

Felicity's Children

by Deathofme

The six stages of addiction and withdrawal. Hermione Granger's journal as she goes through the experiment of what high volumes of Felix Felicis have over a person, and the unexpected results. Snape watches over, caught between being her supplier and enabler. Written for the Summer 2010 SSHG Exchange.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Written for the SSHG Exchange for Siriuslysnogged. The original prompt was *Consequences: Hermione Granger has been abusing Felix Felicis as per her nature (think: past Time Turner burn out). What are the consequences of such flagrant actions? Morally grey Snape, possibly her drug provider and flimsy moral advisor...perhaps he half-heartedly tells her that the constant use of FF is leading down a dangerous path, but internally he is all too pleased to watch her life's degradation. Bonus points for: a dub-connish scene in which he refuses to provide the drug unless she does something lewd with him.*

PROLOGUE

It started, as most failures do, with the best of intentions. When they found Hermione, she was lying amongst a flurry of papers, notes scribbled onto abandoned reams of parchment. The walls of her flat shook and trembled, and the team of Aurors had to cast several warding spells to stabilize the area.

Magic shook throughout the flat, thick and sour in the air. A fierce coda belying the power of the witch it was bound to, now staring at them with glassy eyes, a blank expression on her face.

"Hermione?" Kingsley Shacklebolt had come personally, refusing to believe all accounts until he had witnessed his rising protégé and friend himself. He shook her arm gently, unable to recognize anything familiar in her face.

"We have to get her out soon, Minister. Our wards won't hold for much longer."

Kingsley stood up, letting the stoic side of his nature take over for the moment. There was nothing to mourn here. There was only a shell of what could have been.

"Transport her to St. Mungo's. Collect as much of the material in here as possible. We'll see if there's anything criminal that requires a trial with the Wizengamot."

*

Restless Sleep...Two months under effects of Felix Felicis

Harry and Ron always nagged me about going a hundred miles an hour, especially with my studies. I feel like I did then, studying for final exams, staying up all night for a few days consecutively and feeling that warm buzz of energy in the pit of my stomach and fingers. Running on adrenaline.

Things have been going fantastically well, though, I've made more progress in this last month than I have the whole year. Finally, out of the laboratory studying each ingredient of Felix individually! Even for me, it was dull work, and I'm much happier seeing the effects of this potion in application.

Of course, I've abstained from taking Felix when there could be a major conflict of interest. My application for an extension on the Ministry grant, unfortunately, went to the St. Mungo's ward for the incurably insane. I'm sure they needed the funding more; I'm just starting to find it more difficult to keep purchasing the volume of Felix I need. Who would have thought that, even after all the accolades and respect he earned after the war, Severus Snape would still be a grumpy old bastard who won't even give a fellow colleague a discount on materials needed for research purposes? Some things do not change. The positive side effects of using Felix on a low-end, daily basis have been quite pleasant. Always getting an empty elevator on my way to work, little mix-ups at the shops that include small items I was neglected to be charged for ... it's still on a very petty scale though. I need to know the truly lasting, full extent of what Felix can do.

In the short times I visit Severus to place orders, he's shown a marked contempt for my work. He turns up his nose at me as if he feels it's redundant, and that he knows something I could never hope to. It's irksome; I'm sure there are elements to Felix he could never hope to know...

*

Sleeping patterns starting to become irregular. I find myself nodding off in the middle of doing work or writing notes, which isn't unusual, but once I finally try to sleep, it is hard coming. I toss and turn, some humming part of my brain that refuses to switch off.

Felix is quite a powerful potion, yet with very subtle ways in which it works. I've been reviewing the arithmancy charts of my own magical thread, and I'm beginning to understand how Felix ensures success and luck for its taker. It creates a very small change in the frequency of one's magical thread, almost making one perform and function to a slightly higher degree than usual. I've been finding some parallels in my side studies with Muggle research on psychosomatics.

Either way, there is no time to worry over a few missing hours of sleep. I'm too close to groundbreaking results.

*

An odd thing happened earlier today.

I was at Severus' shop to pick up another order. He took one look at me and wryly commented, "Burning the night oil? It does wonders for your complexion." Very rude, very pointed. Nothing I shouldn't have expected from him, but something welled up inside of me. I had to take a moment to collect myself, paid for the order and then left the shop as quickly as I can. I then walked half a block, turned into an alley and cried on someone's porch for a good ten minutes. It was uncontrollable.

I suppose I've broken before, become snappy and unable to fully handle my emotions during high-stress periods. I just can't afford to lose myself now; there is still so much to do.

I will try and get a full night's rest today.

