

# Gemstones

*by shefa*

Where fear and hope collide, from the crucible come gemstones. A set of six, 100-word drabbles. Written for lifeasanamazon for HPcon\_envy.

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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The door slams behind her with a crash that reverberates through the house. She must have put a minor blasting charm behind that one, he thinks.

She never was one to go for subtlety.

He eyes her from the front window. She's been irritable for weeks, prickling at the smallest frustration, her expression comparable to an offended Hippogriff.

There's no point asking her what's wrong. He'd prefer to avoid the lecture and the tears that follow.

Hers, not his.

Back on the couch, his journal awaits him. The page before him blurs.

She'll tell him in time.

He can wait.

~~\*~~

She can't tell him.

It's not as if they've ever discussed *this*—not really.

Fantasies of happily ever after, of a life, and a family—*real* home together—belong with her dreams, scattered like snowflakes in the dark of night.

She can still hear his voice, thick with love and rough with need, weaving glittering promises into her skin. Her heart holds each one close, every one its own gem, glimmering with hope miles deep.

She hadn't ever expected this—had never planned to be here, having to decide whether she has any right to hold him to them.

~~\*~~

Spooned together in the dark, he feels tension snake through her body, coiled as if ready to spring.

One long finger traces the line of her shoulder, follows the spiral of a wayward curl and comes to rest between her breasts.

She clasps his hand between hers. Silent tears slide between their fingers, watering the bed beneath them.

"You'll be angry," she whispers. He starts at the despair in her voice.

"Since when is that tragic?"

She draws their clasped hands down to lay his palm against the curve of her belly.

"Since it doesn't involve only you... and me."

~~\*~~

She will die from his silence.

It's worse than her worst nightmare, she thinks, as she imagines him withdrawing from her, taking back every tender wish; demanding recompense for each offering, now regretted.

But when he speaks, his fingers draw languid circles over her skin, mapping the roundness that has just begun to take shape.

"I am reminded," he says, voice rough, "of some advice, imparted to me several years ago. Advice, I should add, that was at the time, unwelcome."

There's hardly enough air in the room to breathe, just enough to whisper, "What advice, Severus? Tell me. Please."

~~\*~~

"I was completely at loose ends," he says, remembering. "Useless. My time passed and a future I never wanted stretching out before me."

Freed of his bonds, he'd panicked, railing against anyone who came near. Even her.

*Especially her.*

He brushes lips against salty skin and feels her let out a long breath.

Finally.

"I was angry," he whispers. "And afraid."

"I remember."

"Do you remember what you told me that day?" he asks. On the day he gave her his heart.

"I said..." Her voice is choked with tears. "That you are never alone so long as you love."

~~\*~~

It had been the day she'd feared she'd lost him.

He, unwilling to trust the moment in front of him for fear of the trap it concealed.

And she, knowing only that this man was the one she wanted for now and for always.

"What else did you tell me, Hermione?"

She remembers.

"To stay in the moment and..." Her voice wavers. "That you'd never be alone because... I love you."

He draws her closer and turns her to face him.

Skin to skin, heart to heart.

"Then how," he murmurs, "can you believe any less of *me*, my love?"

~Fin

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