

Proestigium

by Lady Strange

COMPLETE An epistolary story based on the WIKTT 'Arsenius Jigger' challenge. There will be 42 letters in all. Correspondences trace the changing lives and times of the various characters in the HP universe as well as some new characters.

Letter 1: Severus Snape to Minerva McGonagall, 26th November 1997

Chapter 1 of 42

COMPLETE An epistolary story based on the WIKTT 'Arsenius Jigger' challenge. There will be 42 letters in all. Correspondences trace the changing lives and times of the various characters in the HP universe as well as some new characters.

Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Brief Author's Note: This is written in response to the WIKTT "Arsenius Jigger" challenge. The details are as follows:

(A) Basic Idea & Gist of Story: Write a story where Hermione comes into possession of the book *Magical Drafts and Potions* by Arsenius Jigger. Hermione decides to write to Arsenius Jigger regularly. Arsenius Jigger is really Severus Snape.

(B) Requirements:

- Why and what Hermione writes to Arsenius Jigger about is up to you.
- Why Severus writes under a pseudonym and wants this to be kept secret is up to you.
- Severus must know that Hermione is the one writing to him, but she must not know he is Arsenius Jigger.
- Severus must write Hermione back
- Hermione must fall over heels in love with Arsenius Jigger and not Severus Snape. How you get her from that to loving Snape is all yours.
- You may choose any plot conflicts you wish, and the ending may be dramatically angst ridden, happy or just ambivalent. However, under no circumstances is there to be sappiness of any sort.
- No time-turners are allowed.
- No dead characters should come back to life or play any part in your story.
- Hermione must carry around an action figure of Victor Krum and talk to him regularly.

Chuse is the old-fashioned spelling of choose.

Letter 2: Hermione Granger to Arsenius Jigger, 27th November 1997

Chapter 2 of 42

Hermione's rather interesting letter to Jigger...

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphasises are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU or a little OOC.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 2: Hermione Granger to Arsenius Jigger, 27th November 1997

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

Dr Arsenius Jigger

c/o The Publisher,

Esotericae House,

An imprint of Obscurus Books

18a, Diagon Alley,

London,

England,

United Kingdom

27th November 1997

Dear Dr Jigger,

I have long admired your work in advanced alchemical theory. However, this is not another letter extolling your intellectual genius.

Forgive my audacity, but I feel it my duty to point out an inconsistency in your book *Magical Drafts and Potions*. In chapter 5, page 78, you wrote, "Arrowroot is renowned for its great restorative qualities. Lesser known, however, are its preservative powers. This accounts for its usage in the stasis solution used for preserving and maintaining the samples of highly degradable bats' liver and hippogriff heart." Yet, later on page 90 of the same chapter, second paragraph, third line from the bottom, it is stated, "The Stasis solution is unsuited to the preservation of delicate ingredients such as lacewing flies' wings and dragonfly wings. When these gossamer ingredients were soaked in the stasis solution made from arrowroot, they degraded into a thin film. Given that the rest of the ingredients, as outlined above, viz., early morning dew, ground crab apple seeds, Peruvian dragon blood and mandrake juice, it is likely that the degradation is caused by the arrowroot binding to the dragon blood."

However, sir, in *Dumbledore and Flamel's Uses of Dragon Blood*, the authors' state, "It is conclusively proven that dragon blood is a catalyst rather than a binding agent. Its chemical composition is a covalent bonded double tetra-hexagonal cat-ion, which prevents its breakdown into simpler forms." This is in the second edition of *Dumbledore and Flamel*, page 143. In light of the fact that dragon blood cannot be broken down into the basic ionic compounds, it cannot bond chemically to arrowroot or its extracts. Arrowroot, regardless of its extracted form, can only bind itself to an HQ negative ion in the compound. Regardless of the species of dragon, dragon blood, according to von Blundt-Stätgarken, *Extracts of Dragon Blood*, is the same in consistency.

At first, I was in doubt as to whether von Blundt-Stätgarken's theory held water. I was also confused as to the conflicting theories suggested by yourself and *Dumbledore et al.*; as such, I conducted an experiment in my 7th Year Independent Study Module (ISM). Using the hybrid atropa-Sudan test, I substituted the various types of dragon blood (kindly donated by my module supervisor's private stores) *ceteris paribus*. And I found that both *Dumbledore et al* and von Blundt-Stätgarken were correct in their assessment of the properties of dragon blood. I also took the liberty of creating a stasis solution from the various samples of dragon blood in which I soaked the other ingredients for preservation. The following observations were made:

1. the complete dissolution of lacewing fly wings
2. the dissolution of the gelatinous material of dragon wings.

Therefore, it leads me to extrapolate the conclusion that the arrowroot powder (which is the only non-liquid component of the stasis solution) contains a compound that

breaks down the cellular structure of the gelatinous fibres of insect wings and other ingredients of similar molecular composition based on the CP-K-HN anion.

However, I am as yet unable to verify this theory as Hogwarts does not provide the facilities for student experimentation in breaking down potion ingredients. After presenting my finds to my supervisor, Professor Snape, I suggested that I ought to be permitted to access the staff research rooms to prove/disprove my theory. He has denied me the permission to use his personal workspace and dismissed my presentation (I believe, unfairly) on grounds that it discredits other factors. When pressed as to what these other factors were, I was hastily given an 'Outstanding' for this project. I plan to pursue my hypothesis to its logical conclusion in the Independent Potions Study Module for my next project. However, I am uncertain whether I will indeed have access the necessary research and experiments by the NEWT examinations. I am aware that you, *unlike my supervisor*, may instruct me to take this matter up again at a higher level, as my present abilities and knowledge maybe insufficient for the cause. But I assure you, I am keen on the subject and the results of this experiment. After what can be best described as a brief *consultation* with Professor Snape, he suggested that I "write to Dr Jigger of your findings so as to receive the set down you so richly deserve."

As you can see, I have already taken the first step and have apprised you of my research findings. Perhaps you would (if you think it not too impertinent for me to ask) like to conduct an experiment on your own. If you do so, could I beg your indulgence to share the findings with me? You have my assurances on my discretion. I know better than to intellectually rob someone of their work.

I thank you for taking time to read this instead of dismissing this as a (1) fan letter, or (2) a letter written by an ignorant schoolgirl. If I should be in error in my descriptions or my hypothesis, kindly disabuse me of my preconceptions. I apologise for taking up your precious time. I earnestly hope that you will look into the matter I brought to your attention. It was neither my intention to disparage you nor become a pest.

Yours very sincerely,

Hermione Granger.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Letter 3: William Heaney to Arsenius Jigger, 28th November 1997

Chapter 3 of 42

Letter to Jigger from his publisher. Notice that the publisher has no means of being in direct contact with him...

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 3: William Heaney to Arsenius Jigger, 28th November 1997

William H. Heaney

The Editor

Esotericae House,

An imprint of Obscurus Books

18a, Diagon Alley,

London,

United Kingdom.

Associate Professor Arsenius Jigger

c/o Mr J. Alfred Prufrock

Prufrock and Tudor Literary Agency

57, Nimue Lane,

Leeds, West Yorkshire

United Kingdom

28th November 1997

Dear Dr Jigger,

Please find the attached Gringotts' cheque of 6000 galleons. There has been an increase in the percentage of royalties earned this year due to the high intake of students. We, at Esotericae House and Obscurus, wonder if you might be interested in writing a companion guide to your seminal text? Might we suggest one for higher level students? Perhaps you might consider publishing something for your own students at the university? In the event that you are interested, Esotericae House and Obscurus

will be more than happy to print and market the book on your behalf for the usual 10% home fee and 20% abroad fee. Our commission, regrettably, has been raised to 15% of the market yields, but it will continue to leave you with a sizeable amount nonetheless.

For your perusal, we have attached a brochure of the costs it will incur this year owing to the fiscal resizing and various management cutbacks. Our service to you and all our authors', however, will be in no way compromised.

Attached is also the latest catalogue of books available at Obscurus and its sister imprints for the academic year 1997-1998. The 20% discount for published authors still remains, so it might please the esteemed professor to make a few select purchases with us this year. Of interest are the newly imported 5th editions of Cosmo de Medici's Draughts for All Occasions and the latest translations of Lao Tzu's Metaphysical Potions Most Analytical. New in this year's wizarding philosophy and political science range are Black Death: Hermeneutics in Modern Wizarding Politics, The Reckless Soul: Impiety and Ignobility in Nietzschean Magic, Justice in Platonic Magical Discourses, and The End of the Coming of the Gods in Greek Magical Histories.

On your previous instructions, I have already sent letters to people requesting your signature for their books informing them that you do not do so. Enclosed, you will find 3 fan letters and a misdirected letter addressed to you. How anyone can mistake us for your literary agent, I do not know. An easy enough error, as you are known for your reclusive ways.

Flourish and Blotts has again asked whether you would be interested in conducting a book launch, book signing cum lecture shortly before Easter. Do consider the idea, Dr Jigger, it would be good publicity for everyone involved. Obscurus and Esotericae House would also like your permission for the translation of Magical Drafts and Potions in these languages: Japanese, Dutch, Burmese, Hindi, Russian and Danish. Our usual 12% translation fee still holds. Our offices in Rome and Athens would also like Latin and Ancient Greek translations of the book. Seeing how you have published in journals using those languages, I thought you would prefer to make your own translation. The French edition may require updating soon, as does the German one. I shall inform you, as and when the need to do so arises.

I am, your obedient servant,

Wm. Heaney

Footnotes

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Wm. is the abbreviated form of William.

Letter 4: J. Alfred Prufrock to Severus Snape, 29th November 1997

Chapter 4 of 42

A letter from Jigger's literary agent, who is not all that he seems.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 4: J. Alfred Prufrock to Severus Snape, 29th November 1997

J. Alfred Prufrock

Prufrock and Tudor Literary Agency

57, Nimue Lane,

Leeds, West Yorkshire

United Kingdom.

Professor Severus X. A. Snape

Hogwarts Castle,

Potions' Office,

The Dungeons,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

29th November 1997

Snape,

That old bag Heaney from Obscurus/Esotericae House has written again. I have already deposited the cheque at Gringotts. The receipt is enclosed. Are you not glad that you are now able to live through your pen as you always wished? Albus was right about your flair for the language; after all, you know how persuasive the Dumbledore brothers are. As you will note on the bank receipt, I did not arrange to cut the 15% meant for the Order war fund or the 25% for the wizarding war orphans' school fund. I

will require your Arsenius Jigger signature to withdraw the money before discreetly "dropping" the amounts into the relevant offices. There is nothing I can do about this, as it is a newly installed Gringotts' rule. Once you grant me the permission, I will also transfer the balance of the royalty monies from your Jigger account to your usual Severus X. A. Snape account. Upon the completion of these transactions, you should have 3782 galleons, 488 sickles and 67 knuts in your Jigger account. In case you are unaware, Gringotts has also implemented a new rule whereby each account must have a minimum of 2 galleons in it otherwise the bank administration will charge a "reminder fee" of 20 sickles for every month it is below the official amount. "Reminder fee" my bloody arse! It's a new Fudge led campaign to forcibly fine the wizarding community so that the ministry can fund its blooming impending war effort.

Now, should you opt *not* read Heaney's atrocious letter, here's what it's trying to say: (1) it wants you to look through the catalogue and order some books, (2) Flourish and Blotts wants you to do a book signing and lecture affair a la Lockhart, (3) Obscurus Books and Esotericae House International want to translate your books for the usual commission fee to home authors, (4) attached are your 'fan' mail, (5) it wants you to consider revising the textbook you wrote. I shall forward Heaney's letter and the Esotericae House catalogue so that you can decide on your own. I've already written to Flourish and Blotts declining their offer on grounds of your "delicate health". As your agent, I think it wonderful that your textbook is now the standard text for Potions' students everywhere. I will enquire to see if outsourcing the translation is more economical. Or would you prefer leaving it to Obscurus to handle the translation? The Latin and Attic Greek editions are almost ready for despatch to Obscurus and Esotericae. Our editor is giving it a final look through before posting it to the publishers. When Aberforth's wife has completed the editing, I'll send the draft manuscripts to you for one final proof before giving it to Obscurus. Penelope suggests that you should write new introductions for the foreign language translations and I think it is a good idea. It is times like these when she shows great presence of mind that I wonder why she married Aberforth.

I have replied to your fan mail with the generic thanks. I feel you ought to seriously consider Obscurus's suggestion that of revising Magical Drafts. It has been in print for the past 8 years and as much as you hate it to admit it, there have been new innovations in the field that could be relevant to your students' examinations. I strongly recommend revision because a Miss Granger has written to you. Her query is on some academic point or the other, I do not fully understand, on the nature of arrowroot or something to that effect. I have been out of school for too long and am unable to answer the young lady's question. I apologise for opening it as I realise now that it is meant to be a private letter. However, if I did not inspect its contents, I would be a poor agent and publicist. You may want to respond to her. I know you usually make it a habit to confine your speculative arguments and intellectual browbeating to the notable Alchemy journals, but do make an exception in this case. Miss Granger is too young to publish and I doubt even the Midlands Journal of Alchemical Studies would accept an article by a Hogwarts student. Put your usual truculence and academically demeaning personage aside, and give this young lady an apt reply. I cannot stress the importance of cultivating your reasonable Professor Arsenius Jigger air. Since she is also your student (for you are the only Potions Master in Hogwarts after all), I trust that you will handle this matter with the utmost delicacy.

By the bye, the University of Kent is desirous of Jigger's attendance at the Advance Dead Potions Workshop next month. I know you will most likely be unable to get away from Hogwarts, so I have written to the organisers with the usual excuses. However, they would like it very much if you were to write a paper to be read and/or delivered by proxy. Potions Perspectives have sent their latest winter issue. That is enclosed within. Your article appears between pages 183 to 214. The rate of your honoraria for the article is 50 galleons a page and will be automatically debited into your Jigger account via inter-bank fund transfer.

You will find everything you need and all the relevant documents within this package. Give the owl a little something extra for its effort. Do take care. My cousin, Penelope Tudor Dumbledore sends her compliments.

Regards,

J. Alfred Prufrock

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

The word "Blooming" that appears in the first paragraph is an 18-19th Century mild swear. It is not as offensive as "Bloody", but more offensive than "Heavens!"

Letter 5: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 2nd December 1997

Chapter 5 of 42

Jigger replies to Miss Granger in a vaguely familiar style...can it be that he has condescended not to be too patronising...

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 5: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 2nd December 1997

Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts,

Faculty of Alchemy,

Potions Research Centre,

York,

United Kingdom

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,
Hogwarts Castle,
Head Girl's Room,
Gryffindor Tower,
Scotland,
United Kingdom.

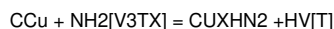
2nd December 1997

Dear Miss Granger,

Thank you for interest in Magical Drafts and Potions. Kindly bear in mind that the book is a standard text meant for students such as yourself; it is *NOT* a great academic treatise. When I wrote it, I had planned to explain the potions that students will be encountering in an engaging and lucid manner. It is greatly unsuitable to the exposition long theories on the properties of such-and-such an agent and so on. Students of pre-university age do not usually take interest in the abstract formulations of particularly unstable brews. It is not an intentional inconsistency in the book, but I thank you for bringing it to my attention. Your argument and thesis is cogent and well thought out. It is apparent that some degree of in-depth research had been conducted. However, in your analysis of dragon blood's reactivity to arrowroot extract, you did not consider the effects of the corrosiveness of dragon blood vis-à-vis ingredients with complex CP=K=HN2 anion. You have chosen to *willfully ignore* the CCuV3TX strain in dragon blood that reacts to the HN2 base of the lacewing fly wings. The V3TX sequence of the coding ribbon in dragon blood will loosen the covalent bonds between the CP=K=HN2 thread of the delicate gossamer ingredients. Once the K compound is freed from the sequence, the HN2 becomes a degradable agent. Should this appear complex, I shall refer you to chapter 36 of my book *Modern Potent Potions* published by Free Ga Greine Press in Denmark. Should this be beyond your meagre comprehension, I shall simplify it further here:

Consider the CCu3TX strain in dragon blood. V3TX is joined together by a diamond like structure. The C-Cu bond is a positively charged entity, enabling it to attract 3V molecules instead of the usual 2 you see in Hippogriff or Kappa blood. V#TX is the unique univalent by-product of bile in dragon liver. This combines with the CCu structure to the high indestructibility of dragon blood. However, everything that lives must necessarily die. Preservation of our substances is as far as you go. However, when V#TX latches onto the easily movable HN2 molecule, you get a breakdown. Hence, unless you are a complete cretin, you should follow my chain of thought with this equation: CCuV3TX + CP=K=HN2.

Carry over the VTSX over to the K bond and K will breakdown to combine with the phagocytes in dragon blood, thus leaving CP as a thickening compound to the stasis solution. After this, we have CCu + HN2[V3TX] as our equation. You should be able to solve this most basic of equations on your own. *If it should prove TOO ADVANCED*, let me finish it for you.



The unstable [T] will break down and be reabsorbed in the dragon blood morning dew mix of the stasis solution. CuXHN2 will be corrosive because of the coppered element in Xyabriteen, which, you may or may not know exists in stasis solution. So X reacts on the N2 to reduce the Cu which in turn renders the entire CuXHN2 to break down the wing structure of that which we want to preserve.

Despite your apparent oversight, it is clear that you have understood the basic premises in Potions. Your theory is credible at some point because dragon blood cannot be broken down into *individual* simpler forms such as X, N, and Cu; but it can break away and break up into chunks such as V3TX. If you succeed in your theory, you *might* convert it into an M.Mag.A. thesis. This is *not* a matter of research for pre-university students regardless of the students' abilities. I have looked through your hypothesis on the arrowroot extract and am astounded to confess that your conclusion is half right. *Only HALF right*. Arrowroot extract does contain a secretion very similar to manufactured cleaning solutions. Oddly enough, its chemical makeup is similar to that of Bundimum secretion. This is despite the fact that it is of herbaceous origins. This is a matter warranting more research. I thank you for bringing it to my attention.

Do not put yourself out over your project supervisor. I am certain he has your best interests, as his student, at his heart. While I do not think he intended for you to write to me, I am thankful for his *advice*.

Should have any further queries, owl me through the Alchemy Department, Potions Research Centre; the department secretary will ensure that I receive my posts. Alternatively, tell your owl, "Arsenius Jigger, Semper Eadem" and it will know where to find me. Best of luck in your continued research.

Yours &ca,

Arsenius Jigger

D.Mag.A.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

The equations and everything here is made up.

Semper Eadem is Latin for always constant or always the same. It was Elizabeth I of England's motto. Severus uses it for a good reason at that. I leave you to devise the reason for that.

&ca is the old fashioned way of writing et cetera.

D.Mag.A. stands for *Doctor Magicorum Artium*. In this story, it is the wizarding equivalent of a PhD.

I'm releasing this a few days early because I'm busy with school work (3 term papers to churn out). I'll most likely not post next week because of my workload &ca. So there's this letter to keep you at bay. Exercise patience, d'accord?

Letter 6: Minerva McGonagall to Severus Snape, 8th

December 1997

Chapter 6 of 42

Minerva writes to Severus. We learn of the trouble that Weasley, Potter and Malfoy have been stirring.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 6: Minerva McGonagall to Severus Snape, 8th December 1997

Transfigurations Office,

Hogwarts.

8th December 1997

Dear Severus,

I trust that your latest sojourn to Canterbury and Dover was a success. Thank you for the rose tea. Albus also extends his thanks for the chocolate orange fudge. I hope that everything is all right at the home front. You do not usually disappear on weekends with prior notice. I was quite at a lost when deciphering your punctilious note. Tell me, my boy, what am I to make of your phlegmatic, "*Prof A.D., Am gone for weekend to Sandwich and its environs on a slight matter of honour. Will return by Sunday evening. S.S.?*"

Albus was called away for a meeting with the Ministry and their plans for you-know-what in the future; otherwise, he would have read and understood your note. As it turns out, when he returned, he *DID* understand your intent and assured me that you were much too prudent to engage in a duel over a woman or a family member. Yet, I cannot remove the thought in my mind that you must have been called away on a family emergency. I am glad to see that you are back safe and sound. Since my husband and 'godson' refuse to tell me anything, 'godmother' will comfort herself with the knowledge that her men-folk are safe.

You will be pleased to know that I have spoken to Miss Granger. She will be undertaking a new project with you when the report for her present one has been filed. This sudden change has struck me as very singular. Miss Granger is as intransigent as you and when she makes up her mind, and there is no changing it. Perhaps she has now grown *your* sense of responsibility and logic.

Messrs Potter and Weasley will be serving their detentions with you this evening. Likewise, Messrs Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle will be under my supervision for the duration of the evening. It is immaterial who picked the fight; they must learn to respect their fellow schoolmates. Fighting in the middle of the Defence Against the Dark Arts lesson is a gross misdemeanour in its own right. Carrying on with it along the corridors while en route to my classroom is an unpardonable offence! What will we tell the parents and guardians of the other children if they get hurt in the ensuing crossfire? While you may be certain that Mr Potter was the perpetrator, I believe it was mutual provocation on both Messrs Malfoy and Potter's parts. I propose we give our charges stern warnings and appropriate punishments. I will send Messrs Potter and Weasley to you at 6.30pm. Kindly extend me the same courtesy with your students.

Minerva McGonagall.

Footnotes

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Canterbury, Dover and Sandwich are near Kent. Careful readers will be able to surmise why Severus went there. If you do not know, look to the letter he received from Prufrock on the lecture and you will understand.

Oh and 10 points to readers who picked up on the J. Alfred Prufrock reference.

Some have been asking me what Severus's initials stand for. You'll have to wait till the later letters to find out.

Letter 7: Hermione Granger to her Mother, 11th December 1997

Chapter 7 of 42

Hermione write to her mother about the boys' detention and her views of Dr Jigger.

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Letter 7: Hermione Granger to her Mother, 11th December 1997

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

11th December 1997

Dearest Mummy,

We are all very well here and the weather is very fine out. How are you and Daddy? Have you managed to extract yourself from the potential lawsuit? I feel that it is ridiculous for Miss Havisham to make such a fuss over the matter. The surgical removal of wisdom teeth is bound to be underlined with some risks. Furthermore, the x-rays that you showed me prove that the teeth were near the nerves and the roots were curved. The indignation that you and Daddy feel is perfectly acceptable. The consent form that she signed must have explicitly stated that risks are present. Why didn't she pay attention to it?

Oh, you would not believe what has happened! I am so very thrilled and honoured! Dr Arsenius Jigger (Doctor of Philosophy, not medicine. They call it the D.Mag.A here in the wizarding world. It stands for Doctor Magicorum Artium) replied to my letter! Do you remember Dr Jigger? He wrote the Magical Drafts and Potions text that we use at Hogwarts. I was raving about his latest article in Midlands Journal of Alchemical Studies when I was last home. He is a great intellectual, and you were always teasing my admiration of his work. Well, I had spotted an inconsistency in a chapter and wrote to him about it, forwarding my alternative hypothesis on the matter. I was actually quite certain he would dismiss me as a mere child. I seem to recall that you had once informed me that authors very rarely read and reply to their fan mail, so I was full prepared for a perfect silence. After all, he is an associate professor and I am a mere schoolgirl.

To my complete surprise, he personally replied and was extremely kind (though rather patronising) in explaining the nature of his inconsistency in chapter 5 (where I found the oddity). He also took my suggestion and thesis with moderately good grace. He does not seem to be like Cousin Amelia's Political Science professor who browbeats and intimidates his students with the "I have a PhD you do not" stance. Maybe Dr Jigger was really trying to be kind and was trying to put me and my theory down gently. Still, I do not care! He replied! He said that my theory *could* hold water! I think him wonderfully progressively, though condescendingly so. But of course he is progressive – he is terribly clever after all.

On a more sombre note, the boys have landed themselves on trouble again. This time, it was in the Defence Against the Dark Class. They were, apparently, trying to defend my honour. How trite! I thought chivalry and gallantry are dead arts. Malfoy had called me a "mudblood" (again) because I wanted to better understand one of the principles in a new protective spell. It seems (in Malfoy's opinion) that the "purebloods" have long understood the theory behind that spell. Professor McClaggen heard it, as did the rest of the class, and issued an order for him to take himself to the Headmaster's office. Before he could leave the classroom, Harry and Ron pounced on him and his faithful attendants. They were mobile duellers along the corridors and had almost reached Professor McGonagall's Transfiguration classroom when Harry and Ron jinxed them soundly. Professor McGonagall must have heard the scuffle, for she emerged from the classroom and turned quite pale with anger. I hope you do not think me uncharitable, but I enjoyed looking at Malfoy as a slug. He made a very handsome slug, I think. Harry and Ron were turned into purple chimpanzees for all their efforts. As an upshot, they had to serve detention with Professor Snape. I told Victor (you remember Victor, the Quidditch player from Durmstrang) about it and he laughed himself silly over the boys' supposed gallantry. It is a little odd communicating through the specially charmed Krum action figure (which he gave me as a souvenir) but one gets used to it after a while. I try to think of it as a cassette tape recorder that sends my messages directly to his Krum action figure. Victor can send Daddy a moving non-cassette recorder one if he likes. He also sends you his best regards. He's seeing a Russian Quidditch player now, Irina Alexandrovna Karenina. I've been told she's very amiable. She's also very good in transfigurations or so Victor claims. I'll be receiving a journal article from him soon and my interpretation of it could form the basis of my subsequent potions project for the year.

