

# Quiet Retreat

*by slytherinlaurel*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

Severus returns to what he thought was home.

It didn't even occur to him to bring flowers. Or candy. Or poetry. In fact, had he done so, she probably would have hexed him, thinking it was an imposter. For that matter, she might hex him anyway.

When he hadn't written the first week, it was because it slipped his mind. When he hadn't written the first month, it reached the point of being awkward, so he avoided it all together. Now, six months later with his research complete, he stood on her doorstep and hesitated, however briefly, before knocking.

The knock was followed by shuffling on the other side of the door. When she opened it, her face betrayed little surprise, but she had learned to school her features. Funny how those things rubbed off. She looked tired, hair loosely tied back, as she sported an oversized jumper and leggings.

"*Merlin*. You're pregnant," Severus uttered, in quite possibly the least articulate moment of his entire life.

Hermione eyed the man on her doorstep. "Thanks. I noticed."

"You never wrote."

"Neither did you," she replied without malice.

"You should have told me. I would have come back."

"You should have written me - at least once - in the six months you were off roving around South America looking for potions ingredients."

"I would have stayed if I had known."

"When you left I did ask you to stay, unless you've forgotten. I asked you to stay for me, Severus, and it wasn't enough for you."

"It was only going to be six months."

"Exactly. Nothing of consequence could possibly happen in six months."

"I'm sorry, Hermione."

"For what?" she demanded softly.

"Pardon?"

"I want to know what you're apologizing for, Severus."

In the space of time it took him to pause, the door shut quietly, but firmly, in his face.

*A/N: Special thanks to my beta, peppermint, with additional gratitude to WriterMerrin.*