

Loyalty

by Anastasia

A 4-part response to the "Seedy character" challenge on the grangersnape100 LJ community.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Severus grimaced at the filth, twisted his hands further into Mundungus' robes, and slammed him into the wall.

"You are treading on dangerous ground."

"You should know about walking the line, Severus. Where do your loyalties lie this week?"

The world spiraled sideways as Severus threw Mundungus to the ground. Before he could attempt to rise, a boot touched his throat, pressing to a degree just short of asphyxiation.

Mundungus grinned, even as death was only a shift of Severus' weight away. His eyes shifted to a figure standing in the shadows.

"This is not about loyalty. You love her."

The boot lowered a fraction further, twisting against Mundungus' windpipe, only allowing enough air for him to retain consciousness.

Severus stared down at Mundungus, scowling as he clawed at his boot and tried to wrestle free.

"There, there..." Severus taunted softly, "this won't hurt a bit."

"Hermione, no..." Mundungus croaked, then was cut off when Severus replaced his boot with his hand, driving his fingers deep into Mundungus' jaw, forcing his mouth open.

Without hesitation, Hermione stepped forward and poured a vial's contents down Mundungus' throat.

Severus viciously picked Mundungus up, shoved him against the wall, and grinned.

"The locket."

Mundungus appeared casual, a crooked grin revealing his tobacco-stained teeth.

"Why, Severus, how do you survive standing before your master in such a condition? Love is certainly a deadly distraction," Mundungus crooned, his voice hitching when Severus drove his wand into his ribs.

"The same as you: with every ounce of my wit and undying vow of loyalty," Severus growled.

Mundungus paled and remained silent.

"Where is it?" Severus demanded.

Mundungus' mouth struggled to remain closed; however, his eyes shifted to his bag, hastily shoved under a tangle of chairs when he had found himself cornered in the alley.

Hermione followed Mundungus' gaze and found the bag. Her eyes met Severus' in the dim light as she raised the chain high. The locket twirled around, swaying heavily. A depth of furious color surrounded it, angrily descending to a dull gold. Alive.

"Get on with it," Mundungus stated grimly, watching Hermione leave the alley.

"Oh, I won't kill you," Severus said, "but the poison mixed in with the Veritaserum will. In a foul manner, too. Pity."

Mundungus' eyes grew wide as he clutched his throat with a shaking hand.

"You were right about one thing, though... I do love her."