*

Finally resorted to some Dreamless Sleep Potion. I've only ordered enough for a week. Hopefully this will help me reset my sleep cycle and I can return to normal.

*

I don't understand how this happened ... but I've used up a week's worth of Dreamless Sleep in three days.

I still feel tired.

Dilated Pupils Two months and two weeks under effects of Felix Felicis

I've been inside my flat for a week now. I've converted one of the spare rooms into a workstation. Ginny sent an owl yesterday, concerned that she hadn't seen me in a while. Begging me to come to lunch with her tomorrow. I don't know if I can leave my work, but perhaps a break and some sunlight will do me good.

The thought of being outside, however, has slowly become abhorrent.

*

He laughed. The bastard had the gall to laugh at me today.

I wish I could just get my orders of Felix owl delivered to me, but it is a very valuable and restricted potion. So I need to be present for the authorization of the transaction. Bloody bureaucratic methods...

He told me I looked the very image of a pasty English girl. My hair was also not being as cooperative as I usually like, so I suppose I must have looked a right mess. But professionalism is a term unfamiliar with Severus Snape. He has always been one to know which buttons to push.

I never want to leave my flat again.

*

My supervisor raised her concerns with me after a regular drop-in today. She wanted to open the curtains of my apartment and the windows, to "let some light and air in." I humoured her for the time being, distracting her with my new findings. But honestly, I just wanted her to leave as soon as possible.

The second she left I closed the curtains again. The sunlight is too harsh; it pierces right through me, giving me headaches. I can't concentrate in those conditions. And I must be able to focus now; I'm at such a critical point. I just wish I knew how soon I'll be able to arrive at that breaking point.

*

I've stopped taking Dreamless Sleep. It has an odd effect of making me lethargic, yet edgy. I was also taking it in an almost one to two ratio with the Felix, and that's far too much than is safe.

The effects of Felix have seemed to hit a plateau as well. How much must one consume in order to go beyond simple victories and pleasantries in day-to-day life? I dread thinking of the volume I need to order from Severus now, but it's become inevitable.

Anorexia Four months under effects of Felix Felicis

My intake of Felix has become a daily occurrence. Reviewing my notes, I can see that I foreshadowed the need for a dramatic increase in order for results, but I'm suspicious that this change occurred unconsciously, or rather, without this consideration in mind. I've only recently realized how dramatic this increase was this morning when I stepped out of my bedroom to see empty boxes with empty vials littered on my floor. So much so that I could barely walk around them.

I postponed my appointment with my supervisor again. My work is just too unstable and unclear of a stage for further review at the present moment. What would be the point of discussing the project when I still only have half the information I need? The meeting would consist of her pointing this out and then proclaiming she could make no conclusive statement on my progress. *I know this already.*

I think I have had three hours of sleep over two days.

*

Disgusting as it is, I took my first shower today in almost a week. I can see my ribs poking through my skin. I've become neglectful to daily routine, but this is normal. I've always forgotten about insipid things like tidying or exercising or eating regularly in the middle of work. This is completely normal behaviour on my part.

My arithmancy charts were showing me confusing patterns until I realized I had made a simple mistake in my calculations. It was an incredibly rudimentary mistake as well ... something they taught me in second year at Hogwarts. It was embarrassing, but everyone must make mistakes at one point or another.

Have to see Severus again today for another pickup. How tedious this chore is.

*

A curious glance, not a welcome one, from Severus when I went to pick up the next order of Felix. He had nothing snide to say to me, however, so I left thinking I had a lucky break.

But he sent me an owl later on in the day. Bizarre! A slender, black hellion too, in keeping with character. It just stated that we needed to discuss the next order in person, very curt and formal, but I know what it is. It's a dig at my professionalism. Somehow I can never escape a visit with him without being insulted in some way.

*

Cannot sleep. I drift in and out and perhaps catch a few precious minutes unbeknownst to me, but the buzzing feeling has spread from my brain to all of my limbs. I just cannot hold still for one moment, and yet I cannot find the energy within me to move.

I discovered blisters under my tongue and some light down on the underside of my arms today. I shall have to schedule an appointment with a Mediwitch. Soon. I can't tomorrow, I have the week's arithmancy charts to process and graph and that dreaded visit with Severus. Perhaps the day after. If I feel up to it.

*

Severus came over today, instead of insisting I meet him down at his shop as per usual. He made a pot of some smelly tea, and I sipped at it only to be polite. He asked some very routine questions about how my research was progressing and such and such.

