestly, Draco, has this former ladybird of yours even sought more compensation?"

"No. She seems very respectable now."

"Oh yes, she caught the eye of young Nott and Goyle."

Matching his godfather's scowl, he hotly announced, "I'll run them through if they dare so much as cast designs on her virtue, Goyle especially he's been telling Mother on me."

"Hadn't you already deprived her of her virtue?" questioned Sterne with deliberately carelessness.

"That is not the point! She is my cousin. I will make amends to her. I cannot acknowledge her in public, but I have every intention of treating her in a manner of *œupe-jarret* Lestrangle."

Lord Sterne leaned further back into his chair and moved his rook with a mordant sneer, "You will not be the first."

"What do you mean?"

Sterne traced his lips as they curled into a disdainful smirk when he saw that Villiers had gambled away his checkmate in eight. "Simply that someone has been treating her like a real lady, a genteel poor member of the *ton*. He treats her with respect without knowing who she is."

The young marquess cracked his lips into a smile reminiscent of his father's look of arrogant assurance. "Who is this fool?"

"Longbottom," was the laconic reply, as the black knight took a white bishop.

"The Vicar of Chelsea Common!" laughed the blond in amusement. "Does he love her? Can he love her? He has no fortune of his own and his manners are execrable, even with his Fluxweed connexion."

Staring pointedly at Villiers, Sterne said in a low emotionless voice, "Those things are nothing, *Lord Villiers*. He wants a helpmate and she has the proper demeanour and a good temperament. No doubt, it comes from being a genuine repentant fallen woman."

"Perhaps. All the same, it is a respectable match for her. It might cause a scandal when Longbottom comes into the Earldom, but she will be established by then. I might as well write to Father and tell him that there will no impediment to my match. But I do not agree with the elopement nonsense. It is akin to going to Gretna Green. Ginny will kill me if I commit her to such a marriage."

"So will the Duchesses," reminded Sterne with a cruel smirk.

"But isn't Gretna Green an idea..."

"It is a legitimate one."

"Not you too!"

"Lord Aberforth Dumbledore is there. His son is the Archbishop of York."

"Special license?"

"Have you *never* thought on that?" sneered Sterne patronisingly. "Wulfric Dumbledore may assist us." he continued, appraising him with utter contempt when he caught his godson's smug look.

"Did you mention my nephew?" murmured a well-known voice behind Sterne's seat.

Scowling a greeting without rising or turning around to acknowledge the old man, he coldly said, "Sanguine, old goat," before removing the Duke's firm wrinkled hand from his shoulder. "Didn't hear you enter."

"No apologies needed, mon enfant," came the good natured reply, as the bearded old man sat down to watch the chess match. "Hello, Villiers."

Villiers made his greetings and attempted to move his queen.

"Don't touch the pawn, lad. Move the bishop and you'll have a mate in six," instructed the Duke of Sanguine, ignoring the scowl an impatient finger drumming of his godson. Glad to have advice on his appalling chess playing abilities, Villiers followed the Duke's recommendation with an obliging nod of his head.

"What brings you here at this early hour, Duke? Aren't you engaged to promenade with Lady Minerva and Lady Sybill?" spat the pallid Marquess testily.

The Duke laughed. "I just saw Moody off. He's been invited to speak at the University of Bonn. Minerva does not need me today. It seems she cannot find a use for me yet. She's chaperoning her niece to a drive with Lord Lupin."

"Poor Sterne!" laughed Villiers, moving his pawn.

"I shall bear the loss tolerably," Sterne acerbically assured his companions.

"You know, mon enfant; if you must keep your hair at shoulder length, you could tie it up like your charge's progenitor."

"I dare not Mallefille's style is inimitable."

"As is your own," noted Villiers.

"Checkmate," hissed Sterne, moving his bishop. "Should have moved your pawn, Draco. Really, Sanguine, what is wrong with my hair?"

The Duke picked out a small, nearly concealed speck of something from his godson's hair at his collar. "This flew in when I walked in and it clung to you. You should wash your hair today; it will attract less beetles," said Sanguine with a chuckle, throwing the beetle out the window. "I recommend Ox-eye's essence wash."

Sterne looked askance at the dotty old man; his narrowing dark eyes searching the grave blue ones. "Perhaps I should brew some."

"You would be the gainer. Look what it has done for my beard! My nephew would tell me..." Villiers and Sterne exchanged an intelligible look and rolled their eyes at the Duke's rambling. "You were speaking of my nephew when I came in. Would you like to meet him?"

"Is he in town?" enquired Sterne, making a mental note to discuss this development with Miss Granger.

"Not yet, but he will be next week."

"How long will he be here?" asked Villiers politely.

"Two or three months, I can't say for certain. He has some business with the Archbishop of Canterbury."

"Perhaps, Sanguine," muttered Sterne with affected indifference. "You would arrange for an introduction whether we like it or no."

As the old man nodded, the attention of the gentlemen was drawn to an altercation in the adjoining room between Lord Percy and Lord Ronald Weasley. The curious Duke and his companions moved there to observe the causes of it. Sterne, however, draped himself in a chair in the shadowy part of the drawing room and casually darted his eyes between the brothers. He took in their flushed faces and the beleaguered Sir Harry Potter by his friend's side. Evidently, the altercation was over a woman.

Sir Harry tried to keep the two brothers apart without any success. They looked set to come to blows and Sterne noted sardonically that his attention was riveted. It could become interesting after all men quarrelling over a female; men killing themselves over a woman the same day in and day out nothing ever happens, thought Sterne with a contemptuous curling of his lips.

"You have no right to aspire to her hand, Percy! You are not even fit to kiss the mud on her boots!" Lord Ronald almost screeched, to Sterne's amusement. Dissatisfied with his brother's air of studied disinterested arrogance, Lord Ronald withdrew his wand and pointed it shakily at Lord Percy.

"Ron...calm down," implored Sir Harry in a placating tone as he attempted to pull his friend away. "Think about your parents."

Lord Percy lazily threw himself into a chair and checked his reflection in the window. "Oh, don't be so naïve, Ronald," he laughed haughtily. "You have nothing to offer the lady other than £3000 a year. I, however, will adorn her arm and house with *me*. Face it, dear brother, I am a much better match for the future Baroness de Quib."

"You are no such thing. You're a blackguard, Percy Weasley!" roared Lord Ronald, trembling with rage.

"Really, such language! No wonder she does not favour you. You will never hear me use my tongue so poorly."

"Ron," urged Sir Harry angrily, "Leave the great game of match-making alone. Miss Lovegood knows that Lord Percy's heavily in debt to the tradesmen and the other Hells."

Smiling brazenly at them as his eye twitched nervously, Lord Percy laughed, "I am to be her investment and she is to be mine. Nothing you can do about it, gentlemen. When sanctioned by her excellent father, she will come to see that I am best suited to her and she will look on me favourably." Lord Ronald's trembling became increasingly pronounced and he accidentally let slip his wand. "Retrieving my poor brother's things, Potter? I feel sorry for you." He paused and took some snuff, ignoring Sir Harry clenching and unclenching his fists. "On better reflection, I suppose it is not your fault. You seem to enjoy cast-offs, such as Miss Granger's abigail."

"Why you scoundrel!" Sir Harry lunged at Lord Percy. "You have never a feather to fly with!"

Neatly tripping Sir Harry, Lord Percy snorted in disgust, "People of your class, like my unfortunate immediate family, grieve me. Don't you realise you are beneath my touch and inferior to heiresses such as Miss Lovegood."

"I've had enough of you!" bellowed Lord Ronald, as he assisted his friend to his feet before spitting in his brother's face. Lord Sterne raised a brow in surprise. He had expected Lord Percy to call his brother out; he had not anticipated Lord Ronald's impulsive action. Closer inspection revealed that Lord Sterne's surmise was correct. Lord Percy carefully wiped the spit from his face in the dead silence of the club, rose deliberately from his seat and removed his glove from his pocket. Spectators itching for a fight were rewarded when Lord Percy smacked his brother and Sir Harry with the glove before loftily saying, "You have insulted me, my clothes, and my immaculate manners long enough. I am calling the both of you out. Pick your weapons." Some of the younger members of the club gasped in shock and Lord Percy nodded politely to his audience. "Rapiers, pistols or wands? Who will be your seconds? Mr Clearwater and Mr Goyle will be mine."

Lord Ronald was about to bluster an answer when Sir Harry silenced him with a pinch. "There will be no duel," he said with as much calm as he could muster, clenching his fists.

"Are you a coward, Sir Harry?" scoffed Lord Percy nervously as the enormity of his chosen course of action took root in his weak febrile mind. He crossed his legs anxiously as his mind had chosen to remind him that the baronet was an excellent marksman and wandsmen."

"No, I am not as callow as Ron in these matters. But we have honour, Lord Percy. I don't think you know what it is, seeing how pigeon-livered you are."

"No need to insult me, sir. Will dawn suit you?" he asked, realising with pleasure that Sir Harry had no desire to fight him.

"There will be no duel!" stressed Sir Harry. "I hold his Grace of Offaly too highly in my esteem to pursue this course of action you created."

"Yes! You can ride rough-shod over Mother and Father, even if you think you're above their touch! After all, they are never high in the in-step!" riposted Lord Ronald.

"I will not stand for this insult! This is not the last time I shall attempt to defend myself. Mark my words, Potter, Ron, one day, I will run my sword through you both."

"And be caught by the Bow Street Aurors, no doubt," said Sir Harry coolly.

On hearing those words, Lord Percy emitted a cry of exasperation and hurried out of the club as all his bravado deserted him.

"You did well," offered the Duke of Sanguine quietly, shaking both men's hands. "I am proud of you, the both of you."

"They acted out of self-preservation," whispered Sterne to Villiers in his usual denigration of Sir Harry and Lord Ronald's characters. His remark drew a snort of agreement from the young man.

"Where do you think he has gone?" asked Lord Ronald with a touch of concern in his angry voice.

"Hades," answered Lord Villiers loudly in a confident voice.

"The gaming Hell?" gasped Sir Harry. "How do you know?"

"I used to see him there."

"Go on, Villiers," goaded Lord Ronald disagreeably. "Rub my family's dirty linen in my face!"

"Contain yourself, Lord Ronald," drawled Sterne, pushing Villiers behind him. Nodding to Sir Harry in thanks for restraining his friend, he continued, "It is a matter of simple deduction, as Sanguine will tell you."

The Duke shrugged and murmured that he knew nothing of the modern gaming hells beneath his twinkling blue eyes.

"Really?" asked Sir Harry with great scepticism.

The old man only chuckled and popped another sweet into his mouth. "It is a well known fact that Goyle and Clearwater frequent that establishment."

"I would suggest you and Lord Ronald take your curricles everywhere you go. Do not leave home without your tigers. Be careful. If you must die, race to Portsmouth and break your neck," offered Sterne frostily, picking up an abandoned newspaper.

"We won't break our necks," declared Lord Ronald stoutly. "We members of the Four-Horse Club men are the best sportsmen on the road!"

"You may have to prove that to me," replied Sterne behind his newspaper. "Villiers here bets three guineas that you will."

The sound of other bets filled the room as Severus left Black's in a thoughtful mood.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Thyme has two meanings: (i) activity, (ii) courage. Beyond this, there are many other implications. In the High Middle Ages, many people were wary of the scent of thyme because its scent was believed to pervade places where someone had been murdered. Make what you will of this. View it here <http://pharm1.pharmazie.uni-greifswald.de/allgemei/koehler/koeh-138.jpg>

Thyme, to many of my readers, is just a herb for cooking. This is not so. It has small pale purple flowers that are very pretty. The name thyme stems from the ancient Greek word 'thymos', which I translate as spiritedness. Other commentators of Plato translate it as courage, but that is a matter of debate outside this story. It is of interest to note that in ancient Delphic records, thymos was also associated with the term "to fumigate". Thyme has a very invigorating fragrance and it was burnt as incense because it was believed that its pungent and cleansing properties would inspire a more robust attitude. This would open up the Pythia's mind to possession by Apollo. Those unfamiliar with the Pythia, refer to my fic *Beyond Time and Space* for a definition.

The thyme flower is very pretty and very popular with bees. It makes the most wonderful honey. Interestingly, a bee hovering over thyme is a very popular motif in medieval tapestry and embroidery.

(2) Ox-eye means "patience". In Regency times, it was spelt as separately. View it here <http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/wedtri4.jpg> and <http://www.monasheetourism.com/PlantsandFlowers/T%20132%20Oxeye%20Daisy.jpg>

Now, it is known as the oxeye daisy. It is a flower that is both loved and hated. It was a plague on pastures and crop fields across Europe. The Scots called the flowers "gools". The farmer with the most gools in their wheat field had to pay an extra tax. Now the gools have invaded this continent from coast to coast. The oxeye daisy is short-lived perennial originally brought here from Europe. The dainty flowers have escaped cultivation and now crowd out other plants on many rangelands. A vigorous daisy can produce 26,000 seeds per plant, while smaller specimens produce 1,300 to 4,000 seeds per plant. Tests have shown that 82% of the buried seeds remained viable after six years, and 1% were still viable after 39 years. Oxeye daisy requires cold winters to initiate blooming. The plant also reproduces vegetatively with spreading rootstalks. Daisies are resistant to many herbicides.

The oxeye daisy is mildly aromatic, like its close cousin, chamomile. The leaves and flowers are edible, though palatability may vary. A tea of the plant is useful for relaxing the bronchials. It is diuretic and astringent, useful for stomach ulcers and bloody piles or urine. Also used as a vaginal douche for cervical ulceration. The daisy is aromatic, used as an antispasmodic for colic and general digestive upset.

Sheep, goats and horses eat the oxeye daisy, but cows and pigs do not like it. The plant spreads rapidly when cattle pastures are managed with a low stock density and continuous grazing regime. Under these conditions, cows repeatedly select their preferred plants, while ignoring unpalatable species like the oxeye daisy.

Switching to higher stock densities and shorter grazing periods does encourage cattle to eat and trample more of the plant. Intensive grazing and trampling slightly reduces the number of seeds produced, and presumably injures younger rootstalks. Trampling also brings dormant seeds to the surface and removes the canopy cover so those seeds will germinate with mid-summer rain showers. In normal years, those seedlings will dry-out and die before becoming established, further reducing the number of seeds in the seed bank. It should be noted, however, that intensive grazing in wet summers may increase the number of successful seedlings. As many as 40% of the seeds consumed by cattle may remain viable after passing through the digestive tract, so care should be taken to avoid spreading the seeds when moving stock.

(3) The Weasley fop referred to in this chapter is Lord Percy Weasley the only one of his family to be described so.



(4) A natural child of someone is the illegitimate child of someone. In this story, Millicent Bulstrode is the natural daughter of the late Baron LeStrange and Marianne Bulstrode.

(5) Draco says he will treat Millicent as a *coupe-jarret* LeStrange. What does this mean? In very old families, there are often many branches of a family. Regardless as to the number of the branches, they can be collated under two broad branches: (1) the aristocratic branch, called the *casse-tête* branch, and (2) the feudal or plebeian branch called the *coupe-jarret* branch. Usually the *coupe-jarret* branch is poor and is regarded by the *casse-tête* branch as having fallen down the steps of precedence and rank. Still confused? This is made more apparent if you consider the fact that younger sons don't inherit titles. E.g. Lucius in this story is the Duke of Mallefile. Let's pretend he had 2 sons, Draco and Francis. Draco has his father's next highest title, the Marquessate of Villiers, but his hypothetical younger brother will only be Lord Francis Malfoy. Draco's eldest son will inherit the title. Francis's son will be plain "the honourable Mr Malfoy". This son, like Francis, will have to make his own way in the world, seek his own profession and thus fall down in the ranks and precedence. Francis's son, therefore will then become part of the *coupe-jarret* branch of the Malfoy family. Occasionally, if relations between the two branches are amicable, the *coupe-jarret* branch may help the *coupe-jarret* branch to advance.

(6) The term "tiger" in regency times referred to the chap who accompanied you and helped managed your horses when you were out driving or riding. He is also your trusted carriage/curricle (fill in vehicle of choice) driver on those rare days when you are not driving. If you watch period dramas, these are the fellows behind your curricle, carriage or whatever it is. A tiger is NOT to be confused with a footman. If you had a tiger, he would most likely be a liveried groom, generally small, generally young. An owner-driven curricle or phaeton typically had a groom's seat between the springs on which the tiger sat. The single-horse cabriolet had a platform at the rear on which the tiger stood. He also managed the horses when his master ascended to or descended from the seat, and sometimes took the reins to exercise the horses while his master temporarily left the vehicle. A small, lightweight tiger was preferred in order to maintain the proper balance. In fact, it was something of a status symbol to have the smallest possible tiger.

(7) The *Four-Horse Club* that Ron refers to a real club in Regency London. In this story, Harry and Ron are members of this elite club. Originally one of the clubs frequented by the notorious Earl of Barrymore, the Four-Horse club had been a wild group of young men who enjoyed bribing coachmen to give them the reins to the vehicles and then driving them at break-neck speeds along the very poor British Roads. By the early 19th century it was a respectable club for superb drivers. At its peak it only had some 30-40 members. It was often also called the Four-in-Hand Club, the Whip Club or the Barouche Club - the last from a description in "The Sporting Magazine" of February 1809. Club rules stated the barouches should be yellow bodied with 'dickies', the horses should be Bays, with rosettes at their heads and the harnesses should be silver-mounted. However Mr Annesley - a club member, drove roans, Sir Henry Peyton drove Greys so the colour of the horses wasn't as strictly enforced as the colour of the carriage.

The uniform of the club was strictly enforced. Whenever its members met or raced with one another, they must each wear a drab coat that reached to the ankles with three tiers of pockets and mother of pearl buttons as large as five shilling pieces. The waistcoat was blue with yellow stripes an inch wide, the breeches of plush with strings and rosettes to each knee. It was fashionable that the hat should be 3 and 1/2 inches deep in the crown.

The first meeting of the Four-Horse club was held in April 1808 and subsequent days of meeting were the first and third Thursdays in May and June. The members assemble at Mr Buxton's house in Cavendish Square and drove to Salt Hill to dinner at the Windmill first and then the next time at The Castle alternating between the two. There was rather a long complicated time when the club could not decide which hostelry to provide give their full membership too and alternated until the matter was decided by the Windmill on one broiling hot day. The cloth had been cleared and the wine placed before them when a waiter entered and asked each man to rise, the chair was removed and cool one put in its place. This attention to detail decided the Four-Horse club in its favour.

The procession was always the same. Club rules stated that each member in single file, no overtaking was allowed, and no one to exceed a trot. The procession set out from London to Salt Hill at noon, following along the Bath Road. It was 24 miles to Salt Hill so the club lunched at the Packhorse on Turnham Green and then took further refreshment at the Magpies on Hounslow Heath. They ran to Salt Hill where they remained overnight.

There popularity of the Four-Horse club began to wane around 1815 and it was disbanded in 1820. It was revived briefly in 1822 and finally died out in 1824. The Four-in-Hand club was another driving club completely which was not established until 1856. It based on the old rules of the BDC or Bensington Driving Club. The BDC was the great rival of the Four-Horse Club during the Regency era.

(8) A Guinea is worth 21 shillings or 1 pound and 1 shilling. It is highest coin denomination in those days and was partially made of gold.

(9) In this chapter, you would have noticed that I mentioned snuff. Snuff is a preparation of finely pulverised tobacco that can be drawn up into the nostrils by inhaling. It was also called smokeless tobacco. The quantity of this tobacco that is inhaled at a single time is no more than a pinch literally. However, not all snuff-takers used it for fashion (it was then seen as a fashionable activity). Some people with nose trouble (blocked and/or running noses) used a special kind of 'snuff' which was a powdery substance, such as a medicine, taken by inhaling.

Taking snuff was a popular, widespread pastime among the upper class and middle class English of the 18th century. Snuff boxes were made by silver smiths who specialised in tightly closing boxes. Most English snuff boxes were made in Birmingham

(10) When I say "malacca cane", I do not mean that the cane came from Malacca (a state in West/Peninsula Malaysia. (If you want to know more about Malaysia, email me and I will give you a history lesson.) The word "cane" had not been applied to the fashionable walking stick up to the 16th century. During his period, however, the thick, jointed stems of tropical grasses known as bamboo and cane, and the reed-like stem of several species of palm and rattan were introduced for the stick. These were called "canes." From that day forth, the walking stick of the past merged into the cane of the future. Today the terms are used interchangeable, though the saying, "One strolls with a walking stick and swaggers with a Cane!" tend to give greater dignity to the former. (Katherine Morris Lester and Bess Viola Oerke, *Accessories of Dress*, The Manual Arts Press, Peoria Illinois, p. 392.) A cane was an important accessory for a man from the late 17th century through the early 20th century. A cane made of quality wood, with a silver or gold handle, told of wealth and importance. Cane shafts usually were made of wood such as ebony or rosewood or malacca.

(11) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? Think about it.

(12) Hell is the abbreviated name for "gaming hell". A gaming hell is a gambling establishment. It's kind of like a casino without all the neon lights and loud music. A young "pigeon" was more likely to fall victim to a dishonourable "shark" at a hell than at an elite gentleman's club.

(13) A Curricle is a fashionable open-air two-wheeled sporting vehicle designed for a pair of horses and seating for two (i.e. the Regency equivalent of a two-seater convertible sports car).

(14) Readers may dislike the fact that I called the Aurors the Bow Street Aurors. This is a Regency story, remember? I modelled the Bow Street Aurors in this story after the Runners. The Bow Street runners were like the local policemen of the age. You may see the Bow Street Office here, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/LAbow.jpg>. In 1740 Sir Thomas de Veil, established a court house in Bow Street near the Opera House in Covent Garden. Ten years later, his successor, Henry Fielding (yes the author), formed the Bow Street Runners. Initially nicknamed Robin Redbreasts, on account of their scarlet waistcoats, the original eight Bow Street Runners were London's first band of constables. Their functions included serving writs, detective work and arresting offenders. The Bow Street Runners travelled all over the country in search of criminals and gained a reputation for honesty and efficiency. John Stafford, Chief Clerk at Bow Street, used several spies, including John Castle and George Edwards to help arrest several members of the Spencean Philanthropists, a group who were involved in the Spa Riots and the Cato Street Conspiracy. The formation of the London Metropolitan Police force by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 brought an end to their activities.

(15) To be "beneath someone's touch" is Regency cant for being (i) socially inferior, (ii) or not good enough to socialise with high society.

(16) "High on the instep" is a Regency phrase for being haughty and proud.

(17) "Never have a feather to fly with" is upper class Regency slang for having no money.

(18) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the ton.

(19) There were many clubs in London during the Regency period. The oldest and most famous of these was White's. But within this story, I have renamed White's. I call it Black's (after Sirius Black). If you are curious as to name of Black's and these sorts of gentlemen's clubs, read on. I have modelled Black's heavily after White's.

White's can be found at 37-38 St James's Street. It was founded 1736. White's is the oldest club in London, growing out of White's Chocolate House which opened in 1698. The building burnt down in 1733 and so the club moved a few doors up St James's Street and then to its current location around 1755. It was sometime around 1736 or just after that it established as a club and included among its membership of the time such great personages as the Duke of Devonshire, Earl of Rockingham, Bubb Doddington and Sir John Cope.

There was such a clamour for membership that by 1745 it was decided that a second club would be established under the same roof, and this was called the 'Young Club'. The original group were called the 'Old Club'. Vacancies in the Old Club were filled by members of the Young Club. It wasn't until around 1780/81 that the unwieldy system of administration between the two clubs was amalgamated. In Regency times, it faced its great rival, Brookes's, across St James's Street and while it was regarded as a Tory club. This distinction meant little in practice as gentlemen were generally members of both. It was one of the few clubs that set itself up with premises of its own. White's, like Brookes's had restricted admission, with members being elected. It was remarked that no man was refused entry who "ties a good knot in his handkerchief, keeps his hands out of his breeches pockets, and says nothing." White's is most famous for its Bay Window which was built in 1811 and quickly became the preserve of Brummell and his friends. Other noted members who frequented White's, and the notorious bow-window, were Lord Alvanely, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Worcester, Lord Foley and Lord Sefton.

Whist had been voted a dull game by the members and deep gambling was made in hazard, faro and other games of pure chance. The betting book, like the one at Brookes's, was always open on the table for bets of the most trivial nature to be laid at any time.

## Chapter 12 - Flax under Broken Straw

### Chapter 13 of 23

The Reverend Mr Longbottom consults Miss Granger on a matter pertaining to Miss Bulstrode. At the moment of his departure, she learns from the society pages of the newspaper that an expose of Hiero Gravitus will soon be printed. Believing that Lord Sterne is the culprit, she vows to declare war on him.

Sorry for the delay, it's Chinese New year tomorrow (the first day there are 15 days in all) and I've been busy with the preparations and my maths homework was appallingly difficult to do....

### Answering readers' queries

Due to the number of emails on the following matter, I have decided to clarify the matter here rather than reply to each and every one of them and their follow-up questions.

#### Question 1 What's with the ox-eye's essence wash?

Readers have asked me about the ox-eye's essence wash, and what Albus means by advising patience vis-à-vis the beetle. Cf to the chapter of Minerva's birthday ball at Albus's (ch 7). It was stated in the first line of para 6, "Regardless of the Duke's private doubts on the abilities of ox-eye scented insect repellent incense to perform its duties, he did not neglect his." Now, cf that sentence to Albus's remark and Severus's reaction. Tell me what you see? Don't tell me (as some respondents did) that ox-eye essence wash and ox-eye insect repellent are different. I know they are. But there's nothing stopping my characters from using ox-eye in different brews for the same purpose doesn't it. For more on the beetle and ox-eye, refer to response to question 3, below.

#### Question 2 What's with the Luna/Percy/Lord de Quib thing going on in the last chapter? Is there some transaction between Percy and de Quib that Luna, the ton and we don't know about? Is that why Percy is so sure that he'll marry Liuna?

There is no transaction between Percy, Luna and Lord de Quib (who is Luna's papa). I don't know what gave rise to idea. If you think that way, you have misinterpreted the Luna/Percy's arrogance section in Ch 11. Percy is sure of marrying money, yes. Percy is sure of marrying Luna, yes. Percy is sure of his abilities, yes. Percy is a fop and dandy, yes. But Percy is also oblivious. Percy is NOT in a deal with Luna's father to marry her. Percy wants to marry Luna for 2 reasons (a) Percy is in debt (it is mentioned several times in this story). He needs money fast. What's one way of getting fast money? Marrying money. Luna is an heiress (it was stated in an early chapter, if you can't find the reference go back to the preface and go to the *dramatis personae*.) It is a well known fact that Luna's family is eccentric (polite society calls Lord de Quib and Luna eccentric, the ruder people call them mad). Because of this, Luna is unlikely to ever make any any kind of match. Percy thinks that Lord de Quib is like an ordinary person wanting to marry his daughter off. But we know that de Quib is nothing like that. Percy thinks like Mr Collins in Jane Austen's P&P that he will be successful in getting Luna's hand in marriage. Notice that he uses the same line, "when sanctioned by your excellent parents..." in P&P, here "when sanctioned by her father....". the irony is that de Quib is exactly like Mr Bennet. (b) he knows that Ron is courting Luna. He thinks he's better than everyone in his family, even his parents. Does he think his brother, the youngest son of an impoverished ducal family with no prospects a fit match for her? He thinks Ron has no style, no wit, no nothing. Percy is full of himself, remember. It is evident in ch 11 that he views himself as a nonpareil. Because Ron's courting Luna, he wants to do one better than Ron. Why just court her when he can marry her and force de Quib to agree to the match, which brings us back to point (a) above. And de Quib's paper does not publish salacious things. It was stated in the footnotes of Ch 4 that in this story, everything that Luna and her father believe in are real. Percy DID NOT win de Quib's favour by playing the quibbler with info

#### Question 3 What's with the references to the beetle? You keep saying that there's a link between Percy and the beetle? I don't see it. Is it Percy's pet?

No, Percy does not have a beetle as a pet. You know and I know that beetle=Miss Rita Skeeter. As a beetle she can enter all the gentlemen's clubs, an all male bastion forbidden (to the present day) to all women. She needs to go as a beetle to ton parties because she isn't part of the ton. You don't ask a farmer to a Duchess's tea party, right? Same reason you don't ask Skeeter to your ton parties. Because she is a cit (for defn of cit please refer to footnote elsewhere in one of the chapters of this story). Miss beetle is not allowed into ton events, and given Albus's trendsetting of ox-eye essence insect repellent, she won't get in to the ton parties even if she tried. that leaves Percy. If you read carefully, you will realise that Percy has been miss beetle's insider in the ton and supplying her with info (tinged with his unique worldview of course). As for the beetle/Albus/Severus arc, Albus counsels patience because he (Albus) knows something about the beetle. at this point of the story only Minerva, Albus, the beetle herself and Percy knows who she is. Minerva won't say anything because she's discreet. The beetle and Percy won't reveal it for obvious reasons. Minerva knows because Albus told her. Albus knows but can't be sure. Why? Because he has no real concrete proof. Try going into society with sth sans proof and you're a mad man regardless of your wealth and status etc. now, in this ch, the Albus/Severus beetle exchange is where Albus tells Severus, i think you know sth about this beetle. Severus gets the message, but he's sceptical. a few more well placed hints and Severus gets it. Albus sees it in Severus's actions that he wants to do sth about the beetle. But Albus stops

him. The beetle has yet done nothing too egregious. Society columns in those days were worse than *hello* magazine, so beetle has been very mild. cf to the ch before Severus confronts Hermione about her identity as Hiero (ch8 the 1st few paras of the ch). Severus comments that the news in the society pages has been slow and he's disturbed. Link that statement to Albus's caution here. Beetle has as yet done nothing but her job. Expose her now and society will tell you 'so what? Beetle was only doing her job. Besides she told us sth delicious about the Countess of \_\_\_\_\_,' that's the way society worked in those days according to my great aunt. So expose beetle too soon is a bad idea. expose beetle too late and hell breaks loose. The timing has to be right, that's why patience (ox eye) is the insect repellent.

If everyone is satisfied that the beetle is indeed Skeeter, on with ch 12.

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

## Language of Flowers

### Chapter 12 Flax under Broken Straw

The day had been unusually torrid, in contrast to the previous two days of light rain. Bloomsbury Square was like an oven and the glare of the sunlight upon the dark brickwork of the house across the road was painful to the human eye. It was not difficult to believe that these were the same walls which loomed so gloomily through the fogs of winter. The blinds in Miss Granger's study were half drawn and the lady lay curled upon the sofa surrounded by her books and papers. There, at her perch, she was reading and re-reading parts of her study and preliminary notes on the Wars of the Cousins. Her visitor and abigail sat a little apart from her. The latter was sewing something near the empty grate of the fireplace and the former was engaged in pacing along the walls of books looking past the leather bound volumes and into his mind. Mr Longbottom did not appear to mind the extraordinary heat, but could not help being restless. Parliament had risen yet again and almost all the *ton* was in town. The young man stared past a volume of Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* and yearned secretly for the safety of his parish of the Duchess of Offaly charities where he was supposed to be in another two hours. His work at the community level had caused him to postpone a brief holiday to Bath. The real reason lay in the person of the old Countess of Fluxweed; at her age, neither the country nor the sea presented the slightest attraction, and as she was not inclined to travel to these places, her grandson remained with her.

The Reverend found his hostess too absorbed for conversation and tossed his newspaper aside so as to occupy its former position on an armchair. Suddenly, the firm voice of his hostess broke into his thoughts.

"You are right, Neville," said Miss Granger without looking up from her book. "It was a terrible occurrence."

The clergyman looked to his friend mulling her papers and books and smiled sadly at the sight of her tucking a frizzy stray lock of hair behind her ear. "Preposterous!" Mr Longbottom exclaimed before realising that Miss Granger had echoed the innermost thought of his mind at that moment. After that singular ejaculation, he could only sit upright in his chair and stare at his hostess in amazement. "What is this, Miss Granger?" he cried, unsuccessfully hiding his perturbation at being so transparent. "This is beyond anything which I could have imagined!"

She laughed heartily at his perplexity without lifting her eyes from a paper in her hands. "You are a man of God; I am a woman of Alchemical philosophy."

Still staring at the reclining and scribbling figure in amazement, he ventured to tell her, "You're a *tour de force*! I said nothing."

"Not with your lips or tongue, Neville, but certainly with your entire countenance. Notice that no one has yet read the newspaper for the day, except Father. Brown brought it up for me. So, when I saw you throw down the paper, it was clear that you were unconcerned with present news. This naturally means you were dwelling on the past or some part of it has your attention. You were pacing in a desultory fashion with unsteady feet, and as I know you do not consume spirits before seven in the evening, I am certain you are sober. The fact that you were staring at the books lining these walls without looking at them informed me that you had entered upon a train of thought. I simply read your expression and voila it proves that I am indeed a close friend in good rapport with you; otherwise, I would not have discerned your thoughts"

The abigail chuckled as she put aside her sewing and picked up the newspaper for her perusal. The Reverend Mr Longbottom was still far from satisfied. "Do you mean to inform me that you drew your conclusions from the actions of the man whom you've been observing? Tell me, Hermione, I've been seated quietly in this chair, what clues could I have given you?"

"You do yourself an injustice. Your features are very expressive," she explained, shuffling her papers as if looking for another relevant portion.

"Do you mean to say that you read my train of thoughts from my features?" Mr Longbottom quizzed with a mix of surprise and disbelief.

"Yes, especially your eyes. Shall I tell you how your reverie began?"

"Go on, tell me."

Miss Granger smiled and consulted one of her nearby books. "After throwing down *The Daily Prophet* to the floor, (which was the action which drew my attention to you, by the by) you sat for half a minute with a vacant expression. Then, your eyes alighted on my draft genealogy of the aristocratic families linked by blood to the Dunseof line. When your eyes affixed themselves there, your vacant expression was replaced by a thoughtful spark. Thus, I saw by the alteration in your countenance that a train of thought had commenced. But it did not lead very far. Your eyes flitted over to me while you twisted the ring on the middle finger of your left hand. The ring, as I noticed some time ago, has a lock of hair in it; and I know you are not in the habit of wearing your own hair and that of other members of your family. I know no one in your family with dark hair. Therefore I conclude it must be a tribute from a lady, say Bulstrode. This fact ties very nicely with your reason for visiting me today. You had informed me yesterday you wanted to know Bulstrode's bloodlines. You are aware that I researched for Hiero Gravitus when he wrote *The Wars of the Cousins*. That was why you glanced at my direction. With that look, you soon turned your attention to the painted miniature brooch she has so willingly loaned me. It became clear to me that you thought she was not who she is at present."

"You follow me wonderfully, Hermione," complimented the clergyman, uncrossing his legs and leaned back in his seat.

"I know," answered Miss Granger with a knowing smile, as she twirled a quill in her hand. "Your mind turned to what I had revealed yesterday that I believed Bulstrode is Lord Lestrangle's natural daughter. You were at the verge of a sigh and I knew you were sympathetic towards her if only her father had lived, he would have provided for her or so you thought. After all, he gave the brooch, which was a miniature of his mother, to his mistress. Then your eyes hardened and your thoughts drifted to your parents, whom the Lord and Lady Lestrangle deranged in a duel during the wars. But your eyes softened again as your hand stole to your ring and you thought of the goodness in the late Lord Lestrangle's daughter. His death undoubtedly depleted the income of the Bulstrode women, and after Marianne Bulstrode's death, the daughter was left to fend for herself as the prima ballerina of the London Opera. However, as you began wringing your hands violently, I surmised that you wondered on Bulstrode's fate had her father lived. If he had been alive, he would have kept his nephew, the former rascal and rake, Lord Villiers, away from his daughter. You were thinking how her fate could have been and how unnecessary were her experiences. I merely agreed with you."

Mr Longbottom smiled sadly at Miss Granger, as she pinched her nose in mild exhaustion. "You are truly the brightest witch of our time, Hermione!"

"Don't flatter me, Neville, or I might be tempted to steal you away from your Bulstrode."

"You're actually assuming that I can be stolen and that I will easily succumb," he laughed, enjoying the joke.

"I'm assuming nothing old friend," she said playfully. "Hence the research." She gestured to the papers and books beleaguering her in a wave of mock defeat. "You really ought to give thanks that I did not throw away all the information drafts that I drew up for Gravitus."

"Yes, I am in your debt," he assented, his eyes full of hope and mirth. "How's the research going?"

"Ah ha!" Miss Granger exclaimed, excitedly jumping onto her feet, startling her companions. "I am right! She is a LeStrange by blood! There is an obscure legal document in which LeStrange added a codicil to his will, which reads, 'The LeStrange line will die with my wife, Bellatrix, and me. But another holds the key to the truth of the bloodline's demise.'"

"What does it mean?" asked the Vicar, as he looked between a privately simpering Lavender Brown and Miss Granger.

"I have not been able to figure it out, but I have it from Lord William Weasley that the bank vault of Lord LeStrange did credit moderate sums from 1789 to 1812 to Marianne Bulstrode's account. However, it was a pittance for two people. There is a vault belonging to Lord LeStrange, but the key is missing and if I am not mistaken, he's alluding to this key in the codicil."

"Simple," interpolated Brown quietly in a faint blush. "The miniature portrait brooch fits into the lock and should turn the vault's lock."