There is something I must tell you and I hope you will not be too disappointed. Given the present state of affairs in the wizarding world (which look set to extend into the muggle world as well, Professor Dumbledore has issued an order for all students to remain at Hogwarts for Christmas. I am sorry that I will not be home for Christmas this year. I am not sure whether Harry, Ron and I will have to remove to the late Sirius's family residence to be better protected. I will keep you informed of any other developments.

The bell has just sounded and it's time for dinner. Kiss Daddy on the cheek for me.

Your loving,

Hermione

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

The late Sirius's family residence is a reference to the Order of the Phoenix's headquarters at Grimmauld Place.

D.Mag.A. stands for Doctor Magicorum Artium. In this story, it is the wizarding equivalent of a PhD.

Those puzzled as to the 'inconsistency' as to my usage of Prufrock as the literary agent, should note that I was trying to be ironic and deliberately so. I like my readers to do a little thinking as to why the plot is the way it is and why I write a character in such a way. However, you need not fear, Prufrock will feature again soon.

Those confused as to the reference to the Krum action figure should refer to the requirements of this fic challenge.

One of my betas brought this to my attention: there might be some readers who take issue with the odd Russian name. My spelling is my own transliteration of the language.

Those confused as to the Russian name, should bear in mind that Russian names are arranged thus: First name, patronym, surname (the last 2 are fixed according to gender).

E.g. Father's Name: Nikolai (Nicholas in English). Surname/Family: Kerensky. Daughter's name: Irina (Irene in English), Son's name: Viktor. The daughter will be called, "Irina Nikolaievna" by her teachers and elders. In Russian, they drop the surname when addressing people. Officially the daughter's name will be "Irina Nikolaievna Kerenskaya". The Son's name will be "Viktor Nikolaievich Kerensky". The patronym and surname are always 'fixed' to accommodate gender. A ___sky (e.g. Vronksy) for male would always be ___skaya (e.g. Vronskaya) for female; a ___nin (e.g. Ptotemkin) for male would always be a ___nina (e.g. Ptotemkina) for female; and a ___v (e.g. Orlov) for men would be ___va (e.g. Orlova) for women. I hope this makes it clear.

I have a packed week come Monday (classes and work demand that I have 8am-10pm days), so I wouldn't be able to post. I hope this pacifies my dear readers for a while.

Letter 8: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 15th December 1997

Chapter 8 of 42

Severus's business letter to his literary agent, Prufrock.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 8: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 15th December 1997

Severus X. A. Snape

Potions' Office,

The Dungeons,

Hogwarts,

Scotland,

UK.

15th December 1997

Please inform Penelope that I do not need *fattening up*. I *already* feel like a lamb to the slaughter without the constant reminders from her brother-in-law and your lot. If I were unacquainted with her, I would have pegged her as a Dumbledore by blood rather than marriage, given her meddling streak. You need not fear that the foodstuffs were laid to waste, for I donated them to my employer and unofficial Godfather. I keep reminding him that he will rue the day he 'adopted' me but he only laughs. The infuriating old goat!

Lest you think this is a social letter, I must disabuse you. I wish to, nay, *have to* talk shop. I want you to halt the publication of Magical Drafts and Potions, as I am presently rewriting a few sections. There are also major changes in a few chapters. You should have the manuscript at the earliest by the end of the year.

Albus Dumbledore will be holding a meeting two days hence at Order Headquarters. He requests that you bring the accounts books. He is planning the logistics for the purchase of basic necessities. I think we should have enough to cover the costs of the operation, but you know *my opinion counts for little*.

I concur with your views on the war – I cannot wait for it to be over. It is a great financial drain on me. Being a lamb to the slaughter isn't enough? I am already contributing to the Order fund and that confounded War orphans' fund. I look on these charities as a necessary evil from which I am able to atone for my sins. Merlin knows how many decent wizards and witches I have killed! Attempting to save this side and silently aiding their dunderheads (who deserve to drown in a cauldron of Longbottom's worst potion mistakes) are all I can do. However, the Dark Lord also expects contributions to his war effort. It is akin to paying tithe to a feudal lord and you know how I despise that. He takes about a quarter of my monthly teaching income! Blast him and his egocentric monomania! I cannot refuse to donate to his cause – I would be killed instantly for being a traitor. I feel like a muggle woman because it's damned if I do and damned if I don't. You are right in a manner of speaking – if Albus Dumbledore had not suggested I write books, I do not know how I can afford to maintain myself on the remnants of my Hogwarts salary. Thank Merlin – the Dark Lord does not know I am Jigger. If he finds out, our cause will undoubtedly be blown into pieces.

If my damnable father had not been such a wastrel, the Snapes might have been almost comfortably off. Bah! His indulgences in lost causes resulted in too much pain and misery to the family. Yet, all things considered, I am a lost cause in myself, hoping for redemption when I am far beyond it. Will these hands never be clean? I sometimes wonder whether it would be better if I were to be killed by either the Dark Lord or Albus. It does not signify who strikes the killing blow, after all, I am *tanquam ovis* and as such, should be resigned to my fate.

My lessons will commence shortly, I must pen off. Remember the meeting. It's at the same time and venue.

S. Snape

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Tanquam ovis is Latin for "like a lamb to the slaughter".

In case you're confused, in this story, Penelope Tudor married Aberforth Dumbledore, our favourite headmaster's bartending brother. Penelope Tudor is the chief editor at Prufrock and Tudor Literary Agency. This was mentioned in letter 4.

Letter 9: Hermione Granger to Victor Krum, 20th December 1997

Chapter 9 of 42

Hermione writes to Victor Krum and speculates on school work and the latest occurrences in the wizarding world...

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 9: Hermione Granger to Victor Krum, 20th December 1997

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,
Hogwarts Castle,
Head Girl's Room,
Gryffindor Tower,
Scotland,
United Kingdom.

20th December 1997

Dear Victor,

It is so very kind of you to remember me this festive season. Thank you for the gift. I have not opened it yet, as I do not wish to spoil the surprise. Christmas presents are meant for Christmas and its twelve days, not a day sooner. I hope you have not played a trick on me and sent me a very small object in a huge box. See, isn't it more sincere to receive a letter thanking you for something! It is quite all right if the East Europe Potions Review has been delayed; I can wait for the arrowroot and wolfsbane article.

I received your message on the Krum action figure two days ago. You really shouldn't have taken the trouble to call when you have already owed another journal with the package. I have to disagree with your assessment of Logos in Potions. I do not think that journal has illiberal tendencies. Rather, its articles engender debates through an exploration of the simple things that often go unnoticed. Thank you for drawing my attention to Dr Jigger's article and Dr Rowling's response to it. I appreciate your interest in my research in the not-so-exciting realm of theoretical and philosophical alchemy

While it does draw several interesting conclusions on the properties of theoretical alchemy, I find it highly specious that Rowling selects individual passages from Jigger and suggests theories based on those few lines without considering the article in its entirety. So doing proves *nothing* about the work as a whole. The wonderful thing about Jigger's reading of Dumbledore and Flamel is the fact that he seems to have read Dumbledore and Flamel for themselves rather than relying on secondary sources or simply quoting from other likeminded articles. In this respect, his original effort is to be commended. In contrast, Rowling goes on to rely on rhetoric of right and wrong in determining the effects of potion brewing in relation to the by-products that may be produced. That by itself is pure sophistry. Rowling fails to reflect on his own thesis, which also takes advantage of moral categories. Is it "evil" to speak of good and evil in potions brewing? Rowling implies that it is and thus puts himself in the same category as Aristotle and Hobbes. Jigger, on the other hand, feels that the current strict definition of so-called good and 'evil' potions require qualification. He says it is not 'bad' per se to distrust the excesses of potion brewing; rather, it is the intention that is questionable.

I particularly like the way where he shows how recent academic writing in alchemy utilise the rhetoric of absolutes in a reactionary and illiberal manner by Dumbledore and Flamel while professing to advance so-called modern magic. It is a radical theory to suggest that modern alchemy is characterised by an ungrounded relativism.

You wish to know how Harry and Ron's detention went? Professor Snape was unusually kind to them, by his standards. They were only subjected to a lecture on propriety and were asked to wash all the cauldrons by hand, prepare some of the samples for First year potions' class and catalogue the student stores.

You have noticed the strange occurrences too? Good. I was beginning to worry that my imagination had run away with me. I keep getting this sense of foreboding and the air seems so oppressed and heavy. It is as if something is waiting to happen. It is very strange that wizarding communities in Eastern Europe are facing floods. Could Voldemort be looking for Professor Karkaroff again? I was under the impression that your former Headmaster is hiding in Afghanistan not Europe. Is Durmstrang still looking for him?

Professor Dumbledore fears that this is the eye of the storm and I readily believe him. I will tell him of your offer of assistance. The boys need me for something. I will discuss the Karkaroff-Voldemort issue when you next forward me the news. Thanks once again for the things.

Take care,

Hermione

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Letter 10: Hermione Granger to her Mother, 24th December 1997

Chapter 10 of 42

Hermione's letter to her mother. We learn about the Christmas at Hogwarts. Features wizarding crackers...

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 10: Hermione Granger to her Mother, 24th December 1997

Hermione Jane Granger,
Hogwarts Castle,
Head Girl's Room,
Gryffindor Tower,
Scotland,
United Kingdom.

24th December 1997

Dearest Mummy,

I hope this will find you and Daddy well. Poor Daddy! His sore throats are always worse than everybody else's. I am very glad it did not spoil his appetite. I do not think he wants to consume nothing but gruel for Christmas.

You really shouldn't have sent me a present. I know how the impending lawsuit with Miss Havisham could go and I do not want you to mortgage anything. Can you imagine the ignominy of being subjected to such a 'death grip'? Well, I can. The book on Eleanor of Aquitaine is lovely. Thank you so very much. Kisses to you and Daddy for getting it for me. Harry and Ron also send their thanks to you for their gifts. Ron could not contain himself and ripped open his gift in the morning. He thinks the blue tie very nice; rather, he imagines it improves his looks. Out of tact, I declined to comment. Between us, I am glad you did not get Harry more food. Mrs Weasley is forever feeding Harry. She sends Ron cakes and all manner of other confections and instructs him to share them with us.

We had a mini Christmas party in the Great Hall earlier in the evening during dinner. It was quite nice with Professor Flitwick's decorations and the sky was beautiful and crisp. The Christmas exchange of gifts among the staff was quite funny. Professor Dumbledore finally received a pair of socks. Professor McGonagall had a new brooch. Professor Snape had a pair of black kid gloves that he quickly shoved into his pockets with a scowl. Speaking of Professor Snape, there was this strange incident involving Cribbage's Wizarding Crackers. I shall start from the beginning so as to make it easier for you to follow.

The Staff had to distribute Cribbage's Wizarding Crackers to the students. Professor Dumbledore thought that it would be a most festive thing for the students as there would be something for everyone. Draco Malfoy and I had to assist in the distribution because we are Head Boy and Girl. While the rest of the students were left to party under the watchful eye of Mr Filch and the prefects, the teaching staff, Draco and I retired to the staffroom for a brief tête-à-tête and the staff exchange of gifts. Professor Dumbledore had Cribbage's Wizarding Crackers for all of us. Instead of distributing them, we had to stick our hands in a bag and extract one Cracker. Professor Snape and I were the last ones to do so. He did not feel that it was becoming for him to engage in such activities and I thought I had outgrown the age of popping Crackers. I knew he was not going to pick the Cracker, so I took one for myself and gave him the last one. He took it from me without even touching my hand. He contemptuously lifted it with his fingers and stared down at me as if I was something that offended his nose and shooed me away with a dismissive flick of his wrist without so much as a thank you. Yet, I was sure that throughout the evening, he was studying me most intently. Then again, it could be my imagination. Or it could be a hormonal swing, as it is the first day of my period. You and I always get these odd so-called intuitive sensations during our menses.

The funny thing about the exchange is this: looking at the Crackers, you wouldn't think that there was anything special about them. They were uniform in every way, that is, until you popped them. It turns out that everyone had something useful from the Crackers. Professor Trelawney had a snow globe crystal ball specially charmed to tell the future. Draco had a new Slytherin scarf charmed to return to him should he misplace it. It is really a very suitable thing for him because he's always losing his. Professor McGonagall received hairpins that could do up her hair in any style she wanted. Professor Snape, very oddly, received a very reliable dictation quill. It's nothing like that quick quote quill used by Miss Skeeter. This dictation quill wrote everything he said ad verbatim. I do not know whether to be amused or disconcerted when it started to record his more colourful expletives as well. I received a very magical reusable diary-com-organiser. It looks like our muggle ones with one difference – instead of buying the yearly refills, it automatically starts the year anew for one. How economical and so very practical!

I cannot help but wonder why Professor Snape would need a dictation quill. As far as I know, he always does his own writing and is constantly scrawling over papers and whatever administrative work he has to do for the school. Even odder, Professor Dumbledore patted him on the shoulder and muttered something to him (that I did not catch) which drew a raised brow from our Potions Master. Professor Snape almost looked amused; then, he caught my eye and scowled at me. After that, he turned away and spoke in hushed tones to Draco. It is speculated that Draco may turn to our side, but I do not know whether I ought to put any stock in Professor Dumbledore's belief.

That's my Christmas for you. It was not terribly exciting, though fun and interesting.

In the meantime, I have been spending time researching on arrowroot, wolfsbane and Voudoun potions. I wish to speak to Dr Jigger about them. If all goes well and I do not mess up my final year examinations, I may ask Dr Jigger to supervise my B.Mag.A thesis. As you can imagine, I am very excited by the prospect. However, at present, everything is still in the planning stage. I will have to *discuss* the matter with Professor Snape first to determine its viability. The discussion will invariably entail another lecture on my poor abilities, but I value his opinions all the same.

Victor Krum sends his regards and the enclosed non-magical Krum action figure for Daddy. Love and kisses to you and Daddy. Reply soon.

Your loving,

Hermione.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Mortgage is Latin for death grip, hence the pun.

Letter 11: Hermione Granger to Arsenius Jigger, 29th December 1997

Chapter 11 of 42

Hermione writes to Jigger on more academic matters.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 11: Hermione Granger to Arsenius Jigger, 29th December 1997

Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts

Faculty of Alchemy

Potions Research Centre,

York,

United Kingdom

29th December 1997

Dear Dr Jigger,

Many thanks for your invaluable help and thorough explanations. It was extremely kind of you to *condescend to my level*. Professor Snape granted me a moderately good grade for the paper I wrote. It was heavily based on your explanation and I cross compared it to other works on dragon blood. I found one of your early journal articles on the same subject. It was a fascinating read. I cannot abide by the local Ministry rules here which expressly forbid students from using certain potion ingredients. It leaves some of us quite unable to conduct our experiments. In order to better facilitate our work, we sometimes have to resort to *unorthodox* means of acquiring the ingredients and other substances from the professor's private stores. He does not approve but what else can we do? In this field, theoretical papers have to be substantiated with empirical proofs.

Forgive my forwardness, sir – but I feel I am indebted to your indirect contribution to my paper. I have decided to work on the properties of aconite in the coming months. This does not mean that I have given up my arrowroot theory. I have spoken to Professor Snape who condescended to agree that it would indeed be more expedient for me to conduct a study on it at the University level. For the final year project, I shall be assisting Professor Snape on his cure for lycanthropy. There is a slight problem on this account though – he is presently unaware of my plans to work on this endeavour. I am uncertain as to his reaction. In all likelihood, he would fly into a rage and throw me out of the classroom. Alternatively, he could disparage my abilities as he always does and accuse me of speaking or learning out of turn. What do you think? Is it feasible for someone of *my level* to pursue this project? I feel that so doing would be an extension of my study on aconite. While I am very certain as to my plans, I do not know how Professor Snape will react. He could see the wolfsbane/werewolf project as a convenient cop-out meant to highlight my lack of originality and general laziness. Convincing him otherwise would be an almost futile activity. However, I shall say nought of this plan if you think it unsuited to the NEWTS. I anxiously await your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Hermione Granger

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

I shall be taking some time off for exams and other commitments. I'll most likely post again after April 26th. Exercise patience, 31 letters to come.

Letter 12: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 2nd January 1998

Chapter 12 of 42

Jigger's (or should I say Snape's) veiled reply to Hermione.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 12: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 2nd January 1998

Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts

Faculty of Alchemy,

Potions Research Centre,

York,

United Kingdom

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

2nd January 1998

Dear Miss Granger,

It pleases me greatly to see young minds taking an active interest in the fine art and exact science of Alchemy. It is indeed a tremendous achievement in the field, considering your age. Your paper on arrowroot extract and stasis solutions sounds extremely promising. In receiving such an excellent grade from your professor, I have no doubt you will go far. I know Professor Snape *by reputation* and he is, if the reports are to be believed, an exacting task master; harsh but impartial. I believe he has a tendency to be so engrossed in his work that anyone deemed foolish enough to meddle in it would be most severely punished. If this is true, I admire him exceedingly. It establishes him as a man of principle and just convictions. It is his prerogative to punish the students as he chuses; after all, if students wish to involve him in their activities when he has no desire to participate, he will find a way of *involving* them in his work. Given this then, I suggest you determine whether the wolfsbane and/or lycanthropy cure research project you propose is part of your supervisor's *PRIVATE RESEARCH*. Unless I am much mistaken, this area of Alchemy is a relatively contentious one. In light of its nature and his temperament, he may not wish to bring it under public scrutiny. If he is the private man that reports paint him to be, he would not relish being the centre of a new academic maelstrom. I, myself, do not like my own research material to work to be under *any observation* save my own. It is a trait that most potions' masters share. Pray, Miss Granger, kindly enlighten me as to how you acquired an interest in lycanthropy and by that extension, your supervisor's research. Does it in any way coincide with a personal project? Or is it mere academic *curiosity* coupled with *AN EYE FOR DETAIL*?

You need not apologise so profusely in your letter, I am not so petty a wizard as to take offence at everything. Intellectual questioning is admirable and ought to be encouraged provided it is *done in MODERATION*. As long as we *do not* resort to childish slights on each other's characters, all questions, proposals and theories on academic matters, *if not overdone*, are acceptable. While I do not think I am the right person to consult as you already have an independent study course supervisor, I am honoured that you wish to seek my opinion. Young people nowadays are more interested in rushing headlong into things without due consideration. I am glad that you do not share their predilection. I urge you to discuss the matter of your project with Professor Snape. Do not be disappointed if he does not grant you permission. There are other avenues to pursue.

The effects of mallowsweet in both healing and harmful potions could be a worthy study. I expounded this in Logos in Potions. Its properties are still a matter of some conjecture in our world. Remember, do not give up; *never deviate* from your original path. There is always a reason for everything, regardless of your supervisor's reactions to your research proposal, bear in mind that he has a reason for everything.

Upon rereading your letter, I own myself very shocked to discover that you had indeed stolen from your Professor's private stores. That is a near unpardonable offence! Pilfering from your supervisor's private stores indeed! It is fortunate you were undiscovered. It is also fortunate that you could identify the ingredients there. In advance

alchemical studies and potion making, the constituency of some ingredients are so similar that even experts have difficulty differentiating them. Out of curiosity, what else have you been helping yourself to? More dragon blood? Or powdered unicorn horn? I can only advise you not to be so foolish in the future. Potion Masters are *NOT* to be crossed, *especially* those who constantly rearrange the materials in their stores.

Now, on matters more suitably discussed betwixt intellectuals – I have broken down arrowroot into 67 compositely disparate samples. You might like to think on that. Much luck on your education.

Yours &ca,

A. Jigger

D.Mag.A

Footnotes

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Letter 13: Hermione Granger to her Mother, 4th January 1998

Chapter 13 of 42

Hermione's letter to her mother. We learn more about the Grangers' 'lawsuit' with Miss Havisham and Miss Granger's thoughts on Arsenius...

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 13: Hermione Granger to her Mother, 4th January 1998

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

4th January 1998

Dearest Mummy,

I miss you awfully. How is Daddy? I do hope he is slowly recovering from the bout of influenza. It seems so incongruous that he should suffer from *after* his flu shot. The case with Miss Havisham is most distressing. I had no idea out of court settlements had the potential to be uglier than portrayed by the tabloids. If you can manage to keep the practice afloat, I will support your decision to fight her. And she's demanding a lifetime of free dental treatment! Ridiculous! Doesn't she know that you did not elect to dig out the root of the tooth? So the tooth broke – Big deal! The leftover root tips can be reabsorbed into the body. I think she's merely suffering from facial spasms due to some nervous ailment rather than a "dental surgery gone wrong". You even offered to give her a discount when repairing the preceding premolar – what more does she want? Free root canals? Free crowning? She should be drug out into the streets and clubbed very severely. Let me know how it all turns out.

Professor Dumbledore has plans to remove Harry, Ron and I to the late Sirius's residence some time in March. Mrs Weasley and Professor Lupin will be there to look after us. There has been another attack on Harry. He has been getting terrible migraines as Voldemort has found his way into Harry's dreams (again). Professor Snape justly berates him for not practising Occlumency. It is quite possible that Voldemort may try to kill Harry in his sleep. This would remove Harry from his way and facilitate his takeover of the wizarding world. He believes killing Harry before Harry kills him is the best course of action. And seeing what his Death Eaters are capable of, I am inclined to agree.

Due the recent dream attacks on Harry, the strange things around the castle have escalated. All the teachers look drawn with fatigue in trying to protect us while giving the illusory assurance that everything is all right. Professor Dumbledore has lost the spring in his step. Professor Flitwick has become slightly irritable. Professor Snape has grown gaunter. I suspect he has not been getting enough sleep. According to Harry (who admitted this grudgingly), Professor Snape has been surreptitiously entering his dreams and extracting him from danger whenever possible. We all worry a great deal for both Harry and Professor Snape. Professor Snape has to be careful so as not to be discovered by Voldemort, and Harry has to try to keep himself alive.

London is not the only place with strange happenings. According to the Daily Prophet, Scotland is not exempt from them. Lately, the school owls have been active day and night. The trees are dry and dying in the nearby forest. Hagrid tells us that nothing he does seems to alleviate their suffering. Professor Dumbledore suspects that Voldemort is in the vicinity again. We are all a little frightened, even Harry. But Professor Dumbledore wants you to know that he will do everything he can to ensure that we are safe.

On a completely unrelated note, you will be proud to learn that Dr Jigger has replied to my second letter. I feel his kindness keenly. He's extremely insightful and meticulous in his research. Yet, the more I read of his work, the more I get this sense of déjà vu. It is as if I know him from somewhere. The Buddhists and Hindus will tell me that I had

most likely met him in a past life and I think it may be possible. There is something very familiar in his writings, but for some reason, I am unable to put my finger on the exact reason for it. Dr Jigger disconcerts me slightly because he seems very aware of my actions and some of my thought processes. That could be due to his manners, I suppose. He has a very nice way of writing that draws you in while keeping himself aloof from the reader. He's more disarming than anything and I am very intrigued. I wonder what he is really like. More importantly, how is it that he is able to hint at his knowledge of my actions and thoughts? Do you think I am paranoid? It is almost as if he can read my mind. Or do you think I am reading too much between the lines? He seems to have intimated at activities that I have done in the classroom when Professor Snape was away on Hogwarts' business. Strange, is it not?

I must end off now so that I can finish Professor Vector's Arithmancy homework. Kisses for Daddy and you.

Your loving,

Hermione

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Thank you, dear readers, for your forbearance. I sat for my last paper today and it was tricky. Thank you for your kind words of encouragement. I will try to upload the next instalment either on Friday or Saturday, as I have to attend a colloquium on Thursday.

Letter 14: Dr Jane Porter to her daughter, Hermione Granger, 13th January 1998

Chapter 14 of 42

Hermione's mother replies to her daughter's missive with words of advice and caution.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 14: Dr Jane Porter to her daughter, Hermione Granger, 13th January 1998

Drs Reginald Granger & Jane Porter,

21 Fullers Road,

South Woodford,

London, E18 2QB,

United Kingdom.