He then told me that as a legal potions supplier he couldn't continue providing me with the volume of Felix I required without an official approval from my supervisor. "This is a restricted potion, Miss Granger, and you are requesting inordinate quantities of it. I struggle to be able to provide the amount that you ask for on this regular basis. I want that approval form for your next order; it's that or they take my license. And as much as I bend head over heels to accommodate you, I will not suffer to see my business run to the ground because of your fanaticism."

I ground my teeth and thanked him for his visit. I was glad when he left. The approval form is still sitting on my counter.

I need that new batch of Felix tomorrow, and my supervisor's signature is very close to my own handwriting.

*

I hate going out.

Severus gave me a knowing glance when I showed up today, but he still handed over the boxes without a word. He had a comment about how I'd been paying too close attention to the *Glamour Witch* magazines, and I almost slapped him.

Came home and looked at myself in the mirror. I've become rather gaunt. But it's nothing out of the ordinary. I've always trusted my body cues, and I have just not been hungry. I shall eat when I'm hungry, when my body needs it. Forcing myself to eat at this point would just have me sick anyway.

*

I woke up unexpectedly in the middle of the day. I hadn't even known I'd fallen asleep. One of my curtain rings had torn, and a part of it had fallen down. The sun burnt.

I think there is an unstable element of Felix I have underestimated.

*

Still stuck in this horrible plateau, in this insufferable rut. Felix hasn't peaked; its effects even seem to be tapering off. Could it just be the very neutral environment of my flat? I feel like I haven't left it in a year. How can I measure the effects of Felix in an environment where nothing happens?

The thought is sickening that I could have wasted months. I'm burning out. I don't know how much is left within me.

I've begun to use Dreamless Sleep again. I may not fall asleep any easier, but it seems to calm the buzzing in my brain for at least a few hours. Buzzing, buzzing, never stopping. Vibrating at a frequency I don't understand.

*

I put on my robes this morning to go down to Severus' shop and place a new order. They slipped right off my shoulders and fell into a pool at my feet. This lifeless, black mass. Limp and dead.

Hello, Hermione Granger? Are you still there?

***Goose Flesh* Seven months under effects of Felix Felicis**

Severus has remained stubborn, as he always is, and refuses to deliver the packages of Felix to my flat. That is one thing he will never concede to. "If you want the potion that badly, than it shouldn't behoove you to come pick it up. I am in no position to take time out of my busy schedule for your petty whims." Bastard.

It hurts to leave. It hurts to move. It hurts to be *out*.

I came across a stray arithmancy chart today when I woke up and found myself having inadvertently used it as a pillow. The ink smeared on my mouth; I must have drooled a little in my sleep. However brief it was. Funny, I haven't done a chart in months. The patterns just don't make sense anymore.

None of this makes sense anymore. None of my findings, none of my notes, none of these charts or graphs. I've lost sight of my work.

*

I collapsed in Severus' shop today. I only remember seeing coloured lights that quickly overtook my entire vision and then nothing.

I woke up and found myself in my flat. Severus was sitting across from me and immediately handed me a glass of water. I tried to push it aside but he gave me a hard look

and said, "Drink." I downed the glass, felt it churn in my stomach and was sick. He banished it quickly without a second glance, and then spoke very gently to me. It was only until he mentioned it that I realized my hair has been thinning and falling out.

I asked him if he was going to take me to St. Mungo's, and a conflicted look came across his face. I was surprised. He may have been one of my most despised professors, and a thorn in my side since, but I had always held this fundamental trust that Severus Snape was one to do the right thing. Not the ethical or moral thing, but the right thing. The thing that had to be done. But he was hesitant to send me to a hospital. Shows his weakness.

He turned the tables and asked me if I wanted to commit myself, and I fervently refused. Ashamedly, I came to the point of begging him not to take me and to leave me here, and that I'd be fine.

He performed a few, quick cleaning spells on the flat and then left. I lay there for the rest of the day on the couch, not sleeping, but not truly awake either.

*

Severus has now struck up a daily routine where he comes over and brings food. I refuse to eat it, and he either gently coaxes me or tries to appeal to my rationality, and usually in the end begins to insult me in such harsh, acidic tones, always finding the right nerve to hit before I cave in. Just to stop him from tearing me to shreds. It's become one of my favourite games, though; I find ways to hide the food from him, and in the most lightning quick moments when he's not looking, discard it. The food makes me feel sick.

I asked him, in a coy way I suppose, if his bringing me food all the time also meant he would bring the Felix personally himself. A sudden dark look passed his face then, and he looked as if he would strike me. He told me that he didn't enjoy babysitting me one bit and that the agreement still stood that if I wanted Felix that badly, I would have to come get it myself.