"You may have it!" agreed Miss Granger, unsurprised at her abigail's ability to perceive the obvious. As Brown coloured deeper, she continued, "We shall send for Bulstrode, Lord Dragonlaire and Lord William Weasley. Neville, you had better go with them and protect Bulstrode's interests."

"What about grandmamma?" he asked, cringing slightly at the thought of the formidable old lady.

"She may have some reservations now on account of Bulstrode's status as an abigail, but since she is moderately successful, that should overcome one part of the old lady's prejudices. The only question is whether she will be opposed to a match between you and LeStrange's natural daughter. If she has money, your grandmother maybe mollified. But if she has nothing, then the opposition might remain."

"She is my intended, not grandmamma's. But I would still prefer her blessing."

"I would think that her objection would be your wedding to a lady whose father produced the unhappy conditions of her son and daughter-in-law."

"That was in the past!" declared Mr Longbottom, as he wore a look of quiet determination.

"Rightly so," Miss Granger murmured, "perhaps the Commons and the Lords could help."

"How?" he enquired with unfeigned interest.

Rubbing her temples with one hand, as she chewed thoughtfully on her quill, she offered, "I will have to see Villiers first, as well as the eldest two Weasley brothers. Dragonlaire has a head for law he could interpret the will and the legitimacy clauses. Villiers could push for an attainder in the Commons, and he could do the same through his friends in the Lords, to declare Bulstrode the LeStrange heiress. She will still be a Bulstrode, mind. If all goes well, you can tell Lady Fluxweed that you are a man of the cloth and forgiveness is a thing divine, et voila you marry Bulstrode."

"I wish I shared your optimism," whispered Mr Longbottom, who took to the habit of observing his feet.

"Look at me, Neville! This is not an optimistic face, my friend." Miss Granger proceeded to write something as a slip of parchment before she handed it to the Vicar. "Give this to Lord Dragonlaire and Lord William. They will understand what they must do."

Upon pocketing the note, he thanked his hostess profusely and left. As the clergyman left, Brown gave a cry of dismay and thrust the newspaper into her mistress's hand. Annoyed with her abigail's reaction, Miss Granger glowered at the young lady and absentmindedly cast her eye over the paper's society section and began to read:

*This year has been a most remarkable one for the ton. The season is almost at its height and there have been fourteen engagements announced in The Daily Prophet's fair pages. Yet, if the reader reads on, he will discover that the large number of couples approaching matrimony do not outweigh the interesting gossip of the season. This humble writer has it on very good authority that the charms of some of society's most ineligible women, namely, Lady Ginevra Weasley, Miss Lovegood and Miss Granger, are purely illusory. For who would choose to ally themselves with an impecunious ducal family? The unfortunate suitor would not only have to face humiliation of paying for the lady's trousseau, he would also have to supplement the impoverished Duke of Offaly's pockets and pay the debts of the extravagant three youngest sons. Although this humble writer is loath to believe in these rumours, I see it my civic duty to inform the readers that the Duchess of Offaly has been seen making her morning calls in a mere gig and to all appearances, the Offaly carriage appears to have been sold.*

At that point, Miss Granger snorted her disgust and rolled her eyes. The article read suspiciously like a Percy Weasley composition, as she was certain that it deviated from Rita Skeeter's (the usual on-dit columnist) style. "Bah! Dragonlaire has repaired the wheel of the Duke's family carriage last week. Utter rubbish!" The composer of the article did not share Miss Granger's view for it continued in this vein:

*The humble writer does not comprehend how Miss Lovegood came to be considered one of the successes of the season. That female is unsuited to life as a leader of the fashionable world. She frequently forgets her place as she condescends to assist the rabble of the city in the Duchess of Offaly's many charities. Her behaviour is the least of her failings. It is at least not as great as the failure of her lineage. While Miss Lovegood maybe the heiress of the oldest Barony in the country, no gentleman, regardless how pitiable his financial state, would consider her as a bride. For there is the taint of madness in her blood, as evinced in the Banbury stories Lord de Quib's Quibbler, which as a newspaper, pales in comparison to The Daily Prophet. Her great-grandfather, founder of The Quibbler, frequently published scurrilous material. Her father has continued this shameful tradition by recently publishing so called exposés on the abolition of the slave trade, the preservation of British and international wizarding wildlife. Her close association with Miss Granger, the famous bluestocking, does not enhance her blonde beauty. Miss Granger, it would seem, unites the worst in womankind by being a pedant. Only her money renders her somewhat respectable to society. This humble columnist, with the help of the lovely Miss Skeeter, has uncovered the truth behind Miss Granger's many gentlemen callers. It is extremely likely that they all call on her to see her abigail and Lady Ginevra's abigail. This naturally casts doubt as to Miss Granger's character, for these damnable facts portray her as little more than a noble-born broad. A woman who encourages gentlemen to make love to the abigails of her friends cannot be respectable. However, it is hoped that she is unaware of the social faux pas she has committed. Doubtlessly, she is aware of Sir Harry Potter (the most eligible catch of the Season) has a tendre for her Lavender Brown. She can also not be unaware that the reverend Mr Longbottom is also making a cake of himself over the former opera dancer, Millicent Bulstrode, presently in the service of Lady Ginevra as an abigail. The Daily Prophet shall bring you more stories on these shocking scandals in our next edition. Tomorrow, Miss Skeeter's column shall delve behind the secret romance between the handsome Lord Villiers and the plain Miss Granger. Also look out for the column in three days hence, where Miss Skeeter promises the revelation of the year Hiero Gravitas exposed.*

Remaining as still as a statue, Miss Granger reread the damning column again. "Expose me, will she!" muttered the scholar under her breath, tightly crushing the edges of the newspaper she held and ignoring her abigail's anxious alternation between sewing and glancing in her direction. "I wish to expose her as Plato proposed to expose unwanted infants in the Republic!" She had enough of the slanders written by Rita Skeeter and this new columnist, whom she immediately disliked.

"How dare he expose me to that creature!" she muttered darkly, her eyes glittering dangerously in fury as she violently cast a spell to incinerate the newspaper. "I wonder how much The Daily Prophet gave Lord Sterne for the information! If it reveals that I am Hiero Gravitas..." She leaned forward on her sofa and twisted her sprig muslin gown as she sank deeper into the cushions in the hope that they would suffocate her and end her masquerade and the ordeal. "I will kill him!" she hissed under her breath, masking her temper with a serene countenance. On the sofa, she sat and remained motionless, oblivious to her abigail's nervous wringing hands and looks of concern. While she was engaged in the pleasant occupation of casting aspersions on Lord Sterne's supposed character, Lord Villiers was announced.

A quick smile at Brown and a glance at the clock on her desk enabled her to come to her decision. The time informed her that Lord Sterne would be arriving in half an hour. With the entrance of Lord Villiers into her study, she confirmed her extemporaneous decision. She would leave Sterne seething as he waited and she would spend the afternoon driving around town with Draco and dining at Offaly House. "Ha!" she thought, "it would give him food for thought; it would show him I am not to be trifled with." Although she had already contemplated confronting Sterne, she was too cross to think rationally and decided to give him something to consider.

Thus, she transfigured her sprig muslin day gown into a smart carriage dress with a matching pelisse and bonnet. When Lord Villiers had given his approval as to her taste in gown, both Miss Granger and Brown took the blond Marquess's arms and walked him to his phaeton and climbed in beside him.

"Take us around town, Villiers," she ordered in an intransigent tone.

Despite her tone, Villiers was apprehensive and hesitated at his reins. "Isn't my godfather coming soon?"

"Drive, Villiers! Or I will!" she insisted waspishly.

A nod from Brown urging him to do so disquieted him. "Has he done something he oughtn't?" he asked in what he hoped was a kind manner, as he drove his team at a strict gallop in the direction of Hyde Park.

Opening her parasol smartly, she snapped, "He knows what he has done. Let us not talk about him." Changing her tone to something bordering on civility, she continued, "Tell me, did the Duchess of Offaly take kindly to the news of your intention towards Ginny?"

"She took it very well; she has been very discreet."

"Naturally, she is protective of her daughter's interests. Tell me all, Villiers, we have all afternoon."

Lord Sterne who arrived in time to see the phaeton driving off thought very little of the matter until Finnigan, the butler, found him pacing in Miss Granger's study. When he was told that she had gone out and would not return till late evening, he kicked the charred remains of the newspaper and picked up the remnants of a small paper fragment from among its charred larger body. It read "...ero *Gravitas exposed*". Crushing that piece of paper in his hand, he stormed out of the house with dark clouds over his brows, silently cursing himself for not arriving sooner.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Flax means "I feel your kindness".

It was first cultivated in Babylon around 3000 BC as burial chambers depicted flax cultivation and contained clothing made from flax fibres. At about 650 BC or so, Hippocrates wrote about using flax for relieving abdominal pains. In the same period, Theophrastus recommends the use of flax mucilage as a cough remedy. In the 1st century AD, Tacitus praises the virtues of flax. By the 8th century AD, Charlemagne considered flax so important for the health of his subjects that he passed laws and regulations requiring its consumption. This continued to the 15th century where Hildegard von Bingen used flax meal in hot compresses for the treatment of both external and internal ailments. View it here <http://www.lewisgardens.com/flax.jpg>.

(2) Broken straw represents "a rupture of a contract".

(3) "Banbury stories" is Regency cant for "a lot of nonsense" or "falsehoods".

(4) "Making a cake of oneself" is Regency cant for "making a fool of oneself".

(5) It was explicitly stated in Ch 1 that Hermione as Hiero Gravitas wrote a book on the wizarding civil wars entitled, Wars of the Cousins.

(6) Hermione mutters, "I wish to expose her as Plato proposed in the Republic!" In the Republic, where Plato outlined the ideal city, the myth of metals and the duties of the Guardians, he says that children born to unsanctioned marriages in the Guardian and Auxiliary classes will be exposed. By that, he means taken away from the city, dumped in the middle of nowhere (usually a desert wasteland) and exposed to the elements and left to die. This is what Hermione means she wants Rita Skeeter to be exposed to the elements and left to die.

(7) The Grangers live at Bloomsbury Square, an ideal address for them. Before its construction this square was called Southampton Square, after the Earl who built it in 1665. In 1700 the Duke of Bedford took Southampton house on the North side of the Square. Bedford developed the grounds in 1800. Repton laid out the gardens and James Burton built homes there, No. 18-27. There were many book sellers and cabinet makers to the Southeast of the square. No. 45 was the family home to the Earl's of Chesterfield. Issac D'Israeli lived at No. 6 from 1817-1829.

(8) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? Think on Lavender, Millicent, Hermione and Ginny.

(9) Bluestocking refers to a woman with unfashionably intellectual and literary interests. The term is explained in Boswell's "Life of Dr Johnson", as deriving from the name given to meetings held by certain ladies in the 18th century, for conversation with distinguished literary men. A frequent attendee was a Mr Stillingfleet, who always wore his everyday blue worsted stockings because he could not afford silk stockings. He was so much distinguished for his conversational powers that his absence at any time was felt to be a great loss, and so it was often remarked, "We can do nothing without the blue stockings." Admiral Boscowan, husband of one of the most successful hostesses of such gatherings, derisively dubbed them 'The Blue Stocking Society'. Although both men and women, some of them eminent literary and learned figures of the day, attended these meetings, the term 'bluestocking' became attached exclusively, and often contemptuously, to women. This was partly because women were instrumental in organising the evenings, but also because they were seen as encroaching on matters thought not to be their concern.

(10) A phaeton is a fashionable open-air four-wheeled sporting vehicle with seating for two; if the drivers are slim, three can be seated very comfortably. A popular version was the high-perch phaeton (see example at right) with its exaggerated elevation. Phaetons could accommodate two or four horses.

(11) Hyde Park Hyde Park is one of London's finest landscapes and covers over 350 acres.

Henry VIII acquired Hyde Park from the monks of Westminster Abbey in 1536; he and his court were often to be seen on thundering steeds in the hunt for deer. It remained a private hunting ground until James I came to the throne and permitted limited access. The King appointed a ranger, or keeper, to take charge of the park. It was Charles I who changed the nature of the park completely. He had the Ring (north of the present Serpentine boathouses) created and in 1637 opened the park to the general public.

In 1665, the year of the Great Plague, many citizens of London fled the City to camp on Hyde Park, in the hope of escaping the disease. Towards the end of the 17th century William III moved his court to Kensington Palace. He found that his walk to St James's was very dangerous, so he had 300 oil lamps installed, creating the first artificially lit highway in the country. This route later became known as Rotten Row, which is a corruption of the French 'Route de Roi' or King's Road.

Queen Caroline, wife of George II, had extensive renovations carried out and in the 1730s had The Serpentine, a lake of some 11.34 hectares, created. Hyde Park became a venue for national celebrations. In 1814 the Prince Regent organised fireworks to mark the end of the Napoleonic Wars, in 1851 (during Queen Victoria's reign) the Great Exhibition was held and in 1977 a Silver Jubilee Exhibition was held in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's 25 years on the throne. In 1866 Edmund Beales' Reform League marched on Hyde Park where great scuffles broke out between the League and the police. Eventually the Prime Minister allowed the meetings to continue unchallenged and since 1872, people have been allowed to speak at Speaker's Corner on any subject they want to.

The Lido was set up by George Lansbury, the first Commissioner of Works, in 1930 and in warm weather is used for sunbathing and swimming.

In the days of the Regency, there was what was known as the "fashionable hour at Hyde Park". The fashionable hour was really three hours from half past four to seven thirty though there aren't many ladies in evidence until about half past five. By seven thirty it was time to return to one's townhouse or lodgings and change into evening dress for dinner. The Ton promenaded up and down with all the same fervour of any teenager today on what so ever street it is the thing to ride up and down peacocking and flirting with the others drawn to the place to take part in the social rituals.

A brick wall was built to enclose the Park in 1660 at the order of James Hamilton the Keeper of the Park under Charles II. The avenue fashionable for disporting oneself in Georgian Times was Rotten Row, a corruption of La Route du Roi. William III had the road improved and made wide enough to easily drive three carriages abreast in 1690. The road was well sanded with coarse Thames sand. Hyde Park was purely the venue of the wealthy, no hack being allowed into the Park since 1695. The old wall was replaced with a new railing as part of the Coronation festivities of George IV.

On Rotten Row one could be seen, flirt, greet friends, and make others pea green with envy for your beautiful driving clothes and equipage or mount. There you might see that aging playboy the Duke of Queensbury ogling women from his carriage with his bold letter 'Q' on it rather than a crest. Viscount Petersham can be seen driving his famous chocolate coloured coach pulled by brown horses. Mr Annesley might drive by with his roan horses standing out among all the bays and black horses. Sir Henry Peyton drives his famous Greys with their manes and tails flying like clouds in the wind. Gentlemen wearing the ankle length drab coat and yellow striped blue waistcoat of the Four-in-Hand club are sprinkled in the passing cavalcade. The Hon. Frederick Gerald Byng glides by with his carefully clipped poodle on the seat beside him. Beau Brummell always ready with a quip notes the hair curling round Byng's forehead and pauses to speak in passing. Uttering the sobriquet with the assurance it will be the on-dit of the day. "Ah, Byng, how do you do? A family vehicle, I see." It's "Poodle" Byng from now on. The Prince Regent is surely out in the equipage he proudly commissioned Stubbs to paint. Gaze upon Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and the other great beauties of the day taking their airing. Is it just a fancy or do the Prince's eyes follow Georgiana wistfully as they pass one another? Watch the looks of awe and snubs as the notorious Letty Lade drives by in her high-perch phaeton. Carriages bearing the family crests of the Ton and the living ornament of the Dalmatian coach dog, and liveried servants glide by in gilded splendour. Among the carriages are those bearing faux crests meant to remind one of the crests of titled lovers whose Lady these courtesans will never be.

C. J. Apperley writes of the fashionable hour in Hyde Park, "on any fine afternoon in the height of the London season ...he will see a thousand well appointed equipages pass before him... Everything he sees is peculiar, the silent roll and easy motion of the London-built carriage, the style of the coachmen - it is hard to determine which shine brightest, the lace on their clothes, their own round faces, or flaxen wigs - the pipe-clayed reins - pipe-clayed lest they should spoil the clean white gloves... not forgetting the spotted coach-dog, which has been washed for the occasion... such a blaze of splendour... is now to be seen nowhere but in London."

(12) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the *ton*.

(13) On-dit is French for "we tell". In the context of Regency speech, it meant gossip about the town that is usually published in the newspapers.

(14) Some readers might take offence at the phrase "tendre" used here. I understand that some might look on it as a bastardisation of the French. I know the original phrase is "tendre penchant". In Regency English, the term "tendre" is usually understood to mean a strong liking for. The term "tendre" was used by W. M. Thackeray, who wrote, "You poor friendless creatures are always having some foolish *tendre*" in *Vanity Fair*. So you see, in English, it is perfectly acceptable.

(15) Natural daughter/son refers to an illegitimate son or daughter of someone important and often wealthy.

## Chapter 13 - Growing Mushrooms

### Chapter 14 of 23

On realising that Miss Granger believes him to be responsible for the expose on Hiero Gravitas that will soon be on the Daily Prophet society's pages, Lord Sterne visits his godmother, Lady Minerva McGonagall for advice. He's furious when he meets the Duke of Sanguine there. What happens next? Read on?

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

Extensive footnotes follow the chapter. Readers who are antipathetic to them have been warned.

\*\* Those confused as to the time line need to know this BEFORE and AFTER reading this chapter. Let the events on Chapter 12 (the previous chapter) be Day 1. On Day 1, Hermione reads that the next day (Day 2), the newspaper will run an article about 'the secret romance between the handsome Lord Villiers and the plain Miss Granger' to quote from the on-dit columns, and in three days (Day 4) there will be an exposé on Hiero Gravitas. She goes driving with Villiers on Day 1 to confirm that the miniature of Lady Lestrangle (which is a copy of an original) was done by Mme Vigée-Lebrun. On Day 2, Neville, Bulstrode, William and Charles Weasley go unlock the Lestrangle vault. This news is published in Day 3. Sterne tried calling on Hermione on Day 2, she was home but wouldn't receive him, hence, she 'was not home to him'. Chapter 13, occurs on Day 3, which means the Hiero Gravitas exposé will occur (plotwise) the next day (Day 4). To give you a bit of a bone to chew on, let me reveal on Day 4, the same day as the Gravitas exposé, the Duchess of Mallefille is throwing a soiree.

Now, that you are familiar with the time line, on with the story...

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 13 Growing Mushrooms

"I swear to God, I will kill him, Godmother!" spat Lord Sterne violently as he apparated to the gate outside Lady Minerva's garden. Shaking and visibly paler with anger, he watched her noiselessly open the gate without any invitation or complaint. Taking her silence as a sign to follow her into the house, he strode angrily entered her compound and shut the gate. As soon as he was inside, he removed his outer clothes and seated himself slowly in a bid to keep his temper in check and scowled at the silent lady removing her gardening gloves and large straw hat.

The lady's eyes betrayed no glimmer of surprise at Marquess's sudden manifestation in her home. "Sit," she instructed firmly, pleased that the house-elves had brought the tea things on time. Handing him a cup of strong unsweetened tea, she ventured to give voice to that which was foremost on her mind, "Are you in trouble, Severus?"

Before he could offer an appropriate answer, a bell at the fireplace sounded and a tall bearded figure appeared. The old wizard cast a cleaning charm over himself, kissed Lady Minerva's proffered hand and held it. "You appear to be a man of action today, mon enfant," he commented before settling on a chair next to Lady Minerva's.

"It is just as well you are here," snarled Sterne quietly, narrowing his eyes at the old man who had the temerity to interrupt his visit to his godmother. "Do you think I can get away with killing him?" he asked Lady Minerva in a harsh whisper.

"Who and why?" enquired Lady Minerva calmly as she cut a scone.

"If you had read the newspaper today, you would know why!" he hissed darkly, pushing away the old man's proffered lemon drop forcefully.

The wizen figure stroked his beard thoughtfully, his blue eyes twinkling. "What does it say, Minerva?"

"I read The Quibbler, Sanguine now, be good, the both of you," she warned, scooping some jam onto her plate. "Sanguine, please allow Severus to narrate his grievances in peace."

Using the livid twitching of a nerve at the corner of his mouth to curl his lips into a smirk at the patient lady, Lord Sterne lashed out, "It was in the on-dit columns of The Daily Prophet today. I should have known that she would have driven out in Villiers' phaeton. Yesterday, I saw it leaving as I arrived at Orthod's residence."

Quirking a brow and staring at the dark figure flicking aside a lank lock of dark hair out of his face, the Duke of Sanguine issued a command, "Accio today's Daily Prophet!" He flipped through the pages of the newspaper and soon came to the society pages. "Why do you have murderous intent towards him, mon enfant?" Sterne scowled in reply and placed his hands in a steeple. "He was only driving her around town and her abigail was in attendance. It was very proper."

"Proper? We were to go to the museums to see the Elgin marbles!" growled Sterne. "I cleared a day in my schedule to do so!"

"Have you tried to obtain an audience with her?" enquired Lady Minerva, rapping Sanguine's knuckles sharply as his hand strove to seize another scone even though he had yet to finish his. "Don't be so greedy, Sanguine!"

"I called on her this morning, but was told she was *not at home*! She was not at home *to me*!" he snapped, banging his fist on the delicate japan table to his godmother's chagrin.

"So she was out," said the old man calmly, finishing his scone and taking the cut one from Lady Minerva's plate.

"No, you old fool! She *did not want to see ME*! How dare she use me in this puerile manner when I have done nothing to her! Nothing! She did not attend to her end of the bargain! How dare she go around promenading and exposing herself to the public with Villiers! She is supposedly mine! She is mine until Sybill Trelawney changes her name to Lupin! We had a civil agreement!" he barked with a glare that would have resulted in his man, Filch, sinking away into the shadows for the rest of the day.

"Well," exclaimed Lady Minerva in a quietly indignant voice, "I see you are speaking of Miss Granger. You do realise that we women are not livestock you can barter, own and sell. Miss Granger is a sensitive and intelligent woman. She is a person; a human being. I beg you to remember that, Severus."

Seeing how their godson had ignored Lady Minerva's words, the Duke of Sanguine sought to soothe her with a gentle press of her hands. Then, to ensure that she was apprised of all the details of the matter at hand, he quizzed, "Perhaps, *my Lord Marquess* would like to tell us the rest?"

"Why need I tell you when everything is already stated in the on-dit columns! They must have been gallivanting about town! You will soon come to the part of the article when Skeeter says they went to see Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun. No doubt, he wanted a portrait of her!" he levelled at his godparents, glaring at the old man.

"Think rationally, Severus. All sorts of people go to Madame Vigée-Lebrun's studio," reasoned Lady Minerva, cutting a scone for herself.

"Unsurprising too, considering what a long career she's had. Why, she's been doing muggle styled paintings for us in London since 1776. A very respectable woman; she keeps a record of all her commissions, isn't that clever? That way, she knows exactly who she painted and when. Remarkable ingenuity, isn't it? At one point, she was taking in commissions from the aristocracy to make copies of miniatures, all of which she imbued with her own inimitable style. Lestranger was one her best clients I heard," murmured the Duke of Sanguine to Lady Minerva, popping a lemon drop into his mouth.

"I don't see how all that matters?" snapped Sterne acerbically.

"You don't? All the more the pity, mon enfant," replied the Duke noisily chewing his sweet and defending himself against Lady Minerva's sharp rap of his knuckles for daring to sweep the scone crumbs off his beard to her carpets. "Could Miss Granger be aiding Lord Villiers in going to Madame Vigée-Lebrun's? Could it be that they were there to verify a portrait that she had done? Could such a portrait have come into Miss Granger's possession? Surely, the artist herself would know whether a portrait allegedly in her style was authentic."

"Mere speculation," said Sterne, waving his hand dismissively and sipping his fifth cup of tea.

"You have not read the paper in its entirety?"

"Does it matter?" he hissed, sullenly staring at a scone in front of him.

"Many exiguous threads are needed to weave a cloth, mon enfant, remember that. At present, we have only one thread."

"No, we don't!"

"The visit to Madame Vigée-Lebrun, you mean," said Lady Minerva, moving to the window to draw the drapes.

"Indeed, dearest. The other thread lies in another section of the newspaper, where it is stated that Lord Dragonlaire and Lord William Weasley have managed to open Lestranger's mysterious vault at Gringotts."

"There's nothing interesting about that," snarled Sterne, folding his arms across his chess. "They likely found the skulls of all the Lestranges' victims."

"That's what the Weasley brothers thought, for they had Miss Bulstrode and Mr Longbottom accompany them," said Sanguine over his perusal of the newspaper.

"I fail to see how this has any bearing on the skeletons and skulls in Lestranger's secret vault."

Lady Minerva set down her teacup gently and frowned slightly. "Has it been conclusively proven that the Bulstrode gel is Lestranger's?"

"That's what I am coming to, dearest. I think I had best read this portion of the article: *The celebrated historian and alchemist, Hiero Gravitas, has revealed in the footnotes of his Wars of the Cousins that the miniature portrait brooch of the seventeenth Baroness Lestranger, mother of the late last Lord Lestranger, holds the secret of the secret Lestranger vault. With the brothers, Lord Dragonlaire and Gringotts legal advisor, Lord William Weasley, the theory forwarded by Mr Gravitas was indeed verified when the brooch proved to be the key to opening the vault. In the vault were several papers of importance, among them were documents providing for Miss Bulstrode and her late mother, the fabled soprano, Marianne Bulstrode. There was also a document signed by King Richard the fifth which legitimises Miss Bulstrode as rightful heiress to the remnants of the Lestranger fortune. Lord William Weasley, an expert in Gringotts inheritance law, had conclusively shown that the documents are authentic.* Well, mon enfant what do you think of that?"

"Interesting, but it does not palliate my black mood towards Villiers!"

"Ah yes, you were saying that you wanted to kill him," recalled Lady Minerva with forced nonchalance.

"Judging from the way he looks, he still does," quipped Sanguine, his eyes glittering in amusement.

"Skeeter says they were happily engaged in their drive around town. What could they have discussed that would result in mirth?" spat Sterne with a derisive snort. He rose and started pacing; then violently flicking a lock of his hair from his line of vision, he continued vehemently, "She did not have the courtesy to inform me that *she did not want to see me!* If she had, I would have respected her wishes! Villiers is the cause of this! To think that I petted and looked after Mallefille's son, and *he* takes her on a jaunt around town!"

"That does not mean you have to kill Lord Villiers," reasoned Lady Minerva calmly, pouring him another cup of tea.

"I will do so honourably in a duel," he announced bitterly.

"The Bow Street Aurors will have your head, fool! You would have to flee to France! You would be no different from Mallefille!" reminded Sanguine absentmindedly, popping yet another sweet into his mouth.

"Selfish, utterly selfish, Severus," said Lady Minerva, nibbling on a teacake. "Do you want to bring scandal to Miss Granger?"

"No!" he snapped, still scowling, averting his eyes from the sight of his godfather and his sweets.

"Does this mean you will desist from this ridiculous course of action?"

Lord Sterne remained silently in thought for half a minute before he finally spoke in a neutral tone through his teeth, "I don't blame her for throwing me over. I concede she has helped me advance Lupin's suit with Lady Sybill. *But* I do not intend to sit idly by when Miss Granger's virtue and honour are called into question. That Skeeter creature accused her of toying with gentlemen. She insulted Miss Granger's upbringing. It stated that she had thrown me over for an heir to a Dukedom. Its veracity is immaterial. I cannot abide by such scurrilous reports of her. Skeeter painted her to be a woman of dubious mores. How can I remain silent? Villiers is the cause of this and I intend that he should carry his responsibilities through if he truly wishes to fix his interest with her."

"My, my" muttered Sanguine, stroking his beard carefully as he chewed on yet another sweet. "Can it be that you are jealous?"

"Bah! I have no jealous bones in my body!" Sterne declared furiously, setting aside his teacup with such force that the table trembled.

"Jealousy is predicated on envy. You clearly envy your godson," noted Sanguine causally, rubbing the knuckles that Lady Minerva had rapped once more with her butter knife.

"I do not!" he protested testily, scowling at the old man.

"Envy means you think you desire what the person has; in short, *you think and feel* the other party is undeserving of that which you desire. Feeling so leads to jealousy."

"Humbug! Stuff, old man! Nothing but stuff!" swore Sterne heatedly. "I am content with my lot!"

"Really? I wonder what Lady Potter would say?"

On hearing that name, Lady Minerva turned her head sharply towards her old friend and sharply rapped her butter knife on his knuckles in disapproval.

"Lady Potter?" murmured Sterne lowly, tensing his fingers at the edge of the table.

"Yes, Lady Potter, formerly Lily Evans, daughter of Lord and Lady Ambrose Evans, sister of Mrs Dursley. You were quite fond of her once. You always felt that Sir James did not deserve her, if memory serves me correct. Is it not the same here, mon enfant?"

"I will not tolerate your inane and specious speculations as to the state of my private affairs!" Sterne said vehemently through his teeth as he rose to take his leave. He was furious that the old man had ferreted out his secret that the thought of Lady Potter no longer pained him.

After a curt bow to Lady Minerva, he stormed out of her house without bidding the Duke of Sanguine goodbye. As he made his way down the street, he wondered whether there was any truth to the old man's words. To his mind, it appeared that the Duke had been insinuating that he had been untrue to the memory of the deceased Lady Potter. Perhaps he was, answered his left brain, he stopped in his tracks and stared blankly into a window before him; his mind hurling all manner of accusations at him. How dare he aspire to the possession of purity! How and why did he dare aspire to it when he was thoroughly impure? Was purity truly an attraction to the impure such as he? He curled his lips contemptuously at himself as he made his way home in his strong unrelenting strides. He should bludgeon himself or arrange for someone to kill him in a duel he had committed a grievous sin twice. He had failed to learn from his past first Lily Evans and now, *her*. Cursing himself, he soon arrived at his town house and hastened to the comfort of his library.

With a strong drink in his hand, he laughed coolly at himself for succumbing to the merits of Miss Granger's quiet charms and Lady Potter's graceful manners. These women were kind, intelligent, quick witted and pure of heart they ought to be worshipped and adored by all, he reflected.

"Why?" he asked himself bitterly, cradling his head in his hands in torment. "Why did I have to feel for them? Why haven't I thought of Lily in a while? Why?" Downing his sixth swig of Firewhisky, he sought to comfort himself by telling himself aloud that it was a fortunate thing he never discovered himself to Lily. If he had, he was certain that she would have in all likelihood told him she was already spoken for. She would have been so gentle and kind yet firm with him so much so that he would have shot himself for his unworthiness. Men such as himself, he felt, were too tainted by the dark deeds of their past to deserve any kindness. Lily Evans was fortunately dead and he did not scruple to put her momentarily out of his mind. The issue surrounding the present frosty relations with Miss Granger was another more pressing matter. She apparently believed that he had revealed her secret to the on-dit columns. She had, in his opinion, rightly condemned him without seeing him, yet he could not prevent the stirrings of his feelings of injustice in his heart and soul. Despite that sentiment, another part of him resented her highhanded behaviour towards him. "Damn her! What is she doing to my mind! Lily Evans never had this effect on me! Why am I thinking on Lily Evans with such equanimity!" he whispered violently to himself. Picking up a nearby glass and staring intently at its carvings, his grip on that artefact tightened as he cursed Skeeter for ruining his relationship with Miss Granger, flinging his glass into the grate of the empty fireplace, he railed against his faculties for ever perceiving Miss Granger as anything more than an insufferable know-it-all. Why had he been lured to see her mind? Why had he been drawn to her writings? Why did he have to uncover her identity Hiero Gravitus? He laughed caustically at himself, despising the irony of his present predicament while perversely enjoying the agony it wrecked upon his mind.

"Milord," came the dismembered voice of Filch from outside the door. "Ye all right?"

Sterne laughed ruefully again and took another long swig from his Firewhisky bottle. "What do you want, Filch? Do you intend to offer absolution for my sins?" he laughed hollowly at the belief that he would never fully exonerate himself in Miss Granger's eyes.

"If it please ye, milord, the Duke of Sanguine's man just left a note. Doth ye want me to bring it to ye?"

He flicked his wrist sharply thereby opening the door to his man. Catching his master sloughing in his favourite green armchair in front of the fireplace drinking directly from the bottle, Filch had the perspicacity to quietly leave the note on the small table beside his Lordship's elbow and hastily departed.

"Can't the old man use the floo?" muttered Sterne angrily as he picked up the note. The cryptic message merely ran,

*Scarabs are sacred.*

*Beetles are dangerous.*



Sanguine.

He leaned back into his chair and drummed his fingers on his lips in deep thought. What could the Duke mean by his three lines of scrawl? He knew his godfather was hinting at the way in which he could re-establish himself in Miss Granger's eyes. But to do so, he had to uncover the message's meaning. He rose and began to pace in his study. All his conversations with Miss Granger, on the matter of her other self, were conducted *sub rosa*. He had always ensured that their talks were under a rose carving or a hanging rose so as to safeguard her secret. Only a person devoid of honour would eavesdrop on a *sub rosa* conversation. He paused in his tracks and sank into chair at his desk with a sudden realisation the only way anyone could be privy to a *sub rosa* conversation was to be in the same room as the spell caster and the conversationalists. The Duke of Sanguine had intimated as much. In Duke's residence as well as Lady Minerva's, there was the distinct scent of ox-eye incense used to keep out insects. Furthermore, anyone outside the vicinity of the spell would find themselves listening to humming and should they still persist and attempt to join in the conversation, they would find themselves temporarily mute. So, the damnable *on-dit* columnist must have been in the room and near the conversationalists when the spell was cast. Sterne leaned back into his chair, formed a steeple with his hands.

It was apparent to Lord Sterne that the Duke undoubtedly knew the secret identity of the on-dit witch, Rita Skeeter. Then, it struck him there was only one way she could have been privy to all sorts of societal gossip without being present. She must be an unregistered animagus. Given the Duke's recent persecution of insects, Sterne was positive that Skeeter's secret animagus form was an insect. And given the ubiquitous presence of a single beetle in the oddest of places such as Black's, Hatchard's, The Temple of the Muses, his coat and so on, Sterne deduced that the beetle was indeed Skeeter. If the exposé on Miss Granger was to be published in evening edition of The Daily Prophet on the morrow, there was only one method she could deploy to prevent a scandal over her name. She would have to be confronted and she must confess it all and avert the potential disaster. Thumbing through his agenda book, he saw that the following evening was the Duchess of Malleville's thirty-third wedding anniversary rout party. Shutting the book dramatically, he saw that he would have to act fast. Striding to the fireplace, he threw in a handful of floo powder. "Black's" he commanded.

As soon as Lord Lupin's face appeared in the flames, Sterne asked to speak to Villiers. On hearing that the young man would return within the next fifteen minutes, Sterne scowled and said, "Lupin, order Villiers to come to my residence *immediately* when he returns. It is imperative!" Without waiting for a reply, he closed the flow network and fell into his chair in deep thought.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Mushroom stands for "suspicion". If you give someone mushrooms (any kind of mushrooms), you are telling them, "I cannot entirely trust you."

(2) The term "to discover myself to you" in Regency times means, "to reveal myself to you". How you choose to interpret 'reveal' is up to you. That's what Severus means when he says he never discovered himself to Lily, i.e. he never declared himself to her. This is a fact mentioned in chapter 1. I should also add that the portion of that said conversation in chapter 1 has a deeper meaning.

\* (3) A rose carved into or hung from a ceiling meant that the conversation held beneath it was in confidence, or *sub rosa*. So you see, the roses are not all above love as the romantics running around the world would have us think.

(4) Ox-eye represents "patience".

In Regency times, it was spelt as separately. View it here <http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/wedtri4.jpg> and <http://www.monashetourism.com/PlantsandFlowers/T%20132%20Oxeye%20Daisy.jpg>

Now, it is known as the oxeye daisy. It is a flower that is both loved and hated. It was a plague on pastures and crop fields across Europe. The Scots called the flowers "gools". The farmer with the most gools in their wheat field had to pay an extra tax. Now the gools have invaded this continent from coast to coast. The oxeye daisy is short-lived perennial originally brought here from Europe. The dainty flowers have escaped cultivation and now crowd out other plants on many rangelands. A vigorous daisy can produce 26,000 seeds per plant, while smaller specimens produce 1,300 to 4,000 seeds per plant. Tests have shown that 82% of the buried seeds remained viable after six years, and 1% were still viable after 39 years. Oxeye daisy requires cold winters to initiate blooming. The plant also reproduces vegetatively with spreading rootstalks. Daisies are resistant to many herbicides.

(5) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? Look at Hermione, Ginny, Millicent and Lavender and tell me what you see? Think about it.

(6) A phaeton is a fashionable open-air four-wheeled sporting vehicle with seating for two; if the drivers are slim, three can be seated very comfortably. A popular version was the high-perch phaeton with its exaggerated elevation. Phaetons could accommodate two or four horses.