13th January 1998

My Pet,

Your father sends his love and a kiss. He has since recovered from the flu and is now nursing a backache as he had overstrained himself while doing Tai-chi. If Grandmamma Porter can do it smoothly and effortlessly, so can he. But you know your father's vigorous crazed gambolling. He must have taken up Tai-chi lessons with your Grandmamma so that he can butter up to his mother-in-law. Your Grandmamma thinks it is worth the effort to see your father incapacitated for once.

How were your term papers so far, Love? Were they manageable? I know you can cope with your workload, but I still worry. So all these strange occurrences are due to this Voldemort? What madness is this world coming to?

Hermione, Hermione, how many times must I tell you that it is poor taste to make your snide remarks about Miss Havisham. She is a patient, a disgruntled one, but a patient nonetheless. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It creates a false impression. You, of all people, should be aware of that, since you always leave your teeth marks behind in everything. Jokes aside, I am glad you asked. She is a bit of a heartless guttersnipe. She claims she wishes to sue your father and I out of our practice. Utter rubbish, I say. Our lawyer, Mr King from North Square Park, informs us that we have a strong case. My personal sentiments incline towards an across-the-table negotiation. It would be too messy if we drag the matter to the courts. All this litigation does not sit well with our practice. Mrs Woolf's daughter refuses to visit us anymore. Fortunately, Mrs Woolf has decided to stick with us for the crowning.

Mrs Weasley and Professor Lupin have both written to us as to the proposed removal of you and the boys to the Black residence. As long as it does not interfere with your lessons and school work, I have no objections. My darling daughter's safety is all that I desire at the moment. I will write to your Headmaster as well to see if your father and I can take the three of you out for lunch when you are removed there. We can always meet you at Oxford Street; and you can ask that nice Professor Lupin to escort you youngsters. You must invite the boys to stay with us for a while when the horrid war with Voldemort is over. Ask the boys and see whether they are amenable to the idea. It will give them something to look forward to.

Do you think the post offices at your end will check the letters? I know there is no way for us to send you anything by owl. Although it is convenient that the post recognises the letters and packages for the magical quarter (as I call it) and leaves it at the various magical post offices before owling it to you lot, I worry that this war will lead to unnecessary suspicion on incoming and outgoing post. You wrote in one of your letters that everyone sending post from the school must ask a member of the teaching staff to cast a protective charm about the owls so that this Lord Voldemort has no chance of harming the owls or intercepting your letters. It is most distressing to think that any one would want to read one's private correspondences.

I have been meaning to speak to you about Dr Jigger, my dear. I am sure he must be very agreeable and very sensible. But do you think it wise to continue bothering him? I know he has not overtly demanded that you cease writing, as you have made no mention of it. He could be too polite to tell you that he feels you're a little irksome. You say that he seems to adopt a patronising tone in his replies; perhaps, he is circuitously asking you to sod off. I resort to that method sometimes. This is not a slight on you, love. You must know how temperamental these bright academic sorts are. Still, don't take what I told you to heart. Your father and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Lots of love,

Mummy

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

I recall some readers commenting as to the nature of "owling". The contents of these letters may shed some light on the matter. Given the protective spell on the owl, it ought to be a more or less secure form of communication.

Those curious as to initials in Severus's name would have to wait till letter 34. I'm sorry, but that's the way it is. Miss K. Lupin's theory on one of the initials holds water, so 5 points to her.

Letter 15: Hermione Granger to Arsenius Jigger, 20th January 1998

Chapter 15 of 42

After thinking over her mother's advice, Hermione writes to Jigger...

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 15: Hermione Granger to Arsenius Jigger, 20th January 1998

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

Dr Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts

Faculty of Alchemy

Potions Research Centre,

York,

United Kingdom

20th January 1998

Dear Dr Jigger,

I do not know what you mean by my observations on Professor Snape. My wit is not that refined. It is my wish to help an old friend and former teacher who is unfortunately ostracised by his present condition; I feel that people suffering from lycanthropy deserve our compassion. I will not argue whether human nature is intrinsically good or otherwise, I am only making a case for aiding others. I am sure you will agree that it is no shame to value life. What better way to value it than to assist others who for some reason cannot live their lives to the fullest. I suspect that is why Professor Snape is conducting his research in his direction. However, you appear to be better acquainted with him and you will undoubtedly inform me that he has turned out quite contrary to all that is noble and good. I assure you, sir, Professor Snape's *amor fati* is tempered with guilt; at least, I think it is guilt. I do apologise. It is not my place to make such judgements on my professors.

Once again, I humbly thank you for your counsel. I have indeed spoken to Professor Snape as to my project for the rest of the year. Pardon my youthful enthusiasm; however, I am extremely overcome with much excitement. Upon his *tacit* approval, I further suggested that mallowsweet be incorporated into the research as well. Whether I successfully witness the curing of lycanthropy is immaterial, for I believe every little bit of research contributes to the progress of Professor Snape's noble work.

Do not mock me, Dr Jigger. I have no intention of emptying Professor Snape's private stores. I did what I had to do and I usually resort to other means when *reasonable applications* have been *denied*. It is definitely better than acquiring them off an agent who procures the ingredients from the black market. I have no intention of revealing the truth to him as I feel certain he will not hesitate to throttle me before the Headmaster. After all, discretion is the better part of valour and I am a Gryffindor.

Thank you for your encouragement and patient interest in my work. I have been extremely busy of late with revisions and papers. I shall be on school leave for a while due to a family emergency. You may write to me at my parents, that is, only if you want to. The address is as follows:

21 Fullers Road,
South Woodford,
London,
E18 2QB,
United Kingdom

This address will be valid for communication purposes until I return to Hogwarts.

The arrowroot compounds should have the corrosive elements entrenched within its make up; as such, it could have a thinning effect on dragon blood. If it is not too bold of me to suggest – perhaps you should try it on a glutinous or thick potion and/or mixture to see if it works. I would experiment with a mixture of PVA glue and water or even PVA glue on its own. I read in Xenos's Scientia Media that arrowroot has a difficult compound to work with and this was written in the time of the Pre-Socratics. The Latin translation on Hogwarts has only a few pages on it and I am unable to determine whether the Greeks had any notion of the arrowroot's possibly corrosive properties. In the German translation of Hippocrates' Paideia Alethinos Logos, he appears convinced that a by-product of arrowroot is volatile. He did mention something about the instability of arrowroot within the scope of the quantifier in the potion. I cannot make sense of the symbols he employs where $(\exists x) (F\chi \beta p)$ and $(\exists x (F\chi))\beta p$ determine the ambiguities within the fallacies of scope in arrowroot. Perhaps you could explain it to me if you decide to continue the correspondence. However, if you do not, I quite understand that I was imposing on your goodwill and time.

Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely,

Hermione Granger

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Amor fati can be understood as a sort of love for the resignation of one's fate whatever it may be.

"Discretion is the better part of valour" is adapted from Napoleon Bonaparte.

The "family emergency" that Hermione speaks of is the official reason why she, Harry and Ron have to leave Hogwarts for Grimauld Place.

Letter 16: Victor Krum to Hermione Granger, 4th February 1998

Chapter 16 of 42

Victor replies to Hermione. We learn of the strange occurrences in Europe and that Hermione has been making discrete enquiries about Jigger...

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 16: Victor Krum to Hermione Granger, 4th February 1998

Victor Krum
284, Makarios Avenue
Cy-3720 Sophia,
Bulgaria
February 4, 1998
Hello Hermione,

I received your long message on the Krum doll communication link. Sorry it took so long to answer. We have been training hard for some of the local matches. The Quidditch season has just opened after all and we have had a bad season last year. Hopefully, we will do better this year after much more training. You do not like the

game, so I will say no more about it.

Have you heard the rumour? There are rumours swinging around that the end is near for wizards everywhere. The rumours also say that Voldemort wants to strip all the wizards everywhere of their powers so that he will be the most powerful one. Bulgaria and Eastern Europe has many strange things happening. Magical creatures are dying in very large numbers and the Ministries here do not know why. Do you think this has anything to do with Voldemort, do you? Can you imagine us having no magic? We could not be able to play Quidditch or do the things like we usually do.

I have bad and frightening news. Karkaroff's body has been found in Bavaria. His body was badly decomposing but was identified as him after the forensic wizards ran a few tests on the corpse. The reports also say that he died of the multiple avada kedavra curses. The pictures in the newspapers show that he had the glowing green Death Eater marks on his chest and back. Durmstrang is not very upset because he was a very poor Headmaster. The muggles would say that he had low EQ and I agree. That does not mean he deserved to die a horrible death. No one deserves that even if they are annoying, overbearing and self-important pricks. Sorry I said that. I go out with the boys from the team and use language like that always. I sometimes forget that I must not say such things in front of ladies.

Anyway, it surprised me that you could not find anything substantial on this Dr Arsenius Jigger in Britain. Does not your school or your country's wizarding libraries have any non-British records? This is not a complaint, so do not get angry, Hermione. I do not know why you are interested in finding about Arsenius Jigger, but I will help you. I remember that your Magical Drafts book was full of underlining and notes by the margin. I also remember that you think very highly of him and had wanted to write to him. It certainly took you long enough to pick up the quill.

It is clear that Arsenius Jigger did not study at Durmstrang. What I know about him comes from extracts behind journals where they write the author's profiles and all that. There is a very nice one published in the Russian Alchemy journal that Irina found for me, called Nomos. I will give you a translation. It says, "Arsenius Jigger is a mysterious figure in academic circles. It is speculated that he was born sometime after the Second World War, as he has studied with the students of many early 19th thinkers. Since many of his references hail from Cambridge, Wittenberg, Innsbruck and La Sorbonne, it is highly likely that he had obtained his D.Mag.A from one of these institutions. Unfortunately, the editors have yet to uncover any documents related to Dr Jigger. The above institutions have declined to comment. Dr Jigger, however, is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Alchemy at the University of York's School of Magical Arts. The reclusive Dr Jigger never delivers his lecture series in person. He presents his yearly 16 lectures via the temporus sonus charm. It has been recorded that a student's memory was completely erased in 1992 because he had sought to trace the elusive spell caster. Dr Jigger has published extensively in the fields of Potions Research and Alchemy; most notable is his standard introductory textbook *Magical Drafts and Potions*."

I do not know if this helps, Hermione, as this is all I can find. I do not know what your interest in the old man is, but I do not like him because you like an old man better than your old friend, Victor? Just joking, eh? If you need anything else, talk to the Krum doll.

Best,

Victor

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

D.Mag.A. stands for Doctor Magicorum Artium. In this story, it is the wizarding equivalent of a PhD.

The letter structure and style of this letter may leave some fuming. Let me stress that Victor Krum's first language is not English. He does not write or speak English as well as native speakers.

EQ stands for emotional quotient.

If someone can teach me how to include table (that I've used in microsoft word) into this thing that I can put up here, I would be most grateful. I have a table with words inside the cells, very much like statistical figures, that I am contemplating releasing with one of the letters. Help would be appreciated.

Letter 17: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 8th February 1998

Chapter 17 of 42

Jigger/Severus responds to Hermione's letter.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 17: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 8th February 1998

Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts

Faculty of Alchemy,

Potions Research Centre,

York,
United Kingdom.
Miss Hermione Jane Granger,
21 Fullers Road,
South Woodford,
London, E18 2QB,
United Kingdom.
8th February 1998

I submit myself, dear Miss Granger, to the superiority of our argument on the arrowroot trials. If this missive does not go astray, you will learn that I have news to report. I am pleased to inform you that arrowroot's corrosive properties have been indubitably proven. The volatile by-products that you mentioned in your reference to Hippocrates is Folstezen, used as a catalyst in that wondrous thing we call floo powder. I have tried your insane PVA glue suggestion and was astounded by the results. Arrowroot is truly the qualifier in the potion. As the qualifier, it has a part that remains constant throughout, hence the unvarying (X) where X is its covalent bond and X the subsidiary. Fx represents the potion that is brewed and βp is the break-up of the arrowroot. The Ancients are known to deploy esotericism, Miss Granger; as such, I ask you to bear that in mind.

Attached is a draft paper regarding the findings on arrowroot, its corrosiveness and volatility. Please excuse the liberty which I use in sending it to you. You will notice that I credited you as a research assistant in the footnotes on page one. Your contribution to it will not go unremarked, that, I am certain. Please excuse the stains on the paper and the envelope. I had nothing else handy and I wanted to get this paper off to you as soon as possible.

Do not put yourself out, young lady, with thoughts of being a nuisance to me. It is an extremely refreshing turn of events to receive intelligent letters from my readers instead of dry encomiums, which I ill deserve, or rude challenges to my theories. Perhaps you have misunderstood me, Miss Granger, I do not, in any way, discourage your projects with Professor Snape. Your intention to consider mallowsweet may be a little premature though. The lycanthropy cure alone requires a tremendous amount of work. I sense you are on the path to becoming an Alchemical philologist. The lycanthropy project (do please *TRY* to be discrete for your professor's sake) is not entirely hopeless. If it does get off the ground, there may be a Master of an Oxford College prepared to sponsor it and hence, also myself. A paper you may consider perusing on the subject is in *Recherches Alchemique*, vol. 199, no. 1, by Alfred Laird, a professor in Aberdeen. I hope this finds you well. So write again, so that we do not lose track of one another.

Yrs.,
A. Jigger.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

"Yrs" is an abbreviated form of Yours. Notice the change in his sign-off. What does it herald? I leave it to you to uncover.

I have decided not to reproduce the aforementioned draft of an article because you will have journal articles soon enough.

Letter 18: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 15th February 1998

Chapter 18 of 42

Severus writes to Prufrock on a variety of issues.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 18: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 15th February 1998

Severus X. A. Snape
Hogwarts Castle,
Potions' Office,
The Dungeons,
Scotland,
UK
15th February 1998

Your office informed me that you were on leave this week. I hope this missive finds you at home; otherwise, I will deliver a hex on your bald pate. I have just received from your office, a forwarded card from Obscurus books and its Estoericae House imprint informing me that the finalised proof for Magical Drafts and Potions is in its hands. Thank you for your efficiency. As soon as the copies arrive at your doorstep in a few days' time, I want 3 copies delivered to my usual address. *Do not* question me, man! This is important and a matter of great delicacy. I trust you have sent my request for the re-drawn dedication page to that ridiculous puffskein, Heaney.

Everyday, the toil of this act knots itself around my neck. Not only do I have to play spy to the Dark Lord, I have to pretend to be Jigger to answer the Granger chit's letters. Easy enough to stop writing altogether, you say. Therein lies the trouble – I *enjoy* writing to her. In a perverse way, I enjoy being privy to her thoughts on me. And I get a sense of how the blasted Golden Trio feel about the Order's mad schemes to defeat the Dark Lord. Damn it, I am a moral egoist! It may sound odd, but I feel a certain affinity to the girl in our correspondence. I cannot explain it. Damn me, Prufrock – I now know *EXACTLY* how Merlin felt when tempted by Nimue's charms. Yet, this girl is no Nimue, as you well know. Her mind is keen and her wit is sharp.

Enough on me, on to more pressing matters. Albus desires both your presence and Aberforth's at the next meeting. He will send word as to the time and the date. He may want us to strike the first nail in the Dark Lord's coffin, so to speak. As the Dark Lord's plans are near completion, it would be expedient for us to act *before* he does. The minutes of the last meeting plainly indicated that the Dark Lord's Headquarters will be stationed at Cardiff. If all goes well and *if* Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy keep their word, we may have an easier time breaking in with the Second Front. At present, I have every reason to believe that the plans known to me are outdated by a fortnight. After the next meeting with the Dark Lord, young Malfoy and I will endeavour to report all to the Order.

On the professional front, Jigger *WILL NOT be available* for comment on the latest imprint of Magical Drafts and Potions. There will be *no* official book launch or book signing at Flourish and Blotts or Esotericae House or Obscurus Books. I will pre-sign 50 copies. These will be sold at 20% more than retail price. The proceeds to these will go to the Order funds and the war orphans. I am also expecting some letters from Ars Chemica and Nomos. There is a debate about Voudoun love potions that I wish to follow. Jigger is also expecting two copies of a book entitled Dark Potions by Thomas Strauss; it could be useful for adding that narcoleptic Lupin's private cause.

S. Snape.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

For the confused, Severus refers to Hermione as Nimue in the context of this letter. Those familiar with the Merlin-Nimue story (not the one propounded in the film version starring Sam Neill and Isabelle Rossellini) will see why. In Sir Thomas Malory's *Le morte d'Arthur*, Merlin becomes infatuated with the enchantress Nimuë. She is young and he is considerably older. She wants him to teach her all that he knows of the magical arts. He promises to do so in return for a lover's fee (as to what that is – use your imagination). She agrees to the terms. He teaches her, but instead of the 'lover's fee', she buries him under a great rock, sealing it with a form of magic that she had learnt and adapted from him. And poor Merlin remains under the rock from which he could not escape.

Now apply this to the context that Severus presently sees her, what do you see? Think about it.

Letter 19: Dr Jane Porter to her daughter, Hermione Granger, 27th February 1998

Chapter 19 of 42

Hermione receives a letter to her mother, as well as some forwarded packages.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 19: Dr Jane Porter to her daughter, Hermione Granger, 27th February 1998

Drs Reginald Granger & Jane Porter,

21 Fullers Road,

South Woodford,

London, E18 2QB,

United Kingdom.

27th February 1998

My Pet,

The lawsuit with Miss Havisham is finally settled. Strange things are happening all over. This is the 4th day the eclipse has shadowed London. Your father suggested it could be the doing of the Lord Voldemort fellow at your end. Father also wonders whether he is a member of the House of the Lords. I told him that it would be very shocking for us if he were in the House of Lords. The animals in the pet shops and the veterinarians' are over-reacting and cower away at the slightest sounds.

The new Government, which you know has just been installed, has declared a state of emergency. It is most distressing. The shops are closed early and everything is in virtual shutdown. Curfew has been imposed and we all expected to be indoors by 3pm. The post office, provision stores and grocers are only open from Monday to Friday from 10am to 2pm. Electricity is being rationed as well for a number of reasons that I need not list here.

Since things are so topsy-turvy where we are, I think it must be far worse at your end where you are in the heart of it all. I hope your pleasant Headmaster and young Harry will put it to an end soon enough. I still don't see how Harry can be the hero to come through for everyone. He's just a boy! Is he to be a sacrifice in the mode of the Mayans?

By the way, you have received quite a few packages. Some time last week, a letter came for you. It had such a beautiful curlicue hand. It must be that Professor Jigger you have been raving about. Mind you, Love, he is likely to be married. I know you are excessively fond of him (do not deny it, I am your mother, I can sense these things); I know how it is when you talk about him. But do not keep your hopes up. Admiration is all very well; *leave it at that*. I'm telling you this so that you will not pursue a chimera. It is better to be unhappy single than to be unhappy in an unequal relationship.

You have two fairly large packages, in a gentleman's hand no less. I am inclined to think that they are books. The sender must be a sweet fellow to be sending you books. In the odd chance that they are both jewellery caskets, give you old mother one of them. I trust you will tell me what they are. I'm forwarding these to you, as previously arranged.

Take care and much love,

Mummy

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Hand has two meanings: (1) hand as the appendage with fingers and a thumb, (2) handwriting.

Letter 20: Hermione Granger to Victor Krum, 6th Merch 1998

Chapter 20 of 42

Hermione writes to Victor on the present state of affairs in the British Wizarding World.

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphases are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 20: Hermione Granger to Victor Krum, 6th Merch 1998

Hermione Granger,

21 Fullers Road,

South Woodford,

London, E18 2QB,

United Kingdom.

6th March 1998

Dear Victor,

I left several messages on the Krum action figure but have had no reply from you. I do not know what to think! Are you hurt? Are you busy? Or has Irina demanded that you cut off all contact with me because she is suddenly jealous and possessive? I need to talk to you because I think I have reached the end of my tether.

Britain is still suffering from an eclipse and there is chaos everywhere. I am not panicky; rather, I am beginning to have some crazy thoughts. The Muggle British government has declared a state of emergency to minimise widespread looting. That's the New Labour line – in my opinion, it wishes to avoid answering for the citizens that get killed as part of Voldemort's plans to seize the British Isles. So far, he and his coterie seem to be targeting muggle spouses of witches and wizards. There have been 2 reports deaths so far and the New Labour government has (expectedly) hushed up the matter. All these incidents lead to only one logical conclusion – the end is nigh.

I know the final battle is around the corner but I cannot help but think on Dr Jigger. I somehow have the feeling that he is encouraging me, and not merely in the academic sense of the word. He invites me to continue writing to him. But this is nothing. He sent me a *gratis* copy of the reprint of *Magical Drafts and Potions* (through the offices of the Prufrock and Tudor Literary Agency). He autographed it! Yes! He did! He wrote, "*To Miss Granger, Best regards always, Arsenius Jigger.*" I have always liked him, now I think him absolutely wonderful. Do you think he knows that I am a little in love with him? A funny joke at my expense, no doubt.

The *Magical Drafts and Potions* book was the nice surprise. I dare say Professor Dumbledore was pleased with it too because it was dedicated to him. There was a somewhat disturbing surprise as well. Wait till you hear of the other book he sent me. It's the second edition of Thomas Strauss's *Dark Potions*. He penned something in that too. The words "*Miss Granger, You will find this intellectually stimulating and particularly useful. Yrs., Arsenius Jigger*" were scrawled in it. What am I to make of it? Is he apprising me of his sentiments? Is he trying to warn me that his intentions are less than honourable? And why *the hell* did he send me a potions book on the dark arts?

Ron and Harry suspect that Dr Jigger may be working for Voldemort. I told them off for it because it is well known in the British wizarding community that he is a contributor to the war orphans and Order funds; and he is a bosom friend of Professor Dumbledore (the Headmaster acknowledged it). I showed Professor Dumbledore the book and he merely laughed at me, and at Harry's suspicions. Oh Victor, what am I to make of this? I've always been very proper in my correspondence with him. What if he *thinks*

that I was flirting with him through my letters?

I showed Professor Snape the Dark Potions book and expressed my concern of its perceived 'immoral' contents – after all, it is a book on dark potions, what did you expect to call it? It proved to be a fatal mistake. He scowled at me, jabbed at the book with his long pale index finger and frowned disdainfully at me. Then he said in that low contemptuous drawl of his, "Insufferable! There is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are either well written or badly written. Be more catholic in your reading, know-it-all!" His eyes, oddly enough, glittered as he said that. Strange occurrence, is it not? And I swear; his eyes lingered on the new Magical Drafts and Potions book from Dr Jigger. And he quirked a smirk; at least, I think so, or else, I had imagined it. I think it must have been my imagination.

Dr Jigger sent me a letter where he practically pressed me to write to him. He all but revealed that he enjoyed receiving my *"intelligent letters"*. He even added, "*So write again, so that we do not lose track of one another.*" This strikes me as something written by a lonely man reaching out for a kindred spirit. I also get this impression when I read the reference to me in the draft article he wrote on the properties of arrowroot. The footnote reads, "*The author extends his thanks to J. Alfred Prufrock, Albus Dumbledore, Thomas Strauss and the anonymous reviewer at Ars Chemica for their comments on the earlier versions of this paper. The author is also indebted to the research assistance of Miss Hermione Granger, a final year student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Miss Granger was instrumental in forwarding the novel theory expounded herein.*" I was similarly thanked in the acknowledgement pages of Magical Drafts and Potions.

Meanwhile, Professors Dumbledore, McGonagall and Snape have a cunning plan to exterminate Voldemort. The extirpation will hardly risk Harry's life and for that, I am thankful. However, Harry is monstrously upset that he has been left out of what he considers *'the real action'*: I do not see how he can feel thus when he will be the central core through which we will channel all our wands' power.

In any case, reply as soon as possible and let me know your thoughts on all the strange occurrences. My regards to Irina.

Take care,

Hermione

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

One of my reviewers once asked me how Hermione knew 'Jigger' was not a Voldemort sympathiser. Well, I trust this answers that question.

Disclaimer: The bits about New Labour are made up. In the previous letter, I alluded to the change of muggle government in Britain. That too is made up. I have always been a Tory supporter, so this is a joke at the Labour government. It is not meant to insult any supporters of the Labour party. I am fully cognisant of the fact that the Tories are presently the joke of the British political system – but I hope for a return to the glory days of Tory power. Enough politics...on with the plot.

Letter 21: Hermione Granger to her Mother, 14th March 1998

Chapter 21 of 42

Hermione writes to her mother that the war is finally over.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 21: Hermione Granger to her Mother, 14th March 1998

Hermione Granger

c/o Professor Albus Dumbledore

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry,

Scotland, United Kingdom.

14th March 1998

Dearest Mummy,

Sorry for not writing sooner. We have only just settled everything and are very tired. Thank heavens the war is finally over. I hope the same can be said of the state of emergency throughout Britain. I know for certain that the eclipse is no longer over the British Isles. The brand of the Dark Mark over us is also no more. The sad news is that we have also lost some of our number. I do not want to go into details, as it is still very painful for me recount. Moreover, we have only returned to Hogwarts yesterday and are trying to re-establish a sense of some normalcy. Ron is recovering very slowly, as he barely made it. Harry, unfortunately, is still unconscious at St Mungo's (the wizarding Hospital). I speculate that this was due to too much magical power coursing through him.