It was a slap to the face, and I threatened him. I told him that if he didn't bring it to the flat, I would go to St. Mungo's myself. I would go to the Ministry, and he was just as heavily implicated in all of this as I was.

"But you would never go to the hospital. Hermione. You would never bring this matter to your superiors. The threat is quite a weighty one, but imaginary, as its result frightens you a thousand-fold more than it affects me in the slightest. Besides, Granger ... what money do you have to keep ordering Felix Felicis with? Your Ministry grant has completely run dry."

He stood by the door, a black monolith, and turned his head slightly to glance imperiously at me overtop a shoulder. "There is no unstable element in Felix Felicis, Granger. That would undoubtedly be you."

*

My arms are scraped raw. The buzzing I feel in my limbs is an infinite, indomitable itch that I unconsciously scratch and pick away at. Hoping that for one second I can be graced without feeling it hum within me. There's blood caked under my fingernails and light scabs all over my arms, legs and stomach. I found some dried blood around my temples as well. The humming is the worst in my head.

I forget what all this was for.

*

It was with a sense of triumph that I walked into Severus' shop and slapped down the payment for the order of Felix in cold, hard galleons. Show that greasy bastard what Hermione Granger is still capable of.

"Your personal funds will only last you so long, Miss Granger."

Of course, always a sour note accompanying any exchange I have with him. But the Felix was the important part, and in that I was successful today. I was on top. I was lucky.

*

Cried in the bathroom for an hour. Exhausted, but can't fall asleep.

*

Severus came today, let me off easy when it came to trying to force me to eat, and then brought out a vial of Murtlap Essence. I cringed at first; it felt so odd to be close to someone, let alone having them touch you, but he had saved his barrage of invective for this. Once I calmed down, he was very gentle about applying the Murtlap to the various scabs and open wounds on my body. Although my stomach I insisted on doing myself, if with shakier hands.

It was the first time I've felt some tension unwind from me. I feel like Hermione has wound herself into a very tight knot, sitting at my centre of gravity. Having the Murtlap massaged into me was blissful ... wonderful ... unwinding, I could feel myself stretch out and become still. If for just a moment.

He sternly hissed at me to stop scratching and then left. I slept, finally, for five hours in a row.

*

I've begun counting. In this dark room, where there is nothing but the walls and me, I have latched onto numbers. I am counting, counting, endlessly counting.

How many empty boxes there are, and how many vials a box can contain, and how many fluid ounces a vial can contain, and at which concentration of Felix I have, which means exactly how much in an ounce, in a vial, in a box?

I am counting not how many there were, but how many I have left.

*

Owls from the Ministry. Some from Harry and Ginny. They've left so many scratches at my windowpane, fluttering like a storm outside my flat. Never let in.

Sometimes I look out, only at night. Feathers littering the ground and the deck below, blanketing the night and outside.

*

I have no galleons left in my account at Gringotts. Just a few stray knuts, not enough to buy the *Daily Prophet* with.

I tried to cry, I did. There's just not enough of me left that I could waste a single drop.

***Irritability* Ten months under effect of Felix Felicis**

"It seems our relation is then at its conclusion. It was a pleasure doing business with you, Miss Granger."

Oddly enough, I was certain that I would walk out of his shop with Felix, even just a vial, but that I would not leave empty-handed. That there was no way the world could

turn that this would not be a possibility. It was the kind of certainty in things turning out well that Felix gives you. It was that I was certain of this, because the alternate was something no one could contemplate.

Barter, I said. There must be something I possess of value that I could trade in exchange for another order.

"I don't need your lab trinkets or any of your useless notes, Miss Granger."

"The flat."

"Is a sty, and unfit for a human being to reside in."

"The deeds, you can have the deeds to the flat."

Severus gave me a hard, considering look then. The moment seemed to stretch on for eternity. "That's only good for two more orders."

"It's good for *five* at the very least!"

"Three. And not a vial more."

And I was right. I walked out of his shop with Felix.

*

I can't understand

*

How have I gone through a box so quickly?

*

Severus came over. My landlord wouldn't accept the transfer of the deeds. Apparently my signature was illegible and looked nothing like my previous documents. I laughed at him and told him to leave. It was his problem.

"Put your magical seal on it *now*."

It's fun, pretending like I have any power in the situation. Any time I can make him squirm, at least a little bit, is worth it. He had to help me guide my wand and place a spell on the parchment, but then it was done.

"Don't make me leave until the order's all gone."

Severus looked around at the flat and then for a very long time at me. "There won't be anything left once it's all gone."