(6) Readers may dislike the fact that I called the Aurors the Bow Street Aurors. This is a Regency story remember? I modelled the Bow Street Aurors in this story after the Runners. The Bow Street runners were like the local policemen of the age. You may see the Bow Street Office here, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/LAbow.jpg>. In 1740 Sir Thomas de Veil, established a court house in Bow Street near the Opera House in Covent Garden. Ten years later, his successor, Henry Fielding (yes the author), formed the Bow Street Runners. Initially nicknamed Robin Redbreasts, on account of their scarlet waistcoats, the original eight Bow Street Runners were London's first band of constables. Their functions included serving writs, detective work and arresting offenders. The Bow Street Runners travelled all over the country in search of criminals and gained a reputation for honesty and efficiency. John Stafford, Chief Clerk at Bow Street, used several spies, including John Castle and George Edwards to help arrest several members of the Spencean Philanthropists, a group who were involved in the Spa Riots and the Cato Street Conspiracy. The formation of the London Metropolitan Police force by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 brought an end to their activities.

(7) Louise-Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, French artist, the daughter and student of her father, the artist Louis Vigée, was born on 16th April, 1755 in Paris. In 1776, she married the known art-dealer Jeanne Baptiste Pierre Lebrun. She made an early and brilliant career: in 1779 she officially became a court painter of the Queen Marie-Antoinette, in 1783 she was admitted to the French Academy of Arts. "Intelligent, diplomatic, resourceful, and independent, she remains a role model to women who paint, having won wide recognition for her skills and gained admission to academies long closed to her sex." (Colin Eisler, *Paintings in the Hermitage, Stewart, Tabori & Chang*, 1990, p. 516.) Vigée-Lebrun was an extremely industrious and productive painter, she left more than 30 portraits of the queen and her ladies-in-waiting, many self portraits, and a lot of portraits of the European nobility. Her portraits are elegant and rich in color, very sentimental and idealized the model. But the evident difference of the models from their pictorial depiction did not embarrass the customers. Vigée-Lebrun was fashionable with the European aristocracy. Her fame grew even more with her immigration during the French Revolution first to Italy (1789-93), then to Vienna (1793-94), and then to St. Petersburg (1795-1802), where she also spent 6 very successful years painting portraits of Russian aristocrats. In her best works the magnificent art of French portraitists of the 18th century and fine sensitiveness of the European sentimentalism are happily united.

I played around with the timeframe of her life a little for the sake of the plot, but it does not affect anything within this story

(8) Unmarried women of the *ton* over the age of 28 are generally held to be old maidens and not likely to be ever married. These ladies can establish themselves in their own homes (as they have their own income) without censure or gossip.

(9) "Gel" is Regency slang for young lady who is old enough to be out of the schoolroom but not yet presented into formal society or Court. Older women may use the term as an affectionate form of address when talking about young debutantes in their acquaintance.

(10) On-dit is French for "we tell". In the context of Regency speech, it meant gossip about the town that is usually published in the newspapers.

(11) Hyde Park Hyde Park is one of London's finest landscapes and covers over 350 acres. In the days of the Regency, there was what was known as the "fashionable hour at Hyde Park". The fashionable hour was really three hours from half past four to seven thirty though there aren't many ladies in evidence until about half past five. By seven thirty it was time to return to one's townhouse or lodgings and change into evening dress for dinner. The Ton promenaded up and down with all the same fervour of any teenager today on what so ever street it is the thing to ride up and down peacocking and flirting with the others drawn to the place to take part in the social rituals.

On Rotten Row one could be seen, flirt, greet friends, and make others pea green with envy for your beautiful driving clothes and equipage or mount. There you might see that aging playboy the Duke of Queensbury ogling women from his carriage with his bold letter 'Q' on it rather than a crest. Viscount Petersham can be seen driving his famous chocolate colored coach pulled by brown horses. Mr Annesley might drive by with his roan horses standing out among all the bays and black horses. Sir Henry Peyton drives his famous Greys with their manes and tails flying like clouds in the wind. Gentlemen wearing the ankle length drab coat and yellow striped blue waistcoat of the Four-in-Hand club are sprinkled in the passing cavalcade. The Hon. Frederick Gerald Byng glides by with his carefully clipped poodle on the seat beside him. Beau Brummell always ready with a quip notes the hair curling round Byng's forehead and pauses to speak in passing. Uttering the sobriquet with the assurance it will be the on-dit of the day. "Ah, Byng, how do you do? A family vehicle, I see." It's "Poodle" Byng from now on. The Prince Regent is surely out in the equipage he proudly commissioned Stubbs to paint. Gaze upon Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and the other great beauties of the day taking their airing. Is it just a fancy or do the Prince's eyes follow Georgiana wistfully as they pass one another? Watch the looks of awe and snubs as the notorious Letty Lade drives by in her high-perch phaeton. Carriages bearing the family crests of the Ton and the living ornament of the Dalmatian coach dog, and liveried servants glide by in gilded splendour. Among the carriages are those bearing faux crests meant to remind one of the crests of titled lovers whose Lady these courtesans will never be.

C. J. Apperley writes of the fashionable hour in Hyde Park, "on any fine afternoon in the height of the London season ...he will see a thousand well appointed equipages pass before him... Everything he sees is peculiar, the silent roll and easy motion of the London-built carriage, the style of the coachmen - it is hard to determine which shine brightest, the lace on their clothes, their own round faces, or flaxen wigs - the pipe-clayed reins - pipe-clayed lest they should spoil the clean white gloves... not forgetting the spotted coach-dog, which has been washed for the occasion... such a blaze of splendour... is now to be seen nowhere but in London."

(12) Japan is a finish on furniture of the time. A cabinet with such a finish is known as a japan cabinet, and so on, so forth.

(13) There were many clubs in London during the Regency period. The oldest and most famous of these was White's. But within this story, I have renamed White's. I call it Black's (after Sirius Black). If you are curious as to name of Black's and these sorts of gentlemen's clubs, read on. I have modelled Black's heavily after White's.

White's can be found at 37-38 St James's Street. It was founded 1736. White's is the oldest club in London, growing out of White's Chocolate House which opened in 1698. The building burnt down in 1733 and so the club moved a few doors up St James's Street and then to its current location around 1755. It was sometime around 1736 or just after that it established as a club and included among its membership of the time such great personages as the Duke of Devonshire, Earl of Rockingham, Bubb Doddington and Sir John Cope.

There was such a clamour for membership that by 1745 it was decided that a second club would be established under the same roof, and this was called the 'Young Club'. The original group were called the 'Old Club'. Vacancies in the Old Club were filled by members of the Young Club. It wasn't until around 1780/81 that the unwieldy system of administration between the two clubs was amalgamated. In Regency times, it faced its great rival, Brookes's, across St James's Street and while it was regarded as a Tory club. This distinction meant little in practice as gentlemen were generally members of both. It was one of the few clubs that set itself up with premises of its own. White's, like Brookes's had restricted admission, with members being elected. It was remarked that no man was refused entry who "ties a good knot in his handkerchief, keeps his hands out of his breeches pockets, and says nothing." White's is most famous for its Bay Window which was built in 1811 and quickly became the preserve of Brummell and his friends. Other noted members who frequented White's, and the notorious bow-window, were Lord Alvanelly, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Worcester, Lord Foley and Lord Sefton.

Whist had been voted a dull game by the members and deep gambling was made in hazard, faro and other games of pure chance. The betting book, like the one at Brookes's, was always open on the table for bets of the most trivial nature to be laid at any time.

(14) 'The Temple of the Muses' or 'Lackington's Temple of the Muses' was a real bookshop in Regency London. Not as famous as Hatchard's, but in those days it was the Borders of the town. It sold books, manuscripts, music sheets. Like its modern contemporary, Borders, The Temple of the Muses had a café where customers can have refreshment. The wealthier customers could have private parlours where they could eat and do their own work and whatnot (it was a haven for writers with nowhere to write).

From 1778 to 1798, James Lackington, the bookseller, had a shop at No. 32, Finsbury Place South in the southeast corner of Finsbury Square called "The Temple of the Muses". The shop had a frontage of 140 feet and was one of the sights of London. On top of the building was a dome with a flagpole, which flew a flag when Mr Lackington was in residence. In the middle of the shop was a huge circular counter around which, it was said, a coach and six could have been driven, so large were the premises. A wide staircase led to the "lounging rooms" and the first of a series of galleries with bookshelves. The books became shabbier and cheaper as one ascended. This, the first large book emporium was the pioneer of Remaindering, buying up bulk stock from elsewhere at a bargain price and selling cheap. Every one of the thousands of books in the shop was marked with its lowest price and numbered according to a printed catalogue. In 1792, Lackington estimated his profits for the year to be about £5000. At this period, he issued more than three thousand catalogues ("A Catalogue of Books, in All Languages, and Classes of Learning, for the Years 1806-7, Now Selling for Ready Money, at the Low Prices Affixed, Warranted Complete, by Lackington, Allen, & Co. Temple of the Muses, Finsbury Square, London.") every year. In 1793 Lackington sold a fourth part of his business to Robert Allen who had been brought up in the shop. The firm of Lackington, Allen and Co. became one of the largest in the book trade, selling upwards of 100,000 volumes yearly at their very extensive premises.

Lackington issued promotional tokens with a facing bust of the proprietor (this design, which was not particularly successful, yielded place to a more orthodox profile portrait in 1795). The reverse design, used with minor modifications in both years was a figure of Fame blowing a trumpet, proclaiming Lackington's firm the cheapest booksellers in the world. The edges of these tokens usually bore advice as to redemption, on several varieties, payment was guaranteed at the "Temple of the Muses". After Lackington's retirement, his nephew continued the store. Later in the early 1800s the bookstore was sold to Jones and Company for distribution of their books and other works. The shop burned down in 1841.

(15) In 1797 John Hatchard (1769-1849) opened a bookshop at No. 173 Piccadilly. In 1801 he moved premises to No. 190. Later the store was moved to No. 187 where it has remained. In Hatchard's time the shop was as much a social meeting place for the literary-minded as it was a bookshop. Residents of Albany, just across Piccadilly, including Byron frequented the shop. The daily newspapers were always laid out on the table by the fireplace and there were benches outside for the customers servants. He was bookseller to Queen Charlotte. The firm has always held a royal warrant since that time. His son Thomas took over the store after his father's death in 1849.

## Chapter 14 - Replacing Cobaea with Summer Mistletoe

*Chapter 15 of 23*

: At the Duchess of Mallefille's soiree, it is whispered that the Honble. Miss Granger is Hiero Gravitas. Lord Sterne has a plan to keep everything from spiralling out of control. Will it work?

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

## Language of Flowers

### Chapter 14 Replacing Cobaea with Summer Mistletoe

At five o'clock that evening, Lord Villiers called in at Lord Sterne's townhouse to offer his lordship an apology for having kept him waiting. Since Sterne was then busily employed with all the preparations for his latest alchemical experiment, the young Marquess's visit was ill-timed. Filch or Rosier, the footman, would have informed Lord Villiers that Lord Sterne was *not at home*, but since Filch was heavily engaged in picking out and preparing his master's evening dress for the following night's rout party; and Rosier, assisted by the house elves, was moving his lordship's newly arrived shipment of books to the library, the door was opened to Lord Villiers by a very junior ranked house elf whose flustered attempt to deny her master he had no difficulty in overbearing. He said, with the certain air of his father's handsome condescension which awed her very much, that he imagined Lord Sterne would grant him a few minutes of his time and walked past her into the house. She started back before this determined entry,\* excusing herself, later to Filch, who severely took her to task (with a threatened flogging), by saying that Lord Villiers had walked through her as though she was not there. There seemed to be nothing for it but to show him into the antechamber and to scurry away in search of her master. She found him, after an abortive search of the upper floors, in what he called 'the dungeons', pouring over his cauldron and parchments, so that Villiers was left to kick his heels for a considerable time before he was ushered into Lord Sterne's presence.

Lord Sterne was in no very good humour and after the barest of greetings, told his godson that he could spare him only half an hour at most, having a great deal of work to do and begged that he would state his business with him without loss of time.

Though Villiers answered in a manner calculated to disarm his host, he soon realised that he did nothing but incurred the older man's irritation. "I shall not detain you long. You wanted to see me? I was occupied on an errand for my mother."

Sterne made a sound of acknowledgement at his godson's presence and gestured him to sit. "Have you read the on-dit pages today?"

"I pay no attention to the slanders printed therein."

"Then you will be informed that you have nearly ruined a lady's reputation."

"See here, Godfather, I have not returned to the dissipated calf-love lifestyle I used to lead. There is no need to remind me of my past!"

Sterne raised a brow and bared his teeth in a knowing dangerous smile. "Then, it pleases me to be the first." Observing the indignation emanating from young man, he added, "Save your temper, I have not the time to throttle you today. You may be glad that you will be able to remedy your mistake. Undoubtedly, you are aware that Miss Granger's reputation has been called into question due to our own selfish neglect."

"How can that be?"

"Tut, tut, Draco, you are getting forgetful. You have been using Miss Granger as a screen through which you are able to conduct your amour with Lady Ginevra; so convincing was your courtship to Miss Granger that it was noticed by the *ton* and your mother. I too have used her abominably!" His voice came in a ragged hiss. "I pretended to dance attendance on her to free myself from Lady Sybill Trelawney. So compelling was the pursuit that Society was inclined to believe it."

"I see nothing wrong in men paying court to a woman," interpolated Villiers, "it's part of the chivalric code."

"But the on-dit has twisted this commonplace occurrence. It has painted Miss Granger as a notorious flirt playing us one against the other. Yesterday, you were seen driving her around town and to Madame Vigée-Lebrun's salon. It was speculated that she means to have you after all as you are the heir to a Dukedom."

"Stuff! Who would believe such rubbish!"

Sterne shot the young man a hard reproachful and quelling look and Villiers gave a cry of realisation. "Oh!"

"Since we are the reasons for her current 'questionable' reputation, we must do all that we can to repair it to its former state."

Villiers nodded silently in agreement, comprehension dawning in his eyes. "This could explain why she was out of temper with everyone today from Potter to myself."

"Exactly."

"What do you propose we do?"

"We should assist her in such a way that it would forward our own agendas as well. I know this will appeal to your baser instincts," Sterne dryly commented as the younger man's eyes lit up. "The denouement will occur tomorrow evening at your mother's rout party."

"I will not permit you to ruin my mother's soiree!" exclaimed Villiers hotly.

"This filial devotion is most affecting," remarked Sterne, stirring the potion in the cauldron carefully, "May I know why it has suddenly attacked you?"

"She is my mother!"

"Did you not tell me two days ago that she was an impediment to your marriage with Lady Ginevra? I must have imagined it then my mistake," purred Sterne, flicking aside an unruly lock of lank hair.

Immediately, Villiers' eyes brightened. "Your scheme involves bringing about my marriage?"

Sterne curled his lips into a disdainful smirk and glared down his hooked nose at his godson. "I said nothing of the sort. I do recall that I asked for your presence so that we may assist Miss Granger." He bottled some of the concoction he had just brewed. "Take these and place them in all corners of the house tomorrow. There must be at least two in every room."

"What is it?"

"Insect repellent."

"Smells quite pleasant."

"Milkwort extract. Remember, Draco."

"What does it do?"

"Protect our privacy."

"The Skeeter woman is never invited to *ton* events, this fuss is unnecessary."

"If she is never invited, how does she become privy to the most intimate conversations?"

"I see what you mean," Villiers answered as realisation dawned on him. "Unregistered animagus? Insect?"

His godfather nodded grimly. "How your intelligence grows! I am most moved," he purred softly with a patronising look in his eyes.

"How will we salvage Miss Granger's reputation?"

"Restore, not salvage," hissed Sterne, seizing Villiers' wrists in an iron grip and inched his face closer to his godson's. "You will announce your engagement to Lady Ginevra tomorrow evening and I will step in to offer for Miss Granger, should the need arise and her reputation may be saved."

"I will be seen as crying off! And Mother will be upset," demurred Villiers while unsuccessfully attempting to pry off the older man's fingers.

"*Foolish boy!* You are to announce the engagement, secure your bride and clear Miss Granger's name. Once it becomes known that she was merely chaperoning Lady Ginevra during our outings, sympathy will be with her. You must speak to Miss Granger and implore her to adopt a mask of slight dejection. Because of your actions tomorrow evening, she will be seen as the wronged party and I will offer for her to put to right the rumour that she is a woman of dubious morals."

Villiers laughed uneasily, "What will you gain from this?"

"If I am fortunate, I will be able to reach her mind; if I am not, I would have tried," was the quiet answer.

"What about Mother?"

"I've written to Mallefille. You will be married under a special licence that I shall obtain as soon as I can catch hold of the Archbishop of York. You will go to your father in France and he will write to your mother."

"Capita!" applauded Villiers.

"Naturally," Sterne replied, searching the stack of papers before him. In finding one bearing his family seal, he handed it to his godson. "Give this note to Miss Granger, she will understand. She must receive this in the presence of her father *tonight*. Remember to inform Lady Ginevra and Miss Granger as much or as little of the plot as you see fit."

"Yes, sir," said Villiers, much awed in the solemnity with which Sterne spoke.

"Go, leave me now. I am tired."

As soon as Villiers left, Sterne slumped into a chair and hoped that nothing in his plan would go amiss.

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The following day crawled slowly to the evening without any other incident than the on-dit exposé of Hermione Granger as Hiero Gravitas. Severus had been prepared to encounter displays of Miss Granger's wrath on account of his note that he had sent through Villiers the previous day. Although Villiers had despatched a note informing that Miss Granger had read the note in an impassive manner as befitted a lady of calm temperament, the young man added that she appeared thoughtful. Lord Orthod, who was shown the note, expressed his wholehearted approval of its contents. Playing over several possible scenarios in his mind as he dressed himself in his customary black, Sterne hoped that she would have enough presence of mind not to let fly at everyone who dared to question her on her identity as Hiero Gravitas.

As Lord Sterne was the earliest of the Duchess of Mallefille's guests, he was in an ideal position to observe the other guests as and when they arrived. True to his surmises, Miss Granger demonstrated her good sense and quality at her appearance for she carried herself in a haughtily aloof manner on her father's arm and greeted the Duchess with a very proper court curtsy. He found nothing to criticise in her appearance as he watched her greet Lady Ginevra and the rest of the Weasley clan. Clad in a robe of celestial blue crepe with an open front over a white satin slip, she surpassed Lady Ginevra in her sea-green gown and Miss Lovegood in bronze. He chuckled as he overheard Lord Ronald declare her magnificent. "No, nearly beautiful, Ron," amended his sister.

"Then there are a pair of us," answered Miss Granger, observing Sterne bowing to her father. "Shall we take a turn around the room and dazzle all the eligible young men here?"

Before the ladies could do so, they were accosted by the Duchess of Mallefille, resplendent in her silver gown and powdered locks. "Is it true, Miss Granger" she began in shrill excitement, "that my son is to announce his engagement this evening?"

"There is indeed going to be an announcement of an engagement, Duchess. I will not say more on the matter," Miss Granger ventured amiably, patting Lady Ginevra's hand.

"And is that dreadful rumour about you true?" continued the Duchess, unwilling to relinquish the young scholar to her penniless friend.

Miss Granger smiled slyly at the Duchess and exchanged an intelligible look with Villiers. Though her voice was good natured, her strangely glittering eyes turned to Duchess without mirth or warmth. "Which rumour? There are so many that I lose track of them!"

"How clever you are!" thrilled the Duchess, clasping her hands to her powdered bosom. "You remind me of myself when I was at the height of my bloom. There were many similar rumours about me too, but Mallefille put an end to them. Villiers would do the same by you too, I warrant. But there will be time for that, my pretty." She blinked her cold blue eyes and countered, "And now, my dear, you simply *must* tell me, are you *really* Hiero Gravitas?"

A veil of silence fell across the room and Sterne silently glided next to his godson, who was stationed near his mother. He exchanged a smirk with the young man and turned to observe the scene. All the *ton* was awaiting Miss Granger's answer with baited breath. At last, the lady in question replied, "It is true. I had intended to reveal all to society with my next article at *Ars Chemica*. My father and my friends are aware of my other identity."

The Duchess turned abruptly to her son and snapped her fingers to attract his attention, for he was engaged in a lively discussion with Lord Sterne. "Is it true, Villiers?" she asked amidst the gasps of astonishment and disbelief of the *ton*.

"Yes, Mother," he answered with a barely suppressed snigger. Then schooling his features into a nonchalant mask, he continued, "She has never hidden the fact that she is *la Philosophe*."

Not satisfied with that, she approached the Duke of Sanguine, who corroborated Miss Granger's claim. The Duke further added that he had always known she was Hiero Gravitas.

Much to the surprise of all assembled, the Duchess of Mallefille did not rant unreasonably at her son for attaching himself to a bluestocking. No, she only laughed (a little too shrilly, Sterne thought) and commented on the eccentricities of the modern youth. Inwardly, Lord Sterne sighed in relief and released the breath that he had been unconsciously holding. Part one executed, part two to go, he mused, bowing low and taking Miss Granger's arm so as to escort her father's side. However, he was blocked in this endeavour by the figures of Lords Percy and Ronald Weasley. He rolled his eyes and muttered under his breath, "Not another blasted altercation!"

"Another?" murmured Miss Granger, clearly amused. "Over Luna Lovegood's money? How very interesting."

Miss Granger, Sterne noted, proved to be correct. The two Weasley brothers were arguing heatedly over Lord de Quib's daughter. The two idiots were too busy attempting to tear each other apart to notice that their mother and Miss Lovegood were entreating them to be civilised.

"Luna does not care a shilling for your loathsome attentions, Percy! You have never been fit enough to drive her around! Haven't you noticed that she avoids you at every turn? She is disgusted with you, Percy revolted!" cried Lord Ronald hotly, jabbing at his brother's immaculately tied waterfall cravat.

Lord Percy laughed arrogantly and undid his brother's cravat with a deft flick of his hand. Ignoring the Duchess of Mallefille's invitation to supper in the dining parlour, Lord Percy raised his voice at his youngest brother, "I think she is disgusted with you. Look at that derision in her eyes, Ronald! She's denigrating you in her mind! She's deriding everything the rest of your family represent! Who in the right mind would settle for you? I, on the other hand, am a non-pareil and an eligible match in every way. I will have better uses for her money than you will. What will you do with it? Invest it in your pathetic Quidditch club or let her do as she chuses with it? Have you any ambition in politics? You have nothing driving you, you pathetic worm!"

"Why are *you* so keen on it, Lord Percy?" countered Sir Harry, restraining his friend who was trembling in anger. "You are neck deep in debt. It is only entirely expected that you should wish to marry money!"

At that accusation, the Duchess of Mallefille collapsed on a nearby sofa in what could be presumed to be a faint.

"Selfish creatures!" scolded Miss Lovegood in her self-assured quiet voice, as she clung on to her father's arm for support. Despite the fact that her face betrayed disappointment, she continued in the same placid tone, "Immobilus!" With that spell, she froze the two brothers in their tracks. "Do not I get choice on the matter? Lord Percy, I am honoured by your remarks on my fortune, but you have not recommended yourself to me in anyway. You are vulgar and worse than a cit! Here's what I think of you." She delivered a sharp resounding slap to him. Coolly turning to Lord Ronald, she said, "You are devoid of sense, honour and decorum. How do you think I feel when my opinion counts for nothing? I readily confess I was misguided in your character." Delivering him the same tribute of her handprint on his face, she promptly left for the dining room with her father.

Miss Granger raised a brow of amusement as the house elves entered to move the immobilised figures of Lord Percy and Lord Ronald to a corner where they would not be in anyone's way. "Wonders never cease. I think the Duchess of Mallefille is stirring."

"She will not rise from the sofa until Villiers announces his engagement," ventured Sterne.

Leading her companion to Villiers side, Miss Granger nudged him. "Now would be a good time to announce*it*."

As soon as Sterne led Miss Granger to a nearby seat where they had an excellent view of all the characters in the drama, Villiers cleared his throat. "Ladies and Gentlemen, today is not only my noble parents' the thirty-third wedding anniversary, it is also the day of my engagement to Lady Ginevra Weasley, who has done me the honour of accepting my hand."

The crescendo of applause and congratulations was truncated by a cry of dismay from the Duchess of Mallefille as she sank into a genuine paroxysm of vapours and swooned. Unable to bear the responsibility of being a disappointment to his mother, Villiers called his man for his carriage and departed from the house.

The Duchess, being a woman of uncertain nerves, strong feeling and an even stronger constitution, soon recovered from her swoon and began abusing Miss Granger in the worst terms possible. Bowing stiffly to the Duchess, she flashed her widest grin to the distraught woman and took Sterne's arm firmly, signalling that he should lead her to the refreshment table.

"I must apologise for distrusting you; I should have known better than to distrust a caster of the *sub rosa* spell," she said in a conciliatory tone. "The explanation on the beetle as the on-dit columnists and Villiers words on it were entirely logical. I see it now. I apologise for my behaviour once again."

"It is forgot," he replied laconically.

"What did you think of your work this evening?" she asked curtly, glad that they were once again on speaking terms.

"It only needs one thing to crown its success," he answered lowly. "Will you consent to be my Marchioness? Tell me that I may speak to your father and I will be content."

"For money?" she laughed, hoping that he was making a joke even if it was in poor taste.

He curled his lips scornfully, as he enveloped her hand on his arm with his other one. Carefully moderating his voice to a tone he thought bordered onto patience, he ventured, "I have become accustomed to the workings of your mind. If you consent, you can buy Hatchard's and the Temple of the Muses for all I care."

She received the abrupt declaration (for declaration it must be called) in a manner uncommon among young ladies. She threw him an arch look and said gravely, "You are either supremely confident or incredibly facile to offer me a marriage of convenience. There is no need to speak to my father when you know that I have nothing to offer you."

"It is not a marriage of convenience. It is an honourable offer," he said without pity or his habitual irony.

Her eyes danced for the briefest moment at his words, but she soon withdrew her hand from his arm, not in a gesture of coquetry, but as though she was renouncing something to which she had no rightful claim. "Do not feel obliged to offer for me out of a misguided sense of chivalry or pity."

"It is neither," he protested violently, looking straight into her impassive chocolate eyes.

"Ah," she said with a rueful turning of her lips, "for all your fine words of wisdom, you must be very sure of your answer if you are asking me."

Stunned by her pointed retort, he scowled at her. "Naturally," he purred casually.

"I have anticipated you, my lord and I will put you out of your misery by refusing you, as you would have wished. There the charade is finished," she stated plainly, drawing back the hand that he had regained.

"You are a coward!" he remarked in solemn anger.

She turned gracefully to face him, searing him with her liquid brown eyes, and said in a neat clipped tone, devoid of emotion. "I am not the only one, my lord. I have had enough Spanish coin for one evening. Goodbye and goodnight, Lord Sterne." And with that, she left the Duchess of Mallefille's townhouse soon after with her father.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Cobaea means "gossip".

View it here <http://www.mytho-fleurs.com/images/vivaces/cobaea%20scandens.JPG>

and <http://www.robsplants.com/images/portrait/PenstemonCobaea.jpg>

(2) Mistletoe means "I surmount difficulties". Those of you familiar with Pliny will be aware that he wrote extensively on the magical rituals performed by Druids involving mistletoe. These priests regarded mistletoe growing on oaks as especially potent, cutting it with golden sickles and spreading their cloaks on the ground to prevent the falling sprigs from touching the earth and becoming tainted. Mistletoe was under the protection of the Norse goddess of love, Frigg, one of the myths associating the plant with fertility, from which the practice of kissing under the mistletoe may have evolved. Contrary to popular belief, it does not grow only during winter.

View it here <http://www.yourdictionary.com/images/ahd/jpg/A4mistle.jpg>

(3) Milkwort means "hermitage".

Milkwort was so named because it was thought to stimulate breastmilk. In his Irish Herbal (1735), K'Eogh stated that, because of its hot and dry nature, "it encourages the production of milk in nursing mothers." However, this attribute is unfounded. There is another school of thought that believes milkwort can be used to induce abortion. By the 17th century, it was used as a tea to treat respiratory problems, including chronic bronchitis, bronchial asthma and all forms of convulsive coughs. View it here <http://www.british-wild-flowers.co.uk/040711%20Lake%20Vyrnwy/Milkwort,-Common-1.jpg>

\* (4) The phrase "She started back before this determined entry" is an example of a very popular manner of styling words between 1750 and 1900. It simply means "she was startled into moving/staggering backwards when confronted with this person's forceful (determined) way of brushing past her (or aside her)."

(5) A rose carved into or hung from a ceiling meant that the conversation held beneath it was in confidence, or *sub rosa*. So you see, the roses are not all above love as the romantics running around the world would have us think.

(6) Hatchard's is a bookstore. In 1797, John Hatchard (1769-1849) opened a bookshop at No. 173 Piccadilly. In 1801 he moved premises to No. 190. Later the store was moved to No. 187 where it has remained. In Hatchard's time, the shop was as much a social meeting place for the literary-minded as it was a bookshop. Residents of Albany, a very fashionable and expensive neighbourhood, just across Piccadilly, including Byron frequented the shop. The daily newspapers were always laid out on the table by the fireplace and there were benches outside for the customers' servants. He was bookseller to Queen Charlotte. There were also private tea rooms inside where the customers could take some refreshment. The firm has always held a royal warrant since that time. His son Thomas took over the store after his father's death in 1849.

(9) Lackington's Temple of the Muses was a real bookshop in Regency London. Not as famous as Hatchard's, but in those days it was the Borders of the town. It sold books, manuscripts, music sheets. Like its modern contemporary, Borders, The Temple of the Muses had a café where customers can have refreshment. The wealthier customers could have private parlours where they could eat and do their own work and whatnot (it was a haven for writers with nowhere to write).

From 1778 to 1798, James Lackington, the bookseller, had a shop at No. 32, Finsbury Place South in the southeast corner of Finsbury Square called "The Temple of the Muses". The shop had a frontage of 140 feet and was one of the sights of London. On top of the building was a dome with a flagpole, which flew a flag when Mr Lackington was in residence. In the middle of the shop was a huge circular counter around which, it was said, a coach and six could have been driven, so large were the premises. A wide staircase led to the "lounging rooms" and the first of a series of galleries with bookshelves. The books became shabbier and cheaper as one ascended. This, the first large book emporium was the pioneer of Remaindering, buying up bulk stock from elsewhere at a bargain price and selling cheap. Every one of the thousands of books in the shop was marked with its lowest price and numbered according to a printed catalogue. In 1792, Lackington estimated his profits for the year to be about £5000. At this period, he issued more than three thousand catalogues ("A Catalogue of Books, in All Languages, and Classes of Learning, for the Years 1806-7, Now Selling for Ready Money, at the Low Prices Affixed, Warranted Complete, by Lackington, Allen, & Co. Temple of the Muses, Finsbury Square, London.") every year. In 1793 Lackington sold a fourth part of his business to Robert Allen who had been brought up in the shop. The firm of Lackington, Allen and Co. became one of the largest in the book trade, selling upwards of 100,000 volumes yearly at their very extensive premises.

Lackington issued promotional tokens with a facing bust of the proprietor (this design, which was not particularly successful, yielded place to a more orthodox profile portrait in 1795). The reverse design, used with minor modifications in both years was a figure of Fame blowing a trumpet, proclaiming Lackington's firm the cheapest booksellers in the world. The edges of these tokens usually bore advice as to redemption, on several varieties, payment was guaranteed at the "Temple of the Muses". After Lackington's retirement, his nephew continued the store. Later in the early 1800s the bookstore was sold to Jones and Company for distribution of their books and other works. The shop burned down in 1841.

(8) Bluestocking refers to a woman with unfashionably intellectual and literary interests. The term is explained in Boswell's Life of Dr Johnson, as deriving from the name given to meetings held by certain ladies in the 18th century, for conversation with distinguished literary men. A frequent attendee was a Mr Stillingfleet, who always wore his everyday blue worsted stockings because he could not afford silk stockings. He was so much distinguished for his conversational powers that his absence at any time was felt to be a great loss, and so it was often remarked, "We can do nothing without the blue stockings." Admiral Boscawen, husband of one of the most successful hostesses of such gatherings, derisively dubbed them 'The Blue Stocking Society'. Although both men and women, some of them eminent literary and learned figures of the day, attended these meetings, the term 'bluestocking' became attached exclusively, and often contemptuously, to women. This was partly because women were instrumental in organising the evenings, but also because they were seen as encroaching on matters thought not to be their concern.

(9) "Spanish coin" is a Regency phrase for false flattery.

(10) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the ton.

(11) On-dit is French for "we tell". In the context of Regency speech, it meant gossip about the town that is usually published in the newspapers.

## Chapter 15 - Wild Tansy in the Wind

Chapter 16 of 23

Upset with the events of his mother's soiree, Lord Villiers goes to Hades (a gaming hell) and gets embroiled in a brawl, which results in a death and a challenge to a duel.

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books & ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

## Language of Flowers

### Chapter 15 Wild Tansy in the Wind

After storming out into the night from his mother's disastrous rout party, Lord Villiers called for his carriage to be brought to the door and ordered his tiger to take him to Hades. Though he was sprawled very much at his ease, with his hands dug deep into the capacious pockets of his greatcoat, he was still sulking over the events of the evening. It was evident that he had been acting below his mother's expectations and it pained him to upset her. However, he could not condone her selfishness in desiring an advantageous match for him where the prospect of amassing more wealth and influence were high. Sinking further into the shadows of his carriage, he wondered why his mother could not see the political influence wielded by the Duke of Offaly in the House of Lords. His face darkened as he pondered as to the possible prejudices that prevented her from seeing Lady Ginevra Weasley's gentle merits. The evil pace at which his team drove soon brought him to the most established and luxurious of the gaming halls, Hades.

Hades was a discreet looking establishment near Westminster. The orderly man who greeted his lordship received a black scowl, as did the porter who admitted him. After leaving his wand with the wand porter as the hell's rules dictated, Villiers cast black looks at any one of his acquaintance who dared to cross his path on his way up the stairs to the dicing and card rooms of faro and deep basset. Passing through the general rooms, he continued on to an archway into a smaller apartment where the rattling sound of the dice resounded. There was one large table occupying the centre of room and as such, was surrounded by a fair number of onlookers. Quickly throwing himself into an empty chair in the corner, Villiers called for several bottles of Firewhisky. Upon finishing two and a half bottles and watching a green young fellow lose a small fortune at dice, Villiers found himself in the company of his former associates, Messrs Nott, Goyle and Crabbe. Pointedly ignoring them, he waved to his friend, the recently ennobled Lord Macnair.

"What brings you back here, Villiers?" asked Goyle blithely, "Petticoat trouble?"

The company around him laughed.

"Hang all the women!" hissed the Marquess. "Hang them all!"

"Who's the bird of paradise this time? Another opera dancer?" quizzed Crabbe.

"Or is it an opera singer?" laughed Goyle.

"Ooh!" the circle around Villiers guffawed in mirth.

Downing his third bottle of Firewhisky, he smirked contemptuously at them.

"Either the Granger creature or the Weasley piece," announced Goyle knowingly to the rest of his companions.

Villiers flashed him an evil look and rose from his chair. Providentially for Goyle, Lord Macnair intervened. "Pay a round with us. It will be like old times. You'll be the bank again and no one would dare play against you."

The Marquess laughed and patted Macnair's back before loosening his cravat and unbuttoning two of his flowered waistcoat's buttons. The casual observer would perceive that my Lord Villiers looked almost as pale as his godfather by candlelight and rather like his former dissipated self. Sitting down at the game table, he glanced at his companions and betrayed no hint of his private unhappiness.

Two hours passed in this agreeable manner until the doors brought forth Lord Percy Weasley. "Why Lord Villiers! I did not expect to see you *here* tonight," he said.

"He has trouble with a wench, I wager?" laughed Goyle, shaking hands with the newcomer.

"I apprehend that most of Lord Villiers quarrels owe their existence to a female," said Lord Percy dryly.

"Shall you try to take the bank, Lord Percy?" quizzed Villiers, tossing off what remained in his glass. "I'll throw you for it."

"I'll advise against it," Mcnair said mincingly. "Villiers has had the devil's luck all night."

"I thank your lordship's counsel but I would *prefer* to throw *against* the bank and Lord Villiers," replied Lord Percy as he seated himself beside Crabbe.

"Raise you to a hundred, gentlemen," Villiers said, narrowing his scornful eyes at his intended's brother while laying back in his chair and feeling in his capacious coat pocket for his snuff box. He pulled it out and opened it and took a pinch, glancing quickly around the table. Crabbe complained that fifty was deep and steep enough. One of the spectators surrounding the game table commented that the game was definitively going too deep, but was overruled.

"Standing out, Lord Percy?" mocked Villiers.

"Good Lord! I'm not then! You've too many of my notes under your hand, Villiers. Keep it at fifty," Macnair said, sensing the unease tension around the table.

"Raising you to a hundred," repeated the Marquess, coldly looking at Lord Percy.

Nott took the dice. "A hundred it is then, and those afraid of it stand out," he said in as genial manner as possible. He called a main of sixes and threw twos. "Damn you, Villiers!" he said good-humouredly and scribbled his name on a slip of paper and pushed it across the table.

The inebriated Goyle loudly declared, "It was a one-sided game. Another man ought to hold the bank! A reliable person like Lord Percy! It takes a person in Dun territory to have some sympathy for those of us opposed to you as the bank."