It would be clearer if I started from the beginning:

Professor Snape and Mr Malfoy brought the lot of us before Voldemort on the pretext of having captured us. Professor Dumbledore feigned injury and is almost as accomplished an actor as Professor Snape. Voldemort wanted us to stand in a semi-circle around him so that he could survey this great capture by his most loyal Death Eaters. While the rest of us begrudgingly fanned ourselves out for his inspection, Mr Malfoy and Professor Snape flanked him on his left and right. Feeling complacent,

Voldemort laughed manically a couple of times before rising to point his wand at Professor Dumbledore. At that moment, Professor Snape very valiantly caught him off guard and disarmed him, thereby enabling all of us to point our wands at Harry's. Harry and Professor Dumbledore then cast a spell, in which process was aided by Professors McGonagall and Snape. This spell subsequently resulted in Voldemort's demise.

It must have been too much for Harry for he collapsed immediately after the villain turned to dust. Professor Snape cursed Harry for being pigeon-livered and whisked him off to St Mungo's for professional medical care. On our way out, Ron stupidly and clumsily tripped over what he thought was a thick rope. That 'rope' was, in actuality, Voldemort's pet serpent, Nagini. Nagini bit Ron and her lethal venom nearly killed him. Madam Pomfrey tried to do all that she could to stabilise his condition before Professor McGonagall and Mrs Weasley took him to St Mungo's. Nagini has since been transferred to a high-security wizarding zoo, where her venom will be studied.

At least, it is over. I hope this will bring us relative peace and calm. I do not want to see another such threat to the world during my lifetime. Don't worry, Mummy, I'm all right. A few scratches here and there don't matter. I am tired, so I'll pen off now. My love to Daddy as well.

Your loving,

Hermione

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Letter 22: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 20th March 1998

Chapter 22 of 42

Is Snape losing his patience with the charade? Or is he (as Jigger) losing his temper with Miss Granger? If so, why?

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 22: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 20th March 1998

Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts

Faculty of Alchemy,

Potions Research Centre,

York,

United Kingdom

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

20th March 1998

Professor Snape has alerted me to your excellent progress in your present research endeavours. Your comments on the arrowroot article were most insightful. I shall make the suggested emendations to the article. While your corrections were very helpful, I take issue with your opinion on the research material quoted by Laird. You did not satisfactorily consider all the other factors in his paper.

By the bye, I have not heard your personal reports on your academic progress for a long time. Has your supervisor been giving you so many problems? Or have you decided, in the time honoured tradition of cretins and intellectual poseurs everywhere, that you have changed your mind on the potions project? Or has your *infatuation* for the subject waned and died like the ridiculous sentiments espoused by creatures your age? Come now, true passion does not die. When I was your age, I was never fickle. I knew what I wanted and went after it. Academia is a serious pursuit; it is a jealous mistress. You do not abandon her when she reveals so many facets of her character in all her glory to you. She does not lavish her attentions on merely anyone. Do not tell me she has wasted her efforts on you? If I had known that to be the case, I would not have bothered to send you the new edition of *Magical Drafts and Potions*. I ought to have sent *Dark Potions* to a more deserving recipient. I doubt you have taken the time to read it. If you have read it, you would have noticed that Chapter 10 deals with lycanthropy and its effects. Chapters 11-13 deal with possible methods through which lycanthropy can be alleviated and dare I add – perhaps cured. It postulates that arrowroot and mallowsweet could be brewed in our present wolfsbane formula. However,

seeing how much you have strayed from the path of virtuous knowledge and educational decorum, you will *undoubtedly* no longer be interested in this fact or in aiding Professor Snape's work. You could just apprise him of your erring changefulness. I am sure he will be more than happy to release you from your unpleasant shackles. He will, no doubt, welcome his regained liberty. Also, if you do not want the books I have sent, you can always return them.

A. Jigger.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Notice "Jigger's" curt sign-off. Whatever does this mean? That, dear readers, is for you to discern. What does it portend for the correspondence? *gasp*

Letter 23: Hermione Granger to Arsenius Jigger, 27th March 1998

Chapter 23 of 42

Hermione replies to Jigger's letter in fairly curt manner.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 23: Hermione Granger to Arsenius Jigger, 27th March 1998

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts

Faculty of Alchemy

Potions Research Centre,

York,

United Kingdom

27th March 1998

Dear Dr Jigger,

I did not believe it possible for a person of your standing and learning to be capable of casting such aspersions on my character. Isn't it natural that I was remiss in writing because I have been otherwise occupied? I was disposed due to acutely important matters. The books are appreciated and if you demand their return, you are welcome to them. Give the word and they will be returned forthwith. Contrary to your *expectations*, I have read the Dark Potions book and have learned some things that *will not* share with you. I worship knowledge as the ultimate virtue as you do. I do not take to any insults on my pursuit of knowledge as the good in itself for itself. I had expected you to understand that sometimes praxis is more expedient. I had thought that my praxis in my private matters would expiate my temporary silence. I am beginning to believe that I have misplaced my admiration and esteem in your person.

Professor Snape has made no mention of his dissatisfaction of my work. And if he has said nothing, I don't see why should you! He knows how much effort I place into the lycanthropy project. I have conducted various experiments and I have done extensive research into the matter. Professor Snape scowled at my finds on mallowsweet. He tacitly acknowledged that the addition of mallowroot to wolfsbane would break down certain compounds in the werewolf's DNA. I have made other similar discoveries on arrowroot but I will say nothing of it here. Your cruel words on my studies render me silent.

I am loath to send this to you after your disparagement of my capabilities in learning. Since I have written a response to your article in *Ars Chemica* on Voodoo love potions, I might as well reproduce it here. Extant physiological explorations on the effects of 'voodoo love potions' are augmented with information about neurophysiological research on sensitisation, or tuning of the automatic nervous system. The process of suggestion is committed through the admixture of knotgrass and nettle in the Hypatia Voodoo love potion. Although Chapple (whom you quoted) has amply documented the importance of the automatic nervous system in human behaviour, he has failed to consider the effects of the Hypatia Voodoo love potion. The Hypatia love potion has both long term and short term effects. In noting Voodoo love potions in general, you did

not consider the effects of the potions where the persons involved have a certain affinity for mutual affection. The nervous functioning in such situations would pull the couple together in mind and soul, but only when the couple are unaware of the other's affection. In contrast, when love potions are applied to subjects who have no affection between them, it will only be a temporary lust induced passion. I have no more to say to you, as I feel you begin to find my prattling annoying.

Let me end our correspondence on this note –

Adieu,

Hermione Granger

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Praxis loosely understood is 'action'.

And now, Hermione is penning off in a curt fashion. Will this madness not end? *gasp* Wait till the next letter...

Letter 24: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 1st April 1998

Chapter 24 of 42

Jigger replies to Hermione in less than pleasant tones, but attaches a journal article in response to her response.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 24: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 1st April 1998

Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts

Faculty of Alchemy,

Potions Research Centre,

York,

United Kingdom

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

1st April 1998

Miss Granger,

I did not mean to affront your sensibilities or slander your character. Do ~~not~~ ever say 'adieu' when academic discussions are left hanging and incomplete. It is bad form and in poor taste. If you were truly serious about making your mark in academia, you would not be so quick to anger. You must acquaint yourself with the harsh words that other academics will throw at you. They will attempt to discredit you, insult you and challenge you publicly in the journals, forcing you to defend your beliefs and knowledge. Are you going to cower away when they do so? You have better manners than that, young lady! The other academics and your detractors will be crueller than I have been. If you do not harden yourself to it now, you will be a paper academic despised by everyone in your field. Could you abide by it? Would you stand for such treatment? Surely, by now, you would have known that education is an admirable thing, but nothing that is worth knowing can be taught. There are some things that you *must necessarily* learn on your own. I am training you, you impossible, insupportable creature, hapless and ignorant though you may be!

I attribute your supervisor's silence to your inadequate exploration on the properties of mallowssweet. In my own experiments, I discovered that the putrifaction of mallowssweet in ayeletropine (which you may or may not know, is a medieval potion meant to strip the then known compounds into their simplest forms) created 99 by-products. One of these is azurinetic. Azurinetic will aid the restructuring of mamma's DNA. I have successfully tried this on rats and ravens. Azurinetic binds very easily to

the wolfsbane. I am sure your Professor Snape has notes on the same. You might like to read up on the subject and discuss it with him. If you wish to discuss the matter with me, you can take the matter up with me at Nomos, unless you deem it *beneath* you.

Voodoo love potions are a matter of weighty consideration, which I have again addressed in the attached paper from the latest edition of *Ars Chemica*. That would be a matter for your own deliberation. You *may* chuse to respond to it in the same journal as I have responded to your criticisms in this article. Therefore, Miss Granger, let us not say 'adieu' but 'au revoir', for I predict, we shall be hotly debating this topic for some time yet.