But he exited without another word, so I'm sure I'm safe from being evicted.

*

My supervisor came unexpectedly this morning. No courtesy, just plain, mean rudeness. The cunt. Banging on the door, yelling to be let in. I yelled at her to break down the cursed door if she wanted to be let in so badly. She tried manipulating me with all sorts of platitudes about how she was concerned and that I was being oh so irresponsible.

I just couldn't handle her voice, this high-pitched annoying whine in my ear. All the empty glass in the apartment shattered at once, making a deafening, frightening noise. My magic getting the best of me. But she screamed in surprise from the other side of the door, and then I heard nothing else. I just laughed and laughed until it hurt too much to make noise.

It looks like a hurricane swept through here.

*

Another box gone. Lady Luck, Lady Luck what have you done with Hermione?

*

I'm sorry

*

I can't even. Can't even no no no didn't happen never happen can't can't

*

Severus came over. The last vial of Felix. Laughed at me in a strange way of how I could pay for it, but gave it to me anyway.

Why did he stay? To talk? To gloat? I don't know. I don't know why I let him stay, though I guess he owns the flat. He owns everything in here. I live nowhere.

I don't even live inside this body. Hermione left; I'm just squatting. So it wasn't Hermione who undressed for Snape and ...

The shattered glass was all banished before then. It happened on the floor. I could only feel the buzzing. This interminable buzzing shaking right down to the very bone. I don't know why I let him. I don't know why I let me. It was like the Murtlap: it wasn't ungentle, and it wasn't what I wanted, but there is nothing I want anymore. Only hunger. Only need.

"So, are you an unstable element too?" Throwing his words back at him. The things he dares to do sometimes.

But he just looked at me and said this before he turned his back to me and fell asleep.

"Just broken."

*

Why, Hermione.

The ground. It hurts to fall down.

*
Severus came back. All hard composure and business-like. Professional. Not a soft bone in his body. Trying too hard.

"Did you know what would happen?"

He raised a quizzical eyebrow, to ask what I was referring to. I only had to point at myself. He shook his head no, and it seemed sincere.

"Why did you keep ... "

"Why did you?"

He then sighed, deflating, first I've ever seen. Wiping some small nightmare from his tired eyes. "I suppose I had more faith in you than I should have. And then I passed a point where it was too late for me to back out. I'm just as guilty for this as you."

Something broke inside of me. Like the glass storm of empty vials.

"Get out."

A full vial of Felix shattered under the random power of my rage. Severus left without another word, and in a manner I never wished to see him in. Defeated. I was left alone then, something I thought I had wanted. But realized I didn't even have myself for company.

TremorsEleven months and two weeks under effect of Felix Felicis

Hermione, where ... Hermione, how ...

Just come back.

*

Things are falling off the shelves and moving without my uttering a single word. My wand's snapped and somewhere under the couch, forgot how it broke. The magic is out of control. It shudders and oozes out of me at random intervals, becoming more frequent, and once released it wants a grand exit. Some of it has hurt. All of it is frightening.

I don't know what to do. I don't know how to make it stop. Just please, stop.

*

Coward coward coward coward COWARD COWARD COWARD!

Damn him. Circe, damn him.

And damn me too.

EPILOGUE

Severus read the last entry without wincing and stoically threw the last sheet of parchment into the fire. It exploded into flame, releasing a white hot flash of light. The invective seemingly clinging onto one last chance of expression.

Coward, perhaps. The Ministry would be arriving in seven minutes, and he was not one to waste time. The deeds were burned as well; the flat would be reclaimed as property of the Ministry. He also made sure the forged approval form was burned. The receipts and all paper transactions of the orders of Felix, however, he left scattered about the apartment.

The Ministry would arrive in four minutes. It would take them a week at the soonest to be able to sort through all of Hermione's possessions and piece together what had happened. By that time, Severus would have disappeared from England, an empty storefront the only evidence that he had once been a successful Potions master, working and residing within the country. Where could he go? Munich? Venezuela?

The only paper trail left behind in Hermione's apartment now left the blame solely on his shoulders; her recklessness and irresponsibility burnt up inside her private journals. He would most probably need to be tried before the Wizengamot if they ever found him in England, but he had no thought of returning. He was a man who could disappear when he wanted to.

Hermione ... how long she would need to stay at St. Mungo's, Severus had no idea. He anticipated an immediate motion by the Minister to ban Felix Felicis as a dangerous, illegal substance.

Severus did not look behind him as he left Hermione's flat, or the girl lying motionless on the floor. That was not something he deserved.

This was not a world for the lucky.

END