The spectators all saw the dangerous devil-may-care glint in Villiers' eyes and nudged each other warningly. Only Macnair had the sense to comment that luck rarely ran evenly. Despite that placatory remark, it was widely evident that the blond Marquess was already three parts drunk. It could only spell trouble brewing in the vicinity. While Villiers might very well be drunk, his speech and faculties appeared to be unimpaired. He leaned carelessly in his chair, one hand in his breeches pocket, the other with its fingers loosely around the whisky glass. He glared a challenge at Goyle and Lord Percy's looks of self-righteous dissatisfaction. "Had enough, gentlemen?"

The insulting tone affected the two men as could be expected. "I'll call eight," said Lord Percy, who threw the dice and lost.

"Curse it, I've called them for the last hour and the bloody dice turns up twos and aces,"

Goyle chose that moment to add with bitter vindictiveness "Let someone else hold the bank!" He looked around the table as to determine whether he had enlisted any support for his proposal but was met with no response.

Villiers eyed Goyle derisively. "There is the matter of some four thousand pounds in the bank. Throw you for it."

"Come, that's fair enough!" declared Lord Percy gruffly.

Goyle angrily responded, "Not against you, Villiers!"

"Damn! Do we sit here all night arguing?" Macnair exclaimed. "Let us be done with this!" He then picked up the dice box called a main and threw. Villiers pushed a pile of guineas towards him and the game continued.

Money passed backward and forward easily enough, but the bank remained the victor at the end of another few hours. Goyle's temper and Lord Percy's mask of affability deepened as the hours flew by; and by two in the morning, most of the party at the table were more or less inebriated.

"Gentlemen, I raise you to another hundred," announced Villiers recklessly, signifying to those closest to him that he was dangerously drunk.

"I'm out," said McNair with resignation. "Much too deep for me."

Villiers smirked coldly at his friend. "Bank can't win forever," he said in a singsong mocking voice. "Stay the course, Crabbe? Night is still young."

McNair stared hard at a clock on a nearby wall and squinted slightly to improve his alcohol addled vision. "It is three."

"It's still devilishly young," answered Lord Percy, sitting perfectly upright.

"I am going to sit it out," growled Goyle to Lord Percy. "We'll break Villiers yet. I'll bet my diamond stick pin that I'll break the bank before five."

"Make it an hour earlier and I'll take you up on your offer," the Marquess slurred slightly, narrowing his eyes in distrust.

"Will you resign in an hour?" asked Lord Percy.

"I have business at home," Villiers reasoned. "Mother may need to insult me further!"

"You cannot transact business anywhere! You're drunk!" Nott stressed.

"I'm at my best when I am intoxicated," snarled Villiers. Goyle's bet was duly entered in the betting book. "Well, Lord Percy," drawled his lordship. "Play or pay?"

"Play!" cried Lord Percy promptly, licking his lips in cupidity. "I'll have you yet. Playing two hundred."

"Two hundred it is," agreed Villiers coolly, taking a pinch of snuff as he watched the throw of the dice.

Goyle tapped his foot impatiently and bellowed, "This is a farce, Lord Villiers cannot lose."

Villiers smirked in an ugly manner. "You think so?" He laughed bitterly, chilling the spectators. "I have *already* lost. Oh yes, I have already lost at the important gambles."

"Stand out, Mr Goyle, if you can't stay the course!" shouted Lord Percy irritably.

Goyle's gall rose at that remark and he adopted a quarrelsome tone, "I'll stay in the game, but the luck runs with Villiers too much for my taste." Sensing the swift ill wind threatening to engulf Hades, Macnair sought to pacify the ice players.

"Shut that trap, Macnair!" barked Goyle, glaring at his companion through bloodshot eyes. "I'll play if another man takes the bank from Villiers."

"Is that a challenge?" murmured Villiers plaintively with an ugly smirk. "I sympathise, as do Crabbe and Macnair."

"Hold your peace!" whispered Nott, restraining both Lord Percy and Goyle. "Withdraw if luck runs shy of you. Cease this bickering."

Goyle broke free of Nott's grasp. "I don't like the way this game has gone," he raved, banging the table with his heavy fists, "if you won't give up the bank, let us have some fresh dice!"

Nott and Macnair exchanged glances in the uneasy silence that followed. "You've made too many indentures, Goyle. Even if you're miffed, you are in no condition for a mill," opined Macnair.

"I think not," replied Lord Percy, looking fiercely at Villiers.

The Marquess leaned forward and drank the rest of his Firewhisky. "Don't like the dice, gentlemen?" he mocked, serenely pouring himself another drink.

"Devil take you! I don't like the dice!" screeched Goyle.

"I don't like your manners at this table! You've been winning ever since you've held the bank!" bellowed Lord Percy. "I'll be damned if I sit by and..."

His homily was cut short by Villiers' swift emptying of the contents of his glass in Lord Percy's face. His cold eyes alighted on the rapidly colouring visage of his beloved's disreputable brother. "You were saying?"

However, Lord Percy and Goyle were not prepared to leave the Marquess be. They both made for his throat in a desperate lunge and would have succeeded if they were not held back by the propitious intervention of Nott and Macnair.

"Lord Percy, you're drunk," hissed Macnair, noticing for a first time, a pink handprint on his lordship's left cheek. "Take it back!"

"You too, Goyle," cautioned Nott, Crabbe though extremely inebriated was jerked into sobriety by the near brawl. "Control yourself, Villiers, the poor fool is drunk."

"As am I," answered Villiers with an unpleasant smirk. "But I am not so drunk to ignore a man who calls me a cheat, especially from a man who is *real* cheat. Even his brother holds him to be a greek!" He then signalled for one of the proprietors of the establishment and whispered something to him.

Nott frowned at Goyle. "Take it back, my man, you are not yourself."

Macnair sought to imbue Lord Percy with the same wisdom. The aggrieved gentlemen, however, did not partake of the popular opinion and wrenched themselves free from the grips of their companions.

"You'll meet me for this, my Lord Villiers!" warned Lord Percy, his eyes inflamed with drink and desperate rage.

"Then me!" hollered Goyle.

He eyed them belligerently and recalled Lord Percy's behaviour at his mother's party as well as Goyle's previous treachery in reporting his meetings with Lady Ginevra to his mother. "Aye, I'll fence or shoot you, rogues!" laughed Villiers carelessly. "Shall we settle it here? Or would it better for you if I took down one of you here and the other at dusk?"

Nott took the dice in his hand and played with them briefly, wondering how to avert the potential tragedy of three drunk pugnacious men itching for a fight. Then he recalled something that he had once read in a book. "We shall break the dice!" he announced to all present. "You," he called out to one of the spectators, "Get either Zabini or Avery to bring a hammer. Damn them! Where are the proud owners of this establishment anyhow, Zabini was talking to Villiers only a moment ago! Where are the rogues who administer this place when you need them!"

"Wouldn't it be an affront to his lordship if this was done?" asked one of the members of the crowd.

"I think his lordship is properly shot in the neck," whispered another spectator to his friend.



"Blast you! If we break them and there's nothing in them, Goyle and Lord Percy apologise," reasoned Macnair, rubbing his eyes in exhaustion.

"Aye," agreed Villiers, "Malfoys do not play crooked."

Zabini, with whom Villiers had conversed earlier returned at this point with a moderately sized leather case. As he handed it to Villiers, Lord Percy insisted on having the satisfaction of duelling with the Marquess.

"At dusk then," said Nott in the most soothing voice he could muster for the moment. "Villiers is in no condition to duel and neither are you!"

Villiers laughed heartily at hearing his own name and carefully opened the leather case. Macnair's face fell when he saw its contents. "You don't mean to do it now with your own pistols?"

"They were in my carriage for such an emergency," laughed Villiers hollowly with his head thrown back in defiance.

"Name your friends, Villiers!" demanded Lord Percy, picking up one of the Marquess's pistols and inspecting it drunkenly.

"What about me?" complained Goyle petulantly.

"After I'm done with him, you'll have to content yourself with his body!" boasted Lord Percy in a slur as he struggling to remain on his feet. "Crabbe and Goyle can act for me now."

"I'll have Nott and Macnair then," laughed Villiers.

"Get a grip on yourself, Villiers," interceded Macnair. "Both men should put their heads in buckets of water."

Goyle looked on Villiers and all present with an evil eye, "Villiers deserves to have a hole in him. I think he does not deserve to have the honourable way out."

"Peace, friend Goyle," drawled Villiers with a faint slur in his voice. "I'll see you at dusk at Barn Elms. Rapiers are your weapons, I believe?" Goyle bowed. "Excellent. I've not run anyone through in the longest time. I will send my Seconds to you later in the morning."

"If you live through this bout with me," cried Lord Percy, as he pushed the table back.

"I will live," murmured Villiers as he held his pistol in a carelessly slack hold. "Whether you will is another matter of conjecture."

Unable to bear the taunt, Lord Percy lurched at him and Villiers' pistol hand jerked up to respond to the attack with a loud report. The result of which culminated with Lord Percy Weasley crumpling flat on his face. Villiers tossed his pistol to Macnair as he rose steadily. "Tell my man to clean it and return it to its proper place in the carriage," he said, taking a pinch of snuff.

"You've killed him, Villiers," whispered Nott to the hushed room.

"No, I haven't. He may live," his lordship demurred callously, stepping over the body, "Then again, he may die. Keep me informed." He caught sight of Macnair giving the pistol and the leather case to his tiger at the doorway. "I must leave you now. Good day, gentlemen." He then turned on his heels and made for the door. Once there, he paused and turned to address an ashen Goyle, "Consider yourself fortunate, Mr Goyle. I am more proficient at pistols and wands than blades. I have yet to thank you for so informing my mother as to my tête-à-têtes with my affianced. See you at dusk, rogue!" Waving cheerily at the company, Lord Villiers went out of the room.

Within fifteen minutes of my Lord Villiers departure, the silence of Hades was broken by sudden appearance of two gentlemen into the private dicing room. It was clear to the assembled company that these two were not patrons of this fine establishment

The first strode swiftly into the room and curled his lips scornfully at the sight of the gaping men. "Unusually early for a duel, isn't it, Lupin?" he coolly asked his companion.

"Quite right, Severus," replied his old schoolfellow and friend as he mopped his brow with a handkerchief. "A good thing we stayed up at Harry's playing commerce." Catching sight of Lord Percy's blood pooling on the carpet underneath him, he grimaced. "Remind me to thank Lady Minerva for alerting us to Sybill's prediction. If only we had arrived sooner!"

"So, this is Hades," sneered Lord Sterne in a deliberately lazy fashion, scowling at a few of his acquaintances in the room. "I had no idea my godson honoured such a bourgeois place with his patronage."

Lupin bent to examine Lord Percy with a startled look and assisted Nott in attempting to stave the flow of blood from the young man's chest. "Severus, we need a surgeon."

"Avery's already gone for one." Sterne pointed to Lord Percy. "Villiers' latest victim, no doubt? No harm done."

"No harm done!" bellowed Goyle. "I'll kill him later today."

Lord Lupin groaned, "Not you too!"

"Unity in numbers, my dear Lupin, good fortune always comes in pairs. Well, Mr Goyle, when do you meet him, dawn or dusk?"

"Dusk," he replied, clenching his fists.

"Ah, at Barn Elms, I perceive. Come Lupin, the surgeon is here with Avery, *wemust* be off now," said Sterne quietly, tracing his lips with his long fingers.

The rest of Hades' patrons were too lost for words and could only watch the departure of the two gentlemen with dread.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

\*\* Those wondering where's the evidence that Percy is a cheat is, please refer to Ron and Harry's conversation in Ch 6. Ron explicitly states, "Not satisfied with disappointing the family, he's even turned to gaming. It is common knowledge that he's living with his current slip of muslin and visits all the fashionable gaming hells. He's such a greek in his methods that he's even managed to part a Malfoy from his money!" This demonstrates that Draco has played with Percy in the past and was cheated. Ron's statement also hints that Draco is a good player of these games of chance, and to be cheated by Percy is something that annoys his Malfoy pride.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Giving someone Wild Tansy means that you are saying, "I declare war against you."

This plant is also called silver weed and has very cute flowers. View it here <http://www.blupete.com/Nature/PictureFlowers/Tansy.jpg>. The attractive name 'tansy' is a contraction of the flower's medieval name, 'tanazeta'. In England, young children often called it 'buttons' because it has small, yellow round flat flower heads. It was very popular as a strewing herb, valued for its strong camphor-like fragrance that was believed in the High Middle Ages to act as a fly repellent. At one point, it was even rubbed on meat to keep flies away. In Catholic countries during the Middle Ages, tansy was a must. During Easter, the leaves were mixed into a tansy cake, which was awarded to

the winning team of a ballgame between the priests and the men of the congregation. This is because the tansy was thought to purify the body after Lenten fasting.

(2) The term "tiger" in regency times referred to the chap who accompanied you and helped managed your horses when you were out driving or riding. He is also your trusted carriage/curricle (fill in vehicle of choice) driver on those rare days when you are not driving. If you watch period dramas, these are the fellows behind your curricle, carriage or whatever it is. A tiger is very different from a footman.

(3) In this chapter, you would have noticed that Draco took snuff. It is incidentally a habit that he shares with his father Snuff is a preparation of finely pulverized tobacco that can be drawn up into the nostrils by inhaling. It was also called smokeless tobacco. The quantity of this tobacco that is inhaled at a single time is no more than a pinch literally. However, not all snuff-takers used it for fashion (it was then seen as a fashionable activity). Some people with nose trouble (blocked and/or running noses) used a special kind of 'snuff' which was a powdery substance, such as a medicine, taken by inhaling.

Taking snuff was a popular, widespread pastime among the upper class and middle class English of the 18th century. Snuff boxes were made by silver smiths who specialised in tightly closing boxes. Most English snuff boxes were made in Birmingham.

(4) Hell is the abbreviated name for "gaming hell". A gaming hell is a gambling establishment. It's kind of like a casino without all the neon lights and loud music. A young "pigeon" was more likely to fall victim to a dishonourable "shark" at a hell than at an elite gentleman's club.

(5) To be in "Dun territory" in Regency gentry cant is to be in debt. It is insinuated that Goyle and Percy are very much in debt.

(6) To be "miffed" is to Regency upper class slang for being in an increasingly bad mood

(7) "Mill" in Regency gentlemen's slang was to "brawl" or "fight".

(8) "Making indentures" is Regency slang for "heavy drinking of alcohol".

(9) "Properly shot in the neck" is Regency gentlemen's slang for being utterly drunk.

(10) "Bird of paradise" is Regency slang for a gentleman's illicit mistress.

(11) Duelling Laws were passed in the reign of Louis XIV, to punish duellists with loss of rank, office, and estate, or with banishment; but pardons were constantly granted. In England, on the Restoration of Charles I, sword-duelling became more fashionable than ever; and every reader is acquainted with the killing of the Earl of Shrewsbury by the Duke of Buckingham, at Barn Elms, the Duke's second, Sir J. Jenkins, being at the same time killed by the Earl's second, while Lady Shrewsbury, the adulteress, held Buckingham's horse standing by. "O tempora! O mores!" The sanguinary blackguard Lord Mohun also is likely to be remembered; he, who shared in the murder of Montford the actor, and who afterwards, in 1712, fought a savage duel with the Duke of Hamilton in Hyde Park, where both were killed, each receiving three or four horrible wounds. Swords were still preferred to pistols in England, being usually worn by gentlemen, until after the middle of the last century; but the dagger had been rejected since the time of Charles I. Duellists sometimes came with swords and pistols; after exchanging shots they would use cold steel. It was not unfrequent, however, that two gentlemen who had got angry with each other at a tavern or in a private house, would at once draw their swords and fight, without any seconds or witnesses or formal arrangements. Lord Byron, great-uncle of the poet, in 1765 killed Mr. Chaworth, at a house in London in an impromptu sword-fight. Examples of this kind, in the memoirs and anecdotes, or in the comedies and old novelists' works of the eighteenth century, prove that "The world went very well then," as Mr. Walter Besant ironically says. Comparing the England of George II with the England of Charles I, it looks rather like a relapse into barbarism, owing to the decay of religion and morality and domestic life. In the method of duelling, we observe that pistolling found favour in Ireland as a gentlemanly pastime; indeed, it seems to have been the main pursuit of reckless men in the upper classes of society until after the Union. The pistol-duels in England, during the reigns of the last two Georges, of William IV., and at the beginning of Victoria's reign were often very serious; and some persons of considerable eminence, noblemen, statesmen, and distinguished military officers, 'were engaged in them. The present writer, among the personal recollections of his boyhood in a provincial town, has that of the lamented death of a benevolent medical man, the Mayor of the city, who was shot by a certain Baronet in a silly quarrel about dancing with a young lady at a ball the night before. The sword-duel has been maintained, in France especially, since 1830, as an accessory to political Ambition. part of the stock-in-trade of adventurers in Journalism, professional orators, and Parliamentary debaters. It is, at the same time, almost a compulsory obligation, in certain cases, among military men in France, in Austria, and in Germany. French public men too commonly think it a needful accessory to their pretensions; it has cost several valuable lives, and has degraded the tone of political contention.

(12) Barn Elms is an oddly named park in Barnes in England, situated by Hammersmith Bridge to the West and the Wetlands Centre to the East. It hosts much amateur sport, such as football and hockey. Over a hundred years ago it hosted the Fulham Football Club home games. It is a famous duelling ground.

(13) We are told in an earlier chapter that Goyle has been spying on Villiers and reporting to the Duchess of Mallefille in chapters 6 and 11.

## Chapter 16 - An Arrangement of Pitch Pine with Mountain Ash

*Chapter 17 of 23*

On the duel between Mr Goyle and Lord Villiers, a death, and another plan for one man to escape with his name in tact.

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 16 An Arrangement of Pitch Pine with Mountain Ash

My Lord Villiers had left a victor when he departed Hades, there was no gainsaying it. Poor Lord Percy Weasley and Mr Goyle came off badly in the battle of dice and wit. When news of this incident leaked out at dawn, the gentlemen of the *ton* shook their heads mournfully over the startling disclosures of Villiers' past history, but railed at him in hushed tones for being the source of his beautiful mother's distress. The women of *ton*, led by the eccentric Miss Granger, Lady Ginevra Weasley and Miss Lovegood, eventually came to the opinion that Lord Villiers had done them and society a tremendous service by purging the country of a fortune hunter and thus rendering London more habitable. Lady Ginevra could not be blamed for wishing death upon her brother who had slandered the name of one friend and derided the virtue of another. The two Duchesses, the mothers of the injured man and the gunman, reacted to the news of the early morning fracas by taking to their beds with volatile salts. Miss Granger, of stronger mind than most of her sex, considered the near death of Lord Percy (whose survival was by no means ensured) a pretty scandal, for the incident appealed to her secret love of adventure. She was partaking of a solitary breakfast (her father having gone out to the Offaly residence) when Sir Harry Potter, Lord Lupin and Lord Sterne

were announced. She looked up amiably from her eggs and toast as the gentlemen came in and offered them a share of the meal.

"Don't mind if I do," said Sir Harry, dusting his drab grey coat that reached ankles. Picking out a handkerchief from one of his coat's three tiers of pockets as to clean his round spectacles, he grinned sheepishly at Brown as she handed him a plate. Miss Granger could not help noticing that she could see her own reflection in Sir Harry's large mother of pearl buttons.

"Strong coffee for me," said Lupin briskly. "I've breakfasted an hour since."

"Lord Sterne?" asked Miss Granger politely hoping that he would make no allusions to their conversation of the previous evening.

"Just coffee," he answered brusquely with a scowl at both Brown and her mistress.

Gesturing for her guests to sit, Miss Granger ventured to ascertain their purpose, "To what do I owe the pleasure of a visit at this ungodly hour? Why, it has only gone eight!"

"Business to attend to," mumbled Sir Harry in between his food bolting exercises. Lupin nodded mysteriously and stared into his coffee cup, waiting for Sterne to make a clean breast of their reason for calling.

"If it's about Ars Chemica, I know it already," said Miss Granger. "They are still interested in Hiero Gravitas' work."

"My dear Miss Granger," purred Lord Sterne dryly as he narrowed his eyes. "I am unable to speak of intellectual matters before nine in the morning."

"Ah, you must forgive the clock in my mind then," murmured she, masking her demur with a forced smile. Sterne looked askance at her and scowled darkly at her. "What news then? Did Ron blow his horses on the race to Portsmouth?"

Sir Harry's eyes brightened at the prospect of sporting conversation. "You could say that. I lost three guineas to him as a result; and Lupin here lost one."

"Pity," agreed Miss Granger.

"I say, 'Mione," began Sir Harry with some nervous trembling in his voice. "Do you think Villiers is of sound mind?"

"As sound as yours and mine. Why do you ask?" enquired Miss Granger, watching a beetle hover her half eaten toast. "Wait a moment." She stopped her friend from answering. "Brown, get the potion that I brewed yesterday and place the vials open on the middle of table, next to the throatwort arrangement." Once that was done, she turned meaningfully to Lord Sterne as the beetle fled from the sudden air of solemnity. "Sub rosa,\* you understand."

He smirked his acknowledgement of her prudence.

"What does that mean?" asked a nonplussed Sir Harry.

Lupin gently informed him that it was to ensure that the conversation was in confidence.

Miss Granger rolled her eyes in perfect synchronisation with Lord Sterne that it disconcerted Sir Harry and discomposed Lupin. "You were saying, Harry? Do you have reason for doubting Villiers' reason? No? Has he given you cause to doubt the state of his mind?"

Sir Harry squirmed under his friend's thoughtful gaze. Ignoring Sterne's contemptuously curled lips and heavy scowl, he replied, "No, no, not in the least. But the thing is a secret. I'm bound by honour, you know."

"Really," returned Miss Granger as she skilfully caught the beetle in a jar. "What sort of a business arrangement is it? Delicate? Too delicate for female ears, perhaps?"

Sterne gave a snort of disapproval and glared at the Baronet.

"It's only secret so that Ginny won't hear of it," stammered Sir Harry.

"Ah, I see. Who called Villiers out and why?"

Sir Harry gasped at Miss Granger in astonishment and took in his other two companion's calm faces in apprehension. "How did you know?" he muttered.

Brushing aside his question, the hostess turned to the older gentlemen. "Who is the belligerent fellow?"

"Gregory Goyle," replied Lupin, looking into the recesses of his refilled coffee cup. "Severus thinks it's a potential scandal and so it is, if you consider the Malfoy temperament in father and son. Goyle, like Lord Percy, was all for a fight."

Miss Granger's eyes darkened. "Ought I be surprised? I assume by your question on Villiers' reasoning faculties that he refused the challenge? My downstairs staff did not provide me with the full details."

Sterne smirked at the lady's cool irony and Lupin spat his coffee into the cup so that he could laugh. Sir Harry, however, looked mortified. "No! Heavens, no! He took up Goyle's challenge with as much enthusiasm as he did Lord Percy's."

"Villiers as a cool customer," said the lady lightly as she sipped her tea. "Who would have thought! Out of curiosity, why did you doubt Villiers' sanity?"

"He didn't seem much interested in the affair," answered the Baronet. "In fact, Ron and I arranged the whole thing. We're acting for him and I saw Nott and Macnair at home an hour ago. Between the two of us, we fixed the whole thing to occur this evening at dusk at Barn Elms. Villiers already knows and bade me take Lupin and Sterner to consult you."

"Let me guess, he did not appear delighted with your splendid arrangements and it wounded your ego?" mocked the lady. Sterne suppressed the urge to laugh at Miss Granger's reading of Sir Harry's character by training his eyes on her drumming fingers. "Did not you tell Ginny?" she asked.

"We assumed she would be prostrate with grief," offered Lupin blandly.

"We meaning Harry and you? Typical!" she snorted, pushing aside her plate. "This is what you must do. Harry, go to Ginny and tell her the whole truth. It's hers and the Duchess's at-home day today. Take my word for it; she will be at Queen Square all day. Lord Lupin, try to see if you can offer an olive branch to Mr Goyle. Lord Sterne will try to dissuade Villiers. I will see Lady Minerva and Sanguine."

Unaccustomed to his friend's sudden air of decisiveness, Sir Harry was about to question her instructions when Sterne forcibly ushered his companions out of Lord Orthod's residence and bid them do as they were told.

For some time after they had left, Lord Sterne wandered around the streets, staring vacantly into windows. The stroll did much to his cognitive processes and he soon found himself at Grosvenor Square in front of the Duchess of Mallefille's townhouse. On learning that his admirable godson was not at home, he sauntered leisurely to Black's. He sat down with a newspaper by the empty fireplace and began his wait. Various people came and went, among them Lord Villiers, with whom Sterne exchanged his views on the impending duel. Realising that it was useless to dissuade a young man who was intent on his own destruction, he opted for the next course of action he sought and obtained the young man's permission to accompany the duellers that evening.

Two hours before the fateful event, Sterne had learnt by way of Miss Granger's message (delivered at the club by her father's page) that only Sir Harry's commission and her efforts had met with Success. Unperturbed, he kept the note in his breast pocket and took the carriage with Villiers to Barn Elms. Goyle was uncharacteristically early and bore displays of having exercised with a fencing master earlier in the day.

"How's your wrist feeling?" taunted Goyle as Sir Harry and Lord Ronald sombrely assisted Villiers in his preparations.

"More relaxed than yours," the Marquess replied, sharing an intelligible look with his godfather.

"You must think me a much bigger fool than you, my Lord Villiers."

"I would not know; I have never meditated on the matter," commented his Lordship coldly, adding a bite to his words.

Goyle swore at his opponent as they examined the rapiers. The rasp of steel scraping against the scabbard revealed that Goyle's sword was out. A few more hot words passed between the lips of Goyle when Nott came punctiliously forward to measure the swords.

"Don't you the feeling this ought to be stopped, Ron?" whispered Sir Harry to his friend.

"Yes. It could ruin poor Ginny," answered Lord Ronald. "Both Goyle and Villiers are mad!"

"Stark mad," murmured Sterne as he silently berated the absent Lupin for choosing to chaperon Lady Sybill to a Vauxhall play that evening.

"But it's bloody famous sport, isn't it? There's no stopping it now. Bloody brilliant, isn't it?" said a cheerfully amused Lord Ronald. The looks his friends bestowed on him soon censured him and he regained the little good sense that he had and pursed his lips in silent penitence.

Immediately following the barely restrained formal salute, the blades came together soon. There were no other sounds save the clashing scrape of steel and the combatants' oaths. Their respective Seconds stood with drawn swords in their places lest their man was disarmed. Sterne looked on their swordplay with a critical eye. He only raised a brow in a form of approbation at Villiers's move, which he had undoubtedly learnt from his father. At Goyle's poor passes, he frowned in scorn. No mean swordsman himself, Lord Sterne soon saw clearly that the duello was already marking its winner. He hoped against all other factors governing Villiers' presently disordered mind that his godson would not kill his opponent. The match was truly a match of hard fighting, for one man had unbearable insults to avenge and the other's whole mind and will were bent towards destroying his adversary. Very soon, even the unfocused Lord Ronald noticed that his man was better at swordplay. Goyle's thrusts were savage indeed and his attack full of fire, but his wide passes could be easily parried. The onlookers were soon drawn to the conclusion that Lord Villiers constantly had Mr Goyle at his mercy. It was evident that the blond gentleman who was expectedly light on his feet, was playing with his opponent and slowly, the spectators realised that he was making for just one spot and would be satisfied with no other. It seemed that the end of was near. Goyle saw an opening and lunged forward. Following a scurry of blades and a lightning thrust from Villiers, Goyle staggered back with a hand on his right arm. The Seconds sprang to action but Goyle stayed them with a vicious oath. "I'm not dead yet, Villiers! I'll send you body your precious Lady Ginevra yet. You're tired of life, cur!"

"Cur, am I?" laughed Villiers almost hysterically, "You are an impudent one then."

Infuriated by this exchange, Goyle lunged forward in quarte and was adroitly disengaged by Villiers, the fight continued as the two men fought desperately for their lives, every thrust by Goyle was successfully parried by his opponent. Villiers descried an opening and attempted to lurch for the throat but was swiftly held back. Goyle lunged savagely forward so much so that forte touched foible. Although the gentlemen had been fighting for a good while, Villiers showed no signs of tiring for he was still fighting with the same force and cunning.

To Sterne's eye, it appeared as if his godson was intent on pressing his adversary. Tracing his lips with the fingers of one hand and drumming the fingers of the other on his forearm, he frowned at the two duellers' simultaneous lunges. His heart quickened on its own volition as he recognised a feint he had taught Villiers. Goyle had thought that he found an opening but his lunge was matched by Villiers' smooth time thrust which came quicker than the eye could follow, took Goyle's foible in a brilliant parry and passed on unchecked to the heart. All the onlookers gasped in alarm, save Sterne, who mentally made plans to remove his impulsive godson from England. As soon as Villiers sprang back, Goyle crumpled down from his position and fell heavily to the ground. Nott and Macnair rushed to the fallen Goyle with the surgeon who declared him dead.

"Damn you, Villiers, you've killed him!" Sterne angrily hissed.

Villiers bowed with a smile. "Of that, I am certain, Godfather."

"Did you have to use the time thrust?"

"It was the best imitation of your feint I could produce in so trying a manner. Did I disgrace you with my weapon?" laughed the blond unsteadily in a mix of arrogance and nervousness.

"Confound it, bloody dunderhead! The authorities could condone your slaying of Goyle as it was executed in an honourable duel, yet that is not certain. They may not look kindly on you should Lord Percy die! Mr Macmillan was hung for killing his duelling opponent last year. If it came out that both Lord Percy and Goyle were slain at your hands, you must not be in England! I shall have to pack you off to France. What then of your plans? Have you thought on the shame it would bring your mother? Have you any consideration for the feelings of the woman you claim to love? No!" scolded Sterne emphatically in his quiet scowling way. "You will have to leave your *dear* affianced, and mother and leave for France."

"I could not act in such an irregular and clandestine conduct," answered a visibly shaken Villiers as they drove away from Barn Elms.

"When will you learn you are *never* to disregard my warnings!" hissed Sterne, thankful that Sir Harry had taken Lord Ronald home in the baronet's carriage.

"Must I stand trial for both Goyle and the Weasley fop?"

"Not at all," answered Sterne in a cold dangerous drawl. "You forget that I am somebody; my godfather is still somebody. Despite this optimistic prognostication, I hope you are fully aware that for some time to come, you will live with your father on the continent. Goyle's death is an affair of honour and I will use all my influence to exonerate you. I shall bear all the inconveniences on that score. I will request Sanguine to see to the Percy Weasley matter."

"I am in honourable man, sir," insisted Villiers feebly.

"You are, to borrow Miss Granger's phrase, only a nobleman who happened to be your father's son."

"Should I apologise for the brawl at Hades?"

"Only if Lord Percy lives. You must leave," said Sterne grimly. "If you are short of blunt, you may draw upon my Parisian account with Gringotts."

Haughtily regarding the older man through misty eyes, Villiers protested stiffly, "I have enough for my needs."

"Good! You leave in two days," stated Sterne as they arrived at the Duchess of Mallefille's residence.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the

Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Pitch pine represents "philosophy".

View it here [http://sherpaguides.com/tennessee/images/pitch\\_pine.jpg](http://sherpaguides.com/tennessee/images/pitch_pine.jpg) and <http://www.buenavistatownship.org/Photos/Pitch%20pine.jpg>. Pitch pine is one of the most fire resilient eastern conifers. Where fire kills the foliage, new needles are produced on new branches from suppressed buds on the bole. High resin content in this species produced the name "pitch pine". In the old days, if you couldn't afford candles, you used pitch pine knots for torches. Up to the Edwardian era, pitch pine sap was used to make turpentine and rosin. In the Middle Ages to the Victorian era, pitch pine was a popular choice for sills, window and door frames, and structural beams. Because of high resin content, the decay-resistant wood was popular for ship building, mine props, railroad ties, and fencing. I am told that currently, pitch pine is used in pulpwood and lumber production.

Pitch pine is also an important food source for wildlife. Sprouts and seedlings serve as browse for deer, cottontail rabbits, and meadow mice. Pine seeds are eaten by many species of birds and rodents including quails, game birds and field mice. Red squirrels also favour the pitch pine's serotinous cones for food as they contain fewer seeds.

(2) Mountain ash stands for "prudence".

View it here <http://www.yourdictionary.com/images/ahd/jpg/A4mountain.jpg>, <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wihort/Phenology/images/Mountainash.jpg> and <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wihort/Phenology/images/Mountainash2.jpg>. Mountain ash is the common name for rowan. It was regarded as a scared tree by the Celts and from that time onwards, it was highly valued for its powers of protection against witchcraft and evil influences. For these purposes, the trees were grown in gardens, branches hung over doorways and sprigs worn in hats. The mountain ash's wood retained these properties and was used to make dowsing rods, farm implements and for roofing timbers. Birds are very fond of mountain ash berries. Its fruit can be used to make a delightful jelly best eaten with poultry.

(3) The throatwort is also known as the fig-wort in some cultures. Although it is not explicitly stated in this chapter, Severus sends throatwort to Hermione on a daily basis. You will notice from the pictures [http://www.californiagardens.com/images/Trachelium\\_caeruleum\\_aspect\\_c.jpg](http://www.californiagardens.com/images/Trachelium_caeruleum_aspect_c.jpg) and [http://www.flowers.org.uk/images/flowers/aut03\\_tracheliumclose\\_lrg.jpg](http://www.flowers.org.uk/images/flowers/aut03_tracheliumclose_lrg.jpg) that the plant has diverse great, strong, hard, square brown stalks, three or four feet high, whereon grow large, hard, and dark green leaves, two at a joint, harder and larger than Nettle leaves, but not stinking; at the tops of the stalks stand many purple flowers set in husks, which are sometimes gaping and open, somewhat like those of Water Betony; after which come hard round heads, with a small point in the middle, wherein lie small brownish seed. The root is great, white, and thick, with many branches at it, growing aslope under the upper crust of the ground, which abides many years, but keeps not his green leaves in winter. It grows frequently in moist and shadowy woods, and in the lower parts of the fields and meadows. It flowers about July, and the seed will be ripe about a month after the flowers are fallen.

Some Latin scholars during the High Middle Ages called the throatwort/fig-wort, "Cervicaria" because it is appropriated to the treatment of ailments in and around the neck. However, by the 15th-16th century, the English gave it the name "throatwort" because it was found suitable to treating throat complaints. Culpepper's *The Complete Herbal* (that I am quoting in its medieval English) says, "Venus owns the herb, and the Celestial Bull will not deny it; therefore a better remedy cannot be for the king's evil, because the Moon that rules the disease, is exalted there. The decoction of the herb taken inwardly, and the bruised herb applied outwardly, dissolves clotted and congealed blood within the body, coming by any wounds, bruise or fall; and is no less effectual for the king's evil, or any other knobs, kernel, bunches, or wens growing in the flesh wheresoever; and for the hæmorrhoids, or piles. An ointment made hereof may be used at all times when the fresh herb is not to be had. The distilled water of the whole plant, roots and all, is used for the same purposes, and dries up the superfluous, virulent moisture of hollow and corroding ulcers; it takes away all redness, spots, and freckles in the face, as also the scurf, and any foul deformity therein, and the leprosy likewise."

(4) "Blunt" is Regency slang for money.

(5) It is intimated at the start of this chapter, Harry had been racing Ron in his Four-Horse Club race to Portsmouth. How will you know this? From Harry's description, he was wearing the Club's official racing coat. In case, you've forgotten, the *Four-Horse Club* is a real club in Regency London. In this story, Harry and Ron are members of this elite club. The uniform of the club was strictly enforced. Whenever its members met or raced with one another, they must each wear a drab coat that reached to the ankles with three tiers of pockets and mother of pearl buttons as large as five shilling pieces. The waistcoat was blue with yellow stripes an inch wide, the breeches of plush with strings and rosettes to each knee. It was fashionable that the hat should be 3 and 1/2 inches deep in the crown.

\* (6) A rose carved into or hung from a ceiling meant that the conversation held beneath it was in confidence, or *sub rosa*. So you see, the roses are not all above love as the romantics running around the world would have us think.

(7) The Duke of Offaly's townhouse is at Queen Square. It was built between the years 1708 and 1720 and named after Queen Anne. Dr Charles Burney and Fanny Burney (the authoress) lived here in 1771-2. Hampstead and Highgate could be seen through the open North side at that time. The Burneys' entertained Cook here when he returned to London from his 2nd voyage. From mid 18th to mid 19th century a girls' school called "Ladies Eaton". James Boswell's daughter was a pupil there. The Garden has a statue of Queen Charlotte that was placed there in 1775. Dr Willis lived there. Early in his illness King George III stayed with Dr. Willis. It remained a fashionable area until 1800.

(8) The Duchess of Mallefille's townhouse is at Grosvenor Square, a very expensive, very fashionable address. It was built between the years 1725-1731 at the centre of the Grosvenor estate. It is the second largest Square in London. Average cost of homes originally built here was £7500. The majority of the residents here were titled. The area was called Little America because John Quincy Adams lived here while he was the American ambassador to Britain.

(9) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the *ton*.