Yrs.,

A. Jigger.

~~~~~  
Journal Article  
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Arsenius Jigger, "Voodoo Love Potions: New Thoughts on an Old Theory Response to Hermione Granger's Critique," Ars Chemica, Vol. 1204, no. 4.

Fundamental to an understanding on voodoo love potions on the autonomic nervous system is the property of mutual antagonism in the reciprocal activation of subsystems known as sympathetic and parasympathetic, respectively. While Miss Granger of Hogwarts has acknowledged these matters in her study (brought to the author's attention through private correspondence), she does not fully comprehend the difficulties of taking the Hypatia voodoo potion en soi, because it is the quintessential voodoo love potion. Emotional responses attributed to the potion do not necessarily trigger the same neurological responses. Granted that there are occasions when the love potion will bond two genuinely loving hearts together, such cases are rare. Most users of voodoo potions, especially users of the Hypatia potion, only wish to pursue their private gratifications with the object of their desires. The uses in such cases differ little from some muggles' use so-called 'date rape drugs'. However, as Miss Granger pointed out, there are times when a couple are secretly enthralled by each other to the ignorance of the other. In such cases, the deployment of the voodoo love potion would bind them together for all eternity in mind, body, soul and in all. There would be no escape from its effects.

Yet, it is not the East Indies that originated the art of Voodoo love potions. Certainly, Voodoo was the name given by these peoples to this art form. But the potions themselves hail from ancient China. Earliest records on this can be traced in the teachings of Confucius, who wrote in the period of the Warring States. Like Miss Granger, Confucius was aware of the untoward applications of love potions. Being the victim of such a potion, he and his mistress were rent asunder because she did not really feel much affection for him. He also witnessed the unhappiness of his daughter who was bound to a man who despite his affection for her, ill-treated her. This unfortunate witch was bound to suffer with her wizard because they were bound in mind, body, soul and in all.

The Hypatia voodoo love potion, known to the ancient Chinese as the *Affections of Li and Ren* potion, could be used to the advantage of many. This usage is not well known as most abusers of these potions only wish to satiate lust. The *Affections of Li and Ren* when correctly brewed under tightly controlled circumstances and used correctly in the right situation would facilitate friendship, familial love and all manner of noble affection. The trappings of modernity have meant that Miss Granger, and many of you, will consider love as something that exists between oneself and one's sexual partner or beloved. The ancient Chinese, like the ancient Greeks believed in the separation of the many typologies of love. There is a kind of love for everything. I beseech my readers not to forget that. The Great Learning states that the *Affections of Li and Ren* is used to bring out the Confucian teaching of self cultivation through moral basis, viz. , to cultivate the self, one has to regulate the family; to regulate the family, you have to order the state; to order the state, you have to contribute to universal peace. These four things are to be accumulated. In other words, you cannot bring about universal peace if you do not do something about ordering the state, you cannot order the state; you cannot order the state if you do not regulate the family; you cannot regulate the family unless individuals within the family cultivate themselves. When the *Affections of Li and Ren* is used by those for the noble intent of preserving peace (as the Mongolians did with Pax Mongolia under the Great Khan), the practitioner and his subject will be granted much wisdom. In sort, they will further foment the development of self-cultivation that is within themselves. Self-cultivation consists of four things: (i) investigation of things (ii) extension of knowledge (iii) the sincerity of will (iv) rectification of will. So doing, will foster better philosophical understanding and good governance.

Now, the basis of good government here we're slowly moving to the virtues *li* and *ren*. So in 1.2 of The Analects, we're told that a good son would make a good subject. And what are the hallmarks of a good son? A good son must be exemplary in his conduct towards his parents. And what does it mean to be exemplary in your conduct towards your parents? It means that when you are dealing with your parents, you always comply with the rites. That is what 8.2 and 1.9 are about. Being a good son is to always to act in accordance to *li* and to possess the virtue of filial piety. You see, when the gentleman meets the ruler (because the gentleman is an official), and feels profound affection for his parents, then he is being a good son, and the people will be stirred by his benevolence. So the root of good government which is the role that the gentleman plays by ensuring just rule, that gentleman must show profound affection for his parents. He must be an example of the good son in other words. That example according to this passage, 8.2, will help to stir the people to benevolence. And 1.9, this is interesting because the Confucians put a lot of emphasis on not just rites but funeral rights, they have very demanding funeral rights, "conduct the funeral of your parents with meticulous care and let not sacrifices to your remote ancestors be forgotten, and the virtue of the common people will incline towards fullness." So there's a sense in which, good government ensures that the people will be reformed by the exemplary conducts of the officials. This can be further impounded when the *Affections of Li and Ren* is given to the people. The Tang dynasty later successfully did so and brought much peace to its people. However, there are some ethical considerations in such methods, which clearly go against the teachings and Confucius's specific instructions as to the uses of the *Affections of Li and Ren* potions

The Confucian *Affections of Li and Ren* exists because of certain ways of perceiving the institution of the family. It will regulate rites. Not just ordinary rites, but rites that will never change. Rites are these supposedly objective descriptions of behaviour, and it regulates not just the behaviour of human beings, but because these rites also take place in the temple, it also regulates the way you deal with your dead ancestors the spiritual realm. What is so remarkable about rites as sanctioned and elicited by the *Affections of Li and Ren*, is that these rites are objective prescriptions of our behaviour and as such they are different from law.

It would be clearer in the writings of Mo Tzu, especially in his chapter entitled 'Impartial Love'. He elucidates the usage of the *Affections of Li and Ren* in political situations and governance.

Perhaps, after considering this, Miss Granger and others of her mindset will come to be a better understanding and appreciation for the theory behind such love potions.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

For the confused, note that in the previous letter, HG says she wrote a response to AJ's article on love potions but is too pissed to (1) share her ideas with him, (2) attach the journal article for him. In this letter, AJ says he has read her response and this article (attached with the letter) here is a reply to her response.

It's my story and I do what I want with it. In this story, Voodoo love potions (and only voodoo love potions) is based on a multi-purpose Chinese love potion, which in turn is based on the Confucian ideas of *Li* and *Ren*. The Confucian ideas are based on a lecture series that I am presently giving on Ancient Chinese political thought. The *Affections of Ren* and *Li* potion is made up.

The numbers in parenthesis in the journal article are section references to Confucius's Analects. It is an academic article; as such, it has to look like one. The words in parenthesis in the journal article are transliteration of Mandarin words.

The Voodoo babble is made-up rubbish; the rest is drawn from a lecture series that I am presently giving in Ancient Chinese Political Thought.

Thank you for bearing with me and this plot. I know that it may be a little difficult to follow and a little absurd at this point. Your kind words of encouragement and

forbearance are appreciated.

Letter 25: Hermione Granger to Arsenius Jigger, 1998, 25th April 1998

Chapter 25 of 42

Hermione, much mortified, replies to Jigger.

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphases are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 25: Hermione Granger to Arsenius Jigger, 1998, 25th April 1998

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts

Faculty of Alchemy

Potions Research Centre,

York,

United Kingdom

25th April 1998

Dear Dr Jigger,

I am sorry to have given you so much offence; it was not intended. I have been very busy with lessons and whatnot. Besides, examinations are coming up soon and I am worried because I am behind in revision. My potions project with Professor Snape is coming along very well. I shall not reproduce the modified wolfsbane-mallowsweet and arrowroot potion here, as it is the intellectual property of Professor Snape. He can be extremely possessive about his work material and notes. It appears that the mixture has successfully altered the DNA structure of the blood from our subject. It remains to be seen whether it will work on a live subject.

It is very good of you to encourage me to publish my responses to you. You will find the attached article below. I'm afraid it is not of the calibre that is worthy of your attention. I was very surprised when *Ars Chemica* wrote to inform me that it was accepted for publication. Surprisingly, *Nomos* also accepted the paper on azurinetic. Thank you so very much for your support and encouragement.

I hope it is not too much to ask, but would you consider taking me as your student when I leave Hogwarts? I will be more than happy to enrol in York. I would be honoured if you were to supervise my studies then. Apprise me of your opinion. Till then, keep in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Hermione Granger

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Journal Article

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Hermione Granger, Ghosts and the Truth behind Voodoo Love Potions: Response to Arsenius Jigger, Ars Chemica, Vol. 1204, no. 5.

Jigger's explanation of the theory behind Voodoo Love Potions is admirable. In *Voodoo Love Potions: New Thoughts on an Old Theory* he successfully traced Voodoo love potions to its Chinese roots. He is right in assuming that the erroneous name of these love potions have contributed to much misunderstanding as to their intent. However, the evolution of the *Affections of Li and Ren* potion and their other effects, such as bringing back the beloved deceased as ghosts and transforming people into drones who mindlessly love the city's rulers, do not seem to be adequately considered by Jigger. As no one has sought to rename these potions, I shall address them by their proper

names. This paper will study a particular type of *Affections of Li and Ren* (which all Voodoo potions are based on), namely, the *Mo Tzu* love potion.

The aim of Mo Tzu's political-philosophical project in the *Mo Tzu* love potion, which appears in Alexander Burton's translation of *The Basic Writings of Mo Tzu* appears simple enough. As the opening line of the chapter entitled 'Impartial Love' attests, "The business of the benevolent man is surely to strive to promote what is beneficial to the world and to eliminate what is harmful (16/1)." This much Mo Tzu appears to share with his Confucian opponents, namely Mencius and Xun Tzu. What distinguishes him from them are his account of the cause of political conflict and his proposed solution. Mo Tzu identifies the harmful things of the world with "great countries attacking small ones, great families wrecking havoc with lesser ones, the strong robbing the weak, the many doing violence to the few, the clever deceiving the stupid, the eminent lording it over the humble" (16/23; see also 45) ... a fitting description of the sociopolitical conditions of China in the Warring States period caused by the excessive use of the *Affections of Li and Ren*. He traces the cause of these problems to what he calls "partiality" engendered by the *Affections of Li and Ren*. Readers in ancient Greek political philosophy and potions will be familiar with the Platonic view of the dangers inherent in the love for one's own.

It is crucial to be reminded at the outset of the apparently extravagant claims Mo Tzu advances on behalf of impartial love that can be created by the use of the *Mo Tzu* love potion in this chapter. He seems to offer *jian ai* as the panacea for all social and political ills (see esp. 16/920). In view of the pervasive role that impartial love is thought to play in Mo Tzu's proposed solution to the chief problems of the world, one should expect that the doctrine would feature significantly in any argument against war, the very first item in his list of harms to the world. Yet when one turns to the chapter "against Offensive War," one discovers that while the utilitarian logic of the *jian ai* doctrine is discernible, the specific doctrine is not mentioned, nor is the problem of war analyzed in terms of the *jian-bie* distinction. Instead, a large part of this chapter is about how ghosts come to the aid of virtuous rulers in meting out condign punishment to errant individuals and states. The arguments against offensive war would therefore appear to rely much more on the arguments purporting to prove the existence of ghosts in "Explaining Ghosts" than the arguments of "Impartial Love."

At this point the modern student of Mo Tzu faces the following problem: does not the question of ghosts (and their resurrection) appear unworthy of serious philosophical and theoretical attention? It should be borne in mind that the *Mo Tzu* love potion brings back dead loved ones (as ghosts) as well, if well executed. How should one take seriously an argument against offensive war that depends so much on a belief in the existence of ghosts? It may be answered that regardless of our beliefs about ghosts, it would nevertheless be a mistake to underestimate the importance that Mo Tzu himself assigns to their existence. After all, Mo Tzu's project of promoting what is beneficial and eliminating what is harmful to the world rests on the possibility of resolving the problem of war. This means that his project would be essentially incomplete without such a solution. But if it is the case that the possibility of dealing with the problem of war is itself dependent on the persuasiveness of the arguments for the existence of ghosts, then it follows that Mo Tzu's project stands or falls with the success of his attempt to prove their existence. Thus, the arguments concerning the existence of ghosts are not details that can be dispensed with without putting at risk the whole of Mo Tzu's project. This seems reason enough for a modern student of Mo Tzu to take seriously his otherwise alien concern with ghosts.

Mo Tzu is far more interesting from the aspect of theoretical potions but, by the same token, far less optimistic with regard to the salvation of the world. Suppose we have been correct to argue that Mo Tzu's political project stands or falls with the success of his attempt to prove the existence of providential ghosts. What this implies is that his project contains an implicit understanding of the rational limits of dealing with the problem of war. In addition, if Mo Tzu is right to argue that the chief problem of the world ... interstate war ... can be rationally dealt with only if the existence of the ghosts of our dearly departed (as resurrected through the *Mo Tzu* love potion) can be rationally demonstrated, then it follows that if the existence of ghosts cannot be rationally demonstrated then there cannot likewise be a rational and complete resolution to all the problems of the world. As we hope to show, the text provides sufficient indication that Mo Tzu does not believe that the existence of providential ghosts can be demonstrated by any knockdown argument. Nevertheless, he seems to think that a defence of the belief in their existence is a prerequisite for resolving or at least moderating the problem of war. The arguments in "Against Offensive War" and "Explaining Ghosts" thus constitute a crucial correction or qualification to the otherwise optimistic tenor of "Impartial Love" as supposedly created by the *Mo Tzu* love potion. Such a qualification would, moreover, entail important implications for the understanding of Mo Tzu's political philosophy as a whole.

"Explaining Ghosts" contra "Impartial Love" is explained as effects caused by the applications of the *Mo Tzu* love potion. "Explaining Ghosts", where he explains the effects of bringing back one's dearly departed, consists of two disproportionate sections. There is a short introduction in which Mo Tzu first traces the disorder of his world to widespread doubts about the existence of providential ghosts and then proceeds to argue for the desirability of believing that they exist. This is followed by Mo Tzu's replies to a series of objections and queries posed by "those who claim that ghosts do not exist" (31/6, 13, 4243, 60, 96, 102). The exchange between Mo Tzu and the sceptics can also be divided into two parts. The first part centres on the dispute over the existence of ghosts *AFTER* they have returned via the workings of the *Mo Tzu* love potion, the outcome of which is a stalemate that neutralises to some extent the doubts of the sceptics. In the process, Mo Tzu indicates at various points his own reservations concerning the strength of his arguments for the existence of ghosts. In the second part, Mo Tzu engages the sceptics on the more practical question of the utility of fostering the belief in providential ghosts apart from the question of their actual existence. We will begin with an outline of Mo Tzu's view about the relation between religion and morality contra his love potion that opens the chapter.

The introduction of "Explaining Ghosts" constitutes an important yet frequently overlooked qualification to the effects of "Impartial Love", which supposedly comes about from his love potion. While both chapters describe the main problems with the world in terms of conflict between groups and individuals, they differ in their analyses of the cause of conflict. In "Explaining Ghosts," the notion of "partiality" that is so central to the explanation of disorder in "Impartial Love" is only barely discernible in the comment that people assault and rob the innocent "for their [the robbers'] own benefit" (*zi li*) (31/4). Other causes are more obvious here. First, the opening lines of the chapter suggest a departure from the moral standards of high antiquity as one of the causes of corruption: "The sage kings of the Three Dynasties have passed away and the world has lost sight of what is right, the princes regard might as right" (31/1). Second, Mo Tzu explicitly states that: "It [the present disorder] all comes about because people are all in doubt as to whether ghosts and spirits exist or not, and do not realize that ghosts and spirits have the power to reward the worthy and punish the wicked if they raise them to protect their interests and welfare as they once did when they were alive" (31/45). Having identified the underlying causes of moral and political decline, Mo Tzu goes on to propose a solution to the present disorder: "If we could only make all the people in the world believe that the ghosts and spirits have the power to reward the worthy and punish the wicked, then how could there be any disorder in the world?" (31/56). The precise form of Mo Tzu's solution should be noted: Mo Tzu is not saying that people ought to believe that his love potion really brings ghosts back, but that it brings back ghosts with "the power to reward the worthy and punish the wicked" (31/5) exist. Compare also his statement of the prevailing attitude toward ghosts: there are persisting doubts about their existence, and there is also a misunderstanding about their nature and power. This points to at least two different kinds of 'unbelievers' after the success of the *Mo Tzu* love potion is evident: those who do not believe that the resurrected ghosts of loved ones exist, and those who believe that the resurrected ghosts of loved ones exist but not that they have the power to reward the good and punish the wicked.

Mo Tzu appears to address exclusively the former, more radical group. In doing so he indicates that it is necessary to address this class of unbelievers in order to restore a belief in the existence of ghosts (through his love potion) and to reform beliefs about them so as to re-establish order. The reason for this may have something to do with the fact that the unbelievers in question are quite sophisticated and vocal in articulating their doubts about the existence of ghosts, as the subsequent account of their objections reveals. These unbelievers, according to Mo Tzu, are "spreading scepticism among the people and causing them to be in doubt as to whether ghosts and spirits exist or not, consequently the world is in disorder. The Potion is not supposed to work in that manner" (31/7).

All this does not imply, of course, that one needs to be in complete agreement with Mo Tzu over his substantive teaching or the necessity of such a form of rhetoric. But reasonable critique can be achieved only when one has reached a better understanding of his total teaching, and, as we have argued, the ghost elements of the *Mo Tzu* are not optional to this totality. To that end, it would be necessary to explore in depth other chapters dealing with Mo Tzu's political theology, for instance "The Will of Heaven" and "Against Fatalism." And only on the basis of a comprehensive understanding of what appears to be a highly systematic teaching can one begin to appreciate the full extent of Mo Tzu's challenge to the classical Confucian *Affections of li and ren* love potion.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

It's my story and I do what I want with it. In this story, Voodoo love potions (and only voodoo love potions) is based on a multi-purpose Chinese love potion, which in turn is based on the Confucian ideas of *Li* and *Ren*. The Confucian ideas are based on a lecture series that I am presently giving on Ancient Chinese political thought. The *Affections of Ren and Li* potion is made up.

The numbers in parenthesis in the journal article are section references to Confucius's *Analects* and Mo Tzu's writings. It is an academic article; as such, it has to look like

one. The words in parenthesis in the journal article are transliteration of Mandarin words.

The Voodoo babble is made-up rubbish; the rest are drawn from a lecture series that I am presently giving in Ancient Chinese Political Thought.

Thank you for bearing with me and this plot. I know that it may be a little difficult to follow and a little absurd at this point. Your kind words of encouragement and forbearance are appreciated.

Letter 26: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 5th May 1998

Chapter 26 of 42

Severus writes to Prufrock.

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphases are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

In order not to weary the reader's patience, a number of letters from the series of correspondences have been suppressed; those only have been given which appeared necessary to a complete understanding of the events in this group. For the same reason, some letters from the actors in the events of this drama have also been suppressed.

Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 26: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 5th May 1998

Severus X. A. Snape

Potions' Office,

The Dungeons,

Hogwarts,

Scotland,

UK.

5th May 1997

I hope you are better, Prufrock. Your injuries were not too severe; I do not see why you have to paint yourself as such an invalid. It is very unjust. Whatever happened to the Platonic principle of justice being best served by one man having only one job? Albus and Minerva are in health and send their regards.

I received your letter dated 28th April but have not ventured to reply as I have been busy. You will learn that Lupin is not dead from the trials! That fool actually volunteered to try the wolfsbane-mallowsweet potion. I do not know whether the effects are permanent, but he has not transformed this time, it may be safe to assume that he is fine. Still, I advise caution. At the next full moon, get him to have some wolfsbane on standby in case he does transform. Send me a some sample of his blood and I will see whether the cure is truly effected.

Examinations are almost upon the students and I thank Merlin that I will soon get rid of them. Bah! Do not speak to me of Harry Potter and that idiot, Weasley. They are alive, if you must know. Weasley can now walk about and harass one of the particularly vacuous specimens from his house. His survival from that bloody snake bite has turned him into some sort of idol to most of the impressionable young girls. Potter, on the other hand, disappointed me by not dying. I sometimes think that he would have been better off if I had left him where he was. The Daily Prophet had no business buttering up my hopes with reports that the dolt-who-lived-again was tittering on the brink of death every other night. Against all my prayers, he has recovered just in time to sit for the NEWTS. Entré nous, I hope he fails. If he becomes an auror, he will be a menace to our society. It may be too early to beat myself over that point. He may be expelled from auror training and he may be permanently incapacitated during one of the auror raids.

Since that dunderhead bears the Potter name, it seems that all my dreams of his demise will be dashed. I must resign myself to it. I am not Sybil Trelawney, but I can accurately predict that despite Potter's late recovery from his injuries, infrequent revision, less than perfect academic track record and his penchant for Quidditch and heroics over books, he will miraculously pass all his NEWT subjects. Curses! I know *his* NEWTS results will be deliberately tampered so as to accommodate and reward the boy-who-lived-to-vanquish-the-Dark-Lord-again. By this same yardstick, Potter will get through all his auror tests from the force of his reputation alone. Bah! The injustice of the world!

Why Prufrock, why did you send me Miss Granger's letter all those months ago? You are my soul's consistency; it is only to you that I say these things, as I know you will keep them to yourself. Do you know how it haunts me to see my best pupil unaware of my contribution to her mind's improvement? She has exceeded my expectations. She haunts my dreams with her work. She torments my waking hours with her intelligent discussions! What have you done to me, Prufrock? Why did you send her letter to me? Why? Why? I blame you, you accursed damnable creature! I would that she had *never written* to Jigger! What was Penelope doing that she missed the inconsistency in Magical Drafts and Potions? I blame Penelope for this confounded cock-up! Damn you, Prufrock! Curse Penelope! Why? Why must the world and the Fates mock me?

Yes, yes, I know Nimue will graduate and that's the last I will see of her. She looks up to me; NO not to me, but Arsenius Jigger. Jigger! I could laugh I am jealous of my other self! I even think she has some inkling of unrequited love for Arsenius Jigger, that festering figment of my imagination who is supposed to be everything that I want to be but am not! She has not propositioned Jigger; she is too decent to do something so unethical. She let fly at him, or at me rather, for I wrote as I normally would. You could feel the passion for her subject in that letter where she lectured me on not underestimating her love for learning. You should read her replies to my journal articles. She has not only replied to my articles in *Ars Chemica*, but to the articles in *Nomos* and *Recherches Alchemique* as well. And *I HELPED her*, I helped shaped her thoughts. Why did I do so? So that I will know that at least one of my students turned out well. Merlin knows the sort of discrimination she will face when she enters our society to work; you know that her lineage would work against her. I sought to help her and ease that unwarranted bigotry so that she would not face what I did when I tried to do everything under my own name. I have a D.Mag.A from Cambridge and what good is it? I cannot get a decent position in Britain because I am perceived as a dangerous wizard. If it were not for Albus Dumbledore's recommendation, York would not have accepted Jigger as a shadow associate professor. I know that York, Cambridge, Oxford

and a few other schools see me as '*rehabilitated*' (what a vulgar phrase), but do they know that I am still a little disreputable?

Try telling that to Miss Granger? She wants to be Jigger's student at York. She wants to be ~~MY~~ student! Will I never escape her? She even wants me to be her academic supervisor at York. I cannot go on with the charade. I have too much at stake. Should I feign Jigger's death and leave her to forget him? But a woman like this, who plans for her education, is delicious. Vanity tells me to keep her by my side as my star pupil. Logic tells me to let go when she leaves Hogwarts. She is an insufferable know-it-all who dared to tell me that I was illogical and irrational! A woman such as this and my head is turned. Laugh at me, Prufrock! Hex me! Crucio me! My head is turned by this chit and I damn my mind and these eyes that see her worth!

I know what I must do. I must tell her to go away. Or Jigger must go away, or Severus Snape can die and so end this agony. Gods! She is Nimue incarnate. She will take all my knowledge and leave me! Damn her! Curse the Fates! Damn you for forwarding that letter! Damn Penelope for missing that mistake in Magical Drafts! Damn me!

Enough, Nimue has entered the classroom to submit her paper for the wolfsbane project.

S. Snape

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

For the confused, Severus refers to Hermione as Nimue in the context of this letter. Those familiar with the Merlin-Nimue story (not the one propounded in the film version starring Sam Neill and Isabelle Rossellini) will see why. In Sir Thomas Malory's *Le morte d'Arthur*, Merlin becomes infatuated with the enchantress Nimuë. She is young and he is considerably older. She wants him to teach her all that he knows of the magical arts. He promises to do so in return for a lover's fee (as to what that is use your imagination). She agrees to the terms. He teaches her, but instead of the 'lover's fee', she buries him under a great rock, sealing it with a form of magic that she had learnt and adapted from him. And poor Merlin remains under the rock from which he could not escape.

Now apply this to the context that Severus presently sees her, what do you see? Think about it.

Letter 27: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 7th May 1998

Chapter 27 of 42

Severus writes to Prufrock again.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 27: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 7th May 1998

Severus X. A. Snape

Potions' Office,

The Dungeons,

Hogwarts,

Scotland,

UK.

7th May 1998

You are right, Prufrock! I must be calm, bold and resolute. I already know that it is a terrible notion! I am *not* going to pursue her. Do you take me for a fool? I do not want her to run mad before the NEWTS and fail so badly that I will have to hang myself in shame. I have no desire to see my head dragging on the cold floors of Hogwarts. I have too much vanity as an educator to desire my students' destruction. You have every right to disapprove! Your miserable four lines of scrawl have brought me to my senses.

Beyond this nonsense, life goes on normally for me. I have finished preparing all my exam papers and am prepared to fail all the dunderheads. This year's NEWTS papers from the ministry are more difficult than previous years. I sincerely hope that Potter will fail it, though I know it is a worthless hope. Nimue will undoubtedly do well. She has done much extracurricular reading under my guidance (and Jigger's). I have composed a reply to her love potion article in *Ars Chemica*. All that remains is for Jigger to write a letter telling her that it is impossible for him to supervise her.

After the Kent conference in December last year, I have been inundated with many offers to deliver one-day lectures. Jigger will not do them, for I will deliver some of them by proxy this summer. Arrange for the usual fee to be credited into my Gringotts account. The end of the Dark Lord seems to have done my reputation some good. Yesterday, York offered Jigger a tenured position as a shadow lecturer. I am tempted by the offer as it would take me away from the dunderheads here. However, I am aware that there will be dunderheads there as well. Perhaps I should do the world a great service and poison all the dunderheads. Dunderheads or no, I have until July to apprise them of my decision.

I'm sending you the manuscript for *Epistemological Alchemy*. Get Penelope to read it and see if it is any good. If you can beat Heaney over your knees and convince him

that Severus Snape is a respectable writer, publish it under my name. If he *still* feels otherwise after the beating, publish it under Jigger's name, *then* hex him. Severus Snape can restrict his name to academic journals and still be satisfied. It is like the University of York's offer – either way, I, Severus X. A. Snape, stand to gain. And that's *exactly* how I like it. See what you can do about it on that score.

S. Snape.

Footnotes

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The U of Kent conference was referred to in letter 4 and intimated in letter 6.

Letter 28: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 15th May 1998

Chapter 28 of 42

Jigger finally replies to Hermione. Will it be to her expectations? Read on...

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 28: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 15th May 1998

Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts

Faculty of Alchemy

Potions Research Centre,

York,

United Kingdom

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Head Girl's Room,

Gryffindor Tower,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

15th May 1998

Dear Miss Granger,

Permit me to congratulate the new toast of the Alchemical world. You are the talk of the field this season. Nomos has dubbed you "the dazzling debutante in our circle"; you must be very self-congratulatory. Well, *chit* do not allow vanity to get the better of you. There are others out there who are your superior and on no account forget that. I believe you have had offers from various universities? For Merlin's sake, woman! Take the one that you like best and make sure that it is a better school than York.

You need not thank me for your successes, for the ideas and refutations are your own. As for coming to York, I urge you to reconsider the matter carefully. *Mjæalth* does not permit me to lecture in public and I would be an indifferent supervisor if I am not around to assist you when you most need me. Furthermore, I am a harsh task master, even in absentia. *IF* you believe the rumours, I supposedly have eyes everywhere. Are you prepared to study under such an unreasonable tyrant? Why don't you consider the matter after the NEWT results are released? If you are the top student and would still like to undertake this foolish course of action, I will accept you as my student on *MY* terms, not yours. Would you abide by it, Miss Granger? Would *your pride* allow it? Should such a situation happen, you must *never* question my instructions. Is that understood? You may question my theories, explanations and writings, but you are *NEVER* to question my instructions.

Now that we have established that, I wish you all the best in your coming NEWTS.

Yrs.,

A. Jigger

Arsenius Jigger, Ghosts of War in Mo Tzu's Chinese 'Voodoo' Love Potion A Political Overview: Response to Hermione Granger, Ars Chemica, Vol. 1204, no. 6.

The ongoing debate amongst scholars of theoretical potions and Mo Tzu's role as the father of Voodoo love potions requires further clarification. As Miss Granger pointed out, the introduction of *Explaining Ghosts* constitutes an important yet frequently overlooked qualification to the effects of "Impartial Love", which supposedly comes about from his love potion. Yet, in so doing, I consider that there is an incomplete understanding of what Mo Tzu laid down vis-à-vis his own criticism of his writing. She did not demonstrate her contention that Mo Tzu's attempted solution to the problem of war depends decisively on a credible demonstration of the existence of providential ghosts who are resurrected through his love potion. One must bear in mind that Mo Tzu identifies the harmful things of the world with "great countries attacking small ones, great families wrecking havoc with lesser ones, the strong robbing the weak, the many doing violence to the few, the clever deceiving the stupid, the eminent lording it over the humble". This is the reality of the socio-political conditions of China in the Warring States period caused by the excessive use of the Confucian *Affections of Li and Ren* potion. While Miss Granger mentions this, she does not accurately take into account the political implications of Mo Tzu's love potion and the contradictions that it seemingly produces.

Miss Granger wrote, "*Against Offensive War* can be roughly divided into two parts. In the first part, Mo Tzu criticises the princes of his day for their pursuit of warlike activities, characterising their actions as both unrighteous and economically senseless. In the second part, he responds to three objections raised by the princes." However, in so doing, she has underestimated Mo Tzu. I believe that many critics think he does not argue well because his argument tends to be repetitive and sophistic in nature and as such, seems at times not to be very logical. But the key to understanding Mo Tzu is to look at these criticisms. A lot of the arguments don't seem to be strong only because the criticisms are so good. The criticisms of Mo Tzu are very good. But, it is Mo Tzu who reproduces those criticisms. This is the indication that Mo Tzu knows that there is some conception that these criticisms are themselves important things to consider as part of his arguments. And when you take the criticisms seriously enough, you can see that in the light of his criticisms his answers are not so bad. And we respect Mo Tzu because he is willing to listen to the most serious criticisms against him and attempt to rebut them. So the first objection about the Mo Tzu love potion induced universal and impartial love is that it's unrealistic and impractical, as they put it so nicely, "It may be a good thing, but how can it be put to use". And this objection may be a good thing because it says that universal love is not good enough to solve all the problems of the world. The men of world raise this criticism, "And yet the men of the world continue to criticise it (universal love)." Who are the men of the world? These are the political men the men of action. They think they know the world very well, are realists and are worldly-wise. Then Mo Tzu responds, "If it cannot be put to use, even I would criticise it." Then he gives us a case scenario and asks us to consider this, "Suppose there are two men, one of them holding to partiality and the other to universality...So the words of these two men disagree and their actions are diametrically opposed. Yet let us suppose that both of them are determined to carry out their words in action, so that word and deed agree like the two parts of a tally and nothing they say will put it to action." This is a condition argument, a thought experiment as it were. So, these men will act according to what they say and what they believe. At that moment Mo Tzu says, "Then let us venture to inquire further." Here, I think the description is quite powerful, listen, "Suppose that here is a broad plain, a vast wilderness and a man is buckling on his armour and donning his helmet to set out the field for battle, where the fortunes of life and death are unknown;" this man is setting out for battle, he may die. Then he continues a few lines later, "Now let us ask, to whom will he entrust the support of his parents and the care of his wife and children?" So he's telling us to take this hypothetical case and to put ourselves in this situation that you have to go to war and leave your family, your parents, wife and kids and so on behind. In such a situation, who would you want to entrust your loved ones to the partial man or the impartial man? This is a thought experiment and according to Mo Tzu, the answer is obvious when you are confronted with a situation like that, "It seems to me that on occasions like these, there are no fools in the world...he would surely think it best to entrust his family to the universal-minded man (i.e. the impartial man)." So I think this is a very powerful illustration and a powerful line, he says that impartiality is practical and he shows us how it is so. So even if you don't really think much of impartiality, on such occasions, you want the impartial sorts to be around because you can't be around to look after your loved ones; only the impartial one can do that with all his heart. So no matter how realistic you are that man is intrinsically selfish and all that, you wish there are impartial men. And by wishing for impartial men (which his potion can supposedly produce), you are giving and adding legitimacy to Mo Tzu's argument.

The argument of the first part can be briefly stated. Mo Tzu begins by appealing to two opinions that are supposed to be widely held in his day. First, everyone praises as good (shan) that which brings benefit to Heaven, ghosts, and the people of the world (19/14). Second, they also agree that the ancient sage-kings constitute a model of righteousness (yi) and that their benign mode of government brought great benefit to Heaven, ghosts, and humankind (19/5, 710). In sharp contrast to the sage-kings, the princes of the day indulge in war of a most savage kind (19/1011). They invade other states and visit gratuitous destruction upon the common people and their means of production. Mo Tzu thus likens these wars to murder on a massive scale (19/1619; cf. 17/19). Furthermore, they are sacrilegious, as even the sacred things are not spared. Sacrificial animals are slaughtered and ancestral temples looted and destroyed (19/1213). Mo Tzu argues that since humans are the "caretakers of the ghosts," to kill them is to cause "the spirits of the former kings to suffer neglect" (19/17). The harmful effects of war extend to even the aggressors. Having elaborated on the enormous human and material resources needed to arm and supply an adequate army, Mo Tzu goes on to show how most of these resources would be squandered even before the army engages in battle (19/2227). In all, offensive war is harmful to Heaven, ghosts, and humankind; it is contrary to the way of the ancient sage-kings. It is thus both unrighteous and unprofitable.

Yet the princes continue to delight in war (19/28). Although the criticism of the princes opens with the suggestion that they are ignorant of the substance of righteousness (19/5), the sequel reveals something more. For Mo Tzu shows that in order to legitimize their military campaigns the princes engage in the cynical exploitation of conventional morality (19/57). So, for instance, they invoke the notions of duty and honour to urge their soldiers on in battle (19/1314), a fact that partly accounts for the savagery of the soldiers. As further testimony of their ability to manipulate the soldiers and to rationalize their actions, Mo Tzu will repeatedly stress that the princes are adept at concealing their intentions behind "a pleasing facade" (19/30 31, 4849, 5354). No wonder Mo Tzu calls them "perverse" (bei) (19/28; see 28 30). But, more importantly, Mo Tzu presents the princes as not simply rejecting his arguments. In the remainder of the chapter, the princes will offer three cleverly crafted objections to Mo Tzu's thesis, thus indicating that their resistance to his counsel against war is based on 'principled' grounds. In the first objection, the princes attempt to prove the justifiability of war by citing the examples of the sage-kings Yu, Tang, and Wu. These also embarked on military campaigns to subjugate rival states. Since the sage-kings constitute models of righteousness and success, war cannot be simply unrighteous or unprofitable (19/3132).

In the second objection, the princes attempt to prove the profitability of war by referring to the four leading states: Qi, Jin, Chu, and Yue. Originally small, each of these states expanded by successfully absorbing neighbouring states through military action. Seen in this light, offensive war appears to be eminently profitable (19/4951).

The third and last objection is a protestation on the part of the princes that they are not motivated by the spoils of war but by the wish to establish a reputation for righteousness and to attract other rulers to their virtue (de) (19/54).

Mo Tzu's response to each of these objections is remarkable for the implicit concessions he makes to the princes. For instance, in response to the second objection, Mo Tzu compares the use of war for the purpose of profit to the practice of a doctor who only succeeds in curing four out of ten thousand patients (19/53; cf. 18/1820). So even if war is potentially profitable, it is the rare state that is able to gain by it. But this reply does not deny the essential point that war is potentially profitable, that except for purely prudential considerations there is nothing intrinsically wrong with following the examples of the four states. The reply to the third objection fares no better. For in dealing with the princes' claim to righteousness, Mo Tzu reveals that the virtuous ruler, too, undertakes military action to defend other states (e.g., 19/57). War as such is not simply unjust. Some forms of military action are morally justifiable.

If Mo Tzu's reply to the second objection concedes that war is potentially profitable, the reply to the third concedes that it is potentially righteous. But it is with the first objection...that the sage-kings, too, engaged in warfare...that the princes seriously challenge Mo Tzu with the claim that war is both righteous and profitable. This is potentially the most damaging objection of the three because it presupposes Mo Tzu's own premise that the sage-kings constitute models of righteous and successful conduct. Accordingly, it threatens to demolish the contrast between the actions of the present rulers and those of the sage-kings that is part and parcel of Mo Tzu's earlier condemnation of the princes' militarism. The militarism, you will notice, imply these princes' use of the Confucian *Affections of Li and Ren* to inspire people to follow them out of misguided love. By this objection the princes also suggest that there are no essential differences between the sage-kings (who use the *Affections of Li and Ren* to inspire their people to love and follow them) and the present rulers (who use Mo Tzu's love potion to inspire the same): the former were just more successful. That Mo Tzu himself is aware of the importance of this objection is underscored by the fact that he gives more space to answering it than he does to the other two put together

Rather than renounce the sages as models of righteousness or contest the princes' version of events concerning them, Mo Tzu introduces here the crucial distinction

between "offensive" (gong) and "punishing" (zhu) wars (19/33). With this distinction, he is able to maintain both that the ancient sage-kings were models of righteous conduct, and that they engaged in warfare. But where one might expect him to provide relevant criteria by which the two kinds of war can be distinguished, what he does instead is to give elaborate accounts of how supernatural entities appeared to the sage-kings. For example: "a spirit with the face of a man and the body of a bird came bearing a jade baton" to Yu shortly before his military expedition against the Miao (19/35). A numinous spirit similarly appeared to Tang, encouraging him to attack Xia (19/40). And no less than three ghostly figures appeared likewise to Wu, exhorting him to attack the Shang (19/4546). Somehow these supernatural occurrences (which these kings have resurrected from their use of the love potion) are supposed to justify the military actions of the sage-kings as "punishing" rather than "offensive" wars (19/37, 42, 48).

The brief examination above of the objections and Mo Tzu's responses brings us to the following observation concerning his arguments against war. By refusing to give up on the sage-kings as models of righteous conduct, Mo Tzu implicitly concedes that war (when supported by the right love potion to inspire love and willingness to die for the cause from that love) is potentially righteous and profitable. His criticism of the princes thus hinges on the distinction between offensive and punishing warfare. Yet the only evidence Mo Tzu offers in support of his claim that there is a decisive moral difference between the military exploits of the sage-kings and those of the princes is that various supernatural phenomena appeared to the sages. The problem confronting Mo Tzu here is not that his argument is flawed. It would be so if only we can assume in advance that ghosts do not exist. The more immediate problem is that he has chosen to tie the crucial distinction between offensive and punishing wars to the appearance of providential ghosts.

As it stands, Mo Tzu's love potion procedure for political security has a further and potentially more serious drawback. By proceeding in the manner that he does, Mo Tzu, it seems, has supplied the princes with even greater means to legitimize their military campaigns. By introducing them to the distinction between punishing and offensive war, and by suggesting that punishing wars are both righteous and profitable, he practically teaches the princes to characterize their military actions as punishing wars. And since Mo Tzu has given no more reason for believing that the sage-kings conducted righteous war than that certain supernatural omens occurred to them, his reply paves the way for the exploitation of the belief in ghosts to justify the princes' wars. It would seem easy for any ruler to claim that three spirits have visited him. Therefore, any ambitious ruler would now be able to contrive things so as to give the appearance that Heaven is on his side, and thus claim an even closer alignment between his actions and those of the sage-kings.

The analysis above shows that the central argument of *Against Offensive War* depends on an account proving the existence of ghosts. For unless Mo Tzu is able to prove that providential ghosts exist, his replies to the princes' objections are worse than useless: they are positively damaging. For this reason, the arguments in *Explaining Ghosts* are critical to Mo Tzu's attempt to resolve the problem of offensive war.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

It's my story and I do what I want with it. In this story, Voodoo love potions (and only voodoo love potions) is based on a multi-purpose Chinese love potion, which in turn is based on the Confucian ideas of Li and Ren. The Confucian ideas are based on a lecture series that I am presently giving on Ancient Chinese political thought. The Affections of Ren and Li potion is made up.

The numbers in parenthesis in the journal article are section references. It is an academic article; as such, it has to look like one. They are real references to Mo Tzu's writings. The words in parenthesis in the journal article are transliteration of Mandarin words.

The commentary on war is also a thinly disguised commentary on the war (against Voldemort) that the characters in this story have undergone.

For information on how Jigger delivers lectures at York c/f letter 16. It is explicitly stated there that "The reclusive Dr Jigger never delivers his lecture series in person. He presents his yearly 16 lectures via the temporus sonus charm. It has been recorded that a student's memory was completely erased in 1992 because he had sought to trace the elusive spell caster."

It is also implied in letter 16 that his thesis students get in touch with him by using the "semper eadem" on their owls (c/f Jigger's 1st letter to HG - letter 5). If they really to talk to him, he uses the temporus sonus charm to communicate with them. What does this tell you about the temporus sonus charm? It implies the following: (1) It renders the caster audible even though he is not there, (2) the caster can be far away and he can still cast it so long as he gets his bearings and timing right. You can't give a lecture at 4 pm if you cast your spell at 6pm, for instance. It is implied, that his thesis students get in touch with him by using the "semper eadem" on their owls (c/f Jigger's 1st letter to HG - letter 5). If they really to talk to him, he uses the temporus sonus charm to communicate with them. What does this tell you about the temporus sonus charm? It implies the following: (1) It renders the caster audible even though he is not there, (2) the caster can be far away and he can still cast it so long as he gets his bearings and timing right. You can't give a lecture at 4 pm if you cast your spell at 6pm, for instance.

Remember, no one knows (except Albus, Aberforth, Aberforth's wife - Penelope who is editor of literary agency & Prufock) that SS is Jigger. No one has actually seen Jigger.

Letter 29: Victor Krum to Hermione Granger, 30th May 1998

Chapter 29 of 42

Victor apprises Hermione of the news...

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphases are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 29: Victor Krum to Hermione Granger, 30th May 1998

Victor Krum

284, Makarios Avenue

Cy-3720 Sophia,

Bulgaria

May 30, 1998

Hello Hermione,

The team has been away in Russia on a Quidditch match. I have only just returned today. I think writing would be better than leaving another message on the Krum doll.

I am very happy that you did so well in your examination. You are now so famous in the world of Alchemical studies...maybe I think I should leave Irina for you. Oh no! Now, I will have you and Irina killing me. I should tell my Quidditch friends; they will be so jealous that I have two beautiful women wanting to kill me. Just joking, eh?

It is very funny that the *Ars Chemica* editors have ordered you and Jigger to stop your debate. It was just getting interesting. What a pity, no? I like the way they wrote it: *Dear Dr Jigger and Miss Granger, your debate on the true nature of Voodoo love potions has given us a new respect for Ancient Chinese Philosophical potions. However, we feel that it is in the best interest for everyone concerned if you end this debate on an amicable note before heads start rolling. Georges Murat and Leslie Rousseau, Editors.*

Nomos, however, thinks differently. They like your debates and want to compile a book on it. Let me translate what Ilyanov, the editor wrote, just in case, you have not received the journal yet. He said, "*Nomos desires that the respected Miss Granger and Dr Jigger give us the rights to compile the Voodoo-Chinese love potions debate into a book. If the two authors would work together on a book for us, we would be greatly honoured.*" Imagine that, my friend!

Are you serious about studying at York with Arsenius Jigger? You know, they say he never appears. You need a better teacher than that. You are independent. That is very good, but you also need a supervisor that is there, in his office. You are the top Hogwarts student, why do you want to study at York? You have Oxbridge in your country, yes? Why York? You are obsessed with Jigger, Hermy-own-ninny! You can learn with anyone in your field, yes? Then, why you want to study with *only* Jigger? It is not good for you. I feel that you are not thinking carefully. Yes, you said your Professor Dumbledore will give you a job because old Snape is retiring in two years. But will you want to after that when you graduate from York?

I do not know why this Jigger has agreed to take you as his student. I do not like it. And he does not want you to question him! How stupid! But if this is what you really want, I have nothing to say. I only hope you will not regret it. If this Jigger does anything to you that you do not like, tell me and I will beat him up for you.

Say hello to your parents and Harry and Ron for me.

Your friend,

Victor

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

The letter structure and style of this letter may leave some fuming. Let me stress that Victor Krum's first language is not English. He does not write or speak English as well as native speakers.

Letter 30: J. Alfred Prufrock to Severus Snape, 1st June 1998

Chapter 30 of 42

Prufrock tells Severus off, what happens next? Read on...

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphasises are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 30: J. Alfred Prufrock to Severus Snape, 1st June 1998

J. Alfred Prufrock

15 Windswept Terrace

Hetty's Fields

Leeds, West Yorkshire

United Kingdom

1st June 1998

Good Merlin, Snape!

Has everybody at Hogwarts gone potty? Does Albus not know that you have something of *amour* or a *tendre* for Miss Granger? How could he allow you to continue teaching her? She is no longer your concern because she has graduated from Hogwarts. Why do you have to make her your concern at York? If you keep doing this, sooner or later, she is *bound to know* that it is you, Snape. Listen to me; exercise care or this *will be* your undoing. You have worked so hard to establish yourself. You have contained yourself thus far because you have Albus at Hogwarts to fire your bloody arse. Who will fire your arse at York? The University administrators are wary of you because you are the last D.Mag.A student of Nicolas Flamel; damn it, they are also afraid of you because you were a Death Eater. The Head of the Department lives in fear that if he crosses Jigger, his memory will be erased like that poor ex-student of yours who tried to look you up.

I know the Alchemy Faculty at York are still in dark as to Jigger's true identity. Let us hope that it will remain so. They offered you the tenured position because you can lecture like he does. They take it that you are his protégé or something like that. Snape, do not ruin your future. I am not worried that you will have a "liaison" with your student because I know your concern with ethics. It is often those who claim that they are thoroughly immoral and unscrupulous who possess the staunchest principles. I am worried that your Nimue will reveal your true identity. She is brilliant and will discover it sooner or later. Be reasonable, man! You are practically committing academic suicide! As your literary agent and friend, I do not wish to see you do this.

Fine, you made her a promise. How are you going to keep it? Can you be so sure that she *will not* notice that you are at York? You go to Betty's once a fortnight and frequently haunt the black markets. Don't you think she will notice you? She may even find out that your raven picks up your post from the university every night at 11pm. How many wizards keep ravens, I ask you? She will notice something. It may be easy to disguise your tone in your letters, but your style is still there, old man. Think for a moment: she is your student. She has studied with you for seven years at Hogwarts. Don't you think she will familiar with your lecturing method? She is bound to notice the similarity and what then?

Jigger's explanation that Severus Snape is his protégé will not suffice for long. There are certain nuances that will creep up. The disciple will always be like the master in some ways, but he or she cannot be alike in every aspect. No matter how disguise your hand and so on, she will suspect and what then?

Bloody hell! And *WHAT* is this nonsense of you retiring to concentrate on writing and researching upon Miss Granger's graduation from York? You are *the* best Potions Master in Western and Eastern Europe. Giving her your job isn't going to help things, Snape! It may heighten her suspicions.

I hope that you are right in doing this. If you really want to slowly let go of Miss Granger while she is York, I am supportive of you. But I know you, you do not give up that which you want.

Whatever it is you do, let me know so that I can bail you out if it gets too much. Don't worry, I won't tell the Dumbledores. Take care and reply soon.

Regards,

Prufrock.

P/S Penelope is still editing Epistemological Alchemy. Obscurus is interested in publishing it under your name, not Jigger's. There may be a slight problem because you write in the same style as Jigger. I will see what you can do. I suggest publishing next year. Also, contact Miss Granger on the Nomos offer on the love potions debate.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Betty's is an old fashioned English teashop. It is a real place in York, UK. It sells the loveliest crumpets and raspberry napoleons; and every afternoon, at tea time, there will be a fellow playing the piano in the largest tea room.

Penelope, if you've forgotten is the editor of the Literary Agency. She is married to Aberforth Dumbledore, her maiden name is Tudor. She gives her name to half the Literary Agency.

Hand has two meanings: (1) the appendage with the fingers and the thumb, (2) handwriting. In the context of this letter, definition (2) is used.

D. Mag.A is the wizarding PhD/DPhil. It stands for Doctor of Magical Arts.

Letter 31: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 10th June 1998

Chapter 31 of 42

Severus attempts to justify himself to Jigger...

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It has come to my attention that some of you are confused as to letters 28 and 30. York offered both Snape and Jigger tenured. It is intimated in letter 30 that it was Jigger that accepted the tenure. In letter 28, it is explicitly stated that York offered Snape tenure because he is known for presenting Jigger's paper at conferences on behalf of Jigger. Why? Because Albus has given out that Snape is Jigger's protégé. That is explicitly stated in letter 30.

So the bottomline is this – Jigger accepted the tenure position. Snape was only offered it as a backup if Jigger turned it down. Snape was offered it because it is believed that he was Jigger's student and could lecture like him Understood? Good. Now, on with the plot.

Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 31: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 10th June 1998

Severus X. A. Snape

Malmaison,

Alecto's Way,

Leicestershire,

UK.

10th June 1998

There is no real hurry for Epistemological Alchemy. Drop the Obscurus/Esotericae House idea. I have written to Cambridge University Press's wizarding imprint, Telos Press, and it has agreed to publish it under my name and Jigger's. A bloody ex-politician owed Albus and Jigger a favour, so I called it in, in a "*polite*" manner, as befitting Jigger. It is obscure enough not to raise any questions. The readers can take Jigger to be the main collaborator for all I care. I *AM* Jigger, after all. I have given Telos Press your name card. One of its people will be in touch with you shortly. Publication can be delayed for up to two years.

Do you think that I have failed to give *theother* matter grave consideration? She *will* keep her word. She will not question my instructions. I have taught her for 7 years, another 2 or 3 will not signify. I have taught students in absentia for the past few years; Miss Granger should be no different from the rest. If I only see her work and not her, will not this "*ridiculous amour*", as you call it, die a natural death as well? I am not so nihilistic as to commit some brainless act of chivalry. She has never suspected that Severus Snape and Arsenius Jigger are one and the same. I can keep it that way *while* keeping an eye on her luscious mind and her work.

Do not mock me, Prufrock. I am very safe from Miss Granger *IF* I see this scheme to its logical conclusion. She is obviously enamoured with Jigger's mind, not mine. I am safe in that respect. Only let me admire her and shape her from a distance and I will be content. She will not be so foolish as to pursue Jigger. She knows only too well what is expected of her as a student. Jigger has also never given her any encouragement. It is my vanity that is flattered, not Jigger's. It is safer for her to love a chimera rather than a creature of the shadows. If she is occupied with Jigger, who will be a harsher task master than Severus Snape, all her girlish notions of misplaced affection would soon melt away. When that is done, I will be free.

Miss Granger is interested in co-writing an additional section in the Love Potions book for Nomos so as to conclude our discussion. You will be handling that, I understand. That would be an exciting prospect for you, as you can rub your bloody nose in our affair and knock sense into my damnable head every now and then. If everything goes well, you should have a draft of the book by December.

No more '*Buts*', Prufrock, unless you want a hex between your eyes. I know *exactly* what I am doing. I know when to gracefully bow out, and now *isdefinitely* not the time.

S. Snape

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Letter 32: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 17th June 1998

Chapter 32 of 42

Has Severus come to his senses? We wonder on in this letter from Jigger to Hermione.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 32: Arsenius Jigger to Hermione Granger, 17th June 1998

Arsenius Jigger

c/o University of York,

School of Magical Arts

Faculty of Alchemy

Potions Research Centre,

York,

United Kingdom

Miss Hermione Jane Granger,

21 Fullers Road,

South Woodford,
London, E18 2QB,
United Kingdom
17th June 1998
Miss Granger,

I have received your draft three chapters for the Love Potions book. They shall be duly incorporated into it. You will have, by now, received my literary agent's name card. If you have any queries on the publication, you would do well to consult him.

Your lesson plan is feasible. My only reservation lies in your desire to finish your entire honours course in 2 years. Do you think you can cope with your workload?

While I own myself flattered by your suggestion to meet up to discuss your academic work plan, I must decline your offer. I am an old man and a recluse; I do not change my habits for *anyone*. Your attentions to my person are misplaced, *child*. It would not be appropriate for us to consort informally. I prefer to keep *all* my academic relations strictly professional. If I had given you cause to think otherwise of my intentions, I apologise.

You must learn to curb your strong feelings, Miss Granger. You must learn how to govern them. Too much sentiment leads *tathymos*, or spiritedness, which in itself could lead to anger. This question of sentiment, be it *eros*, *philia*, *agape* or even *storge* is an important one. I encourage you to inculcate some scepticism on the matter of human sentiment, and its place in academia and politics. Sentiment of all sorts is very exclusive and very private – that's why academics and politicians in our world are rarely married. We academics love knowledge, our books and the things that we do. However, most academics do not wish to be lovers in the conventional sense of the word. Why don't we want to be lovers? Because we want to be successful conquerors of the academic world. We can only be successful if we are *not distracted* by conventional affection. Channel your *eros* to your work. You must not allow your focus to wane or be distracted. Sometimes, it is better to admire a beautiful object from afar. In so doing, you will not allow it to *blind you and blight your life* Do you understand me, Miss Granger?

We shall discuss the matter of your thesis in our next letter.

I have heard about the successful wolfsbane-mallowsweet potion. Convey my compliments to Professor Lupin on his recovery.

Yrs.,

A. Jigger

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

In British universities (and universities in the Commonwealth), the undergraduate degree course lasts 3 years if you are interested in an ordinary Bachelor's degree (e.g. B.A.) without honours. An Honours degree (e.g. B. A. (hons.)) would take an additional year. However, students can accelerate their degree programme if they so wished (as I did).

Readers familiar with my work will know that my interpretation of *eros* is not sexual love – rather it is the love for beautiful things. It can be something 'intangible' like virtue (though how one defines virtue is another can of worms and not for the footnotes).

Philia is love among friends and family. It is a type of love that demands something in return and can thus, die.

Storge is an 'instinctual' love, i.e. the love of a parent for a child. It is a type of love that demands something in return and can thus, die.

Agape is often understood as a kind of spiritual love, but I interpret it as affection to do with charity.

Letter 33: Albus Dumbledore to Severus Snape, 8th June 2000

Chapter 33 of 42

Two years have passed since the events of the previous letter and Albus Dumbledore takes up the quill to write to Severus...What does he say? Read on...

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphases are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

In order not to weary the reader's patience, a number of letters from the series of correspondences have been suppressed; those only have been given which appeared necessary to a complete understanding of the events in this group. For the same reason, some letters from the actors in the events of this drama have also been suppressed.

Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 33: Albus Dumbledore to Severus Snape, 8th June 2000

Two years have passed since the events of the previous letter

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry,
Scotland, United Kingdom.

8th June 2000

Severus, dear boy,

We must have just missed you. I hope this letter finds you well in Leicestershire. Are you quite sure you do not wish to be around when we welcome Hermione into the Hogwarts' fold? I would have thought that you wanted to lecture her on the proper etiquette for teaching Potions? Your sudden departure even took the house elves by surprise. They found everything in your chambers and classroom under Holland covers. I was even more surprised to find that you had cleared your rooms of *everything*. Really, lad, is this necessary? One would think that you are running away from something!

Today, I received York's report on Hermione and it was glowing. You grudgingly granted her an A in her thesis, I see. The external examiner was much fairer than you were. He gave her a distinction. Ah, my boy, whether you write under the name of Jigger or your own, you are still the same melancholy character we know and love.

Are you happy at last? You will be able to do everything that you like from the bleak comfort of Malmaison. How fare thee knight at arms, alone and palely loitering? It cannot be healthy cooped up in fox-hunting country all alone with your private research and writing. You are always welcome to return to us, you know.

Ah, thank you for the rum fudge and Ancient Chinese Roots to Voodoo Love Potions. The second is more pleasing than the first, as I am proud to see two of Hogwarts best students engaging in such a worthy endeavour. The book is very insightful and is one of the best accounts of ancient theoretical alchemy in recent years.

In any case, let me know whether you will return to Hogwarts for a few hours to welcome Hermione. I think it would proper for you to show her around her future workspace and living quarters. You could also use this opportunity to pick up anything else *that you left behind* in your hurried egress. Minerva is nagging at me to invite you to stay with us for a week at her cottage in Toulouse. Write to us of your decision.

Take care and keep in touch,

Albus Dumbledore

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

The line "How fare thee knight at arms, alone and palely loitering" is adapted from the poem *La Belle dans sans merci* by John Keats.

Letter 34: Hermione Granger to Victor Krum, 31st August 2000

Chapter 34 of 42

At long last, Hermione (now Professor Granger) figures out the identity of Arsenius Jigger. Her deductions are shared with Victor Krum.

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphases are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 34: Hermione Granger to Victor Krum, 31st August 2000

Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Potions' Office,

The Dungeons,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

31st August 2000

Dear Victor,

I have not written because I had nothing worth reporting. You hardly reply to my messages on the Krum action figure anyway. What can I say about your broken arm? You deserve it for carrying out your version of the Wronski Feint or whatever it was. The human body has its limits, you daft Quidditch-crazed fellow! You know, if it were not for your recent accident, I do not think you would have bothered to contact me via the Krum action figure. Really, Victor, what sort of friend are you?

Hogwarts is still more or less the same. It is a little awkward inhabiting Professor Snape's private chambers. I somehow get the feeling that he's still in the dungeons, which is an asinine thought because I know he is not. Professor Dumbledore informed that Professor Snape has retired to his house in Leicestershire. Apparently, the man has decided to devote his life to writing and research. Isn't that a glorious dream? Who wouldn't want to be a perpetual student? All right, don't laugh at me. It's my fantasy, not yours. You, Ron and Harry wouldn't want to perpetual students even if someone paid you.

I have almost settled back in and the students will be here tomorrow evening. Everyone is so very kind to me that it makes me feel quite uncomfortable. I wonder whether

Professor Snape's constant scowls were due to similar discomfiture. He was supposed to instruct me on the '*Do's and Don'ts of teaching Potions*', but he could not tear himself away from his work. And I think I know why. He wants to avoid me – not because I was an insufferable know-it-all, but for another reason. Victor, I will tell you something and you must not tell me that I am being stupid.

Professor Snape's office was *supposedly* cleared of everything that was his. A post owl from him arrived as soon as I had unpacked. The letter was nothing more than a detailed lecture plan for the students from First Year to the Seventh. It differed very little from the syllabus of our time and was a great help. It also told me where to find his private Potions workspace. As is typical of all Professor Snape's notes to non-Slytherins, there were a few lines of scathing instructions in his inimitable style that I will not reproduce here. As I proceeded to move some of my papers to the office desk, I accidentally triggered a secret compartment in the desk by crossing my legs and knocking my knee against the bottom of the top drawer. Professor Snape must have forgotten the secret compartment some time ago because its contents were covered by a thin layer of dust. Victor, among those papers were draft letters addressed to me from Arsenius Jigger. There was even one that he had cancelled because he signed S. Snape instead of A. Jigger. That's not all – I also found an unposted letter addressed to Mr J. Alfred Prufrock, in which he all but reveals that he cares for me.

Do you know what this means, Victor? Severus Xenophon Arsenius Snape/S Arsenius Jigger. I should have seen it! I should have made pains to uncover his initials –but did I? NO! I only discovered them when I came across an old yearbook in a forgotten corner of the Hogwarts library today. How obtuse I am! I studied with him for nine years and I was too blind to notice it. I had all the clues before me: the stylistic similarities in their teaching methods, Jigger's knowledge of my work, and his knowing hints of what I did to his private stores. These past five years when I was chastely loving Dr Jigger from afar, it was Severus Snape all the long! This explains why Jigger inculcated in me a desire not to be distracted by conventional love! I feel so incredibly obtuse! Curse this eros!

I shall write to him. That's the only way to resolve this. I'll tell you how it pans out.

Best wishes,

Hermione

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word Prestige derives from it.

My interpretation of eros is Platonic. Eros is the pursuit of beautiful things, not erotic love. Beautiful things are often intangible to philosophers – such things include knowledge, virtue and honour. How one defines these things is another matter altogether.

Sometime ago, a reader asked me what the 'A' in Severus's initials meant. Well, now you know.

The next letter features a journal article with a hidden message. If you wish to crack it, kindly inform me and I will refrain from posting the message solution...

I understand that the journal articles leave some of my readers high and dry, so to speak. But understand that they are necessary to the progression of the plot. As we progress to the final denouement, Severus and Hermione will no longer be corresponding with one another. The only mode of communication left to our favourite know-it-all is journal articles.

Letter 35: J. Alfred Prufrock to Severus Snape, 15th September 2000

Chapter 35 of 42

As Yeats once wrote, "Things fall apart / The centre cannot hold," seems to be coming a reality, Prufrock wonders how with Severus react to Hermione's review of the book that he had allegedly written with Jigger.

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 35: J. Alfred Prufrock to Severus Snape, 15th September 2000

J. Alfred Prufrock

15 Windswept Terrace

Hetty's Fields

Leeds, West Yorkshire

United Kingdom

15th September 2000

Snape,

Do my eyes deceive me? Or have you started another debate with Hermione Granger in another journal that she decided to carry over into *Ars Chemica*? In case you haven't noticed, she reviewed *Epistemological Alchemy* by Arsenius Jigger *and* Severus Snape. What are you going to do about it? Don't tell me you will sit by and do nothing? Do you realise that others may uncover the secret too? She's addressing your work to your face, Snape; just *WHAT* are you going to do now?

Regards,

Prufrock.

In case you have not read it. Here's how the review reads:

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Ars Chemica, Vol. 1206, No. 9.

Review of Epistemological Alchemy by Arsenius Jigger and Severus Snape, Telos Press, Cambridge, 2000.

By Hermione J. Granger

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In Epistemological Alchemy, the authors' postulate the necessity of believing in the possibility of an alchemical utopia by treating philosophical potions ironically. Keeping this in mind, one realises that the title is a pun on the idea of necessity. Necessity, in this case, is something that fills a need, which, if left unmet, would diminish the quality of private or public life. Of course, this is all very well for the authors. What the authors have in mind is captured by Oscar Wilde's remark that "a map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth glancing at." What this means is simple we have to consider whether utopia has been exhausted as a project and discredited as a body of thought. However, such a view is a sad commentary on the present situation. Obviously, this sentiment is shared by several other notable scholars in the field who contend that our social imagination in alchemy is abandoning us at the point where we most need it. Yet, faced with the dizzying of contingency in the history of alchemical theory vis-à-vis culture and society, the authors are convinced that everything can be or could have been other wise. Our alchemical culture is too dull to generate innovative solutions. Unwaveringly, it continues along this vein. Accordingly, for all the theoretical talk on epistemological alchemy, the field seems comatose in the sort of crisis that used to inspire it to visions of alternative futures. Radical but validly, they prove that most of us no longer live our lives in compliance with nature or tradition. Each chapter points out the fact that there is no longer any order in modern practical alchemy; as such, a change is needed. Susceptible to such views are modern students who only wish to concentrate on the palpable results of alchemy without due consideration of the theory and philosophy behind it. Evidently, they have proven that things that seemed self-evident whether to have or how to feed and educate a child, how to relax and amuse ourselves, how to proceed with alchemical education, how and what to eat have become colonised by reflexivity and are experienced as something to be learned and decided upon instead of just lived. Verily, we have become too knowing and critical, too proudly self-aware to tolerate the so-called 'idealism' of epistemological alchemy.

Ernst Hornby's theory that the first sense of necessity in philosophical alchemy is depended in the loss of impulses driving one's study of empirical potions brewing is discussed in this book. Regardless of the end and loss of radical philosophical alchemy posited by Hornby, the authors disagree with the well-ordered state of constant surveillance on the brew. Utopias in the field of alchemy are impossibilities and constant watching of a cauldron will do nothing to aid one's cause. Such utopian fantasies as pictured by Hornby and his proponents are criticised by the authors because they are characterised by mind-numbing routines. Sameness is not something the authors condone, for they acknowledge that no two potions, even those brewed by the same hand, are the same. Notwithstanding the fact that collective rites are internalised in most potions students, the authors' go against their natural love for order and oppose these schemes as anti-utopias within the discipline. Apparently, the first sense of necessity celebrates the opening up of alternatives and possibilities; this second one suggests a closing down of political imagination and perhaps of politics itself. Pandora's myth, as laid down by Nietzsche, is called to mind in this case. Expectation in alchemical theory, he argues, was released last not because it would make other evils endurable. Noting that, the Jigger and Snape claim that it was released last because it was the worst evil of all for all true students of philosophical alchemy. Obviously, the reviewer agrees with this view for no sane person would be utopian. Moreover, necessity's third meaning is a variant of the second. Obviating the trappings in their language, it would be found that the sole concentration on alchemy without its philosophical base (which students think necessary) leads to the depletion of energy and ability. Potions philologists would argue that Jigger and Snape are unfairly erasing necessities in their anti-utopian view of epistemological alchemy. Rather than opposing these views, the authors' so-called detractors have fallen into the trap of underestimating Jigger and Snape. Epistemological alchemy is dependent liberation from necessity, the satisfaction of human needs, and the end to suffering, war, predatory hierarchies and private property. Therefore, powerful repository of utopian aspirations are kept alive in this book, not least because it has kept alive a vision of a universal way of brewing potions theoretically (and imperfectly) could be redeemed by the productive capacities of capitalism harnessed to the humane ends made possible by philosophical alchemy.

En soi, this redeems the student if the theory is consulted hand-in-glove with practical alchemy. Notice how the most ironic testament to the resiliency of utopianism is how quickly and completely utopian philosophical alchemy is when compared to the triumph of commercial potions. Snape, in his chapter, likens the esoteric reading of epistemological alchemy to adultery because philosophy in alchemy and potions is a placeholder for more sustained kinds of transformation. European tradition will, however, debunk his idea on grounds of impracticality. I beg to differ. Having impugned the philosophical nature of nature, we are unable to understand it. An effect of this failure is chaos in the classroom where students blow cauldrons due to the lack of understanding on the philosophical theory of the potion. Virtually every school has its share of such students and careful observation will prove the authors and myself correct in our surmises. Even Thomas More acknowledged this in his seminal work on esoteric potions in Utopia. Leaving aside the other political implications of the epistemological study of potions, the reader may be struck by the fact that the distance separating theory and practice in alchemy is the fallacy the book tries to address.

Owing to this, the book can be seen as a measure of the failure of modern students to consider philosophy in alchemy. Veering off the topic in chapter 10, the authors consider epistemology on its own. Elaborating on the opacity of most potions masters who are only concerned with increasing the number of students passing their subject than understanding it, the authors criticise the way in which potions masters are trained. "Exile would be too kind an option for those who do not expiate for such heinous teachings by concentrating on the theoretical aspects before actual brewing. Divinity, then, becomes a dimension of epistemological alchemy. Oracles and their divinely inspired riddling utterances are able to discern knowledge and meaning in alchemy. Naturally, the irony in this case lies in the recognition of meanings outside direct speech and of the subtexts of texts. Laird, in his review, dismisses this theory as utopian and ironic in itself. Yet, this is precisely the point the authors wish to make.

Once the reader dismisses the authors for their apparent inconsistencies, he has already underestimated them. Never do that! Every due consideration must be made to respect the authors. Mistaking the authors' genius is not an option. A certain way of looking at it is to realise that they already know of the inconsistencies in their work. Never entertain the possibility that you are more intelligent because you can spot their apparent contradictions. Instead, entertain the possibility that some of the apparent mistakes they make are *deliberate*. We will learn so much more if we take the debates they engender with good grace. In short, never think that you are smarter than the authors. Limitations in the human power of gauging things (especially something as volatile as potions) and the way we are used by the language even as we use it aids in our understanding of epistemological alchemy. Looking at this way, we will grow to have a new appreciation of theoretical potion brewing. Neo-modern philologists would dispute with me by saying that there is only way of looking at anything. On the contrary, it has to be acknowledged that there are these contradictions engender new debates. This makes the texts relevant in all situations across all time periods. Looking at it thus, it is easy to understand we still study Nietzschean potion theory and Platonic philosophical alchemy. Oddly enough, scholars in ancient Greek theoretical potions do not try to render their field to our changing times. Socratic potions brewing is heavily based on the logical sequences of *nous* and spirit; when these are incorporated into the potion, its effective is doubled. Evincing this further is the 5th chapter of the book which details the history and logic of Socrates' teaching. However, it is written in a manner that must be taken with a fair pinch of salt.

I have made my case for this book in this review. May it bring you as much intellectual stimulation as it did me. To all those who are put off by the theoretical nature of philosophical alchemy, I advise you to take it slowly so as to appreciate this art. What you learn here can be applicable to every field of life. In reading it, you will broaden your mind to the ongoing debate in the field. Consequently, you will arrive at a new understanding of muggle philosophy and the ways of our world. Every serious student of alchemy should acquire it.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

There are three layers of meaning in the text of the review: (1) the response to the journal article mentioned above, (2) the hidden message within the text, and (3) the intellectual exchange of the review hides an indirect appeal to Jigger/Snape. This tripartite layer of meanings will continue to hold for the subsequent review articles.

If you extract the first letter of each of the review's sentences (notice that I stress sentences, not every capital alphabet), they read, "I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, SEVERUS

SNAPE. NO MORE PRETENSE. I HAVE LOVED ONLY ONE MAN, I WILL NOT LOSE HIM TWICE.

Why did Hermione supposedly feel that she lost him twice? (1) When Jigger/Snape explicitly told her to concentrate on her education in Letter 32, (2) when Snape refused to meet at her Hogwarts to give her his 'Do's and Don'ts of Potions teachings'.

Letter 36: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 29th September 2000

Chapter 36 of 42

Severus attempts to allay Prufrock's fears for him. He also responds to Hermione with a journal article...

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphases are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

In order not to weary the reader's patience, a number of letters from the series of correspondences have been suppressed; those only have been given which appeared necessary to a complete understanding of the events in this group. For the same reason, some letters from the actors in the events of this drama have also been suppressed.

I understand that some readers are confused as to the Epistemological Alchemy book. I received the following queries from quite a few readers, so I shall address them here.

(1) How come Epistemological Alchemy is written by Arsenius Jigger and Severus Snape? I thought Snape wrote everything and Jigger is only the front. How come both their names are in the journal article title? Did Hermione make a mistake in her zeal to expose Jigger as Snape?

Tut, tut to you. Reread the first paragraph of letter 31, where Severus writes to Prufrock, "There is no real hurry for Epistemological Alchemy. Drop the Obscurus/Esotericae House idea. I have written to Cambridge University Press's wizarding imprint, Telos Press, and it has agreed to publish it under my name and Jigger's."

Here, you see, it is to be officially taken that Jigger and Severus jointly wrote the book.

That paragraph in letter 31 continues, "[The Telos Press imprint] is obscure enough not to raise any questions. The readers can take Jigger to be the main collaborator for all I care. [my emphasis] I AM Jigger, after all."

This further confirms that Epistemological Alchemy will credit both Jigger and Severus as authors.

(2) Why did Epistemological Alchemy take so long to come out?

Once again, refer to letter 31, 1st paragraph, "Publication can be delayed for up to two years." Furthermore, in book publication, things can take a blessed long time, believe me...It can take up to a year in editing and to-and-froing with the author; and that's just the editing for the drafts. There are the fair copies to edit and another round of to-and-froing with the authors.

(3a) Do academic journals publish reviews of books? I thought they only publish articles.

(3b) Why didn't the journal ask permission from Snape to allow Hermione to review their book?

We have established that both Severus Snape and Arsenius Jigger are the authors of the book. Academic journals do publish review articles. These journals usually invite 2 'big name' in the relevant field to review another work by another big-shot in the field. Of these reviewers, one is of the author(s) school of thought and the other isn't. Alternatively, in many journals such as Political Theory, Philosophy and Public Administration, Arethusa and Hypatia, an academic or graduate student (depending on the publication) may write in to the journal, informing the editor(s) that he/she wants to review the latest book written by so-and-so on what-and-what. If the editor(s) of the journal say ok, then it's ok. You don't need the book authors' permission to review a book. The point of reviewing books in academic journals is so that people who are too lazy or busy to browse in academic bookshops will notice when reading journals (most academics don't read entertainment magazines, journals take their place), "Oh, Dr X has published again. In wonder if it's any good? Ah ha! Dr Y has reviewed it, let's hear his/her opinion and see whether this new book is worth getting and reading."

(4) How can Hermione expose Severus/Jigger like that? Won't other people decipher the hidden message too?

When one is in a desperate situation, one resorts to desperate measures...Think what you will on that. As for the rest, unless you are looking for a message in the article, you won't find it. Believe me, most academics, myself included, just read the article and take it as that academic stuff meant to play with your mind. You will not go looking through every article looking for a hidden message. Only a person who knows that he/she is looking for a hidden message in a journal article, would examine the article for the message rather than read it for its own sake.

(5) Prufrock seems to have figured the journal article's message, what's stopping others from doing the same?

Prufrock DID NOT decipher the hidden message, I assure you. The next letter (no. 36) confirms this. What he probably did see was the interpretation of Southern Witch (a real gem), which is this: "*Part of you thinks that you are living in a Utopic enviroment just because jigger is so well respected, no shady past, etc, but you truly aren't because jigger isn't truly who you are. The Snape in you is able to see past such fantasies, having experienced life and mated with reality. I respect you and love you for your ideas and acceptance of things even if nobody else does.*"

Moreover, as Keladry Lupin pointed out, "Prufrock panicked because he knows Snape's secret (i.e. he knows that Jigger=Snape)."

(6) I can't figure out the hidden message!

If you extract the first letter of each of the review's *sentences* (notice that I stress sentences, not every capital alphabet), they read, "I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, SEVERUS SNAPE. NO MORE PRETENSE. I HAVE LOVED ONLY ONE MAN, I WILL NOT LOSE HIM TWICE."

Why did Hermione supposedly feel that she lost him twice? (i) When Jigger/Snape explicitly told her to concentrate on her education in Letter 32, (ii) when Snape refused to meet at her Hogwarts to give her his 'Do's and Don'ts of Potions teachings'.

Without further ado...I present the letter

Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 36: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 29th September 2000

Severus X. A. Snape

Malmaison,

Alecto's Way,

Leicestershire,

UK.

29th September 2000

You worry over nothing, Prufrock. While it may be true that Miss Granger has uncovered Jigger's identity, it does not mean that others have done the same. There is another layer of meaning in the text. I curse myself for teaching her esoteric reading in exoteric writing! Confound her for trying to communicate with me. Blast! Despite my initial annoyance, I am pleased that I have taught her well that meaning is not easily discerned. I am not pleased that she chose to question me in such a public manner. I, too, am capable of engaging in this battle of wits. I will not be so easily provoked. We shall see who emerges the victor in this bout! She dares presume that she can challenge my diseased wits haughty creature!

I would like you to send this to the editors of *Recherches Alchemique*. Make sure they publish it in the October edition. The paper is attached below.

She has written to me as well. I have elected not to reply. The reply in *Recherches Alchemique* may silence her.

Snape

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*Recherches Alchemique*, Vol. 201, No. 4.

Review of Hermione Granger's "Ironic Alchemy," in John Milton, *Socratic Roots to Alchemy*, Beaufort Press, Oxford, 2000.

By Arsenius Jigger

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Youth is characterised by many caprices, as noted by the ancients and Miss Granger in her chapter *Ironic Alchemy*. Of the articles collected in *Socratic Roots to Alchemy*, Miss Granger's is the most philosophical. Underlying her work is in-depth research and familiarity with the subject matter. As she concisely put in her paper, "contemporary life is becoming increasingly governed by technological and market forces that threaten our ability to control our own destiny." Since that is the case, we ought to be struck by the pretence that politics as the art of living together despite differences matter, that we have absorbed the notions that community, consensus, shared norms, concerns with power, coercion and conflict are essential for our daily lives. Morgenthau's review of this paper in the *Nottingham Review of Books* did not consider that and thus misreads the place of irony in the art of alchemy. Forwarding her theory that we have absorbed the idea that political association, it follows that in all its contingency depends on us being imbued with a strong sense of choice, agreement and compliance. On the contrary, Miss Granger explains that irony in alchemy is necessary only because we have been unable to cope with the post-modern age. Regarding her usage of the phrase 'post-modern age', she has erroneously assumed that we have passed the stage of modernity. The state of modernity is the here and now; we have not passed it nor will ever do so because each age believes that it is the modern one. However, the author redeems herself by acknowledging that irony in alchemy is inseparable from the evolution of the modern and post-modern consciousness. Even so, she does not sufficiently address her definition of irony. In the introduction, she writes, "we need irony in our private lives to make sense of the larger sociological implications of alchemy in the world at large." Morgenthau has stated the same in his book, *Drafts and Poisons: A Realist Approach*. Perplexingly, she does not agree that alchemical irony enables us to realise the drama of an individual human life, or of the history of humanity as a whole. Ostensibly, this is because it is not one in which a pre-existent goal is triumphantly reached or tragically not reached. Seeing it in this light then, the author's support of irony in alchemy as a contingent form of magic is not well established. Sociologically, however, it makes more sense when compared to the writings on Bertrand Russell in the same volume.

It can be said that the dramatic narrative of irony in alchemy does act as process of overcoming the ascendance of technology and the scheduling of our lives are the signs of our compliance with modernity's demands. Because of this, she rightly states that the elusive, inherent ambiguity of irony that is constantly evolving causes it to be a subject of much fascinated enquiry and speculation, not just literarily, but politically and philosophically as well. Levelling this argument somewhat, she proceeds to fit alchemy into the speculative ways of ironic alchemy as laid down by Socrates. Effectively, this paper encompasses a brief but thorough overview of the literature on the subject. In so doing, Miss Granger arrives at her own point that irony is necessary to the understanding of alchemy. This coincides with her view that the Socratics had solved nearly everything through their theoretical potions. Strawson challenges this view in last edition's review, but I beg to differ. Jeuneliot, for instance, is the Socratic cure for headaches. It has to be read ironically if one is to understand it, otherwise, one would end up with fertiliser. Going further in her theory, the reader will be delighted to find the linkage of Socratic ironic alchemy with that laid down by Kierkegaard. Generally, Kierkegaard sees ironic alchemy as a mode of seeing things and viewing existence or as an acknowledged perception of the absurdity of life force that goes into potion making. Exercising her penchant for definitions, Miss Granger creates her own new understanding of the link between irony and alchemy. Readers will find this in the section 'Understanding Ironic Alchemy in Socratic Discourses'. Yet, to my disappointment, she does not discuss the trans-ideological modes of learning growing out of the study of irony in alchemy. Ordinarily, scholars treat irony not as a limited rhetorical trope or an extended attitude to life. Unusually for a member of the Hobbesian school of Alchemical thought, she chooses to see ironic alchemy as a discursive strategy operating at the level of linguistics or form. Whether one views this article as a summary of the literature before it or as a work showcasing the importance of irony in potion brewing, one will be sure of appreciating the Socratics anew.

Alternatively, one could read "Ironic Alchemy" as an artificial and compulsory controller of the natural science that is potion making. Nevertheless, some interesting questions are raised. That we pretend that multiplicity of voluntary bodies and natural associations between all potions substances is specious. Miss Granger right devotes some part of her work to address this. Thus, she sufficiently covers the ground for her case of irony in alchemy. Naturally, I agree with her that most alchemists today operate in the face of human impermanence, separation, mortality, change, rootlessness, and meaninglessness because they have disregarded irony. On this note, let me leave you to ponder on her words. They will conjure many images that are familiar to you; such is Miss Granger's originality. Morgenthau would do well to take a leaf from her. Every alchemical formula would be more transparent if read with some degree of irony.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

If you extract the first letter of each of the review's sentences (notice that I stress sentences, not every capital alphabet), they read, "YOU ASK FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE. IT'S JIGGER YOU WANT, NOT ME."

Readers have been asking me why HG and SS are communicating through journal articles rather than letters. The answer is simple. SS refuses to reply to HG's letters, instead he chooses to reply to her in kind through journal articles. Why journal articles? She started the ball rolling with the article annexed to the previous letter. This will become clear in subsequent letters.

I assume, as should you, that SS and HG read, subscribe and contribute to several alchemical/potion journals.

By now, you should have realised that "corresponding" through journal articles is extremely tedious because HG and SS have to comb through all the potions and alchemical journals, find the other party's articles, decipher the message (if any) in the article and write a response to the person and the alchemical community. But when dealing with a stubborn man like Severus, what else can one do?

Letter 37: J. Alfred Prufrock to Severus Snape, 3rd October 2000

Chapter 37 of 42

Prufrock writes to Severus and encloses another letter.. dear me, what does it portend?

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphasises are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

In order not to weary the reader's patience, a number of letters from the series of correspondences have been suppressed; those only have been given which appeared necessary to a complete understanding of the events in this group. For the same reason, some letters from the actors in the events of this drama have also been suppressed.

Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 37: J. Alfred Prufrock to Severus Snape, 3rd October 2000

J. Alfred Prufrock

15 Windswept Terrace

Hetty's Fields

Leeds, West Yorkshire

United Kingdom

3rd October 2000

Good Merlin, Snape! Have you re-acquired the illusions of youth? Why do you entertain Miss Granger's letters if you wish to rebuff her? Do you realise you are encouraging the girl? Will Miss Granger not leave you alone? You should tell her off directly instead of committing to your present course of actions – whatever it is you *think* you are doing. It is *NOT* a masterful defence, far from it! See the lady and tell her to her face that it is nothing but her imagination. You have to reply to her letters! You cannot allow them to sit in your desk drawer for all eternity. She will *want* a reply; she *hopes* for one. Why else do you think she continues to write?

I have just received this from her. Please, for all our sakes', answer it and tell her something in your inimitable harsh manner.

Regards,

Prufrock