(10) Duelling Laws were passed in the reign of Louis XIV, to punish duellists with loss of rank, office, and estate, or with banishment; but pardons were constantly granted. In England, on the Restoration of Charles I, sword-duelling became more fashionable than ever; and every reader is acquainted with the killing of the Earl of Shrewsbury by the Duke of Buckingham, at Barn Elms, the Duke's second, Sir J. Jenkins, being at the same time killed by the Earl's second, while Lady Shrewsbury, the adulteress, held Buckingham's horse standing by. "O tempora! O mores!" The sanguinary blackguard Lord Mohun also is likely to be remembered; he, who shared in the murder of Montford the actor, and who afterwards, in 1712, fought a savage duel with the Duke of Hamilton in Hyde Park, where both were killed, each receiving three or four horrible wounds. Swords were still preferred to pistols in England, being usually worn by gentlemen, until after the middle of the last century; but the dagger had been rejected since the time of Charles I. Duellists sometimes came with swords and pistols; after exchanging shots they would use cold steel. It was not unfrequent, however, that two gentlemen who had got angry with each other at a tavern or in a private house, would at once draw their swords and fight, without any seconds or witnesses or formal arrangements. Lord Byron, great-uncle of the poet, in 1765 killed Mr. Chaworth, at a house in London in an impromptu sword-fight. Examples of this kind, in the memoirs and anecdotes, or in the comedies and old novelists' works of the eighteenth century, prove that "The world went very well then," as Mr. Walter Besant ironically says. Comparing the England of George II with the England of Charles I, it looks rather like a relapse into barbarism, owing to the decay of religion and morality and domestic life. In the method of duelling, we observe that pistolling found favour in Ireland as a gentlemanly pastime; indeed, it seems to have been the main pursuit of reckless men in the upper classes of society until after the Union. The pistol-duels in England, during the reigns of the last two Georges, of William IV., and at the beginning of Victoria's reign were often very serious; and some persons of considerable eminence, noblemen, statesmen, and distinguished military officers, were engaged in them. The sword-duel has been maintained, in France especially, since 1830, as an accessory to political ambition. It is, at the same time, almost a compulsory obligation, in certain cases, among military men in France, in Austria, and in Germany. French public men too commonly think it a needful accessory to their pretensions; it has cost several valuable lives, and has degraded the tone of political contention.

(11) Barn Elms is an oddly named park in Barnes in England, situated by Hammersmith Bridge to the West and the Wetlands Centre to the East. It hosts much amateur sport, such as football and hockey. Over a hundred years ago it hosted the Fulham Football Club home games. It was a famous duelling ground.

(12) Fencing terms for those who cannot follow the duel:

Parry = a block of the attack, made with the forte of one's own blade; also parade

Double = an attack or riposte that describes a complete circle around the opponent's blade, and finishes in the opposite line.

Line = the main direction of an attack (e.g., high/low, inside/outside), often equated to the parry that must be made to deflect the attack; also point in line.

Thrust = an attack made by moving the sword parallel to its length and landing with the point.

Lunge = an attack made by extending the rear leg and landing on the bent front leg.

Feint = an attack into one line with the intention of switching to another line before the attack is completed.

Riposte = an offensive action made immediately after a parry of the opponent's attack.

Foible = the upper, weak part of the blade.

Forte = the lower, strong part of the blade.

Time thrust = to thrust and lunge as your opponent does but your movement in doing so is to avoid his blade hitting you so that you can thrust your blade into his nearest organ.

For more fencing terminology, please go to <http://www.fencing.net/drills/glossary.html>.

## Chapter 17 - A Bunch of Love-lies-bleeding

*Chapter 18 of 23*

After the duel and the shooting, Lord Villiers has to leave for France. His friends have a scheme that will allow Lady Ginevra to accompany him. Will it come to fruition?

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books & ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

P/S The next chapter will be delayed because I'm redrafting my MA thesis and working on two research projects. It does not mean I have abandoned you or this story. Remember, this story has already been completed

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 17 A Bunch of Love-lies-bleeding

The next morning brought around a note from Miss Granger to Lord Villiers. It respectfully requested his presence no later than two o'clock in the afternoon that day. Although he had no intention of calling on the esteemed scholar that day, the urgent tone of her summons brooked no refusal. Thus, he dressed with unusual care in his impeccably cut buff breeches and coat of navy blue with silver buttons. Satisfied with the appearance of his hair and oriental waterfall cravat, he called for his carriage. He had, fortunately, the foresight to anticipate a sound trimming from his fair supplicant. On his arrival, he found Miss Granger occupied in her workroom, alternating between writing and preparing something in a cauldron. He was struck by the similarity between his hostess's habits and his godfather's. He could not decide whether he was amused or intrigued by the sight. The butler had announced him but to no avail, Miss Granger persisted in her work and neither looked up nor betrayed any sign of having heard the announcement of his name. Her absorption in her work reminded Villiers uncannily of his godfather's methods and resulted in a feeling of discomfiture hanging over his brow. To calm his uneven nerves, Villiers elected not to interrupt the lady in her work lest she react with the same unreasonable temper of his godfather. Instead, he opted to move to a nearby sofa.

Soon enough, Miss Granger completed her writing and was concentrating her efforts on the cauldron and its contents. He waited for her to bottle everything before he started pacing. As if suddenly alerted to his presence, Miss Granger bade him to be seated. "Thank you for arriving so promptly," said she curtly upon settling aside her papers. "I heard about our misadventures, so has Lady Ginevra."

"Will her brother live?" he asked in polite surprise.

"The reports are not encouraging. While his death will be celebrated by all sensible individuals, Bow Street does not appear sympathetic to you."

"The Malfroy name is meant to inspire a myriad of emotions," he replied with a mischievous look in his eyes.

"You must hope that the Duke of Sanguine would adequately bring to light Lord Percy's dealing with the late usurper of the Wars, Voldemort, as well as his habit of selling information of the *ton* to the on-dit columns and his attempted abduction of Miss Lovegood."

Villiers showed a look of astonishment in his smirk.

The lady's eyes twinkled in admiration of her friend. "Ah, you do not know that on the night you shot him, or should I say on the night of the Duchess' soiree, he attempted to abduct poor Miss Luna. She would have been had not her presence of mind rescued her."

"How?" he asked with cold curiosity, taking a pinch of snuff.

"She cast a simple translocation spell and he landed in the vicinity of your appalling Hades."

"How did he gain entry to the de Quib household?"

"He followed them home under the protection of a disillusionment charm. It flickered off just as she stepped out of her father's carriage at their home. He made a grab for her; her father stunned him and she translocated him. Very neatly done, if I do say."

"How are Miss Lovegood's nerves after this incident?"

"As well as any sensible woman's," answered Miss Granger with a smile.

"And does she continue to receive Lord Ronald's suit?"

"They have come to some form of an understanding. Their engagement is to be announced in the society pages. The legal papers have to be drawn up so as to safeguard Luna and her fortune. Ron would have to put up with much as the husband of the Baroness de Quib."

"But he cannot take her title! It's Miss Lovegood's!"

Miss Granger rolled her eyes in exasperation at his obtuseness. "Of course not! It will grant the children the Lovegood name and perhaps Ron will learn to act for her in the Lords when the time comes. But I doubt it he has no head for politics."

"Droll, isn't it to call him the husband of the Lady de Quib!"

The lady smiled wryly and shot her companion an intelligible look. "The price of marrying money and a title, my lord!"

Comprehending her look, Villiers ventured, "While we are speaking on the cost incurred for engaging in certain deeds, I suppose that you are acquainted with the conditions necessitating my egress to France."

"When do you leave?" she asked without any hint of interest.

"By tomorrow."

She stared at him with a faraway look on her eyes and murmured, "It is too soon for me."

"Why? What do you mean? Will you miss me?" he teased.

Miss Granger twitched her lips into a lopsided smile. "It is my plan. A present for you."

"A gift? What kind of gift?" he questioned warily.

She shot him a cold hard look. "It is entirely contingent on your plans."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you intend to take anything with you on your flight? Money, clothes, and o, I don't know..Ginny, perhaps?" she softly asked, her eyes narrowing.

Villiers paled at her remark and a muscle throbbed uncomfortably at his temple. "You have quite an assessment of my character, Miss Granger."

"You could say I have you utterly," she lightly replied in a tone that made Villiers feel like he was mouse cornered by a cat. "You cannot possibly hope to spirit Ginny away without marrying her first."

"I can do so in Paris. My father's influence counts for something in the French Court."

She inclined her head carefully to the left so as to better examine his eyes. Glowering at him with disapprobation, she said, "And ruin her in the eyes of society? I think not. However, with my gift, you will be free from the possible accusation of inducting a woman of the *ton* to a life of perdition."

He looked at her quizzically, "What is the nature of this generous gift?"

"A special licence," she revealed and surveyed Villiers expression through a vial she held up to her eyes. "But Wulfric Dumbledore informs me that it will not be ready until the evening of your departure date. By that date, you would have Apparated yourself to Calais and be en route to Paris in your coach."

"Why will it take so long? I thought Dumbledore's the Archbishop of York. He's second highest ranked clergyman in the country!"

"You will receive an immediate dispensation of whatever *other impediments* if the Archbishop of Canterbury endorses it as well. His Grace of Canterbury will only return a few hours before you will be obliged to leave."

"I am all astonishment!" declared Villiers leaning forward in his seat.

"Rightly so," she answered with a smirk. "I had intended for you to be wed by Neville Longbottom. That, however, is no longer an option. It is a lesson for me do not allow my vanity to get better of me. The best laid plans do go wonderfully awry."

"How did you manage to contrive it?"

She laughed merrily at him, puzzling the poor Marquess. "Simple, I asked."

"You know, Miss Granger," said Villiers with a smile of relief. "Now that I have spoken to you, I am uncertain as to whether it would be prudent to leave the country."

"You will have to spare your mother any further anxiety concerning your safety," she stressed, her eyes and expression grave once again.

"Pon rep', Miss Granger, you sound exactly like my godfather!"

She allowed a smile to play at the corner of her lips. "Should I be flattered?"

"You could be."

"Yet, I am unmoved. Come, Villiers, we must go to Ginny and inform her of the plans. Wait for me to change."

\* \* \*

Miss Granger was not the only person desirous of an interview with Lord Villiers, for Lord Sterne was also in the same mind. Unable to find the young man at the Clubs, Sterne sought for him at his residence. To his surprise, he was informed by his godson's man that he had left for the Orthod residence. Intrigued, Sterne hastened to Lord Orthod's home in the hopes of securing both Miss Granger and Villiers. However, on his arrival at the house, he was told that she had gone out with Villiers to the Weasley Ladies Reformatory to meet Lady Ginevra. Instead of finding any evidence to that effect, he found Sir Harry engaged in an earnest tête-à-tête with Miss Brown at the Duchess of Offaly's favourite charity. After giving then the barest of greetings, he stormed home in a temper. Where were all the people he wanted to see? He had, at the ungodly hour of six o'clock in the morning, called on the Duke of Sanguine's residence only discover that he was already in Scotland for the birth of his great-nephew. Thinking that Lady Minerva would be able to act as his voice of reason, he had gone to her house only to find it shut up and its knocker removed. Enquiries at Trelawney House did not shed any light as to his godmother's disappearance. By the time he had left the Orthod townhouse, Sterne was increasingly of the mindset that he was deliberately kept from a scheme. Despite his knowledge that ill temper would beget irritability, he continued to fume and speculate on the state of affairs that Villiers had thrown himself. After browsing through the shelves of books at Hatchard's, Sterne found that his temper was still at boiling point. Deciding that a cup of tea would be useful

in soothing the windmills in his mind, he proceeded to the bookshop's adjoining tearooms. Looking at the lists of private parlours that he had been occupied, Sterne formed the opinion that he needed to blow his brains out if all it could do was consider the prospect of discussing his latest *Ars Chemica* article with Miss Granger. His mind and ear appeared to have collaborated to vex him for he heard the voice of his little alchemical philosopher. Tossing aside the lists of private tea rooms, he followed what he perceived to be her voice. Without knocking or waiting for an invitation to enter the private parlour, he burst in to find Villiers discussing something with Miss Granger.

"Well, well, Miss Granger, how do you do," he growled in displeasure, as he sought to grapple with the unfamiliar emotion coursing through his veins. "Villiers, what brings you here? Does your mother still want you to wed la femme savante? Did she put you up to this rendezvous?"

"My Lord," snapped Miss Granger sharply, throwing her head back in defiance. "Are you drunk?"

"He's not in his cups," warned Villiers, as he dug his hands into his capacious cloak pockets.

Narrowing his eyes and examining the scene minutely, he hissed, "Why are you here with Miss Granger? Where is your estimable bride to be? Have you deserted her? No wonder all the *ton* talks of the two of you." He violently flicked aside lock of hair that tumbled before his eyes. "Have you been making another spectacle of yourselves by going around town again? There's something deuced irregular between the pair of you." He controlled the urge to hex his godson there and there. "Villiers," he commanded, turning paler with poorly suppressed rage. "A word with you *in private!* NOW!"

A close study of Lord Sterne's slightly trembling form, violent speech and blind anger soon resulted in enlightenment dawning on Miss Granger. Choosing not to display her amusement and the fact that she was flattered by his attentions, she coldly nodded at the interlocutor to signal her acknowledgement of his presence. "Under different circumstances I would be happy to welcome you to partake of our tea and crumpets, but we are expecting Lady Ginevra shortly. If you will be so kind as to leave us *in peace*, I will give you permission to call me some time next week."

"Your *permission!*" he spat. "My business is with Lord Villiers, not you, Miss Granger. I beg you to keep your condescension to yourself!" Then turning to his godson with a look of hatred, he hissed, "Scoundrel! How dare you conduct your flirtations with two honourable women in this mad fashion!"

Villiers and Miss Granger exchanged looks of muted mirth before bursting into merry peals of laughter, further infuriating Lord Sterne who thought they were laughing at him.

"Villiers isn't here to flirt, and I thought you knew me better than that!" she spat, still struggling to contain her dying laughter.

"Don't tell me you two were waiting for Lady Ginevra!" drawled Sterne in a low warning tone. "I will not swallow that dribble."

"Sir," came a feminine voice at the door, which soon closed in on itself. "You have traduced the characters of my friends."

The sight of the lady in pale green shook his anger and temper into a rout. He scowled and executed a low bow. "Lady Ginevra," he greeted through his teeth,

The lady pointedly ignored his contrite salute and swept into the room to embrace her friend and her affianced. "How does it stand?" she asked.

"How does what stand?" snarled Sterne, insulted that he was still in the dark as to their plans.

"It hasn't anything to do with you," Miss Granger replied coolly.

"Are you hatching a scheme to poison the Duchess of Mallefille?"

Villiers laughed. "Poisoning mother! Indeed!"

"Well, out with it, Draco! Your business is my business." Sterne expostulated.

Lady Ginevra removed a glove of York tan from her hand. "At the outset, I had informed Hermione that you would not be so obliging as to not take exception in Villiers being in her company. Well, Hermione, it seems you were mistaken."

Sterne scowled and cocked his head slightly to the left so as to cast a reproachful look at his godson. This silent gesture confirmed Lady Ginevra's presupposition.

"Miss Granger has been so kind as to lend us her aid," explained Villiers, raising a brow of conceited amusement. "We have all been thoroughly proper and devilishly correct. Mother was pleased to think that I was fixing my interest with Miss Granger and if she knows that Lady Ginevra goes along, as she does, she assumes she is there for the sake of propriety, which is what anyone would expect. I expected that you already knew all this, my Lord Sterne, for we have been playing at this long before the debacle at my mother's failed rout party!"

Reeling under the impact of this revelation and the embarrassment of his own erroneous conclusion, Sterne was unprepared for his godson to continue, "She has more than helped us. She has sought to obtain a special licence for us."

Sterne arched a brow in reverence at Miss Granger's quick thinking and action. "You had foreseen my movements, Miss Granger."

She smiled coldly and said in a mildly bellicose tone, "I had ample opportunity for observation, my Lord. I was your student at Garswoth and your confederate in present intellectual pursuits. Organised thinking has indubitably led me to your possible course of action."

Villiers found his godfather's intent gaze unnerving and begged him to sit down. "I mean to marry Lady Ginevra."

"Will staring at me in that ridiculous way assist your cause?" barked the truculent Marquess in a tone that the younger man took to be conciliatory.

"Only if you stop keeping your eye on me," answered the young man with a rakish grin.

Sterne curled his lips contemptuously at the assembled company.

"I want to know your thoughts. Ginny said you wouldn't like it. Are you in a miff?" asked Miss Granger, offering him a cup of tea.

"No, not if you've managed to get the licence from Wulfric Dumbledore. Sanguine and his household have gone to Scotland to see Wulfric's new son. But I assume you did get it from him and the two of you are not going to do something stupid like go to Gretna Green."

"We will get the licence in two days," said Lady Ginevra plainly.

"Not soon enough," murmured Sterne, thoughtfully tracing his lips.

Miss Granger wrung her hands in nervousness. "Thank heavens, you're a sensible man."

"What do you plan?" asked Sterne, genuinely curious, leaning forward in his seat.

"Delay Villiers' departure by a day, produce the licence to Neville and get him to marry them," said Miss Granger, her eyes brightening at his concern for her plan.

"Do you have the licence now?"



"No. But I was assured he will meet with the Archbishop of Canterbury early tomorrow evening to obtain his endorsement of the licence and once that is done, Wulfric Dumbledore could marry them."

Sterne chose not to reply to the news he had just received. Instead, he chose to stare thoughtfully at the three young people further discussing their plans.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Love-lies-bleeding means "hopeless not heartless".

It is sometimes called the amaranthus by scientists. It had many names in the English speaking world such as called Flower Gentle, Flower Velure Floramor, and Velvet Flower. Love-lies-bleeding acquired its name from the fact that it looks like blood gushing from a self-inflicted stab wound. A good reason in the late Middle Ages was the woman of your dreams spurning you or forbidding you to ever play at courtly love with her again. If you want more information on the tradition of courtly love, email me. From the pictures <http://www.gardenguides.com/seedcatalog/packets/loveliesbleeding.jpg>, <http://www.gardenerspath.com/plantguide/images/amaranthus.JPG> and <http://www.math.umn.edu/~white/personal/images/Garden/lovelies02.jpg>, you can see that the leaves are of a reddish green colour and somewhat slippery to the touch. The flowers are more tufts than blossoms, but it does not prevent them from being pretty. These flowers have no scent. Interestingly, if you bruise these tufts, you get a sap that is almost blood red in colour. They usually flowered in August and die in winter when the cold arrives. Culpepper's The Complete Herbal, published in 1652 had this to say about the love-lies-bleeding, "It is under the dominion of Saturn, and is an excellent qualifier of the unruly actions and passions of Venus, though Mars also should join with her. The flowers, dried and beaten into powder, stop the terms in women, and so do almost all other red things. And by the icon, or image of every herb, the ancients at first found out their virtues. Modern writers laugh at them for it; but I wonder in my heart, how the virtues of herbs came at first to be known, if not by their signatures; the moderns have them from the writings of the ancients; the ancients had no writings to have them from: but to proceed. The flowers stop all fluxes of blood; whether in man or woman, bleeding either at the nose or wound. There is also a sort of Amaranthus that bears a white flower, which stops the whites in women, and the running of the reins in men, and is a most gallant antivenereal, and a singular remedy for the French pox." For those unfamiliar with 17th century English, I shall inform you that French pox was the derogatory English phrase of saying venereal disease. If you want an explanation as to why this is so, email me.

The other name for love-lies-bleeding is amaranth, which is an abbreviation of its genus, *Amaranthaceae*. In my research, I discovered that the Aztecs pounded the flowers into a mixture which they used as offerings to their gods. Sometimes, they also used the amaranth as sacred food in their sacrifices and religious rituals. A Scandinavian friend of mine informs me that in Mexico, the love-lies-bleeding is popped and mixed with a sugar solution to make "alegria" and that the leaves are used as a vegetable both fried or boiled. The Peruvians use fermented amaranth seed to make "chicha" or beer. In India, love-lies-bleeding is known as "rajeera" (the King's grain) and is popped then used in confections called "laddoos," which are similar to Mexican "alegria." In Nepal, amaranth seeds made into gruel called "sattoo" or milled into flour to make chappatis which are eaten. In Ecuador, the flowers are boiled and the boiled water added to a rum to create a drink that "purifies the blood," and is also said to help regulate the menstrual cycle. Interestingly, this same friend informs me that the little black love-lies-bleeding seeds are very high in protein, high in fibre, calcium, iron, potassium and phosphorus (almost as high as a banana apparently) contain two essential amino acids not frequently found in grains (lysine and methionine)

(2) The phrase "you have me utterly" was then understood as "you have utterly caught my likeness". Do not allow your modern minds to misread the old-fashioned phrases. You may interpret "likeness" how you will.

(3) The phrase "'Pon rep" was a very popular mild swear in Regency England. It is the truncated form of "Upon my reputation".

(4) The Archbishop of York is the second highest ranking clergyman in the British Islands. He is only second to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

(5) Hatchard's is a bookstore. In 1797, John Hatchard (1769-1849) opened a bookshop at No. 173 Piccadilly. In 1801 he moved premises to No. 190. Later the store was moved to No. 187 where it has remained. In Hatchard's time, the shop was as much a social meeting place for the literary-minded as it was a bookshop. Residents of Albany, a very fashionable and expensive neighbourhood, just across Piccadilly, including Byron frequented the shop. The daily newspapers were always laid out on the table by the fireplace and there were benches outside for the customers' servants. He was bookseller to Queen Charlotte. There were also private tea rooms inside where the customers could take some refreshment. The firm has always held a royal warrant since that time. His son Thomas took over the store after his father's death in 1849.

(6) Snuff is a preparation of finely pulverised tobacco that can be drawn up into the nostrils by inhaling. It was also called smokeless tobacco. The quantity of this tobacco that is inhaled at a single time is no more than a pinch literally. However, not all snuff-takers used it for fashion (it was then seen as a fashionable activity). Some people with nose trouble (blocked and/or running noses) used a special kind of 'snuff' which was a powdery substance, such as a medicine, taken by inhaling.

Taking snuff was a popular, widespread pastime among the upper class and middle class English of the 18th century. Snuff boxes were made by silver smiths who specialised in tightly closing boxes. Most English snuff boxes were made in Birmingham.

(7) Readers may dislike the fact that I called the Aurors the Bow Street Aurors. This is a Regency story remember? I modelled the Bow Street Aurors in this story after the Runners. The Bow Street runners were like the local policemen of the age. You may see the Bow Street Office here, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/LAbow.jpg>. In 1740 Sir Thomas de Veil, established a court house in Bow Street near the Opera House in Covent Garden. Ten years later, his successor, Henry Fielding (yes the author), formed the Bow Street Runners. Initially nicknamed Robin Redbreasts, on account of their scarlet waistcoats, the original eight Bow Street Runners were London's first band of constables. Their functions included serving writs, detective work and arresting offenders. The Bow Street Runners travelled all over the country in search of criminals and gained a reputation for honesty and efficiency. John Stafford, Chief Clerk at Bow Street, used several spies, including John Castle and George Edwards to help arrest several members of the Spencean Philanthropists, a group who were involved in the Spa Riots and the Cato Street Conspiracy. The formation of the London Metropolitan Police force by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 brought an end to their activities.

(8) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the *ton*.

(9) On-dit is French for "we tell". In the context of Regency speech, it meant gossip about the town that is usually published in the newspapers.

(10) "To be in your/his/her cups" is Regency slang for the state of being drunk.

## Chapter 18 - The Uses of Pimpernel

In which we are treated to a glimpse of the Daily Prophet and Lady Ginevra's plans to leave with Lord Villiers. The upshot is chaos and anxiety. What will her friends do? Read on?

### Addressing Readers' Queries 1: The throatwort reference

Several people have asked me, 'Why do you always have Hermione staring a throatwort, arranging throatwort, or touching throatwort?' Reread ch 7 and you will realise that at the name day ball, Severus presented HG with a poesy of throatwort. Think about it and your question will be answered.

### Addressing Readers' Queries 2: Oblique references to Heyer's Devil's Cub

I thank those of you who have emailed me. The second half of this story is indeed inspired from Heyer's Devil's Cub. It is deliberately so. It is a tacit tribute to Georgette Heyer. More importantly, I made it Heyerish because I wanted to highlight Draco's past and kill off Percy. The penultimate chapter and denouement is also Devil's Cub-ish - so you've been warned. Sorry for the lack of originality, but allow me to say something in my defence... In medieval times, true genius was not being original. It was taking someone else's already written story (and hence well known) and giving it your own spin). This is exactly what I have done.

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 18 The Uses of Pimpernel

The capture of the on-dit columnist, Rita Skeeter by the ingenious Miss Granger brought much relief to various sectors of society. In her unbreakable glass jar, Rita Skeeter was remanded by the Bow Street Aurors for slanderous reports of the ton. This meant that The Daily Prophet's reports were somewhat less sensational, though it could not be said to have improved. Readers turning to the society pages of the said newspaper would be struck by several astounding reports, which culminated in this editorial:

*Society would have much to look forward to in the coming months for it is likely to play host to a number of impending nuptials. Never has a London Season witnessed such matches whereby the veritable successes among the ranks of the ladies and the most eligible young men in our country will take their positions the next season as some of the ton's finest leaders of fashion. The most significant engagement is that between Lord Villiers (who is almost as handsome in address and looks as his father, the exiled Duke of Mallefille) and Lady Ginevra Weasley, youngest child of the Duke and Duchess of Offaly. Indeed, all the ton speaks of it as a most advantageous match for her and her family. Her family, though as old and well-established as the Malfoy line, is of Irish descent and financially unstable. Despite this, the Duke holds many important hands in the Houses of Parliament. His Duchess and he have agreed to consent to the match as soon as the investigations surrounding Lord Villiers have been cleared. Lord Villiers, as many of our readers will know, killed Mr Goyle, only son of the late Sir Gregory Goyle, knight, in a fencing duel. The courts and assizes have deemed the demise of the unfortunate Mr Goyle as an accident on the duelling ground. As the matter between them was a matter of great delicacy, they had chosen to settle their differences in the field of honour. His lordship is not only known for his swordplay, but also his sharp manner with pistols and the wand. Rumours are rife that the Bow Street Aurors wish to secure his presence at a trial for the near murder of Lord Percy Weasley, an older brother of his unfortunate affianced. The matter which compelled Lord Villiers to defend himself against Lord Percy is uncertain and it is unknown, even to the editor, whether Lord Percy will live. It appears that the ton's favourite dandy is quite iniquitous in character, having defamed the old aristocratic Lovegood family who holds the de Quib barony. This singular young man had also cast aspersions on his family members, calling into question the eligibility and prudence of Lord Villiers's marriage to Lady Ginevra. Though it is common knowledge among the ton that the Duchess of Offaly is one of the gentlest and most charitable of women of our time, her son, this same Lord Percy, claimed that her many public charities were screens to cover his family's numerous private iniquities. However, as The Daily Prophet's journalistic investigators, Messrs Colin and Dennis Creevey, have proven these slanders against the ducal family of Offaly are groundless. It is whispered that the match between Lord Villiers and Lady Ginevra maybe called off due to the effects of his lordship's temper. As editor, I will do the prudent thing and await further information.*

*The Season's two other eligible beaux, Lord Lupin and Sir Harry Potter are also set to enter upon the happy institution of matrimony. Lord Lupin, who has only come into his title earlier this year, has long been an active admirer of Earl Trelawney's daughter, the seer, Lady Sybil Trelawney. Lady Sybil, who provides us with our daily weather predictions, is said to have consented to a long engagement with the charming Baron so as to ascertain their suitability to one another. Although the maiden had once dangled after the taciturn, scholar, Lord Sterne, she seems to have met her match in Lord Lupin. Her happiness when seen with him puts all those that make execrations on her character to shame. While many ladies are presently bemoaning the loss of society's handsomest Baron, they are mollified with the knowledge that he had made himself a very eligible match.*

*In contrast, the country's war hero, Sir Harry Potter looks set to throw away himself away on a woman of uncertain birth. The woman traces her history as far as the Foundling home and has a somewhat chequered past. This woman is presently in the employ of Lord Orthod as his daughter's abigail. This Lavender Brown, quiet and unknown by most of the haute ton, has managed to ensnare one of the largest matrimonial prizes in the country. The only mésalliance this Season thus far, Sir Harry's blatant disregard of the disappointment of society's numerous young ladies has led to speculation as to his eccentric tastes.*

*The editor knows not when abigails became a legitimate pool from which prospect brides could be selected. The society mothers call them 'Jezebels' for snatching away eligible young men from their daughters, and indeed, it is justifiable in the case of Sir Harry Potter and Lavender Brown. However, the case is not as simple where Lady Ginevra's abigail is concerned. The woman I speak of is Miss Millicent Bulstrode, the self-trained mezzo-soprano, who took society by storm since her first appearance at the Duke of Sanguine's party for Lady Minerva. This woman, long held to be the only daughter of Miss Marianne Bulstrode, the famous opera singer of the previous decades, was recently discovered to be the late Lord Lestrangle's natural daughter. The dark beauty and former opera dancer seems to have attached the reverend Mr Longbottom, heir to the Earldom of Fluxweed. If rumours are to be believed his grandmother, the redoubtable Lady Fluxweed, has looked on the match with a kind eye.*

*The young clergyman is not the only of the Baronet's friends to be on the brink of wedded bliss, for the delightful Lord Ronald Weasley, also appears to have contracted a truly advantageous match. His finely sculptured profile, unfixed opinions and want of book learning has attracted the eccentric blonde beauty, Miss Lovegood. Miss Lovegood, who is heiress to the country's oldest Barony (established in 1107) has entered into an engagement with the charming Lord Ronald. He will have to surrender most of his rights to her. In return for the lady's honour and the preservation of precedence, it is said that he has consented to the terms of Lord de Quib's legal advisors. After all, a baroness in her own right comes before the younger son of a duke in the ranks of precedence. The only determinant remaining as to whether the marriage will go through is the period of the engagement. All the ton knows of the possible union but there has been no official announcement from either the Duke of Offaly or Lord de Quib. The Daily Prophet speculates that the couple's silence could be attributed to the lady's natural diffidence.*

Readers perusing such an editorial could not admire its prose and Miss Granger was one such discerning person. As she sat down the offensive newspaper and picked a dress for the evening's dinner party with Lord de Quib and Miss Lovegood. By a stroke of irony, all the people mentioned in the newspaper would be assembled there. She rolled her eyes at the thought, silently fingered the throatwort in a vase and began an earnest interview with Brown.

\* \* \*

Like her friend Miss Granger, Lady Ginevra was also preparing herself for the evening party. However, she stayed Bulstrode's hand when the latter was lacing her in her sea green watered silk gown when one of the house-elves popped into her boudoir with a note. The note and its composer put dressing quite out of her mind. She looked at the familiar hand on the neatly torn parchment, which read,

*Come with me to France if it is convenient;*

*if inconvenient, fly with me all the same.*

*Your own, Villiers.*

*I will return in an hour and a half.*

"I will not be requiring the evening dress tonight. Pack a small valise for me, Bulstrode," instructed Lady Ginevra as she came to a sudden decision. "Tell my mother I have a headache and will be unfit to go to Lord de Quib's dinner party."

Millicent Bulstrode cocked her head to one side and eyed her mistress guardedly and saw that she was tightly grasping onto the note in her hand. "What is the matter, my lady? Am I to accompany you?"

"Questions! Questions! I am tired of all the questions," cried Lady Ginevra in vexation. "Go tell Mamma!"

"Tell her yourself," answered the abigail quietly when a knock was heard. "That is Her Grace's knock."

"Are you ready, dear? It's gone half past six," came the dismembered voice of the Duchess.

"I'm not going, Mamma. I have a headache. Go on without me, I have Bulstrode for company."

"All right, dear. Stay in bed and rest. I'll have Cook bring you up some soup," replied the Duchess's concerned voice.

"That won't be necessary," Lady Ginevra hastily said, "Bulstrode will get it for me later. Goodbye, Mamma."

"Rest well, my dear," chimed the Duchess.

Sighing wistfully as her mother's footsteps died away, Lady Ginevra sternly addressed her abigail, "My half mourning clothes and grey pelisse, quick. You will stay here and inform Mamma of my flight tomorrow morning."

"Consider the impropriety, my lady!" implored Bulstrode whilst she packed.

Quelling her other objections with a sharp look of annoyance, Lady Ginevra continued her vein of speech. "You will have the soup that Cook is preparing."

"Isn't it improper, my lady?"

"No one cares about such things now now, hurry, get my things and help me pack."

Together, the ladies mechanically packed her ladyship's things. A house elf came up with the soup and a bit of super which Lady Ginevra pressed Bulstrode to consume. As the clock struck eight, the abigail helped her mistress to dress. After surveying the results in the mirror, Lady Ginevra placed her monthly allowance in her ridicule and noiselessly let herself out of the silent house. Her worried abigail could only wring her hands in apprehensive anxiety. She stood by the antechamber's window and watched Lady Ginevra trudge down the deserted street with her ridicule and valise into a lighted carriage. As soon as the carriage drove off, Bulstrode made herself comfortable in an armchair and read the note which her mistress had written to her Grace.

*"Mamma," it ran, "Villiers and I are leaving for Paris. We are presently on our way to Dover road to the coast where we shall Apparate to the French port of Calais. We plan to marry at the Embassy in Paris as soon as we arrive there. Ginny."*

What could Bulstrode do but shake her head in disapproval. If only Mr Longbottom were there with her, thought the sighing abigail, he would know what to do. She smiled at the recollection of his steady character and wondered whether she should recall the Duke and Duchess home. No, it would not do to alarm them. She should write to Mr Longbottom he would know what to do. She was about to commence on that worthy endeavour when she was interrupted from cutting her paper. The reason for the disruption was the distinctive floc chime of the arrival Weasley twins.

"Hullo, Millie," said Lord George by way of a greeting as he reset his mother's wards over the fireplace.

"We heard Ginny wasn't feeling well," continued his twin, carelessly throwing himself on a sofa.

"Mother told us to come see if we can cheer her up," explained Lord George, picking up a pear from a fruit arrangement and biting into it.

"Where's Ginny?" asked Lord Frederick, as he fished things out of his pockets. "Still moping with her headache because Villiers has to hide in France? He just left, didn't he?" The Apparition point at Dover closes at eleven at night."

"He could still make the morning six o'clock one if his horses get blown halfway to the coast," interjected Lord George, chewing on his pear.

"Good point. So, Millie, where's Ginny? We've a treat for her!"

"Oh, she'll like it!" asserted Lord George, without noticing that the pale and slightly quivering Bulstrode was trying to get a word in edgewise. "She can write to Villiers with it!"

"And frighten him too!" added his twin, as he withdrew something resembling a piece of parchment from his pocket. "See, it writes like a letter but when you seal it, it becomes a howler."

"No, my good Forge, it acts like a howler to the recipient and disintegrates upon finishing its narration."

"Ideal for Ginny," laughed Lord Frederick merrily, kicking his feet, "eh, Gred?"

"Yes, she'll find more customers for us! Hey, why hasn't she come down yet? She must have heard us!"

"My lords!" exclaimed Bulstrode with nervous agitation. "Before I reveal the truth to you, you must both promise not to be cross."

"Damn me, Millie, why are you dancing waltzes around us?" asked Lord Frederick, as he arranged himself carelessly on the sofa.

"Calm down, Fred, we don't want to frighten her; the gel looks pretty shaken already. I won't be cross, on my honour. Tell us, what has happened to Ginny?"

"Lord Villiers came and she..."

Lord Frederick sprang onto his feet, gripping his twin's shoulder roughly. "He's abducted Ginny! I'll kill him! To think we trusted him, George!"

"He gave us his word, remember? If he broke it, we would know we have a sapphire cravat pin that we charmed. It hasn't started wailing. He didn't betray us. At least ~~not~~ yet."

Bulstrode screamed once so as to get their lordships to cease their chattering. Once their attentions were secured, she said, "Lady Ginevra went off with him, my lords! It's an elopement. They are to marry at the English Embassy in Paris. He sent her this note." She handed Villiers note to Lord Frederick who took it with a grim look. "And this is for Her Grace," continued the dark haired abigail, handing her mistress's note to Lord George

"To speed up the paperwork in France, they need two things," cried Lord Frederick as he counted off his fingers. "A special licence and the ambassador's ear."

"Villiers has the charm to obtain the ear of the ambassador," reminded his twin, pocketing the notes that Bulstrode handed to them, "and I think the ambassador is a maternal cousin of his or some such nonsense."

"We can tell Father, he's in the Lords. He can talk to that young protégé of his in the Commons. Damn me, I can't recall his name!"

"Mr Wood, you mean? He has the ambassador's ear. These progressive Whigs are everywhere these days! But what about the licence?"

"We'll tell Hermione. She'll know what to do!" offered Lord Frederick, displaying his unusually focused mental abilities. "I'm still going to kill Villiers when next I see him."

"Whoa, don't forget, he nearly killed Percy."

"Oh, that's a big favour to consider. I still hope Percy will die."

"So do I, but enough of that! We must go to Lord de Quib's and tell her."

"Yes, let's. Sit tight, Millie. Mother will need you to comfort her."