~~~~~

Attached note

~~~~~

Professor Arsenius Jigger

c/o Mr J. Alfred Prufrock

Prufrock and Tudor Literary Agency

57, Nimue Lane,

Leeds, West Yorkshire

United Kingdom

Hermione Jane Granger,

Hogwarts Castle,

Potions' Office,

The Dungeons,

Scotland,

United Kingdom.

2nd October 2000

My dear Severus,

I am at my wits end. I need to speak to you. I want you. I need you. We cannot go on like this. How long must we continue to torture each other? As a last resort, I have written to Mr Prufrock, your literary agent. After much cajoling, he finally agreed to hand this to you. No one I asked seemed willing to furnish me with your address. Why do you avoid me? We have to talk, if only to resolve this issue.

Why do you torment me thus? Do you submit yourself to the same ordeal as well? You will not cut me off, Severus Xenophon Arsenius Snape. Does it matter whether you are Jigger? You are one and the same to me – I know so. I will not leave this matter until we arrive at a logical resolution. I will not be denied. I know what I want. At present, I have almost everything that I have ever wanted – a good job and entry into a direct D.Mag.A programme with St John's College at Cambridge. I have accepted Cambridge's unconditional offer. All I want now is someone who is sensible and thoughtful; some one who is impartial, well-intentioned, observant and logical; some one who will respect me for my mind, failings and all; some one who will not change a woman to suit him. I do not care what you look like. I love your mind, your meticulous habits and the way you are able to read people. I want to share conversations with you on life, potions and philosophy. You will not pooh-pooh my ideas.

I esteem you. I admire you. I love you for your formidable mind. I love you for everything that you are and for all your faults. When will you accept that? I know you have some inkling of affection for me. I know from your reply in Recherches Alchemique that you care enough to dissuade me from this course of action. While I can understand your reasons, I *will not* be deterred until you tell me yourself, from your lips that you want me to stay away. Tell me you have another; tell me you do not care for me – whatever it is, I will listen. If you tell me that you do not care for me in *any* way, I will relinquish this claim. Only give me a word to that effect and you will never hear another syllable from me.

Please reply.

I am yours in soul, mind, body and in all,

Hermione Granger.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Letter 38: Victor Krum to Hermione Granger, 15th October 2000

Chapter 38 of 42

Victor writes to Hermione and gives her his opinion of the "fracas". A journal article is attached.

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphasises are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

In order not to weary the reader's patience, a number of letters from the series of correspondences have been suppressed; those only have been given which appeared necessary to a complete understanding of the events in this group. For the same reason, some letters from the actors in the events of this drama have also been suppressed.

One reviewer of letter 36 wanted to know if Victor was also deciphering the message. Having received many emails to that effect and doubtlessly enraging many for my refusal to reply, I urge you to read this letter and put your conjectures on that score to rest.

Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 38: Victor Krum to Hermione Granger, 15th October 2000

Victor Krum

284, Makarios Avenue

Cy-3720 Sophia,

Bulgaria

October 15, 2000

Hello Hermione,

I received your message on the Krum doll. Thank you for the new broom servicing kit, you always know what I need. Irina is unhappy that we beat the Russian team again, so I will have to take her out later tonight.

I do not know why the publication of Nomos has been delayed at your end. Never mind, I will send you a copy of Jigger's article like you asked. I am very surprised that he is Severus Snape. If you remember, I always said that I suspected something was not right about this Dr Jigger. I am confused. You write to him and he does not answer. But you comment on each other in publications? Very funny, no? I do not mean funny ha-ha, but the other kind of funny. You know he gets your letters because they do not get sent back to you. I do not understand. If Severus Snape does not want to reply to your letters, why does not he send them back to you? Is there really some form of communication between the two of you in the journals? I see nothing that tells me that there is.

I do not think that going to his home to look for him is a good idea. If he does not want to reply to your letters, he will not want to see you either.

I must fly, Irina is here. Send my best thoughts to the newest Aurors, Harry Potter and Ron Weasley. And don't worry, the secret of Jigger is safe with me.

Your friend,

Victor

P/S Here is the Jigger article in Nomos.

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Nomos, (English edition) Vol. 1111, No. 5.

A Critique of Hermione Granger's Review of Acton Levis's Machiavellian Potions.

By Arsenius Jigger

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So far, there has been little consideration on Machiavellian potions. Prior to Levis and Granger, Machiavelli's contribution to the art of potion making was not considered for over two centuries. Engelhard will say that Machiavelli's contribution to magic is purely philosophical and politically. Acton Levis adds to this by claiming (rightly), "Modernity is this obsession with change and we're experiencing it now with this period of radical change in the economy, in our way of life, in the way we live, in the way we work." Keeping this in mind, one will fall on Granger's reasoning that Machiavelli is the father of modern potion brewing. Notes made by Machiavelli in his book, *Discourses on Livy* prove that his potions are not of a naturally insidious nature. On the contrary, their purposes are for the unification of the mind and the soul so as to strengthen a person's noble character. That much, at least, is intimated in the work. On the matter of whether it has been conclusively proven, I am able to safely conclude that no one has successfully cracked the elaborate code he uses in his writings. Furthermore, Machiavelli's works are couched as political treatises, which make his work more difficult to decipher and interpret. Levis, however, claims that Machiavelli's potions are evil because his Florentine Brew is designed to reunite the spirit with the body without raising the dead. Ordinarily, this view would have been perpetuated if Granger had not entered the debate with her notion that the Florentine Brew is supposed to moderate the impulses by amalgamating the bodily desire with the spiritual one. Vouching for this theory, is Machiavelli's own words, "A quickening will develop without touching those things which had died." Effectively, what this means is that the 'dead' refers to the faculties and bad habits which the subject has since weeded out of his character. While it is possible that a cadaver is alluded to, Granger conclusively proves that Machiavelli cannot be read literally in the *Profundis Potion* that she uses for her article. Hence, she is right in her surmise.

Elucidating this further by means of the Machiavellian problem, Granger attempts to lay down the fundamental premises for modern potion brewing. Nevertheless, she does not take into account the school of Realist Potion Brewing created by some alchemists claiming to follow the Florentine way. In her neglect, she does not realise that Machiavellian potions fell out of use because the end of Machiavellianism in potions is not just around the corner; it is not of this world at all. Which is, in the fact, the same as saying that the controversy created by Machiavellian potions will not lead to perfect results as there will be factors beyond one's control. In looking at Machiavellian potions objectively, rationally without sentiment and dispassionately, as Granger attempts to do, one can conclude that they have many uses, if we are able to uncover their true meaning. Leafing through Levis' book, I am inclined to agree with Granger that he is unacquainted with the twenty-seven different views of looking at Machiavelli's potions. Last but not least, Granger should be congratulated for looking at Machiavelli's style of writing rather than his potions per se. Correct interpretations of his potions are dependent on deciphering his style. Other methods of reading that one might employ can be gleaned from Hobbes, Laird and Strauss. Recognising the inherent difficulty of reading Machiavelli is half the task of the researcher. Researchers must also consult the secondary literature to get a feel of the conflicting views on this phenomenal figure's alchemical formulas.

Until such time when we are able to say for certain that Machiavelli intended for us to read his potions in a certain way, I encourage all scholars to take the Hobbesian view of keeping an open mind. Pinning down one reading alone will do the scholar no good. There is no doubt that Granger is on the right track in her assessment of Machiavelli's writing. Yielding to the superiority of her exoteric reading could be the best option for those who are only beginning to take up the study of Machiavellian potions. Of course, the reader must be aware that Granger is not infallible. Undoubtedly, you would have noticed that I have criticised some aspects of her reading. Restraining oneself from underestimating Machiavelli would be the best advice for Granger if she is to continue her education in Machiavellian potions. So, what is left to say? Other than the fact that Granger has encapsulated many of Machiavelli's points in her assessment, she should have also considered his own clarification of his writings. Unless she does so, she will not comprehend Machiavelli's qualifications on his explanations. Leaving you with that thought, I caution against dismissing Machiavellian potions potential for the wizarding world.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

The letter structure and style of this letter may leave some fuming. Let me stress that Victor Krum's first language is not English. He does not write or speak English as well as native speakers.

If you extract the first letter of each of the review's *sentences* (notice that I stress sentences, not every capital alphabet), they read, "SPEAK NOT OF LOVE WHEN I WILL CORRUPT YOUR SOUL."

Readers have been asking me why HG and SS are communicating through journal articles rather than letters. The answer is simple SS refuses to reply to HG's letters (apparent in letters 37 and 39), instead he chooses to reply to her in kind through journal articles. Why journal articles? She started the ball rolling with the article annexed to letter 35. I assume as should you that SS and HG read, subscribe and contribute to several alchemical/potion journals.

By now, you should have realised that "corresponding" through journal articles is extremely tedious because HG and SS have to comb through all the potions and alchemical journals, find the other party's articles, decipher the message (if any) in the article and write a response to the person and the alchemical community. But when dealing with a stubborn man like Severus, what else can one do?

Letter 39: J. Alfred Prufrock to Severus Snape, 28th November 2000

Chapter 39 of 42

Prufrock writes to Severus. Another journal article by Hermione awaits our truculent academic.

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphases are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

In order not to weary the reader's patience, a number of letters from the series of correspondences have been suppressed; those only have been given which appeared necessary to a complete understanding of the events in this group. For the same reason, some letters from the actors in the events of this drama have also been

suppressed.

Some readers have been asking me how Snape knew to decipher the first message within the journal article in letter 35.

The answer to this is explicitly stated in letter 36 (the letter, not the journal article), where Severus writes to Prufrock, "*There is another layer of meaning in the text. I curse myself for teaching her esoteric reading in exoteric writing!*" This means that Severus as Jigger taught Hermione how to do this sort of thing 'this sort of thing' being messages within messages. This is the basic tenet of exoteric readings in esoteric writing. It's something that the school of political philosophy I belong to tries to imbue in its student. Therefore, the underlying assumption which is implied but not stated is that Jigger and Hermione have been communicating occasionally in this manner through their letters during her duration as his student at York. It is for this reason that I suppressed their correspondence in the York years.

Letter 36 continues, "*I am pleased that I have taught her well that meaning is not easily discerned.*" This implies that Severus (as Jigger) had taught Hermione more than one way of exoteric reading in esoteric writing; he also taught her esoteric writing in exoteric composition.

Finally, letter 36 says, "*I, too, am capable of engaging in this battle of wits.*" Naturally, he taught it to her... He should know.

Now that that has been cleared up, on with the next letter and article...

Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 39: J. Alfred Prufrock to Severus Snape, 28th November 2000

J. Alfred Prufrock

15 Windswept Terrace

Hetty's Fields

Leeds, West Yorkshire

United Kingdom

28th November 2000

Philosophical Alchemical Theory wants Jigger to be its new editor, apprise me of your decision so that the changes will be effected in the next edition.

Haven't you made it clear to Miss Granger yet? By Merlin's beard! Do something about it, please! I am not an intermediary who will intercede on her behalf. The sooner you tell her yourself exactly what your intentions are, the sooner normalcy will return to our lives. Albus does not approve of your present course of actions and neither do I. Where is the disagreeable Severus Snape that I know? Where is he who will silence any woman's words with a contemptuous scowl and a sharp flick of the wrist?

Attached is a copy of Miss Granger's review of your article in Midlands Journal of Alchemical Studies. Please reply to her epistles and tell her your sentiments, for all our sakes.

Regards,

Prufrock

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Midlands Journal of Alchemical Studies, Vol. 397, No. 11.

Review of Arsenius Jigger's *Theoretical Alchemy: A Study in the Properties of Yew* Midlands Journal of Alchemical Studies, Vol. 397, No. 10.

By Hermione Granger