After seeing the abigail to her room, the twins flooded themselves to Lord de Quib's residence, much to the surprise of the assembled company. However, as they began to show signs of anxiety when his lordship pressed them to stay for port and some cakes, the company fell silent. The brothers' original attempt to relay their information met with much confusion as they were both talking at the same time. Miss Granger, however, had enough presence of mind to get Lord Frederick to speak first. The notes to Lady Ginevra and her mother were duly passed around, and by the time it arrived in Miss Granger's hand, her mind began to tick as she thought of an abandoned plan after plan to salvage the situation. Deciding to hold onto the notes for the time being, she bade Lord George to continue his brother's narration. As soon as all was revealed, the assembled company was in uproar and the Duchess of Offaly was visibly upset. Miss Granger and Miss Lovegood were alone unmarred by the afflictions of all the other guests. With a grim expression of her face, Miss Granger summoned Sir Harry and her abigail to accompany her on the floo network to the Duke of Sanguine's residence.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Pimpernel has two meanings: (i) change, and (ii) assignation.

View it here <http://www.blakeneymanor.com/images/pimpernel.jpg>,

[http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/SpecialCollections/images/womennature/oversize/hey\\_platefacing67\\_OS.jpg](http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/SpecialCollections/images/womennature/oversize/hey_platefacing67_OS.jpg) and

[http://www.collectorsprints.com/\\_images/botanical/flowers1870/pimpernel-400.jpg](http://www.collectorsprints.com/_images/botanical/flowers1870/pimpernel-400.jpg). The generic name of the pimpernel is anagallis. It comes from the Greek word meaning "to laugh" because it was believed to lift depression. This tiny flower was also thought to cure bites from rabid creatures as well as alleviate melancholy. On the authority of one Mother Mumby in Merry Olde England, pimpernel is very good at preventing and thwarting witchcraft. Pimpernel also has a cosmetic application. During the 18th and 19th centuries, ladies drank it in teas to retain clear complexions.

Culpepper (1652) in his *The Complete Herbal* says, "The Pimpernel a gallant solar herb, of a cleansing attractive quality, whereby it draws forth thorns or splinters, or other such like things gotten into the flesh; and put up into the nostrils, purges the head; and Galen saith also, they have a drying faculty, whereby they are good to solder the lips of wounds, and to cleanse foul ulcers. The distilled water or juice is much esteemed by French dames to cleanse the skin from any roughness and deformity, or discolouring thereof; being boiled in wine and given to drink, it is a good remedy against the plague, and other pestilential fevers, if the party after taking it be warm in his bed, and sweat for two hours after, and use the same for twice at least. It helps also all stings and bitings of venomous beasts, or mad dogs, being used inwardly, and applied outwardly. The same also opens obstructions of the liver, and is very available against the infirmities of the reins. It provokes urine, and helps to expel the stone and gravel out of the kidneys and bladder, and helps much in all inward pains and ulcers. The decoction, or distilled water, is no less effectual to be applied to all wounds that are fresh and green, or old, filthy, fretting, and running ulcers, which it very effectually cures in a short space. A little mixed with the juice, and dropped into the eyes, cleanses them from cloudy mists, or thick films which grow over them, and hinder the sight. It helps the tooth-ache, being dropped into the ear on a contrary side of the pain. It is also effectual to ease the pains of the hæmorrhoids or piles."

(2) The throatwort is also known as the fig-wort in some cultures. You will notice from the pictures

[http://www.californiagardens.com/images/Trachelium\\_caeruleum\\_aspect\\_c.jpg](http://www.californiagardens.com/images/Trachelium_caeruleum_aspect_c.jpg) and [http://www.flowers.org.uk/images/flowers/aut03\\_tracheliumclose\\_lrg.jpg](http://www.flowers.org.uk/images/flowers/aut03_tracheliumclose_lrg.jpg) that the plant has diverse great, strong, hard, square brown stalks, three or four feet high, whereon grow large, hard, and dark green leaves, two at a joint, harder and larger than Nettle leaves, but not stinking; at the tops of the stalks stand many purple flowers set in husks, which are sometimes gaping and open, somewhat like those of Water Betony; after which come hard round heads, with a small point in the middle, wherein lie small brownish seed. The root is great, white, and thick, with many branches at it, growing aslope under the upper crust of the ground, which abides many years, but keeps not his green leaves in winter. It grows frequently in moist and shadowy woods, and in the lower parts of the fields and meadows. It flowers about July, and the seed will be ripe about a month after the flowers are fallen.

Some Latin scholars during the High Middle Ages called the throatwort/fig-wort, "Cervicaria" because it is appropriated to the treatment of ailments in and around the neck. However, by the 15th-16th century, the English gave it the name "throatwort" because it was found suitable to treating throat complaints. Culpepper's *The Complete Herbal* published in 1652 (that I am quoting in its medieval English) says, "Venus owns the herb, and the Celestial Bull will not deny it; therefore a better remedy cannot be for the king's evil, because the Moon that rules the disease, is exalted there. The decoction of the herb taken inwardly, and the bruised herb applied outwardly, dissolves clotted and congealed blood within the body, coming by any wounds, bruise or fall; and is no less effectual for the king's evil, or any other knobs, kernel, bunches, or wens growing in the flesh wheresoever; and for the hæmorrhoids, or piles. An ointment made hereof may be used at all times when the fresh herb is not to be had. The distilled water of the whole plant, roots and all, is used for the same purposes, and dries up the superfluous, virulent moisture of hollow and corroding ulcers; it takes away all redness, spots, and freckles in the face, as also the scurf, and any foul deformity therein, and the leprosy likewise."

(3) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? You will see why when I reveal Millicent Bulstrode's parentage...

(4) Rita Skeeter was captured in Chapter 16 in her beetle form.

(5) Hand has two meanings (i) the appendage with the fingers and a thumb, (ii) handwriting. My beta thought I meant hand as in appendage with fingers, I assure you, this is not the meaning implied herein. The hand referred to here is handwriting.

(6) Readers may dislike the fact that I called the Aurors the Bow Street Aurors. This is a Regency story remember? I modelled the Bow Street Aurors in this story after the Runners. The Bow Street runners were like the local policemen of the age. You may see the Bow Street Office here, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/LAbow.jpg>. In 1740 Sir Thomas de Veil, established a court house in Bow Street near the Opera House in Covent Garden. Ten years later, his successor, Henry Fielding (yes the author), formed the Bow Street Runners. Initially nicknamed Robin Redbreasts, on account of their scarlet waistcoats, the original eight Bow Street Runners were London's

first band of constables. Their functions included serving writs, detective work and arresting offenders. The Bow Street Runners travelled all over the country in search of criminals and gained a reputation for honesty and efficiency. John Stafford, Chief Clerk at Bow Street, used several spies, including John Castle and George Edwards to help arrest several members of the Spencean Philanthropists, a group who were involved in the Spa Riots and the Cato Street Conspiracy. The formation of the London Metropolitan Police force by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 brought an end to their activities.

(7) Between the years 1780-1820, the little bag/purse thing that ladies carried was called a ridicule. It was only in 1820-1860s that it was called a reticule. I have kept the old-fashioned spelling in this plot. Why was called a ridicule? Because it seemed a ridiculous notion in the late 18th/early 19th century to carry outside the dress those personal belongings formerly kept in large pockets beneath the dress. When waists rose and skirts narrowed, bulky pockets could no longer be accommodated without spoiling the line of the dress, and so the ridicule became an essential accessory. The term "reticule" seems to have come into use around the mid-19th century.

(8) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the *ton*.

(9) On-dit is French for "we tell". In the context of Regency speech, it meant gossip about the town that is usually published in the newspapers.

## Chapter 19 - Trampling over Hellebore

*Chapter 20 of 23*

Torn between taking the departure of Lord Villiers and Lady Ginerva as an elopement or abduction, Miss Granger decides to go after them.

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 19 Trampling over Hellebore

"My dears," murmured the Duke of Sanguine to the others at his table, "we have company unexpected company." His blue eyes twinkled in faint amusement as he watched the party of Miss Granger, Sir Harry and Brown cast cleaning spells over themselves. "Fudge, help them out of the grate," he commanded.

Lady Minerva set down her wine glass and stared with mild censure at the other guests' sudden arrival by floo. "Whatever is the matter?" she asked.

"It must be an emergency, dearest," said the Duke kindly, as he made the necessary introductions. "My nephew, Wulfric, you already know. Lady Minerva and I have only just finished dinner. Lounging over our port, you understand, I can't understand this custom of leaving the ladies out in the after-dinner talk... Now, Miss Granger, I see a certain purpose to your movements. Do you wish to tell me who has disappeared?"

Miss Granger started for a moment before recalling propriety and mumbled something about interrupting the Duke's evening.

"No trouble at all," replied the Duke, waving the three newcomers into chairs.

"My Lord Duke," Miss Granger began, licking her dry lips and twisting her ridicule in her hands. "I have some business with the Archbishop."

"You mean the special licences? They are ready, my child," quipped the handsome auburn haired clergyman, sipping his port calmly and stroking his beard.

She smiled wanly in acknowledgement, pointedly ignoring her companions' looks of incredulity and curiosity. She had been longed inured to the Duke's uncanny omniscient powers and she smirked wryly to learn that his nephew shared this trait. Thus, unlike her abigail and Sir Harry, she did not scruple to don a mask of bafflement to humour the Dumbledore men. "If it pleases your grace," she addressed the Archbishop, "may I please have one of the licences now. The other is to be given to this couple beside me."

Bewildered, Lady Minerva cast a stern look at the merrily laughing Duke as she watched Wulfric withdrew, presumably to his chamber. Sir Harry and Brown too were nonplussed by Miss Granger's request.

"What does this mean, Hermione?" stammered Sir Harry, shifting his weight from one foot to another.

"She asked Wulfric for two special licences; one for you, so that you can marry Miss Brown. By the bye, you owe her the cost of it," said Sanguine, wisely stroking his beard.

"But why?" whispered Brown hoarsely.

"To prevent Harry from being mobbed when the banns are announced," was Miss Granger's straight impassive reply. "It would render the banns unnecessary. Besides, it is an impolitic cruelty to keep you separated any further."

"Hermione," Sir Harry cried, clearly moved by his friend's gesture. "It's not like we're going to elope or something."

"No?" answered Miss Granger with a dry smile and a thoughtful look. "Odd, I had anticipated Ginny's elopement with Villiers and thought that I had forestalled it. I made provisions so that it would not have occurred. It appears I stand in error for being a few hours late."

"They've eloped?" asked Lady Minerva in disbelief. "Why?"

"Because he's shot Lord Percy. If Lord Percy dies, the Aurors will descend on him. If Lord Percy lives, that pugnacious pig may very well send Bow Street on Villiers' heels. I doubt Percy will be so forgiving as to withdraw the charge," explained Miss Granger slowly as Wulfric returned with the special licences.

"Hasn't Uncle Sanguine told you?" The Archbishop looked quizzically at the Duke, matching the older man's twinkling blue eyes with his own blue stare.

"Told me what?" echoed Sir Harry and Miss Granger in urgent tones.

Harrumphing gently as she slapped his arm, Lady Minerva pursed her thin lips together and said, "You had better tell them yourself, Sanguine."

The Duke smiled at his old friend and squeezed her hand affectionately. "Lord Percy Weasley has expired."

"No, this cannot be!" exclaimed Miss Granger in a lukewarm tone, hoping that she came across as concerned.

"Yes, I knew he would give up the ghost! What a fine thing for Ron and the rest of them," razzed Sir Harry, jumping to his feet in sudden animation. Then noticing all the silent glares at him and the uncompromising glower of his beloved, he feebly commented, "He was an embarrassment to His Grace of Offaly and his family."

"Tell them *everything*, Sanguine," urged Lady Minerva, who signalled her displeasure by brushing aside the Duke's hand every time it stole to cover hers.

"I was hoping to use my influence to exculpate young Villiers," he said, eyeing the astonished youngsters before him. "Sterne has already addressed the Commons on the matter and tomorrow, we shall attempt to sway the rest of the Lords. They should be made to see that the young man was provoked and that Lord Percy was not the gentlemen he claimed to be. Although Villiers has a seat in the Commons, he must be tried if it comes to that as a peer. It is easier to be tried by the Lords than by common law, as your father may have told you, Miss Granger. With any luck, the Lords will see that in Lord Percy's unfortunate death, the *ton* has been freed of its most egregious fop. Do not worry, my dears, they will be made to see Lord Percy for the on-dit informant that he is."

"Very cavalier, isn't it, Duke?" asked Miss Granger, placing the special licence handed to her in her ridicule.

"But necessary if his exile is to be of as short a duration as possible."

"I see," said Miss Granger with a nod. "We each will do what we can. I'm going now, thank you for your assistance. Brown, let us leave. Harry will escort us. Goodnight, all."

On her arrival home, Miss Granger waited till her abigail turned in for the night before dressing herself, packing a few necessities which she shrank to fit into her band box, which she had transfigured into a page boy's pouch. Within half an hour, she emerged as a Malfoy page on her mare and made her way to Dover swathed in a voluminous travelling cloak and thick scarf. As the London landmarks faded and Hunslow Heath was left behind, she hoped that her father would not kick up a fuss as to her disappearance. Not trusting Brown to deliver a message to his Lordship, she opted to write a note to him. This letter, which informed Lord Orthod of his daughter's intentions to ensure that her friend's reputation remained in tact, was placed on his desk in his study. He would, Miss Granger, was certain, find it in the morning before breakfast. His lordship, as his daughter instinctively knew, would decline food for a day and consult his friends, the Duke of Sanguine and Lord Lupin. Miss Granger also predicted, from her previous knowledge of her abigail's oftentimes vapid general expression, that her absence would not be missed till the afternoon. And when her departure had been discovered, the inestimable Lavender Brown would fall into a deep swoon and deplete London's supply of hartshorn. Shrugging off these thoughts, Miss Granger urged her mare forward until the poor creature was quite blown when it arrived at the English-French Apparition point at Dover.

A quick glance at her pocket watch showed that it was close to one in the morning. Although she knew the apparition portal would be open at six by the innkeeper whose establishment was near it, she wanted to pursue the couple. There was no time to be lost if she was to catch up with them. Collecting all that she had brought with her in her pouch, she sent the mare to inn's stables, instructing the stable-hand to allow it to head home after it had rested, and proceeded to harangue the innkeeper at wooden public house called, *Thickey's*. She shuddered involuntarily at the name and remembered that Villiers had mentioned that the inn at the Dover apparition point was named for its burly owner.

Miss Granger inhaled a deep breath and marched into the suspiciously named Thickey. "My master, the Marquess of Villiers came by here some hours ago. He had forgot some of his things. I must take them to him or he will never rest easy," she lied with a vexed expression on her face.

"Looky 'ere, laddie," said the innkeeper, taking in the Malfoy livery of the page. "The point has to be closed from eleven at night till six the next morn. It's goin' to stay closed till six! You could sleep in the stables with your master's horse until we send the animals over by barge in another hour."

"If you will not open the Apparation point for me, how will I get my lord's things to him?" she asked, injecting a despondent tone in her voice.

"That, laddie, is betwixt your master and ye," snorted the innkeeper before he spat into a nearby spittoon.

Miss Granger flashed the innkeeper an indignant look. "Mr Thickey, my master will more likely take issue *with you* if he does not sleep on his own linen tonight!" Observing the man's uneasy expression and shifty eyes, she decided to call his bluff. "When I served the Duke of Mallefile, the proprietor of a respectable rest house in Calais, let us traverse to England so that he might give his wife a final embrace. Him a foreigner too! I would have thought a fellow countryman might understand the way of the Quality. But I see, *you* clearly *don't*."

"Now wait here, laddie," said the innkeeper hotly. "I know Quality when I see them."

"That may be, but you do not know their ways!" the page answered frostily. "Let me Apparate to Calais so that my master need not know of your shameful disregard for his needs!"

"It wouldn't be right I opened the portal just for you it wouldn't be worth my while," whispered Thickey conspiratorially.

"You can have a crown if you open the portal and seal it again as soon as I have gone. The Quality often pays that sum to use the portal. What do you say?"

"Oh, very well, laddie, seeing how I like ye so much. A coachwheel then," he conceded greedily, sticking out his large hand for the coins.

"You are to send the chestnut mare back to London as soon as it is able. It is a well trained beast and will know how to return to the proper stables," she instructed the innkeeper before disappearing from England with a soft popping sound.

\* \* \*

Whatever Miss Granger's vaticination of the state of her father's household upon her disappearance, she could not have supposed that his reaction to her departure would be so violent. The good Lord Orthod had risen at his usual hour and had hopes of passing his habitual pre-breakfast hour reading in his study. His projected hour of quiet repose was rudely shaken after a perusal of his daughter's missive. So forceful was his shock that he was only found by his man a few minutes before the breakfast hour sitting palely at his desk with shaking hands and wild eyes. The valet soon returned his master to bed and requested Cook to prepare a thick meat broth with leeks in the hope that it might tempt the master. Arranging for the young Miss's abigail to sit with his lordship, the valet, one Podmore by name, took it upon himself to fetch the family surgeon, Augustus Pye.

It was in such a gloomy scene that Lord Sterne encountered as soon as he stepped across the Orthod threshold. The oppressively quiet air in the house would have unnerved the common man but not the Marquess of Sterne. When his enquiries after the lady of the house met with silence, he knew immediately that something was amiss. As soon as he was ushered into the sickroom, his lordship's dejected and ashen expression alerted his suspicions. The surgeon, Pye, was still volubly recommending all manner of remedies to Lord Orthod, which the old gentleman listened to with closed eyes. Sterne, however, wished to discuss the old man's ailment with the sufferer himself and was keen to be rid of the surgeon. Glaring at Pye, he pointedly told the man to leave.

"No, I cannot do that, sir. His lordship has to be bled," reasoned Pye, tapping his bottle of leeches.

Sterne narrowed his eyes and in a sharp reproachful hiss consigned the doctor and his remedies to the deepest recess in hell. Not satisfied with that vituperative outburst, he also treated the man of medicine with a pungent and scholarly criticism on the whole race of leeches.

The doctor started back at this stinging diatribe of his profession which he had listened to with rapt attention and some admiration. So, he wanly said, "May I have the

pleasure of knowing your trade, sir?" You appear to be very knowledgeable in the medical arena."

"Perhaps you have heard of me?" Sterne drawled in a lazy tone that belied the contempt in his eyes. "I am Severus Snape."

"Oh!" cried Pye in an odd admixture of enthusiasm and trepidation. "I did not recognise you, Lord Sterne. You are indeed better than an apothecary."

"My good man," hissed the Marquess impatiently, "Lord Orthod does not require a doctor or an apothecary."

"You have such phlegm, my lord. Perhaps you will consent to be bled?"

"Be gone with you!" snapped Sterne irritably, flicking aside a stray lock of hair from his eyes. "You have done enough!"

Fortunately, the doctor had a modicum of sense in his brain to realise that his ability to preserve his life presently lay within his hands, withdrew with alacrity.

As soon as Brown followed the doctor out, Sterne asked Orthod to relate the matter surrounding his anxiety to him. In response, the Baron, still very much shaken by his daughter's disappearance, offered the note she had left behind. From the frequent ink blotches, it appeared that Miss Granger had composed this in a calm thoughtful mood with many a pause over her choice of words.

"Papa," she began, as abruptly as she usually was in times where her immediate action was imperative, *"I have gone after Lord Villiers and Lady Ginevra Weasley. I have perused his letter to her at the de Quib dinner party while you were assisting the Duchess of Offaly with her volatile salts. You will see how desperate is the case, for it is plain (to my mind at least) that Villiers has succumbed to recidivism. He may not marry Lady Ginevra on their arrival in France. I have a plan to delve into the truth of the matter so as to show him that he must behave honourably towards her. Do not be afraid for my safety or honour, even though I may not return for supper tonight. Hermione."*

Sterne started up and sat upright in his chair, crumpling the letter in his clenched hand. Something must be done and done quickly. A few quick paces about the room later, he sat down again, mechanically smoothening out the missive. It would not do to act rashly, he reminded himself. "Was anything taken?" he asked.

"Nothing of import," replied the mournful looking father. "A change of stockings, some money and a ridicule. A band box is also missing. That was all the abigail said she took."

"Did she behave strangely last night?"

"She left midway through dinner with Sir Harry and Brown to wait on the Duke of Sanguine. I know nought of her plans on her return."

"I shall see what I can do, my lord," answered Sterne, patting the Baron bracingly on his shoulder. "I will not allow your daughter to come to harm."

On leaving the house, Sterne quickly strode to Half Moon Crescent in the hope of obtaining an explanation any explanation to allay the wild thoughts in his mind. He did not wait for Fudge to usher him into the house, instead, he brushed past the officious creature on learning that the Duke and Lady Minerva were taking a turn in the shrubbery. Stalking closer to the elderly couple who were walking familiarly arm-in-arm, he coughed to draw attention to his presence.

"Ah, bonjour, mon enfant," chuckled the Duke with the briefest of nods. "I was hourly more reconciled to the prospect of your visit."

The Marquess bowed lowly over Lady Minerva's extended hand before looking up at Sanguine. "Your powers of penetration are a credit to you, Godfather."

"Yes, yes, my dear boy," said Lady Minerva by way of greeting. "If you could but give me a few more minutes with Sanguine, I shall return to the house and you'll have him to yourself."

Bowing his assent, he sat down in a small pavilion and watched his godfather earnestly plead with his godmother. The lady, however, appeared unmoved and conjured a potted plant before slipping into the house. The duke, he noticed (unbeknownst to the lady), had kissed the sash of Lady Minerva's gown when he bent to pluck a blossom from the plant she conjured. What the nature of the endeavour was, Sterne could not say; but from the duke's perceptibly heavy steps, he gathered that it was not an altogether successful enterprise.

"Alors, mon enfant," said Sanguine, securing the snapdragon blossom he had plucked to his coat as the tea things appeared on the table. "How much do you know about Miss Granger's sudden flight?"

"You have heard?" said Sterne, quietly tracing his lips with his fingers.

"Naturally," laughed the old man, stroking his beard. "I am a sinister person with uncanny powers of penetration."

Sterne scowled and made several caustic and denunciatory comments on his godfather's abilities. "Then you will hear me out. I believe that rascal has abducted Miss Granger."

"Surely, you mean Lady Ginevra."

"Devil take Lady Ginevra! It is very likely that *that reprobate* abducted them both. He must have drugged Lady Ginevra, then abducted Miss Granger!"

Sanguine eyed his godson sympathetically. "How did you arrive at that masterful deduction?"

Recalling the scene of his confrontation of Villiers and Miss Granger at Hatchard's tea room parlour, he clenched his fist and stuffed it into his coat pocket. "It is my contention that the special licence was intended for Villiers and Miss Granger."

"You astonish me," said the Duke in mild surprise.

"He will not have her, I say! He has no right to ruin one woman and marry the other for her money."

"You appear quite set in your opinion, mon enfant," warned Sanguine, making an elaborate show of cutting a patisserie.

"I know Villiers, old man," insisted the Marquess as his brows knotted together in barely controlled rage. "I've known him since he was in his damnable cradle!"

"Your lack of faith in the three young persons concerned is disturbing. Leave them be they will return shortly and all will be well."

"How can you say that!"

"Because I know so. I was at the Lords today and made my excuse for you," said the Duke conversationally, munching the creamy pastry without getting any of it on his beard.

"Damn your parliament! I'm speaking of saving Miss Granger's reputation and making her see Villiers for the rake that he is."

Sanguine raised a mobile brow and smiled slyly. "I suppose you will go after them?"

"Indeed, I shall! There will be many difficulties for Villiers to travel with two women."

"You can continue to think so if it comforts you. Have you occurred that your outburst is bordering unto irrationality, Severus?"

"Nonsense!"

"I believe you have grown jealous bones," teased the Duke, offering the young man a ridiculously pink patisserie.

"Damn you, Sanguine! I will not listen to your madness any longer. I am for Paris."

"If you must leave go. Do remember to inform Villiers that he may return to England after his honeymoon. The charges against him have been dropped by the Lords and the Commons."

"Not if I kill him first!" answered Sterne through clenched teeth.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Hellebore means "scandal" and "calumny".

View it here <http://www.farmyardnurseries.co.uk/hellebor/hellebore.jpg>, <http://www.munchkinnursery.com/newsletter/helleborus/hellebore-pink-274x205.jpg>,

<http://graphics.gardenweb.com/graphics/images/hellebore.jpg> and [http://www.wildchicken.com/nature/photography/hellebore\\_dish\\_1024x768.jpg](http://www.wildchicken.com/nature/photography/hellebore_dish_1024x768.jpg). The generic name of this plant is derived from the Greek *elein* (to injure) and *bora* (food), and indicates its poisonous nature. The specific name refers to the dark coloured rootstock. The whole plant possesses drastic purgative, emmenagogue and anthelmintic properties, but is violently narcotic. It was formerly much used in dropsy and amenorrhoea, and has proved of value in nervous disorders and hysteria. It is used in the form of a tincture, and must be administered with great care. According to Pliny, Hellebore was used as a purgative in excess by Melampus, a soothsayer and physician in 1,400 BC. This is why we use the name Melampodium for any kind of Hellebore. Spenser in the Shepherd's Calendar (I kept the spelling authentic), 1579, alludes to the medicinal use of Melampode for animals. Parkinson, writing in 1641, tells us: "a piece of hellebore root being drawne through a hole made in the eare of a beast troubled with cough or having taken any poisonous thing cureth it, if it be taken out the next day at the same heure."

Parkinson believed that White Hellebore would be equally efficacious in such a case, but Gerard recommends the Black Horehound only, as being good for beasts. He says the old farriers used to "cut a slit in the dewlap, and put in a bit of Beare-foot, and leave it there for daies together."

Gerard describes the plant in these words:

"It floureth about Christmas, if the winter be mild and warm . . . called Christ herbe. This plant hath thick and fat leaves of a deep green colour, the upper part whereof is somewhat bluntly nicked or toothed, having sundry diversions or cuts, in some leaves many, in others fewer, like unto a female Peony. It beareth rose-coloured flowers upon slender stems, growing immediately out of the ground, an handbreadth high, sometimes very white, and ofttimes mixed with a little shew of purple, which being faded, there succeed small husks full of black seeds; the roots are many; with long, black strings coming from one end."

Once, people blessed their cattle with this plant to keep them from evil spells, and for this purpose, it was dug up with certain mystic rites. In an old French romance, the sorcerer, to make himself invisible when passing through the enemy's camp, scatters powdered Hellebore in the air, as he goes.

The following is from Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy:

"Borage and hellebore fill two scenes,

Sovereign plants to purge the veins

Of melancholy, and cheer the heart

Of those black fumes which make it smart."

Culpepper writes in 1652 that the hellebore "is an herb of Saturn, and therefore no marvel if it has some sullen conditions with it, and would be far safer, being purified by the art of the alchemist than given raw. If any have taken any harm by taking it, the common cure is to take goat's milk. If you cannot get goat's milk, you must make a shift with such as you can get. The roots are very effectual against all melancholy diseases, especially such as are of long standing, as quartan agues and madness; it helps the falling sickness, the leprosy, both the yellow and black jaundice, the gout, sciatica, and convulsions; and this was found out by experience, that the root of that which grows wild in our country, works not so churlishly as those do which are brought from beyond sea, as being maintained by a more temperate air. The root used as a pessary, provokes the terms exceedingly; also being beaten into powder, and strewed upon foul ulcers, it consumes the dead flesh, and instantly heals them; nay, it will help gangrenes in the beginning. Twenty grains taken inwardly is a sufficient does for one time, and let that be corrected with half so much cinnamon; country people used to rowel their cattle with it. If a beast be troubled with a cough, or have taken any poison, they bore a hole through the ear, and put a piece of the root in it, this will help him in 24 hours time. Many other uses farriers put it to which I shall forbear."

(2) Snapdragon has two meanings: (i) You are presumptuous, and (ii) An emphatic No. View it here

<http://www.hort.cornell.edu/4hplants/Flowers/Images/Snapdragon%206.jpg> and <http://www.lilychartier.com/images/80951%20snapdragon.jpg>. Snapdragon is closely allied to the Toadflaxes. It is really not truly a native herb, but has become naturalized in many places, on old walls and chalk cliffs, being an escape from gardens, where it has been long cultivated. The botanical name, *Antirrhinum*, refers to the snout-like form of the flower hence it's English name. However, before it acquired it's modern botanical name of *Antirrhinum*, it was known as *Orontium* (one Dodonaeus gave it this name), which is the snapdragon's medieval generic name because it was then believed to be the spawn of the dragon that lived in the Orontes, the ancient chief river in Syria. The plant has bitter and stimulant properties, and the leaves of this and several allied species have been employed on the Continent in cataplasms to tumours and ulcers. It was valued in olden times like the Toadflax as a preservative against witchcraft. The numerous seeds yield a fixed oil by expression, said to be little inferior to olive oil, for the sake of which it has been cultivated in Russia.

(3) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? You will see why when I reveal Millicent Bulstrode's parentage...

(4) Hermione offers Thickey a crown to let her pass through the apparition point. The innkeeper replies "A coachwheel then." A Crown is worth 5 shillings. The slang word for it among the commonfolk (the cits and tradesmen) during the Regency is "a coachwheel".

(5) In the event that you are fans of Sturgis Podmore, Augustus Pye and Janus Thickey, I apologise.

The owner of the public house at the Dover apparition point to France is named for Janus Thickey. If you have read Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, you will know that one morning in 1973, Thickey left a note on his wife's bedside table saying he had been eaten by a Lethifold. He was found five miles away with the Green Dragon landlady. The long term ward at St. Mungo's is named the Janus Thickey ward.

Discerning readers of Rowling's HP books will notice that I have misappropriated Sturgis Podmore as Lord Orthod's valet. He appears in Harry Potter and the Order of the



Phoenix. He's mentioned as one of the OOTP.

Since we know that Augustus Pye is a trainee healer at St. Mungo's in Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, I decided to make a surgeon to the *ton*, or in this case, Lord Orthod. Readers may recall that in OOTP, Pye had the idea of giving Mr. Weasley muggle stitches when he was bitten by the snake because his wounds would not stop bleeding.

(6) Hatchard's is a bookstore. In 1797, John Hatchard (1769-1849) opened a bookshop at No. 173 Piccadilly. In 1801 he moved premises to No. 190. Later the store was moved to No. 187 where it has remained. In Hatchard's time, the shop was as much a social meeting place for the literary-minded as it was a bookshop. Residents of Albany, a very fashionable and expensive neighbourhood, just across Piccadilly, including Byron frequented the shop. The daily newspapers were always laid out on the table by the fireplace and there were benches outside for the customers' servants. He was bookseller to Queen Charlotte. There were also private tea rooms inside where the customers could take some refreshment. The firm has always held a royal warrant since that time. His son Thomas took over the store after his father's death in 1849.

(7) Between the years 1780-1820, the little bag/purse thing that ladies carried was called a ridicule. It was only in 1820-1860s that it was called a reticule. I have kept the old-fashioned spelling in this plot. Why was called a ridicule? Because it seemed a ridiculous notion in the late 18th/early 19th century to carry outside the dress those personal belongings formerly kept in large pockets beneath the dress. When waists rose and skirts narrowed, bulky pockets could no longer be accommodated without spoiling the line of the dress, and so the ridicule became an essential accessory. The term "reticule" seems to have come into use around the mid-19th century.

(8) Readers may dislike the fact that I called the Aurors the Bow Street Aurors. This is a Regency story remember? I modelled the Bow Street Aurors in this story after the Runners. The Bow Street runners were like the local policemen of the age. You may see the Bow Street Office here, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/LAbow.jpg>. In 1740 Sir Thomas de Veil, established a court house in Bow Street near the Opera House in Covent Garden. Ten years later, his successor, Henry Fielding (yes the author), formed the Bow Street Runners. Initially nicknamed Robin Redbreasts, on account of their scarlet waistcoats, the original eight Bow Street Runners were London's first band of constables. Their functions included serving writs, detective work and arresting offenders. The Bow Street Runners travelled all over the country in search of criminals and gained a reputation for honesty and efficiency. John Stafford, Chief Clerk at Bow Street. used several spies, including John Castle and George Edwards to help arrest several members of the Spencean Philanthropists, a group who were involved in the Spa Riots and the Cato Street Conspiracy. The formation of the London Metropolitan Police force by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 brought an end to their activities.

(9) *Ton*, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the *ton*.

(10) On-dit is French for "we tell". In the context of Regency speech, it meant gossip about the town that is usually published in the newspapers.

## Chapter 20 - The Scent of Japanese Lilies

Chapter 21 of 23

Upset over Miss Granger's decision to bring Lord Villiers and Lady Ginevra to heel, Lord Sterne pursues her in the misguided opinion that his godson had abducted her.

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 20 The Scent of Japanese Lilies

The Marquess of Sterne was in a rare mood of complete rage. Enquire as he might, he deceived no news of a conveyance carrying two women and a gentleman to the Dover Apparation point. Failing this, he ventured to uncover whether Villiers had sent the ladies to France in separate carriages and ridden to Dover himself. This line of enquiry did not yield any result. All he managed to uncover was the innkeeper of Thickey's word that Lord Villiers did arrive in a carriage with a heavily veiled lady. It puzzled Sterne to learn that no other woman had passed through the Apparation point that night. Could it be that one of the women took a barge over to Calais? Perhaps one of them had bribed the innkeeper, this uncouth Thickey fellow, to remain silent, Sterne mused; and accordingly, he threatened that selfsame personage with hexes and curses if he did not reveal the truth. The man, though visibly frightened by one who was clearly a member of the Quality, continued to protest that no second lady had Apparated or sailed to Calais the previous night. Frustrated, Sterne stormed out of the public house and Apparated to Calais to press his investigations there.

Calais too yielded no information on a gentlemen travelling with two women. He stopped at the most expensive hostelry, the *Rayon Noir* where Villiers would have most likely spent the night and made his enquiries. All the proprietor would reveal was that an English Milord had arrived last night with an English lady with flaming red hair. They both had the largest rooms at the front. The Milord slept in the room on the left and the lady, whom the inn's clerk revealed to be the Milord's sister, slept in the other room. They both arose before dawn, consumed coffee and two rolls. Thanking the proprietor with a snarl, Sterne stormed onto the dusty street cursing Villiers, Lady Ginevra and Miss Granger. Why was he unable to find any trace of Miss Granger? Had Villiers killed her? Had she met with an accident? Though he was the picture of sullenness and anger, Sterne could not but be slightly palliated to learn that his godson had the decency to house Lady Ginevra in a respectable establishment in a separate room under the falsehood that she was his sister. That would at least put an end to the curious tongues of the French, mused the Marquess as he made his way past the post carriages.

Miss Granger's disappearance, however, was a more perplexing matter. A single young woman\* without an abigail would not be deemed reputable. What respectable inn would house her? Given the circumstances, Sterne would not be surprised if the formidable Miss Granger took it into her head to pass herself for a vulgar trollop and secure a room in some of Calais's shabbiest public houses. Wearily, he strode into one such establishment and questioned the lady of the place whether she had rented a room the previous night answering to Miss Granger's description. The haughty woman only cackled at him; her unctuous toothless husband, on the other hand, informed his lordship that he had described the ideal abigail a personage too high on the instep to patronise an establishment called *Chez Nous*. At the second such public house (if it may be called thus), which was shabbier than the first, his failure to obtain any information on Miss Granger, aggravated his temper and sulks. The third establishment, which was a little better than the second, again brought forth no information. This had the effect of rendering my Lord Sterne irritable and he decided to calm himself by re-arranging his thoughts over a good brandy. He found it remarkable that Miss Granger could be so well concealed if she had flown with Villiers. Perhaps he had wronged her by assuming that she had willingly flown with his disreputable godson. Perhaps she was really abducted. If so, Sterne vowed he would spare no pains in locating and murdering Villiers. For a moment, he contemplated informing the Duke of Mallefillle of his son's actions, but soon decided against it when he recalled that the Duke was a notorious libertine before his marriage. What if Villiers really had intended to wed Miss Granger? He would have sent her post haste to *l'Hôtel Mallefillle* where the Duke resided with his unmarried eldest sister that would have been most proper and Lady Ginevra could act as a witness and chaperone. It was an ingenious plan. Sterne paused in mid-thought; it was too elegant a solution to be considered by a Malfoy. Whether Villiers abducted Miss Granger or was eloping with her was immaterial. Sterne

curled his lips into a grim sneer. It would appear that either way, he would kill that young man. Tossing a few small coins on the table, he was preparing to leave when his attention was arrested by a few young ruffians who were cursing their luck in French.

"Fiend seize it, I should not have thought that a little page could have cut me eye so roughly," complained the first rustic, who had the distinguishing mark of an eye patch over his left eye."

"Bah!" commented his portly companion. "The English are all madsans doute. The little creature scurried away before we could steal from it."

The assembled ruffians laughed at their misfortune as they toasted the page who had eluded them.

"Fancy an English Marquis forgetting something that was carried by this boy."

"Mad English!" cried the third ruffian. "But you must say, he does look as pretty as a girl."

"Nah. Too much gumption to be a girl, with that shock of frizzy hair! Ha! Ha! You think the little brown eyed thing is now at the *Rayon Noir* with his Milord?"

"We could try the stables later and attempt to rob him for giving me my bad eye," suggested the first hooligan with the eye patch.

"A bloody nose, was all I got," said the second. "Who would have thought he would have been a wizard."

"I bet the green and silver dragon embroidered livery would have found a good price too," said the third.

This curious conversation put Lord Sterne at ease as he mentally berated himself. How could he have been so stupid! He had been seeking a young lady when Miss Granger was dressed as page a stroke of genius on her part. The more he thought on it, the clearer it became to him that the Malfoys were the only English house in Europe that dressed its servants so ostentatiously. Then, he frowned imperceptibly. Was Villiers treating her so shabbily that she had to run after him? Had he been mistaken in his assessment of this matter, Sterne silently asked himself as he stepped out into the streets. Could it be that Miss Granger's note to her father was the truth? Was she really in pursuit of Villiers? If so, why did she beg her father not to worry for her reputation or safety? While he knew that Villiers could behave when he chose, what lady would be considered respectable if a day was spent in his company without a chaperone?

"Ha!" Sterne exclaimed to himself with a grim curling of his lips and furrowed brow. Undoubtedly, Villiers had compromised Miss Granger's reputation and she wanted him to make amends. But Villiers, being the scoundrel that he was, wanted to marry Lady Ginevra. If this were the case, Sterne mused, he did not blame Miss Granger for wishing to remand Villiers and demand that he do right by her. By Jove, Sterne thought with his white clenched fists, he would kill Villiers if this hypothesis was true! As he was about to enquire about for the rates of the diligence\*\* to Paris, he suddenly recalled that the innkeeper at the *Rayon Noir* had informed him earlier that the English Milord and his sister left by the pre-dawn diligence. Mentally calculating all the stops the coach would have to make for alighting and boarding passengers as well as posts where the horses could be changed, the couple would arrive at the *Rayon Elegante* outside the Argenteuil by four o'clock in the afternoon. He quickly consulted his pocket watch and saw that it was an hour to four. If he Apparated to the outskirts of Paris where the *Rayon Elegante* was, he would be in time to meet them. Thus, Lord Sterne Apparated to the Paris suburbs.

The *Rayon Elegante* had a very well kept appearance and Sterne made free to bespeak of a private parlour where he could rest. Towards half past three when a rattle of hooves brought his gaze to the window, he saw a page wearing the Malfoy livery dismounting a handsome grey horse. With his door slightly ajar, Sterne heard Miss Granger's familiar voice requesting the innkeeper in perfect French to prepare a private parlour for the Marquis she served. He smirked and traced his lips in thought as he overheard he instructing one of the bar wenches to show the English Milord and his sister to the private parlour which she had secured so as to enable her to wait on them. At four o'clock exactly, Sterne's private ruminations were justified. The loud sounds of clattering hooves and carriage wheels announced the arrival of the diligence. Growing paler with mild excitement at what he was about to do, he waited till he heard the innkeeper welcoming Villiers and Lady Ginevra in an unctuous manner. Sterne smirked at his godson's astonished utterance of "*Vraiment!*" when told that his servant had arrived before him and was waiting for him in the largest public parlour in the back. After another gasp of astonishment, this time from the lady, the newly arrived travellers made haste down the passage and into the parlour.

Sterne counted to ten before springing into the parlour, which was a door from his. Gripping the handle of the door firmly, he twisted it with great force and stepped into the room. His unwavering gaze swept the room and came to rest on Miss Granger grasping her friends' hands with a look of delight and relief.

"Good day, Miss Ganger," he purred said quietly, clenching and unclenching his fists.

She pointedly cast him an indignant glare and as she did so, Sterne noted that she looked very well in the livery of a Malfoy page. The three-cornered hat that she had worn undoubtedly concealed her neatly tied hair. That same hat had now been carelessly discarded on the arrival of her friends lay on the table.

"You could not have escaped me so easily," Miss Granger told Villiers and Lady Ginevra.

"So, Villiers *did not* abduct you?" Sterne strode forward, glaring at everyone present.

Miss Granger replied in a voice of icy politeness, "Have the goodness to think more of my faculties, my lord."

"And if it pleases you," added Villiers indignantly, "do not doubt my intentions."

"Indeed, my lord, I'm sure Hermione has a very good reason for following us," said Lady Ginevra.

"Following?" laughed Miss Granger. "I came after you with the special licence."

"We do not need that in Paris. The Embassy will settle it all for us and Father will throw us a rout party at *Hôtel Mallefille*."

Rolling her eyes and suppressing the urge to hit her friend at the back of his head, she said, "Oh, but it will help grease the machinery of the bureaucracy, Villiers. It is a necessary advantage even if the English ambassador is your cousin, Nymphadora Tonks."

"Cousin Nymphadora always helps those in distress," Villiers reminded Miss Granger in a teasing tone.

"What is all this?" thundered Sterne, twisting and untwisting his gloves.

"Isn't it obvious?" mocked Miss Granger, glaring at him.

"I see plainly that you have used Miss Granger abominably. You clearly have no intention of wedding Lady Ginevra. Cad! Cur! How dare you ruin a lady of Miss Granger's stamp!" Sterne murderously approached Villiers in a quick stride. The young man struggled to draw his wand from his pocket. However, the weapon did not show itself, for Sterne's deathly white hand tightly grasped his godson's throat. "You bloody rascal! How dare you use her in such a fashion!" he snarled through his clenched imperfect teeth.

Miss Granger calmly rolled her eyes at the two men struggling with each other and moved forward to put an end to the violence. That gesture was obviated by a tearful scream from Lady Ginevra who attempted to unfasten Lord Sterne's hand from her intended's throat. Miss Granger, being the sensible person that she was, withdrew her wand. "Move away from them, Ginny!" she coolly instructed and delivered a stinging hex to the hand at Villiers' neck.

Lady Ginevra, who did not pay any heed to her friend's warning, was also a victim of the hex.

Sterne was silently impressed with Miss Granger's mettle and her ability to instantly sober him. He narrowed his eyes and glowered dangerously at a staggering and choking

Villiers. Lady Ginevra instantly flew to his side and cried, "Villiers, my darling, are you all right? Are you hurt?"

Instead of answering his lady, he hotly demanded, "Shall it be wands then?"

"Incorrigible swine! I'll kill you for dishonouring Miss Granger's name."

"No!" cried Lady Ginevra, tugging at Miss Granger's sleeve. "Please be calm! It's all a misunderstanding. No one's honour was injured!"

"Be rational, Lord Sterne!" snapped Miss Granger waspishly. "Do you really want more blood on your hands?"

"This one does not count," sneered his lordship silkily. "It's for another's honour."

Miss Granger put herself between the two men as they withdrew they drew out their wands. "You are being illogical, my Lord. This has gone on far enough. Please listen to me for a moment and all will be put to right."

"Do you still defend him?" demanded Sterne, paling further with rage.

"I defend him from you. Whatever injury he has done you through me (imagined or otherwise) is nothing but a figment of your overwrought imagination. I apologise for any undue stress we have unwittingly given you," she said coldly.

"Stay out of this, Miss Granger," interjected Villiers quickly. "Nothing you can say will deter me from fighting Lord Sterne. Hold your peace. I will defend your honour yet, my friend, against the scandals this beast laid at your door."

After bowing to each other and levelling their wands at each other, Miss Granger and Lady Ginevra issued a joint order through their wands to disarm the gentlemen. "Shame on you both! I am leaving! Ginny, if you will join me," Miss Granger announced, tossing the gentlemen's wands to the table. As she put on her hat, she continued, "If you wish to kill each other when we leave, by all means, feel free to do so. But I counsel you to talk it over."

Leaving the men staring after them in complete shock, the ladies departed from the Rayon Elegante's largest private parlour arm-in-arm.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) If you present someone with a gift of Japanese lilies (yes, collectively they have no meaning on their own) you are telling him/her, "You cannot deceive me."

View it here <http://www.city.uozu.toyama.jp/en/cstl/jpg/p02.jpg> and [http://www.campbellsnursery.com/Handouts/Images/lily\\_japanese.gif](http://www.campbellsnursery.com/Handouts/Images/lily_japanese.gif). I know some of you have been asking me as to what "Lily" means. The thing is lily on its own has no meaning, you must accompany it with an adjective or sub-species. The first lily known to western civilization was the Madonna lily (*Lilium candidum*). According to the Time-Life Encyclopedia of Gardening Bulbs by James Underwood Crockett (1971), "*.....it is mentioned in history for the first time on a tablet that was inscribed in Sumeria nearly 5,000 years ago. The tablet tells of a city in Persia that was surrounded by fields of lilies and in fact was named Susa, which means lily. Some scholars believe the lily spread from Persia in the caravans of nomads who took edible bulbs along as food for their long journeys; occasionally they would drop one, according to this theory, and it would take root and grow where it fell.*" However, an ex-beau of mine who is an expert on Sumerian and Mesopotamian history informs me that susa does not mean lily. However, what is certain is that bas-reliefs of this white-flowered species have been found from Ninevah of 700 BC. The Madonna lily also received great respect from the Minoans, who portrayed it on frescoes and pottery in 1800 BC Crete. They associated it with their goddess Britomartis. The "lilies of the field" mentioned in the Bible are now thought by most experts to have been anemones, not lilies. Narcissus and lilies were used in the funeral wreaths of ancient Egypt, and a bulb of it had been entombed with an Egyptian mummy (though Scheider doesn't mention which mummy).

Our word, lily, was derived from the Latin word for this plant, *lilium*, which was in turn derived from the Greek word for *ilēirion*. The Greeks held this lily in such high esteem that they associate it with their queen of the gods, Hera, and in their mythology, tell that it first sprouted from milk of Hera. They used crocus, lilies, and hyacinths in ceremonial crowns as far back as 380 BC, and Theophrastus (the Father of Botany) wrote of them just before the third century BC. As with so many other things, the Romans adopted the Greek respect for the Madonna Lily. They associated it with their queen of the gods. Their soldiers took it with them as not only food, but also making a salve for wounds and an ointment for burns from the bulbs. In this way, this lily was even introduced as far away as England. Not only was the burn ointment used till fairly recent times, European beauties, as late as the 19th century AD fought off old age with a salve prepared as Dioscorides (41-68 AD) suggested, "*being beaten small with honey.....clear faces and make them without wrinkles.*" Yet another of Dioscorides lotions required much more work. This one required 3,000 lilies to make a single batch. This lily also made several appearances in the poems of Virgil (70-19 BC).

In Christian times, respect for this flower was carried even through the change of religions. It was grown in Charlemagne's garden in the ninth century and even into the 15th and early 16th centuries, when paintings of the Angel who had always been portrayed holding a sceptre, now was portrayed holding a white lily. It was a symbol of the Virgin's purity and her role as Queen of the Angels.

Because the introduction of Chinese and Japanese lily species to our society came during much more recent times, there is much more knowledge that survives about it. Japanese lilies were first introduced to the West by pictures from Engelbert Kaempfer in about 1690. These pictures included *L. lancifolium*, *L. speciosum*, and *L. concolor*, but they weren't published till 1791. The next botanist in Japan was Carl Thunberg in 1775. He collected many bulbs and may have brought some lilies back with him. The bulbs of *L. lancifolium*, *dauidii*, *japonicum* and the Gold-Band Lily (*L. auratum*), have been in the diets of Japanese, Koreans and Chinese for over 2,000 years. Seriously, we don't eat the flowers, we cultivate a certain type of lily, dry it and boil it into a tea. I believed it can be used to help the complexion and reduce pimples on oily skin.

(2) The French, in those days, called visiting English noblemen "Milord".

(3) I anticipate that some readers will ask, "Why didn't Thickey tell Severus that a pageboy had gone through the apparation point at 1 am?" The answer is very simple. Severus was asking for a lady. Thickey really did not know that the page was Hermione in disguise. To his mind, a lad had gone through, *not* a lady. If Severus had phrased his question more generally, perhaps, he would have found it out and pieced two and two together.

\* (4) In the context of this chapter and story, "a single young woman" refers to a lone woman, not an unmarried one. An unmarried woman is simply called a maiden, maid.

(5) Ape-leader is Regency slang for an old spinster or an old maid. Once you had gone through 4 to 5 Seasons and still remained unmarried, you were deemed an ape-leader. In those days, they had their first Season at 16 or 18, depending on the young lady's rank, fortune, family, Father's desire to launch her, ability to find a suitable sponsor for the Season, state of her education and so on. Why were old spinsters/old maids called ape-leaders? It was believed and widely preached in church by the hellfire-and-damnation pastors that women who did not marry would be punished after death. Their punishment after death for failing to procreate would be to lead apes in hell.

(6) "High on the instep" is Regency slang for someone who is very haughty or proud.

\*\* (7) The 'diligence' the French name for the mail coach cum stage coach.

(8) It is intimated in this chapter that the most luxurious and expensive of all the inns at Calais is the Rayon Noir. This establishment is entirely fictitious.

(9) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? Think about it

(10) The Rayon Elegante (a fictitious establishment) is placed in the outskirts of Argenteuil. Argenteuil was founded as a convent in the 7th century (the monastery and convent there is most famous for being the place that Heloise sought refuge in). It's in the famous Pierre Abelard and Heloise story. Those unacquainted with the story, perpend

Living within the precincts of Notre-Dame, under the care of her uncle, the canon, Fulbert, was a girl named Heloise, of noble birth, and born about 1101. She is said to have been beautiful, but still more remarkable for her knowledge, which extended beyond Latin, it is said, to Greek and Hebrew. Abélard fell in love with her; and he sought and gained a place in Fulbert's house. Becoming tutor to the girl, he used his power for the purpose of seduction, and she returned his devotion. Their relations interfered with his public work, and were not kept a secret by Abélard himself. Soon everyone knew except the trusting Fulbert. When he found out, they were separated, only to meet in secret. Heloise became pregnant, and was carried off by her lover to Brittany, where she gave birth to a son. To appease her furious uncle, Abélard proposed a secret marriage, in order not to mar his prospects of advancement in the church; but Heloise opposed the idea. She appealed to him not to sacrifice for her the independence of his life, but reluctantly gave in to pressure. The secret of the marriage was not kept by Fulbert; and when Heloise boldly denied it, life was made so difficult for her that she sought refuge in the convent of Argenteuil at Abélard's bidding. Immediately Fulbert, believing that her husband, who had helped her run away, wanted to be rid of her, plotted revenge. He and some others broke into Abélard's chamber by night, and castrated him. The priesthood and ecclesiastical office were canonically closed to him. Heloise, not yet twenty, consummated her work of self-sacrifice at Abélard's jealous bidding that she never again shared romantic love with a man, and became a nun.

## Chapter 21 - Essence of Hemlock

*Chapter 22 of 23*

On leaving the Rayon Elegante so that Lord Villiers and Lord Sterne may kill each other at leisure, Miss Granger and Lady Ginevra arrive in Paris. In seeking asylum at the English Embassy, the encounter a gentleman with very familiar manners?

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

Extensive footnotes follow the chapter. Readers who are antipathetic to them have been warned.

### Language of Flowers

#### Chapter 21 Essence of Hemlock

Having left the warlike fools to themselves, Miss Granger transfigured her Malfoy pageboy livery into a sober grey carriage gown and pelisse favoured by governesses in England. At Lady Ginevra's curious stares, she tersely explained that it would be more acceptable for them if they were perceived as a lady and her abigail rather than two ladies of Quality. They would Apparate to Paris and seek the protection of the English Embassy. In the meantime, they had to stay together so as not to lose one another on their way there. Lady Ginevra, however, protested as she was exhausted from the long hours of travelling and could not rely on her poor Apparating skill to transport her slim form to the French capital. Looking skywards as if bemoaning her fate to be caught in these imbroglios, Miss Granger took hold of her friend's hand when they emerged from Rayon Elegante and Apparated them both to Paris proper. Had Miss Granger been given her way, she would have immediately made her way to the English Embassy. As the situation stood, she could not because the Apparation attempt left Lady Ginevra very giddy and almost as green as her fashionable moss green travelling gown.

The fatigue of her friend led Miss Granger's usual presence of mind to think on finding a respectable hostelry where they could rest the night and partake of some supper. Her friend implored her not to adopt this course of action for the present. Lady Ginevra declared that she would sit awhile and if she persisted in feeling worn, then they would spend the night a nearby hostelry. "I finally understand, Hermione, why you are determined not to marry," commented Lady Ginevra, resting her head on her friend's shoulder. "Not *comme il faut* at all."

"Disgusted with Villiers already?" chuckled Miss Granger in forced merriment. "I shall make a present of this special licence to Neville so that he can marry your Bulstrode when we get back. We two could stand as sponsors."

"Why?" quizzed Lady Ginevra, as she played the ribands of her bonnet.

"Ape-leaders, such as ourselves, cannot afford to offend the other amiable people who wish to court the disasters of matrimony.

"I hate being stranded," complained Lady Ginevra as she gazed in admiration at her friend. "But it's not so bad with you. You always know what to do."

"It's not a matter of knowing or not knowing or not knowing what to do. It's trying to maintain an orderly habit of mind."

"Society is right," she finally said, abandoning her mood of self-pity.

Miss Granger smiled dryly, fighting the urge apparate home with her friend. "About what?"

"Oh. It is right to say that your book learning translates into valuable sense. Take our present state of affairs we are stranded in a foreign country and you are not the least bit frightened. You've learnt a great deal more at Garswoth than the rest of us ever did."

She only smiled at her friend's convoluted complimented as she patted her hand. "You could be patron to my school or become a teacher."

"What school?"

"A seminary for young ladies where they would have a real education," Miss Granger said, her eyes brightening at the thought of her dream.

"Perhaps," replied Lady Ginevra in a non-committal tone. "I'm feeling better now."

"Good, then we can claim assistance with the English Embassy," said Miss Granger firmly.

The grand wizarding English Embassy guard allowed the two young ladies into the compound after ascertaining that they were indeed English. Resolutely, the women linked arms and entered the imposing building. They found themselves in a pleasant antechamber with a pair of stairs running up the galleries to the offices of the diplomats. An enquiry with the pretty blonde clerk packing her things for the day revealed that the Ambassador Countess Tonks was engaged in Dijon until the morrow. "Furthermore," she informed them in French accented English, "it is too late for anyone to be working upstairs. If you wish, the Embassy will put you up at a respectable inn and make an appointment with the Ambassador for you."

"The Ambassador is my aunt," implored Lady Ginevra, making a play with wet lashes, hoping that it would win the fair clerk's sympathy. Miss Granger smirked with the knowledge that the relationship between the Weasleys and Tonks were so far removed from the family that Lady Tonks would more properly be called a cousin.

"I am sorry, Mademoiselle," insisted the clerk. "If you wish me to arrange for a room at the Maison Angletterre and some money, I will do so. Beyond that, I can do nothing."

Miss Granger was about to give vent to a sharp retort in French that was on the tip of her tongue when a soft voice and footsteps came down on the stairways.

"You are barbaric, Mademoiselle Delacour. These are English ladies, hein? Less elegant than the French, I know, but can you blame them for their fashions. England's fashions are a year behind Paris's, n'est ce pas?" purred the mellifluous carefully moderated voice in French. Miss Granger smiled to herself when she caught the ironic lilt in their interlocutor's voice.

Lady Ginevra and Miss Granger carefully examined the source of the voice. It appeared to belong to a tall gentleman dressed in a beautiful suit of black cloth faced with silver, clasping his silver handled cane delicately in one hand and perfumed handkerchief with the other. He was dressed at the height of the fashion at Versailles. In the tasteful lace arrangement of his cravat, there was the tiniest hint of an emerald. It was initially thought that he had worn a powdered wig, but soon saw that his hair was platinum blond and neatly tied with a black riband. His thin mouth was curled into something akin to a knowing smirk. As he descended the stairs to their level, it became evident to the ladies that he was middle-aged. This gentleman was indeed a person of some importance for he had left Mademoiselle Delacour stammering. He pointedly ignored the clerk and swept the distant ladies a profound bow gracefully flourishing his handkerchief. As he did so, Miss Granger caught sight of a cynical gleam in the man's hard eyes. He addressed Miss Granger very civilly in a crisp English accent. "Forgive Miss Delacour, she is new to the Embassy. You and your mistress, or should I say, *your friend*, are in some distress? Pray, inform me how I can serve you?"

The two ladies curtsied gracefully.

"We wish to see the Ambassador," Miss Granger stated plainly.

"Regrettably, Lady Tonks will not be back until the morrow. We are keen to return to England as soon as possible. We would also like..." Lady Ginevra paused, uncertain how to continue.

Miss Granger pretended to fuss over her friend. "We have had the most trying experience. My friend is still shaken. If you would be so kind as to bespeak a room for us at a respectable hostelry, we will be most thankful."

The gentleman raised his brow in mild interest as he examined Lady Ginevra. "Your friend mentioned the need for protection. As a person working closely with the Ambassador, I insist you tell me all and I shall do all I can to assist you."

"It is very kind of you, sir, but we would prefer to speak to the Ambassador herself."

His cool glance rested on the ladies in a lazily though meaningful way that they both found familiar. "Ladies," he said with an air of calm authority. "Your virtues are quite wasted on a seasoned diplomat."

"A woman can never be too certain," offered Lady Ginevra, tossing him one of her arch looks.

His lips quirked into a smirk as a nerve in his temple throbbed delicately. "Really? You must edify me then, Mademoiselle Delacour." He turned abruptly to the clerk and addressed her in French, "Escort the ladies to my office for a light supper. The ladies are to sup with me."

"This is most improper," Miss Granger demurred to the gentleman in English, holding on to her friend's hand.

"Allow me to assuage your fears, Mademoiselles; I have the acquaintance of Lady Ginevra's father and the Duke of Sanguine."

Lady Ginevra paled and trembling gasped, "My father," at the same time Miss Granger uttered in astonishment, "The Duke of Sanguine?"

"Ladies, do not lose your composure. It is in poor taste. I believe I can tell Miss Granger apart from Lady Ginevra."

"The Duke of Sanguine is a man with uncanny perspicacity," muttered Miss Granger, eyeing the gentleman suspiciously.

Before any more could be said, they were alerted that supper was ready in the gentleman's office. The first door on the second floor down the hall proved to be this man's working apartments. It was neat in appearance and tastefully decorated. The *escritoire*'s contents were safely locked within it and it backed a shelf of books. Covers were laid on a table in the left corner of the room and the candles were already lit. "Tell me," he began in an enigmatic tone as he helped them to sit "How can I serve you, ladies?"

"Who are you?" asked Miss Granger bluntly, in contrast to her friend's shyness.

The gentleman smirked. "Why do you need to know?"

"I am suspicious," she said, incurably honest. "Have I had the pleasure of your acquaintance some time ago? If so, it explains why you are familiar. Pray, remind me of our last meeting as my memory seems to fail me."

He sipped his soup delicately. "A diplomat in my position has every reason to be suspicious of two young ladies travelling unescorted."

The gentleman and Miss Granger then exchanged intelligible looks of mutual respect and distrust with half smiles.

"We understand each other perfectly," Miss Granger said, nodding to her friend.

"Quite so," replied the gentleman. "If I am to assist you, I deserve some information."

Lady Ginevra gave Miss Granger a wild dart of alarm. Miss Granger allayed her friend with a sharp glance before calmly regarding the stranger over the brim of her wine glass. "We regret that we are unable to furnish you with the truth."

"You have just revealed, my dear, that there is someone else in this story," reminded the gentleman.

"It would impugn my character to deny your acuity of mind," said Miss Granger darkly as Lady Ginevra uneasily shifted her gaze to the stranger.

"So your lips, Miss Granger, are sealed out of consideration for Lady Ginevra and another person. Your modesty does you credit Miss Granger, as does your loyal protection of your friend, and your intelligence. But I feel you must realise your considerations are needless for Lord Villiers had informed the Embassy he would be arriving with Lady Ginevra."

Both ladies started; Miss Granger's eyes narrowed at the gentleman's cynical ones and Lady Ginevra's hand flew to her mouth.

"He was not the only one to inform the Embassy," revealed the gentleman with a smirk. "The Duke of Sanguine owed the Embassy a dossier of Lord Villiers's latest exploits. He specifically requested me to enquire for you, Miss Granger.

"How did he know I would be in Paris?"

"He is uncannily omniscient." The gentleman leaned carelessly in his chair in a manner that Lady Ginevra found familiar. "Do not distress yourselves. Tell me all; disabuse me of all the facts the Embassy has received."

Miss Granger and Lady Ginevra exchanged looks; one's face was furrowed in grim determination, the other's was uncertainty.

"Before my friend begins our story, I beg you, sir, to bear in mind that it was no one's fault," Lady Ginevra interposed.

"It is very often the case that no one is at fault, Lady Ginevra. Miss Granger, if you please," said the gentleman, mocking her with his cynical eyes.

Meeting his eyes with a hard defiant gaze of her own, Hermione began, "You may or may not have heard that Villiers had nearly killed, nay *has killed* Lady Ginevra's brother, Lord Percy Weasley. He was advised to flee the country while the matter, a sorry accident at a gaming establishment, was under investigation."

"Undoubtedly, he was advised by a worthy confidant," murmured he with a satirical smile. Lady Ginevra was watching intently now, inclining her head towards Miss Granger as a sign of wariness. Acting as if he had caught the ladies' exchange of uneasy looks, he continued lightly, "Did Lord Villiers seek to make amends to the family by offering for Lady Ginevra?"

Hermione glared at him with indignation. How dare he make such a rude supposition! "While his lordship and Lady Ginevra have had a long standing understanding, they have only been engaged for nigh a week." Miss Granger met his careless gaze with a challenging and faintly satirical look of her own. "They were obliged to flee. More accurately, Lord Villiers left a billet for Lady Ginevra, and they fled together. Upon her departure, it fell into the hands of two of her brothers and from thence, into mine. I feared that Lord Villiers had relapsed into his former way of life (which had been extremely dissipated) and sought to put an end to the affair. In the event that marriage was indeed contemplated, I brought with me a special licence. If marriage was not his intent, I hoped to compel him to marry Lady Ginevra. Armed with the special licence, I was prepared for both scenarios. I had hoped to accompany them to the Embassy to see if I could act as a witness and request the Ambassador to expedite their union.

"Do I understand you correctly? You pursued them?" asked the gentleman with the faintest hint of amusement creeping into his eyes.

"As a page in the Malfoy colours," added Lady Ginevra, smiling at the memory.

The gentleman raised a delicate brow and commented, "Remarkable!"

"But I was unable to confront them at Calais as I arrived at too early an hour during the day. So, I waylaid them at the posting house, Rayon Elegante, where I discovered myself to them." I was unable to carry out my self-appointed mission for who should burst into the private parlour of the inn but Lord Sterne."

The gentleman raised his brows sardonically and coldly commented, "Your emotions must baffle description at that moment."

Despite both ladies' glares, the gentlemen remained unperturbed and begged them to continue.

"Lord Sterne, with no blame on his part, assumed that Lord Villiers had abducted both Lady Ginevra and myself. His temper was most ugly."

"I am acquainted with him and his mordant temper. May I enquire how he culled such an idea?" asked the gentleman.

"This is on my account," Lady Ginevra slowly said, nodding meaningful at Miss Granger. "The Duchess of Mallefille did not approve of me because my family is not wealthy. She had intended for Lord Villiers to pay court and if possible marry Miss Granger, as she stands to inherit all at her father's death. To keep our assignments secret, Lord Villiers would pretend to court Miss Granger while she took me along for the sake of propriety. It appears to have incurred Lord Sterne's anger. You see, he was supposedly courting Miss Granger to be rid of Lady Sybill Trelawney. Although we announced our engagement at the Duchess's party, Lord Sterne continued to be suspicious over Miss Granger's friendship with Villiers."

"Such pretence is to be deplored," said the gentleman, shaking his head disapprovingly. "And his Lordship should know better than to make such an exhibition of himself."

"At the Rayon Elegante outside Argenteuil, I was - we were rudely shaken by the behaviours of Lord Villiers and Lord Sterne. They were about to duel with wands. Lord Sterne would hear no explanation and Lord Villiers would offer none," explained Lady Ginevra, setting down her wine glass.

"Did they end in killing each other?" asked the gentleman archly as he took a pinch of snuff delicately.

"We disarmed them. But prior to the duel, Lord Sterne was intent on choking Lord Villiers to death. He would have succeeded had I not delivered a stinging hex to his hands."

"Admirable," complimented the gentleman, looking respectfully at Miss Granger.

"It was time they ceased acting like children," reasoned the chocolate-eyed scholar.

"Was that how you managed to tear them apart?"

"Villiers has to be managed like a spoiled child," giggled Lady Ginevra, colouring a little at the thought of her beloved.

"Lord Sterne, on the other hand, is nothing more than a sulky child who assumes too much when the exigency of the situation clouds his better judgement," said Miss Granger pointedly.

"Indeed," said he with a ghost of a smile playing at the corner of his lips. "The Duke of Sanguine would have already seen all this. I have no doubt that His Grace of Mallefille would be very interested to meet women who are capable of mastering his son and friend in so masterly a fashion.

"I think not," laughed Lady Ginevra. "We have decided to have nothing to do with Villiers or Sterne. They have been unconscionable in their actions."

"They lack finesse," agreed the gentleman. "Yet it does not mean His Grace would not be most anxious to make amends to you both."

"He would not," answered Miss Granger with great conviction. "He is..." She broke off, biting her tongue to prevent her indiscreet remark from escaping her lips. "Are you well acquainted with the Duke?"

"Extremely well; in fact you might say that I have always been *on most intimate terms* with him" purred the gentleman with a lazy smirk.

"Then I had better say nothing."

"Has his son been telling you that he is a monster?" he asked, curling his lips into a snarl that he quickly mastered. "I have heard all the rumours about him; nothing you will say about him can possibly shock me."

"Oh no, we have never met the Duke," said Lady Ginevra earnestly. "We knew he was exiled for his part in the Wars."

"Lord Sterne once told me that Duke is, at heart, a reasonable person, a doting father and uxorious husband. But..."

The gentleman raised a brow waiting for Miss Granger to continue. "Such an encomium from Lord Sterne I am all astonishment. But, you were about your reservation about his grace??"

"There is something sinister about him. Common report and Villiers's description informed us that he is unscrupulous in obtaining any ends in the service of his wife and son."

"The Duke would have no desire to meet me since I have broken my engagement to his son. I intend to announce it on my return to London," declared Lady Ginevra calmly.

"There is time yet for that, my dear. You were saying that Lord Sterne and Lord Villiers were about to duel with wands. Did you leave the wands in the room after you disarmed them?"

"Yes, we hoped that they would to their senses and discuss their differences civilly," offered Lady Ginevra.

"Lord Sterne would have killed Lord Villiers, if I know anything about him," chuckled the gentleman darkly.

"That is immaterial, Society will be better off with two less idiots," interjected Miss Granger coldly. "We Apparated here and wish for assistance in returning to England."

"And we wish for protection should then come here seeking us. We will have nought to do with them," stressed Lady Ginevra, folding her arms across her chest.

The sound of voices outside came to their ears before the stranger could reply. Lady Ginevra grew white and Miss Granger remained defiantly calm. "They have come. Will you assist us, sir? Tell them we will not see them."

The gentleman cast the women an appraisingly ironic look. "You are safe in my protection. Remain seated, ladies. No danger will befall you." The ladies looked at each other sceptically. "Come in," he said with an air of command.

"Sir, Lord Villiers and Lord Sterne have arrived; they look ready to commit murder," said the porter, as he poked his head through a tiny opening of the door.

"Send them in," insisted the gentleman.

"Please," pleaded Lady Ginevra impulsively grabbing the sleeve of his black coat. "I fear for your safety, sir. Villiers is an impulsive man, and," she paused to look to her friend. "And Lord Sterne is an ill-tempered one."

"You are safe here," he reiterated, dismissing the porter with a wave and nonchalantly smoothening out the creases in his coat.

The porter withdrew and the imperturbable stranger smiled at his companions as he delicately took another pinch of snuff. A moment later, the door flung open to reveal Villiers with his pistol drawn and Sterne with his hand on his wand. The two murderous men gasped at the sight of the stranger.

"You!" hissed Sterne in annoyance at the same time Villiers greeted the gentleman with a muted "Sir" on his lips.

"Your manners are still execrable, my Lord Villiers," the gentleman sharply reprimanded. Catching the smirk on the face of the other intruder, he added, "And yours are no better, my Lord Sterne. No wonder your ladies left you." Then delicately waving his hand carelessly at the two gentleman, he continued, "I trust you have resolved everything between yourselves."

Sterne scowled and Villiers nodded dumbly, clearly abashed. As the identity of the stranger suddenly occurred them, the ladies exchanged looks of incredulous shock with red spots rapidly spreading over their cheeks.

#### Footnotes:

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Hemlock means "You will be my death".

View it here <http://www.lib.ksu.edu/wildflower/wildflower/hemlock.jpg>, <http://www.psu.missouri.edu/fishel/images/phemp4.JPG> and <http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/h/hemwat19-l.jpg>. The Hemlock is a member of the great order Umbelliferae, the same family of plants to which the parsley, fennel, parsnip and carrot belong. Many of the umbelliferous plants abound in an acrid, watery juice, which is more or less narcotic in its effects on the animal frame, and which, therefore, when properly administered in minute doses, is a valuable medicine. Among these the most important is *Conium*, or Hemlock. Every part of this plant, especially the fresh leaves and fruit, contains a volatile, oily alkaloid, which is so poisonous that a few drops prove fatal to a small animal.

Hemlock is a tall, much branched and gracefully growing plant, with elegantly-cut foliage and white flowers. Country people very generally call by the name of Hemlock many species of umbelliferous plants, but the real Hemlock may be distinguished by its slender growth, perfectly smooth stem which is marked with red, and its finely-divided leaves which are also smooth.

It is a biennial plant, usually growing from 2 to 4 feet high, but in sheltered situations sometimes attaining nearly double that height. The root is long, forked, pale yellow and 1/2 to 3/4 inch in diameter. The erect, smooth stem, stout below, much branched above and hollow, is bright green, but (as already stated) is distinctively mottled with small irregular stains or spots of a port-wine colour and also covered with a white 'bloom' which is very easily rubbed off.

The leaves are numerous, those of the first year and the lower ones very large, even reaching 2 feet in length, alternate, longstalked, tripinnate (divided along the midrib into opposite pairs of leaflets and these again divided and subdivided in similar manner). The upper leaves are much smaller, nearly stalkless, with the short footstalk dilated and stem-clasping, often opposite or three together, more oblong in outline, dipinnate or pinnate, quite smooth, uniform dull green, segments toothed, each tooth being tipped with a minute, sharp white point.

The umbels are rather small, 1 1/4 to 2 inches broad, numerous, terminal, on rather short flower stalks, with 12 to 16 rays to the umbel. At the base of the main umbel there are 4 to 8 lance-shaped, deflexed bracts; at the base of the small umbels there are three or four spreading bractlets. The flowers are small, their petals white with an inflexed point, the stamens a little longer than the petals, with white anthers.

The fruit is small, about 1/8 inch long broad, ridged, compressed laterally and smooth. Both flowers and fruit bear a resemblance to caraway, but the prominent crenate (wavy) ridges and absence of vittae (oil cells between the ridges) are important characters for distinguishing this fruit from others of the same natural order of plants.

The entire plant has a bitter taste and possesses a disagreeable mousy odour, which is especially noticeable when bruised. When dry, the odour is still disagreeable, but not so pronounced as in the fresh plant. The seeds or fruits have very marked odour or taste, but when rubbed with a solution of potassium bi-oxide, the same disagreeable mouse-like odour is produced.

The poisonous property occurs in all parts of the plant, though it is stated to be less strong in the root. Poisoning has occurred from eating the leaves for parsley, the roots for parsnips and the seeds in mistake for anise seeds. Many children, too, have suffered by using whistles made from the hollow stems of the Hemlock, which should be extirpated from meadows and pastures since many domestic animals have been killed by eating it, though goats are said to eat it with impunity. Perhaps this is why we get bezoars from goats...

The Ancients were familiar with the plant, which is mentioned in early Greek literature, and fully recognised its poisonous nature. The juice of hemlock was frequently administered to criminals, and this was the fatal poison which Socrates was condemned to drink. The old Roman name of *Conium* was *Cicuta*, which prevails in the mediaeval Latin literature, but was applied about 1541 by Gesner and others to another umbelliferous plant, *Cicuta virosa*, the Water Hemlock, which does not grow in Greece and southern Europe. To avoid the confusion arising from the same name for these quite dissimilar plants, Linnaeus, in 1737, restored the classical Greek name and called the Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), the generic name being derived from the Greek word *Konas*, meaning to whirl about, because the plant, when eaten, causes vertigo and death. The specific name is the Latin word, meaning 'spotted,' and refers to the stem-markings. According to an old English legend, these purple streaks on the stem represent the brand put on Cain's brow after he had committed murder.

Hemlock was used in Anglo-Saxon medicine, and is mentioned as early as the tenth century. The name Hemlock is derived from the Anglo-Saxon words *hem* (border, shore) and *leac* (leek or plant). Another authority derives the British name 'hemlock' from the Anglo-Saxon word *healm* (straw), from which the word 'haulm' is derived.

The use of Hemlock in modern medicine is due chiefly to the recommendation of Storch, of Vienna, since when (1760) the plant has been much employed, though it has lost some of its reputation owing to the uncertain action of the preparations made from it.

Culpepper's The Complete Herbal (1652) has the last word on the matter, "Saturn claims dominion over this herb, yet I wonder why it may not be applied to the privities in a Priapism, or continual standing of the yard, it being very beneficial to that disease. I suppose, my author's judgment was first upon the opposite disposition of Saturn to Venus in those faculties, and therefore he forbade the applying of it to those parts, that it might not cause barrenness, or spoil the spirit procreative; which if it do, yet applied to the privities, it stops its lustful thoughts. Hemlock is exceedingly cold, and very dangerous, especially to be taken inwardly. It may safely be applied to inflammations, tumours, and swellings in any part of the body (save the privy parts) as also to St. Anthony's fire, wheals, pushes, and creeping ulcers that arise of hot sharp humours, by cooling and repelling the heat; the leaves bruised and laid to the brow or forehead are good for their eyes that are red and swollen; as also to take away a pin and web growing in the eye; this is a tried medicine: Take a small handful of this herb, and half so much bay salt, beaten together, and applied to the contrary wrist of the hand, for 24 hours, doth remove it in thrice dressing. If the root thereof be roasted under the embers, wrapped in double wet paper, until it be soft and tender, and then applied to the gout in the hands or fingers, it will quickly help this evil. If any through mistake eat the herb Hemlock instead of Parsley, or the roots instead of a Parsnip (both of which it is very like) whereby happens a kind of frenzy, or perturbation of the senses, as if they were stupid and drunk, the remedy is (as Pliny saith) to drink of the best and strongest pure wine, before it strikes to the heart, or Gentian put in wine, or a draught of vinegar, wherewith Tragus doth affirm, that he cured a woman that had eaten the root."

(2) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced" why is this ironic? Consider Hermione's relationship with her father and her present disguise as Ginny's abigail it is apt, is it not? Furthermore, given Millicent Bulstrode's parentage, her present profession is also a very choice one...

(3) Riband is the old-fashioned spelling of ribbon.

(4) *Comme il faut* is a French phrase meaning "as it should be". It was very popular phrase in the Regency era.

(5) Ape-leader is Regency slang for an old spinster or an old maid. Once you had gone through 4 to 5 Seasons and still remained unmarried, you were deemed an ape-leader. In those days, they had their first Season at 16 or 18, depending on the young lady's rank, fortune, family, Father's desire to launch her, ability to find a suitable sponsor for the Season, state of her education and so on. Why were old spinsters/old maids called ape-leaders? It was believed and widely preached in church by the hellfire-and-damnation pastors that women who did not marry would be punished after death. Their punishment after death for failing to procreate would be to lead apes in hell.

\* (6) The term "to discover myself to you" in Regency times means, "to reveal myself to you".

(7) When I say "malacca cane", I do not mean that the cane came from Malacca (a state in West/Peninsula Malaysia. (If you want to know more about Malaysia, email me and I will give you a history lesson.) The word "cane" had not been applied to the fashionable walking stick up to the 16th century. During his period, however, the thick, jointed stems of tropical grasses known as bamboo and cane, and the reed-like stem of several species of palm and rattan were introduced for the stick. These were called "canes." From that day forth, the walking stick of the past merged into the cane of the future. Today the terms are used interchangeable, though the saying, "One strolls with a walking stick and swaggers with a Cane!" tend to give greater dignity to the former. (Katherine Morris Lester and Bess Viola Oerke, Accessories of Dress, The Manual Arts Press, Peoria Illinois, p. 392.) A cane was an important accessory for a man from the late 17th century through the early 20th century. A cane made of quality wood, with a silver or gold handle, told of wealth and importance. Cane shafts usually were made of wood such as ebony or rosewood or malacca.

(8) The Rayon Elegante (a fictitious establishment) is placed in the outskirts of Argenteuil. Argenteuil was founded as a convent in the 7th century (the monastery and convent there is most famous for being the place that Heloise sought refuge in). It's in the famous Pierre Abelard and Heloise story. Those unacquainted with the story, perpend

Living within the precincts of Notre-Dame, under the care of her uncle, the canon, Fulbert, was a girl named Heloise, of noble birth, and born about 1101. She is said to have been beautiful, but still more remarkable for her knowledge, which extended beyond Latin, it is said, to Greek and Hebrew. Abélard fell in love with her; and he sought and gained a place in Fulbert's house. Becoming tutor to the girl, he used his power for the purpose of seduction, and she returned his devotion. Their relations interfered with his public work, and were not kept a secret by Abélard himself. Soon everyone knew except the trusting Fulbert. When he found out, they were separated, only to meet in secret. Heloise became pregnant, and was carried off by her lover to Brittany, where she gave birth to a son. To appease her furious uncle, Abélard proposed a secret marriage, in order not to mar his prospects of advancement in the church; but Heloise opposed the idea. She appealed to him not to sacrifice for her the independence of his life, but reluctantly gave in to pressure. The secret of the marriage was not kept by Fulbert; and when Heloise boldly denied it, life was made so difficult for her that she sought refuge in the convent of Argenteuil at Abélard's bidding. Immediately Fulbert, believing that her husband, who had helped her run away, wanted to be rid of her, plotted revenge. He and some others broke into Abélard's chamber by night, and castrated him. The priesthood and ecclesiastical office were canonically closed to him. Heloise, not yet twenty, consummated her work of self-sacrifice at Abélard's jealous bidding that she never again share romantic love with a man, and became a nun.

## Chapter 22 - A Display of Sweet Scented Tussilage

*Chapter 23 of 23*

In which everything is resolved and the extent of the Duke of Sanguine's meddling is revealed.

As this is a Regency story, there is bound to be some AU-ness and OOC-ness. Please bear with me. Emphases are in italics and titles of books &ca are underlined. This story places great stress on the significance and meanings of flowers.

**Language of Flowers**



## Chapter 22 A Display of Sweet Scented Tussilage

Miss Granger and Lady Ginevra were completely shocked by the revelation of the stranger's identity. Lady Ginevra looked from the intruders to the helpful gentleman at the Embassy and her hands flew to her mouth on their own accord to stifle a cry of alarm and surprise. Her friend, though a little surprised was not aghast. Instead of turning as white as Lady Ginevra had, Miss Granger stood her ground in defiant calm. "Duke, she said coolly, "My friend and I would like to apologise for our description of you."

"It has been ages since anyone called me sinister and unscrupulous. I rather enjoyed it makes me feel young again," the gentleman, the Duke of Mallefille, replied with an amused look in his eyes. "There is no need for apologies, ladies. If anything such a thing should be offered, it had better be from them." He gestured carelessly to the two figures dumbfounded at the door before coldly saying, "One of you had better close the door."

Villiers shut it at one and looked expectantly though suspicious at gentleman. "I was unaware you were here, Father," he stammered.

"If you had known," the Duke said chillingly, with a quelling look, "You would have been better behaved. Put aside your weapons, both of you."

"Lucius, what are you doing here?" demanded Lord Sterne with a snarl.

The Duke smiled rakishly and laughed, "I work here from time to time; it keeps me occupied and I hear all the latest English gossip."

"A masterly description of your occupation, you old dilettante," answered Sterne.

"You wound me, mon ami. I have been wounded once already this evening by Lady Ginevra." On hearing her name, her ladyship started. "She imagined me to be like my son when it ought to be the other way around."

"I am ashamed," Lady Ginevra said demurely. "I see now that I was at fault."

"It was Miss Granger who openly asked me who I was. She is a spirited one, very sharp in the mind. I can see why you've set your cap at her, Severus!" commented Mallefille, idling fiddling with his cane.

"Perhaps it would better if we retired, Duke. You may illuminate the gentlemen at your leisure. Are there any rooms in the Embassy for the stranded English traveller?" Miss Granger asked, looking directly into the Duke's eyes.

"Lady Ginevra and yourself must be fatigued, but my son and my old friend wish to speak to the both of you. If it will please you, I offer the apologies to Villiers and Sterne on their behalves. If you wish to leave, you will find rooms on the third floor, which is for ladies. However, for the moment, I strongly advise you to listen to hear out these reprobates," Mallefille suggested, causally pouring himself another glass of wine.

Lady Ginevra looked imploringly at Miss Granger, begging her to stay, but to no avail.

"Good night. Thank you for your assistance, Duke," Miss Granger said, rising from her seat. However, she was unable to leave as Sterne blocked the door.

The young Lord Villiers then took it upon himself to go to his lady's side. "Ginny, don't leave me. You must marry me! I'll stand trial for Lord Percy, if you tell me to. Father, tell her, she must marry me!"

"You abducted her, my son; you persuade her. Let that be a lesson to you and you too, Severus. Heavens! Don't scowl at Miss Granger like that! The two of you are quite far below the women of your chusing," commented Mallefille dryly, flicking his perfumed handkerchief at his son in chastisement.

Villiers held his beloved's hands with a beseeching look. "Marry me, Ginny. We'll do so first thing in the morning. Father approves."

Lady Ginevra collapsed into the chair that she had just vacated. "You've been insupportable, Villiers! But, oh, what will the Duchess say?"

"My wife need not trouble your scruples, Lady Ginevra," said the Duke of Mallefille languidly. "Well," he continued, turning to my Lord Sterne and Miss Granger. "Are you going to remain glaring and scowling at each other? This is my office! Severus, have some consideration for my feelings!"

The sounds of the reconciled voices of Lady Ginevra and Villiers earnestly talking soon came to their attention. Sterne sneered on hearing their hushed tones.

"Miss Granger is right in her assessment of you, Severus. You are a petulant child," mocked Mallefille carelessly as he gazed at his son and new daughter through his quizzing glass.

"I am no such thing!" protested the dark haired Marquess violently.

"I am sorry to pain you, my lord, but you are," stated Miss Granger matter-of-factly.

"Insufferable know-it-all!"

"Touché, my lord."

"Surely, I make myself plain," hissed Sterne, resisting the impulse to rail at Miss Granger.

"You do not," insisted the lady coldly, tucking a lock of frizzy hair behind her ear.

"Lucius, what have you been telling Miss Granger?" he snapped, dangerously eyeing his friend.

"Nothing, old man. The reports from England do not lie; she is quite a *femme savante*. You should ask her how she arrived at her deduction of your character," answered the Duke.

Scowling at the Duke who had the audacity to raise his glass at him, Sterne looked away and turned his attention to Miss Granger. "I once made you an offer."

"I called you a coward in response."

"I want to know why," he said in a mellowed tone.

"Because you were not serious. I gave you the answer you wanted," sighed Miss Granger, wondering as to the sanity of his lordship. "I am not to be an experiment on your potions worktable of life."

"Did not you know that the experiment is not on you but on myself? I was and still am willing to take the risk," he hissed urgently, sweeping his hair away from his face.

"You know of my plans and my work. I am too great a risk."

He caught her wrists as she tried to reach the doorknob behind him. "It is you who are the coward."

"Let me go," she spat without attempting to struggle free from his iron grip.

"I advise you do so, my Lord Marquess," laughed the Duke.

"And have her hex me? Damn you, Mallefille!"

The Duke merely smiled. "You are under no obligations to heed me, old man."

"Indeed, my lord, the Duke is right. You are under no obligations to offer for me even if my name is bandied from lip to lip as the most ridiculous pedant to carry on with two suitors, whom I must add, were not the least interested in me as a person. I am too staid," she said by way of apology to the Duke.

Mallefille took snuff elegantly and nodded sardonically in agreement at her.

"Be that as it may," snarled Sterne impatiently. "I am devilishly sure I cannot live without you."

"Then die," Miss Granger crossly snapped.

"I'll never coerce you," Sterne declared with a slight catch in his voice.

"You were *trying to*, my lord."

He scowled and tightened his grip on her wrists. "I will always use you honestly."

"At last, an utterance of truth!" she mocked, as her eyes flashed angrily at him.

Fighting the urge to throw her roughly onto a chair, Sterne snarled, "You are a disagreeable bluestocking with too much love for your friends. You have humiliated me and made me lose my temper. For some obscure reason yet unknown to me, I permit you to do so. I do not know what more I can say to convince you that I am in earnest. Do not I have *un visage serieux*? Believe me, Miss Granger, of my honourable intent."

"Since you have been so kind as to enumerate *my merits*, I shall consider your suit," she retorted, glaring at him, her knuckles whitening from her tenacious balling of her fists.

"Lucius, advise me!" he bellowed, becoming paler with impatient anger as his voice resounded throughout the Duke's office.

"Why should I?" asked Mallefille quietly.

"You're the married man! You know all about dealing with women," he charged, glaring at his friend.

"Dealing with women, yes. But bluestockings, no! Miss Granger, I advise you not to throw yourself away at my lamentable friend."

Thanking the Duke of Mallefille through a look of relief at his policy of non-interference, she began to reason with the intractable Lord Sterne, her hands trembling in an uncertain emotion, "You do not care for me, my lord and your displays of chivalry vis-à-vis my honour are insanely bordering on jealousy."

"Where there is no affection, there can be no jealousy," he purred, as he bent on his knees and grasped her hands, staring intently at her disbelieving eyes for any answer.

Miss Granger laughed scornfully, as she watched a nerve twitch close to his mouth. "You are too sure of yourself," she whispered, lowering her eyes momentarily.

"Not of myself, but of you," was his lordship's ready answer. "You are welcome to divorce me or kill me anytime, that is, if I do not do run mad from causing you grief first," he continued with contemptuous curling of his lips.

"Very well. We appear to understand one another," Miss Granger conceded, patting his hands in a conciliatory gesture.

"Quite," he said quietly with a look that bore into Miss Granger's very soul. "Your answer, madam?"

"I shall condescend to accept," she replied colouring somewhat, meeting his intense glower with one of her own.

Lord Sterne bowed and reverently kissed both her hands. "Then I shall condescend to be honoured."

"And I shall condescend to be patronising," interposed Mallefille in a clearly cynical tone. "You still are invited to Hôtel Mallefille for the night."

"That would be most improper," answered Lady Ginevra, wagging a finger at the Duke, her future father-in-law.

"Ah well, my dear, you are in luck. I have a perfectly proper story for you. My son has fled England due to his shall we say treatment of Lord Percy. As an Embassy man, I already know from the Duke of Sanguine's owl that his sentence has been dropped by the Lords. For the sake of the story, let us assume I am unaware of my son's present fate. Let us assume that I fear for his treatment at the assizes. My son came to me in Rouen where I have a small estate. My Lord Sterne came to inform us of the news of my son's victim and his fate. My dear ladies, you were visiting with my sister, Lady Lavinia Malfoy. She has invited you to stay with her at Hôtel Mallefille where she keeps house for me. She notices Lady Ginevra going into a decline from the impolitic separation from my son. So, she arranges their wedding at the Embassy where we are all witnesses. Lord Sterne and Miss Granger being of an academic turn of mind decide to marry to bring their work to greater heights, and since it is quite the thing all Season, no one will be surprised."

"Ingenious," complimented Miss Granger with unveiled scepticism. "May I ask how we came to be acquainted with Lady Lavinia?"

"It is a little known fact that she is also Lady Minerva's goddaughter. The rest, you may surmise," answered the Duke blandly, setting down his wine glass.

Throughout the Duke of Mallefille's narration, Sterne stared at his friend with narrowing eyes. There was something uncannily familiar in the schema presented in the proposed plan. "Whose design is this, Lucius? It is too elegant to be yours."

"Your godfather's mon ami," replied the Duke coolly, offering his arms to the ladies. "Now, shall we all leave for Hôtel Mallefille, Lavinia is waiting for us."

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*The news of the sudden marriage of the Season's most eligible marriages put many of the Society mammas and their daughters out of countenance. It was not the rash of weddings at the end of the Season that put them out of spirits for such things were common enough. Society was aghast that the marriages of Sir Harry Potter to the abigail who was really quite plain and homely. The ladies who ended the Season with no beaux cursed Miss Brown for snatching away one of Society's largest matrimonial prizes. While Society's scorn was readily given to Sir Harry's low bride, it was quick to express shock at the union of Lord Ronald Weasley to the witty heiress of the Baron de Quib. Though the couple are presently known by his name, it is a well-known fact that when Lady Ronald comes into her fortune and titles, her husband will be forced to face the certainty of being a mere Lord Ronald Weasley while his children are Lovegoods. The editor wonders how the future Lady de Quib will manage her brood and her husband. That will be something all Society is eager to see. However, as the de Quib family is an ancient one, such a provision should come as no surprise, it was by all accounts an advantageous match for Lord Weasley who moved into his wife's home on their return from their honeymoon.*

*Try as it might, formidable Society could not understand why Lord Villiers had married Lady Ginevra Weasley who had no fortune to her name other than £2000 at five percents. Society was even more surprised to learn that the Duke and Duchess of Mallefille sanctioned the match and gave it their blessing. The kinder proponents of*

*Society, namely, the couple's friends would tell everyone who cared to listen that it was an ideal match as he is rich and she is handsome in manners and beauty. Society mammas were doubtlessly scandalised by Lord and Lady Villiers's sudden marriage in France and are still privately gossiping about them after their return from their Italian honeymoon.*

*Another wedding that excited much attention was that of the handsome Baron Lupin and the former ape-leader, Lady Sybill Trelawney. It had long been speculated that the new Lady Lupin would never marry and if she did marry, it was likely that she would condescend to marry a mere gentleman of the gentry. No one could have foreseen (indeed, not even the lady herself) that she would be wed to Lord Lupin, the other young ladies of the Ton were enraged that a lady like her who was so far past her first bloom, had the ability to ensnare the Baron and his £6000 a year.*

*Whatever Society's views on Lord Sterne, it had had not expected him to marry. Everyone with the exception of his godfather, the Duke of Sanguine, had taken for granted that the Marquess kept himself a bachelor for the sake of the late Lady Potter, to whom he was rumoured to be deeply attached. As such, Society or most sections of it were surprised when he wed Miss Granger. The present Lady Sterne, who will one day be the Baroness Orthod in her own right is generally regarded too plain and studious to be an object of jealousy to the other young ladies. This did not prevent them from wishing that the Marquess and his new Marchioness would plague each other to death with their private academic pursuits.*

*The Reverend Mr Longbottom, who was often looked upon as a prodigiously stupid creature had he not stood heir to the Earldom of Fluxweed, has lately wed the natural child of the late Lord Lestrangle. His match with the lost heiress of the Lestrangle fortune, the former Miss Bulstrode (late of the Duke of Offaly's household) went unremarked by Society. His Grace of Offaly is best known in the House of Lords as the gentleman who assisted the Duke of Sanguine in bringing to an end the potential scandal of Lord Percy Weasley's death. If he had not purveyed a character reference for Lord Villiers, the latter would very likely still be in voluntary exile in France.*

Having read enough of the societal news, the Duke of Sanguine carefully replaced the newspaper on a tray his man was holding. "You may go, Fudge," he commanded firmly. Then turning to his guest, he smiled. "Well, dearest Minerva, that was well done, wasn't it?"

His guest smiled in her habitual thin lipped manner. "What was?"

"My hand at matchmaking, of course," chuckled the Duke, stroking his beard, merrily untangling the knots he found there.

"I really wish you wouldn't meddle," she answered, folding a letter that she had just perused while sipping a cup of tea.

"What do *les enfants* say?" quizzed Sanguine, his blue eyes dancing with animation at his lady's neatly folded hands.

"They found a good building in Surrey for the seminary. The building at Bath looks respectable also. They are presently deciding between the two," Lady Minerva replied as she watched him push his half moon spectacles up his slightly crooked nose bridge. "What news in the papers?"

"Nothing much. Full of scandals as usual," was his dry answer.

"Hermione should have permanently incapacitated Miss Skeeter when she had the opportunity," said Lady Minerva testily. As it was uncharacteristic of her to behave in such a vehement manner, the Duke looked anxiously at her, fearing that she had suddenly taken ill.

"It is not in her nature to do so. Who knows, the unworthy Miss Skeeter may yet have her uses?" opined the Duke, who was then valiantly engaged in the struggle of prying apart two lemon drops. However, as he proved unsuccessful in his endeavour, he shrugged and popped the stuck sweets into his mouth with an unapologetic smile.

"Don't be ridiculous, Sanguine!"

"*Albus*. It's *Albus*. How many times must I tell you so, my dearest one," sighed the Duke, gently placing his hand over his companion's.

"Have you heard? No, I am certain you must have arranged it. Narcissa is to join Mallefille in France," said Lady Minerva conversationally, staring in the direction of the hothouse.

The Duke pouted and removed his hand from hers, evidently hurt by her lack of response. "Do you think I meddle in everything?"

"Yes."

"Alas, you think too poorly on me," complained he mournfully with his hand at his heart.

Lady Minerva only laughed at her friend's theatrics. "You're beyond salvation, Sanguine."

Sharing the joke, he laughed with her until he caught her eyes in a penetrating gaze. "Perhaps a good woman would remedy that. What say you, Minerva?"

"Don't be absurd, Sanguine! At our age!" she breathed, scandalised by the implications of his words.

"Just to keep me company then."

"You certainly entertain a grand notion of yourself," Lady Minerva stated with a smile and a teasing rap on his knuckles.

"Me? Not !!" he demurred loudly, smiling at the laughing crinkles at the end of her eyes. "You know, I've always thought that a ducal coronet would enhance your beauty."

"Silly old fool," she teased, withdrawing the hand that the Duke of Sanguine had silently gained.

Sanguine nodded sagely, idly twisting his beard around the fingers of his left hand. "I am a fool a *foobtill* waiting expectantly for his answer."

Lady Minerva rose abruptly, a frown etched on her lips. Believing that he had unwittingly offended her, the Duke reviewed their conversation in his mind. He found nothing overly egregious in his manner. No matter, he mused with a rueful smile to himself as he absentmindedly stroked his beard and pushed his half-moon spectacles up his nose bridge. He would apologise to whatever it was that she laid at his door. The Duke was about to admit his guilt and request for her forgiveness, when her voice arrested his thoughts and tongue.

"Let us see what the hothouse has yielded this month," she said as suddenly as she rose. To Sanguine's surprise, she clicked her tongue sharply in mild annoyance when he firmly placed his hands behind his back. "Where are your manners? Give me your arm, old man."

"Gladly, my dear," he murmured, glad that her dangerous mood had passed.

Silently, they entered the hothouse and marvelled the many exotic plants that the Duke kept in his collection. He would have led her to new blue violet cuttings that he was cultivating had not he been reminded of her volatile mood a few minutes earlier. Thus, instead of leading her to what he knew to be her favourite flowers, he allowed her to wander to his Far East floral collection.

As Lady Minerva leaned over a pot with a lovely bright spray of colour, the Duke of Sanguine heard her say, "The yellow chrysanthemums look very well this year."

Patting the hand that clung gently to his arm, he smiled and murmured blandly so as to hide his disappointment, "What shall you pick for me to wear with my coat today? Have you settled on a yellow chrysanthemum already? Might I recommend a striped carnation? It would go better with this coat"

"Good heavens! Why would I give you a striped carnation? It clashes with your complexion!" she exclaimed in a chiding tone, ostensibly moving to the other pots so as to better observe the plants. "You haven't any bluebells in here! How vexing! You clearly do not have everything in order, Sanguine."

"Not as much I like to," he confessed quietly, momentarily stunned by her reference to bluebells.

Brusquely casting her eye over the Duke of Sanguine and his clothes for the day, she looked unblinkingly into his eyes and asked, "Will you go abroad today? To look over the Sternes and their new building plot at Surrey? It's only ten miles off."

The Duke smiled and kissed her hand. "Only if you want me to, my dear. You know I will follow you anywhere."

"In that case, I think it quite all right if you leave your coat unembellished as snowdrops are not in season this time of year. I don't think either of us wants to expend our resources on conjuring a snowdrop." Lady Minerva paused at this juncture, her hand tightly clutching the crook of the Duke's arm. "Your head shall be adorned today, not your coat." Looking to a creeping plant near to them before turning to him, she continued, "You should be crowned with ivy today and I give you leave to speak to my brother tomorrow. What say *you*, Albus?"

~ Finis ~

#### Footnotes:

I know that some readers will be asking, "Why didn't Hermione and Ginny know that they were talking to Lucius? After all, they all moved in first circles?" The answer to this is simple. During the wars, the ladies didn't go out much. This was stated in Chapter 1, that Hermione was recalled to her father's residence. This is Regency England, remember. And by the time the wars were ongoing, it wasn't safe for anyone to go one. By the time Voldemort was executed in 1814, Lucius was already exiled. Only when things returned to normal did society begin to function as did before the war. It was only then that Hermione returned to society; it was only then that Ginny came "out". Furthermore, Hermione was in school most of her time at the seminary, as was Ginny, both of them would not have any chance to meet Lucius at all. Furthermore, in chapter 6, Hermione tells us that she does not have the pleasure of Lucius's acquaintance to which Severus replies, "No, he is in France." So this means Hermione and Ginny have *NEVER* met Lucius.

Readers, you will notice that the title of the chapter contains the name of flowers/plants. This is significant to understanding the plot. While some of you may be familiar with the language of flowers, I beg you to allow for differences in interpretation. Some flowers/plants have one meaning during the time of the Regency and another during the Victorian era. My guess is that those of you familiar with this language are acquainted with the Victorian interpretation rather than the Regency one.

Naturally, there is also a deeper meaning beyond that of the flowers. What it is I leave it to you to uncover.

(1) Sweet Scented Tussilage means "Justice shall be done to you".

Tussilage is actually the Latin name of the plant and it means "remedy of cough" (my translation). Indeed, in Roman times and in the Middle Ages, tussilage was used to treat respiratory problems. It was also believed to be a cure for heartburn as it is soothing to the stomach and the intestines. Apothecaries in the old days would grind and mix horehound, tussilage, ginger and licorice root for a soothing cough syrup. Alternatively, you could drink it as a leaf and flower tea. Like the cough mixture, it was believed to be a demulcent and expectorant for sore throats, coughs, asthma, bronchitis, and lung congestion. Warm infusions of the leaves soothe irritated mucus membrane tissues, helps bring up phlegm, and relieve spasmodic types of coughs. In Elizabethan times, it was used to treat chronic or acute bronchitis, irritating coughs, whooping coughs. The leaves can be used externally in poultices on the chest that relieve fevers and pulmonary blockages, on swellings and skin irritations to draw out inflammation and irritating substances, and for bruised or sore feet. This is what it looks like [http://www.guzet.com/html/fiche\\_fleur/tussilage.htm](http://www.guzet.com/html/fiche_fleur/tussilage.htm)

(2) Blue Violet means "faithfulness".

There is an old saying in the English countryside, "Go a-mothering and find violets in the lane". This refers to the custom of taking bunches of violets home when visiting on Mothering Sunday. The flowers were crystallised in sugar to make a traditional sweetmeat and the fresh flowers were scattered in salad as an attractive garnish. In France, violets had a particular historical significance. Napoleon promised that he would return from exile with the violets, inspiring his supporters to give him the coded name, Corporal Violette. Much further back in history, the ancient Greeks believed that violets helped to subdue anger and to cure insomnia. See it here at <http://www.ontariowildflower.com/images/violetblueclose.jpg>

(3) Yellow chrysanthemum is a sign of "slighted love". See it here <http://www.weddingsolutions.com/articles/chrysanthemum2.jpg> and <http://www.mooseycountrygarden.com/wattle-woods/yellow-chrysanthemum-flowers.jpg>. Chrysanthemum root is widely used because of its pungent efficacy in relieving toothache and in promoting a free flow of saliva. The British Pharmacopoeia directs that it be used as a masticatory, and in the form of lozenges for its reflex action on the salivary glands in dryness of the mouth and throat. The tincture made from the dried root may be applied to relieve the aching of a decayed tooth, applied on cotton wool, or rubbed on the gums, and for this purpose may with advantage be mixed with camphorated chloroform. It forms an addition to many dentifrices.

A gargle of chrysanthemum infusion is prescribed for relaxed uvula and for partial paralysis of the tongue and lips. To make a gargle, two or three teaspoonsful of chrysanthemum extract should be mixed with a pint of cold water and sweetened with honey if desired. Patients seeking relief from rheumatic or neuralgic affections of the head and face, or for palsy of the tongue, have been advised to chew the root daily for several months. Alternatively, by Regency days, the powdered root forms a good snuff to cure chronic catarrh of the head and nostrils and to clear the brain, by exciting a free flow of nasal mucous and tears.

Culpepper tells us that the chrysanthemum, also known as the Pellitory, "is one of the best purges of the brain that grows" and is not only 'good for ague and the falling sickness' (epilepsy) but is 'an excellent approved remedy in lethargy.' After stating that 'the powder of the herb or root snuffed up the nostrils procureth sneezing and easeth the headache,' he goes on to say that 'being made into an ointment with hog's lard it taketh away black and blue spots occasioned by blows or falls, and helpeth both the gout and sciatica,' uses which are now obsolete. In the thirteenth century we read in old records that Chrysanthemum/Pellitory of Spain was 'a proved remedy for the toothache' with the Welsh physicians. It was familiar to the Arabian writers on medicine and is still a favourite remedy in the East, having long been an article of export from Algeria and Spain by way of Egypt to India. In the East Indies the infusion is used as a cordial. I for one swear by chrysanthemum tea, for those of you with Chinese friends, ask them for it, you will find it refreshing and delightful. It's the Asian version of flower tea.

(4) Giving someone a striped carnation is a sign of "refusal" or "a love that cannot be shared or returned".

See it here <http://www.sgaravatti.net/ita/prod/img/f136a.jpg>. The carnation as many of you will know is the symbol of the Portuguese Carnation Revolution. It is a versatile flower, lasts moderately long in iced water and is one of my favourites (the other is the lily of the valley). In many parts of the world, carnations are worn for Mother's Day and weddings. In ancient Rome, they were called "Jove's flower" as a tribute to Jove (Zeus to all you Greek fans). In Korea, a young girl places three carnations in her hair vertically to tell her fortune. If the top flower dies first, the last years of her life will be most difficult; if the middle flowers wilts first, her earlier years will bring the most grief; if the bottom flower dies first, the poor girl will be miserable for her whole life. My Korean friend and I tried it last year and my bottom flower wilted first. Out of delicacy, I shall not say which of her flowers died first.

For the most part, carnations express love, fascination and distinction. Light red carnations represent admiration; dark red denotes deep love and affection; white ones means pure love and good luck; striped one symbolises a regret that a love cannot be shared or returned; purple carnations indicate capriciousness; and green carnations are a semi-secret sign of homosexuality. The green carnation's special symbolism is evinced in part of the lyrics of Noel Coward's Bitter Sweet:

"Pretty boys, witty boys,

You may sneer

At our disintegration

Haughty boys, naughty boys,

Dear, dear, dear!

Swooning with affection...

And as we are the reason

For the Nineties being gay."

(5) Bluebell has two meanings: (i) constancy, and (ii) sorrowful regret. These meanings can be taken both collectively and individually.

See it here <http://www.catnip.co.uk/wallpaper/bluebell1024x768.jpg> and <http://raysweb.net/wildflowers-edmonton/images-flowers/bluebell-400vh.jpg>.

According to English folklore, the bluebell came into flower on 23rd April, St George's Day, and the blue was the colour worn to celebrate this Saint's festival. In fact, the flower was surrounded by superstition and whilst beautiful, was also magical. The bluebell was one of the fairies' flowers and solitary children picking bluebells in the woods might disappear forever. This belief is echoed in the nursery rhyme that my old nurse taught me, "In and out the dusky bluebells". More practically, the sap was used to make glue for fixing feathers onto arrows.

(6) Ivy has three meanings: (i) friendship, (ii) fidelity, (iii) marriage. These meanings can be taken both collectively and individually.

See it here <http://www.cesc.net/cinqueportsweb/academicinnbooks/image/christmas/ivy.jpg> and <http://www.theplugsite.com/products/photogalaxy/contactsheets2/ivy.jpg>. Bacchus, the god of wine, wore a wreath of ivy about his head, a reference to the practice of binding the brows with ivy to ward off the less agreeable effects of drinking wine. As a symbol of fidelity, the ivy has a long history, as the ancient Greeks presented newly-weds with ivy wreaths. Poets also wore them in the belief that ivy was a source of inspiration. According to more recent folklore, ivy growing up the walls of a house was thought to protect the home from evil influences and drinking from ivy-wood bowls was said to cure children from whooping cough.

(7) Snowdrop has two meanings: (i) "hope", and (ii) "I shall heal your wounds". See it here <http://www.bcscs-liverpool.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/images/woolton/snowdrop.jpg>.

Contrary to popular belief, it is not native to the British Isles. It was first noted by medieval monks in Italy because they used the flowers for healing wounds. A friend of mine studying Theology informs me that snowdrops are dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Catholics will know that these delightful blossoms played a part in the Feast of the Purification when images of the Virgin Mary were replaced by snowdrops. In some Catholic countries, bunches of snowdrops were placed in the home, especially on Candlemas Day, as they were thought to purify your residence. In other parts of the world, snowdrops in the house are considered an unlucky occurrence. And if there are single genteel ladies of the HP fandom reading, you might not want to pick snowdrops before St Valentine's Day, for if you did so so the superstition runs you would not marry that year.

(8) When I say "abigail" here, I mean lady's maid. In this case, the term is always spelt with a lower case 'a'. The task of such a person was to dress her mistress, style her hair and chaperone her mistress around town or in company. A lady would always call her abigail by her last name/surname only. This is the etiquette and I have kept to it. Ironically, the title and the name "Abigail" is Hebrew for "father rejoiced".

(9) Bluestocking refers to a woman with unfashionably intellectual and literary interests. The term is explained in Boswell's Life of Dr Johnson, as deriving from the name given to meetings held by certain ladies in the 18th century, for conversation with distinguished literary men. A frequent attendee was a Mr Stillingfleet, who always wore his everyday blue worsted stockings because he could not afford silk stockings. He was so much distinguished for his conversational powers that his absence at any time was felt to be a great loss, and so it was often remarked, "We can do nothing without the blue stockings." Admiral Boscawen, husband of one of the most successful hostesses of such gatherings, derisively dubbed them 'The Blue Stocking Society'. Although both men and women, some of them eminent literary and learned figures of the day, attended these meetings, the term 'bluestocking' became attached exclusively, and often contemptuously, to women. This was partly because women were instrumental in organising the evenings, but also because they were seen as encroaching on matters thought not to be their concern.

(10) The phrase "Will you will go abroad today" means "Are you going out today", it does not mean 'are you going overseas today'.

(11) Lucius uses a quizzing glass. The quizzing glass is also known as a lorgnette. During the period of Louis XV the lorgnette became an instrument for the close and unashamed observation of female beauty. Having originally been used for this purpose in the theatre it soon became popular in a variety of situations. (On this subject Mercier wrote an article entitled «Les Lorgneurs», published in the Tableau de Paris in 1793: «Paris is full of these lorgneurs, setting their eyes on you, fixing your person with a steady and immobile gaze. This behaviour is so widespread that it is not even considered indecent anymore. Ladies are not offended when they are observed arriving at the theatre or whilst taking a walk. But should this happen when they are amongst themselves the lorgneur is considered uncouth and accused of insolence». The criticism becomes more severe in the chapter dedicated to the lorgnette: «...they are quite an offence to fashion. Lorgnettes encircle hats, they are contained in fans and in all manner of strange objects. Even the snuff boxes of the era of the XVIII and XIX centuries often contained small spyglasses. French fashions were soon followed in London. Beau Brummell popularized the quizzing glass in England and used a sceptical look through it at a gentlemen as a set down.

(12) I obtained the name Lavinia from Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus. As Lucius is also from the play, I decided to appropriate a name for his sister.

(13) i>Ton, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the Regency/Empire period means fashionable Society, or the fashion. It originates from the French *bon ton*, meaning good form, i.e. good manners, good breeding, etc. A person could be a member of the *ton*, attend *ton* events, or be said to have good *ton* (or bad *ton*). *Ton* can be interchangeably used with *beau monde*. In this story, when I spell society with a capital S (i.e. Society), I am referring to the *ton*.

(14) Those of you confused as to why Luna is now Lady Ronald Weasley, please refer to the preface/introduction and follow the internet link there. The younger son of a Duke, still out ranks the daughter of a Baron and she will have to take his title. However, since Luna is heiress to the Barony of de Quib, when her father dies, she becomes Lady de Quib, and Ron will be plain Lord Ronald. This is because a Baroness outranks the younger son of a duke. Under the marriage contract and settlements, explicitly stated throughout the story look for it you will notice that the clause was that the fellow marrying Luna would have to take her name if he was title-less. If he has a title (fortunate for her she married a younger son), their children would have to be Lovegoods. In history this had happened before when one of the younger sons of the 1st Duke of Leinster married the Baroness de Ros. So in this story, until Lord de Quib dies, Luna will be Lady Ronald Weasley. However, the moment her father dies, she will be Lady de Quib and Ron will be plain Lord Ronald Weasley. This is because a Baroness in her own right outranks the younger son of a Duke.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are extended to Laiagaren and Droxy who assisted in the initial stages of this story. Their preliminary comments helped put together the Introduction/Preface. My betas who choose to be nameless also deserve thanks you know who you are. My preliminary readers, Angel and Larry should also be acknowledged for posing questions in all the chapters. I used them as a standard if they had no idea what I was talking about; odds are, my readers would be just as confused. The encouragement of the ladies at the Potter Place enabled me to edit this story on a regular basis.

I know this story is a deviation from my usual. It's fluffy and quite silly in parts. I'm glad you've stuck with it. It was fun to write and I hope you had fun reading it.

Due to a family emergency and a conference on the Pre-Socratics, I will be away from Saturday (6th May) to Friday (12th May), so I will not be able to reply to any queries or reviews.

Lady Strange