~~~~~

Yew bark's usage in potions has long been restricted to the treatment of chronic sciatica and joint pains. On this score, Jigger is foremost in the field. Unusually though, *Theoretical Alchemy* presents no findings on any new features of yew. However, this does not detract from his purpose of speculating on yew's other probable uses in potions. As scholars familiar with Jigger's research will know, he has already contributed greatly to the study of yew by establishing nine uses for its bark and six uses for its sap. Virtually everything that we know of its use, outside of wand making, was expounded in the many potions created by Jigger. Even so, his *theoretical* speculations require further qualification. As a hypothetical form, pure extract of yew is a difficult possibility to grasp. Landau's 8 pillar study on yew in 1987 states that yew has too many complex composites to impart a definitive essence per se. Research into the matter yields the same findings as Landau. Epistemologically, it is theoretically possible to obtain pure essence from any plant. As an actual abstract, however, yew extract is an impossibility given the different structure and uses of its bark, sap, leaves and so on. Despite this, the theoretical implications of pure yew extract open many exciting doors in the study of pain killers. Yielding to his trenchant argument then, I anxiously wait, with the rest of the Potions community, to see when Jigger will succeed in his ratification of yew extract. Concurrent to this hypothesis, is the novel theory that ground yew bark could be mixed with belladonna to produce a remedy to relieve chronic migraines. On this note, Jigger is rightly cautious as the potion is meant to be hailed rather than ingested. Reconstructing the tradition uses of yew in new potions, Jigger proves why he is the top of the field. Rarely have we seen the simple re-sequencing of ingredients addition applied to the uses that Jigger mentions. Until recently, it was assumed that the usage of yew dispelled the need to follow any strict order of the ingredients in the potion. Putting this belief down, Jigger proves that rearranging then order of yew potions engenders multiple variants that could be used for other purposes. Therefore, it evinces the fact that potions using yew as one of its ingredients are more volatile than others.

Environment, too, as Jigger points out, can be seen to win out over the inaccuracies of sequencing potions ingredients. Day is most suited to brewing yew potions that aid in the symptoms that only afflict the patient at night. Maletropha and other such yew potions used for alleviating eye strain and headaches are best brewed at night. Yet, Jigger does not claim that the conditions must be tightly controlled. Mayhaps, he feels that it is already implied in his words. I feel that he should have stated the matter explicitly so as not to give rise to more confusion. Noting this environmental influence on yew, Jigger goes on to propose that collecting yew at different times of the day would also yield different effects in the potions. Doubtlessly, this fits perfectly with his theory that nothing must be left to chances in the brewing of the perfect potion. Many may regard these efforts as stultifying the simplistic art of yew potions. Addressing this directly, Jigger says, "The objective of this study is not to provide a treatise on the educational method of brewing yew potions in any practical or positive sense; rather it constitutes a radical critique of what contemporary yew potions studies have become." Reconstituting it so that it resembles a table of virtues, Jigger explains that the using yew in its most natural state (in the form of the pure extract) would hold it as the common unvarying element in the potion. Reasoning that yew extract is a delicate potential that must be nurtured if it is to flourish, he shows how careful isolation of yew will preserve its shelf life. Yew, then, is one of the most versatile ingredients available to alchemy. Moreover, its ability to savour the other ingredients in which it is stewed enhances its dual abilities as catalyst and character ingredient. Extending the possibilities of yew, then, would be of great use to all practitioners of our craft.

Footnotes

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If you extract the first letter of each of the review's sentences (notice that I stress sentences, not every capital alphabet), they read, "YOU HAVE ALREADY CORRUPTED MY MIND. MARRY ME"

Readers have been asking me why HG and SS are communicating through journal articles rather than letters. The answer is simple SS refuses to reply to HG's letters, instead he chooses to reply to her in kind through journal articles. Why journal articles? She started the ball rolling with the article annexed to letter 35. I assume as should you that SS and HG read, subscribe and contribute to several alchemical/potion journals.

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Letter 40: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 8th December 2000

Chapter 40 of 42

Severus takes up his pen to Prufrock and encloses the editorial for "Philosophical Alchemical Theory".

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Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 40: Severus Snape to J. Alfred Prufrock, 8th December 2000

Severus X. A. Snape

Malmaison,

Alecto's Way,

Leicestershire,

UK.

8th December 2000

It is all over. It is settled and peace can return once more. No more incessant presumptuous orders from you on what I ought to do! Put yourself at ease. I replied to Miss Granger this week. We were able to establish some form of agreement.* You need no longer worry. Everything has since been settled. What do you take me a fool? I do things in my own way, in my own time. I do not like having you or anyone else breathing down my neck. Do not patronise me in that vulgar manner again, Prufrock! Damn it, man! Do you think me so weak?

I shall be away for the next few weeks on some private business. Send the attached to Philosophical Alchemical Theory for me. It must go out *TODAY*. Do not question me. I have sent the raven on an errand and he will not be back till late. You have two bloody fat owls, think of it as exercise for them. It has to reach the editors of Philosophical Alchemical Theory by this afternoon if it is to be printed tomorrow. If I receive the journal on the 14th of December without that message, I will hex you into a Quintaped! Don't just sit there? Send an owl NOW!

S. Snape.

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Philosophical Alchemical Theory , Vol. 67, No. 12.

Arsenius Jigger's December Message to the Readers  
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Fortune has indeed been kind to the alchemical field, as we have had a year of tremendous breakthroughs in philosophical alchemy by new talents. Of the new talents in the field, the most notable has been Miss H. J. Granger. Organised to acknowledge this new talent, December's issue of Philosophical Alchemical Theory showcases a collection of papers on her theories in ancient and medieval epistemological potions. Louise Durkheim's *Sur les règles de la méthode alchimique dans Hermione Granger* analyses the train of thought and influences inherent in Miss Granger's writings. Ignoratio elenchi as favoured by Miss Granger's study of the ancients is explored by Ernest Mach in his article, *Against the Irony of Illation*. Sociobiology's role in Miss Granger's potions brewing is studied against her works in mallowsweet and wolfsbane in Gottlob Frege's *Rational Practicality in Modernist Potion Brewing*. Hans Feuerbach's *Episteme in Alchemical Theory* considers the cross-disciplinary applicability of Miss Granger's understanding of epistemological alchemy. *Whither the unsophisticated sophistication?* written by myself closes the selection of essays in honour of Miss Granger by extrapolating the theories in her revised 'Affectations of Li and Ren' potions and applying them to present political case studies.

On account of the new discoveries of mallowsweet properties, the March issue welcomes articles on that topic. Many will recall the debate on that topic in April's edition of Philosophical Alchemical Theory . Another non-speculative study of mallowsweet would be needed to bolster our understanding of this versatile substance. New contributors would do well to write to the journal at the address on the back blurb.

Women in alchemical studies will be the topic in our next issue. Instead of concentrating on women's discoveries in potions studies, the topic will encompass feminist theory in philosophical alchemy. Likely to be controversial, this new area of studies within Alchemy will undoubtedly be of much interest to true lovers of the discipline. Lately, this subfield has been rendered all the more important with several studies on the treatment of women in the theoretical alchemical writings of the ancients. Yesterday's notions of alchemical women are considered alongside modernist interpretations. Overarching this new subfield are two schools of thoughts: (1) the ancients were misogynists, and (2) some ancients were fostering radical feminist theories. Undoubtedly, the debate that will grow from the next issue will continue to a matter of

discussion for most scholars in alchemy. Considering this then, it pleases me to announce that the Oxford University's Beaufort College is offering a summer programme on feminist alchemy theory next year. Early applicants will enjoy a fee waiver.

As 2001 is also the year where we commemorate the 50th year of the discovery of the uses of dragon blood by Dumbledore and Flamel, Cambridge University's Wizarding Colleges are offering a special course on this topic. Severus Snape, D.Mag.A, will be guest lecturer for the session that will open during the Easter holidays on the misuses of the compound. East Anglia Wizarding Institute will send Professor Clifford Irwin. Peter Hildebrand from the University of Bristol will be chairing the session on the healing possibilities of dragon blood. Esther Maybank, an M.Mag.A student from Radcliffe College will be the discussant. Sessions on the by-products of dragon blood as well as the uses of cross-bred dragon blood will be run by Albus Dumbledore and Severus Snape. The sessions last a full day and should terminate shortly before dinner. Ethereality in carbonised dragon blood will be the chief workshop at the seminar and should last 3 days. Remus Lupin, M.Mag.A in theoretical dark arts, will be chairing the workshop on the applications of stale dragon blood in the field of the dark arts. Ivan Ilyich Youssoupov from the Perershof Institute in Russia will host a special workshop on dried dragon blood and Herbology. Netherlands' George Mittlelalter will also chair a workshop on the versatility of Snape's tri-dragon-blood solution for healing and cleansing. Gretel Meyer, a sub Dean of the Alchemy faculty at Cambridge will treat the participants of the dragon blood seminar and workshops to a musical night where she will play Mahler's 4th on a piano constructed with vials of dragon blood. Mezzo-soprano, Ophelia Polonius will accompany her. Elson Wong, the head of the Alchemy department at Cambridge's New College will also unveil his latest publication on the by-products of distilled dragon blood. Interested participants must send their applications to "Dragon Blood Seminar and Workshops, c/o Miss Frances Price, General Secretary, New College, Cambridge University, Alchemy Department, Cambridge, United Kingdom." Fortis tenebra should be marked on the top left hand corner of the parchment. Interested participants are requested to submit their applications early. Closing dates for submissions are February 5th for international applicants, February 9th for applicants living in Scotland, Yorkshire, the Lake District and Wales, and 10th February for applicants residing elsewhere in Britain. Applicants are also advised to enclose a brief 2 page Curriculum Vitae. Participants in the seminar are expected to be self-funded. Institutional funding from New College will only cover the participants' board and food; transportation allowances cannot be claimed. Trinity College's Alchemical Research Institute, Cambridge, is presently running an essay competition, where the top 5 entries will obtain full funding for the seminar. Undergraduates are also encouraged to apply to attend the workshops if they are interested. Late applications will not be tolerated.

Alchemical research this year, though novel, could be considered an extension of work that has been previous collated by scholars of renaissance Italy. This is entirely fitting given that the fact that the works of the past are still relevant today. Every previous study was grounded in its belief that it was relevant to its modern environment, the issues covered at the conference and this issue of Philosophical Alchemical Theory are no exception. Very pleased am I to see such interest in the controversial debates surrounding this oft neglected field of the magical arts. Every effort has been made by present day scholars in rendering their work exoteric and readable. Research in esoteric alchemical theory has also seen a visible amplification due the work of recent scholars. Yvonne Roche, the editor of the Cambridge University Press's wizarding imprint states as much in her special introduction to this issue of Philosophical Alchemical Theory. Within the realm of the magical arts, I believe it is justifiable to call alchemy the most esoteric of the exoteric fields of study. Esoteric scholars of the Frankfurt school may decry the present trend of extrapolating alchemical theory, but I urge all the readers to embrace it. Little has been said thus far as to the importance of obscure philosophical texts on alchemy as a subject, as such, I feel that it is time that the field has broadened its scope. Lately, this has been occurring at a frightful pace. This, then, means that we must strive to read the ancient texts slowly so as to capture as their true meaning. Hence, this will enable us to discover the virtue of knowledge for its own sake. Esoteric and exoteric discussions of alchemy aside, I am confident that the discoveries made in the field will engender further debates and more discoveries. Now, I think we have arrived at a better understanding of this complex field.

In this hectic year, the discoveries and debates have truly taught us to question the fundamental truths that we have taken for granted in the alchemical field. As testament to that, this issue showcases some of the theories posited by the discipline's up and coming scholars. Contrary to expectations, I will not launch into a further explanation on the various theories that have been in constant discussion this year. Exponents of philosophical alchemy and theoretical potions may be disappointed on that account. Permit me then to wish one and all a good holiday. Thank you for the lively debates and intellectual exchanges.

Arsenius Jigger,

Editor.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

Ignoratio elenchi literally means "misconception of the refutation" in Latin. This is where an author argues against something that the other party has not proposed; in doing so, the author anticipates the criticisms of his/her work. This has been done most effectively by Plato, Xenophon, Mo Tzu and Han Fei Tzu.

* Please note that Severus *is lying* in the letter. He still *has not* (1) replied to Hermione's letters, or (2) seen her. He is lying to Prufrock to keep him off his back, so to speak.

D.Mag.A is the wizarding PhD

M.Mag.A is the wizarding MA

Yes, I know I have appropriated the names of many philosophers, political theorists and literary characters in this. If you like, I can give 'pretend' points for this.

If you extract the first letter of each of the review's sentences (notice that I stress sentences, not every capital alphabet), they read, "FOOLISH WOMAN! WILL YOU CEASE PESTERING ME IF I CAPITULATE? VERY WELL THEN, I ACCEPT."

Readers have been asking me why HG and SS are communicating through journal articles rather than letters. The answer is simple SS refuses to reply to HG's letters, instead he chooses to reply to her in kind through journal articles. Why journal articles? She started the ball rolling with the article annexed to letter 35. I assume as should you that SS and HG read, subscribe and contribute to several alchemical/potion journals.

By now, you should have realised that "corresponding" through journal articles is extremely tedious because HG and SS have to comb through all the potions and alchemical journals, find the other party's articles, decipher the message (if any) in the article and write a response to the person and the alchemical community. But when dealing with a stubborn man like Severus, what else can one do?

Letter 41: Severus Snape to Hermione Granger, 14th December 2000

Chapter 41 of 42

At long last, Severus writes to Hermione. We wobder as to his intentions...

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphases are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

In order not to weary the reader's patience, a number of letters from the series of correspondences have been suppressed; those only have been given which appeared necessary to a complete understanding of the events in this group. For the same reason, some letters from the actors in the events of this drama have also been suppressed.

Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 41: Severus Snape to Hermione Granger, 14th December 2000

Severus X. A. Snape

Borgia's Inn

Diagon Alley,

London

14th December 2000

Miss Granger,

I respectfully request an interview with you. Refer to page III of Philosophical Alchemical Theory. Do you understand me as you claim you do? I will be at Hogsmead this evening from five o'clock. *You* will have to look for me. If I do not see you by eight o'clock this evening, I shall assume that the issue is at an end. Should you be uncertain where to look, insufferable know-it-all, I suggest you read that which is below to give you a gauge. Dismiss it at your own peril, for you *will be* the cause of a death if you do so.

Tell Me Something Beautiful

Five hours continual simmering

On high heat set slow pressure cooker

Translating from angel to demon

In laid fresh moss carpet cubicle

Sifting two spectacles worth of books

Labelled 'antiquity' leather rebound

Cold and deliberately rare for papers

Needing inspired revisionist theories

To whisper wisdom to me beautiful.

Laboured eyesight strained to dilute fluids

Ought to be stuffed in marrow hollows

Blissfully arcane in ascetic life

Pleasurable in its unmade virtue

Becoming memories of factual dyes

While realising that enough is recalled

To encourage a getting down low

Face first in educational burial

With no truthful nugget beautiful.

In a temporary seclusion tried

Even in library's stranger lighting

A friendly hand coldly recognised

As one similar to my nature

In perverse pent up dangerous feels

Patting without letting go one's head

Begging cold alms of what he could do

In a bid to ease emphasised eye lines

Watery in latent knowledge beautiful.

Looking like a mole without glasses

Lanky shadow laughs to sit beside

Closing in the clouded table of books

Before placing glasses three legged

On for me in wheels of mindful despair

Dangling her feet against my covered arm
Wheeling me to relax and rest for tea
As question repeated itself unsaid
Keeping sought information beautiful.
Trying to be coyly flippant yet arch
A request was made for deceased actions
In part daydreams chivalric and gallant
Flowing through lemon grated hoarse throat
Knowingly egotistical yet shy
Still at play with notions of deficiency
Clothed in imposition experiments
Throwing out reasonable logic,
"Be a Dear – tell me something beautiful."
Response was issued with alacrity
Done with the éclat of a tuned piano
Sounding like an orchestral organ
When pencil in right hand was extracted
From its cyclical spinning fulcrum
To be kissed in manner dryly respected
Almost swooned to see kindness thus spoken,
"Your personality makes my whole day
Regardless of how bad it's been - Beautiful."
Make what you will of those lines. I am a poor poet when I am uncertain of my fate. You need not speak if you should come. A look will be sufficient if I am to condition my behaviour and words to your person.

Yours, Yours,

Severus Snape.

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

The poem is my own. I apologise if it is ghastly. 5 points to anyone who can tell me where Severus will be hiding from 5-8pm.

The sign-off is deliberate, I did not accidentally repeat it. Tsar Nicholas II used to sign off this way to his Tsarina.

Letter 42: Hermione Granger to Severus Snape, 12th January 2001

Chapter 42 of 42

The final instalment in which Hermione writes to Severus and includes a letter from her friend...

A/N: For simplicity's sake, titles of books, journals etc are underlined and emphases are italicised. In reviving the old tradition of epistolary novels, I understand the plot may be a little slow, laborious and difficult to follow. Some might consider it AU and a little OOC.

In order not to weary the reader's patience, a number of letters from the series of correspondences have been suppressed; those only have been given which appeared necessary to a complete understanding of the events in this group. For the same reason, some letters from the actors in the events of this drama have also been suppressed.

The poem in the previous letter is my own. I don't work well with metres and it's killing me to write a whole play in metres (you'll know why when you read the acknowledgements). Curious readers have been bombarding me with questions as to where Severus was from 5pm-8pm? It's not in Hogsmead because our beloved Severus is in London, not Scotland. He wants Hermione to go to him not for him to go to her. I will explain this a little later. He says that he will be in the following places that day, in order of mention: potions section in Flourish and Blotts (1st and 2nd stanza), Obscure Books publication House (3rd stanza - most publishing houses have their own library editors have to do research too), apothecary (4th stanza), Scribbulus Everchanging Inks - the stationery store (5th stanza), and finally, back at Flourish and Blotts (6th stanza).

But for all intents, he will be waiting at Flourish and Blotts (an establishment that I imagine to have its own tea room and places for its browsing customers to sit and read) from 5pm-8pm.

Why was he at Obscurus earlier in the day? To do something about the potions text, Magical Drafts. So, you see, Severus did have business to execute.

This poem was originally written in January 2002 to a fellow I was pursuing (who because I ran after him, came to the conclusion that I was a libertine and didn't want to have anything to do with me). The whole poem was set in the library where we used to meet. He was then a final year Masters student in Philosophy, and I was then in my honours year in political science. The infamous "three legged glasses" reference is to spectacles. The ear pieces make two and the main body is one. Remove your glasses and place them on the table, see how it stands? The mainframe where the glass is rests on the table (that's one leg), and the ear pieces support it (that's two).

Interpretation of poem within the context of the story

1st stanza he'll be browsing for 5 hours at the shops listed below. He needs 2 hours to himself for his own shopping. The bookshop is the most important stop. He'll be at the section of the shop with the green carpets, near the out of print (the books labelled antiquity) leather-bound books. The books there speak to him of wisdom.

2nd stanza When one spends too long staring at/reading books, one gets spots in one's eyes and when one lifts one's head, one can initially see nothing (a symptom that I have). Clearly, the books that he has been reading are esoteric (the arcane reference), hence virtuous (Socratics believe that knowledge is the only virtue worth possessing and acquiring). He hopes she'll find him here first and he can obtain her opinion on some of the books he wishes to purchase. The last two lines states that he fears she will not come, and this would herald an end to their academic correspondence and understanding.

3rd stanza It is hinted that he had gone to Obscurus Books earlier that day. It is hinted that he may see her presence in the bookshop (the cold hand and the nature like his own), but wants not to speak to her yet he feels he's not ready. He tries to make up his mind as to what he will say to Hermione. He doesn't want to come across as overly anxious or desirous (the begging for alms bit), yet he is tired of the game (eyes tired and watery). But the knowledge and hope that she has come after him, comforts him and makes him feel slightly better.

4th stanza It is hinted that he had gone to the apothecary earlier that day. He imagines what it would be like if she found him at the bookshop. She tries to sit beside him but he wouldn't allow it, so she perches herself on his desk where he's seated waiting for his orders to be prepared and packed. She would remove her glasses (I imagine she has glasses after that much studying and would be vain enough about them not to want to magically restore her perfect eyesight) and tell him that (i) they have running around in the game long enough (ii) he must be tired after shopping and whatnot all day, they should rest for some tea in the adjoining tea room. He imagines that he would not hear her question, and she would repeat it with the promise of something else, making the knowledge she has of him beautifully sacred.

5th stanza It is stated that he went to Scribbulus Everchanging Inks (the stationery store) before he returned to Flourish and Blotts. She has, in his imagination already asked him to put aside the books for a while and go for tea. He thinks he would refuse the request. But she implores him through all manner of speeches (read the stanza) and he allows himself to be persuaded.

6th stanza This is essentially his imagined response to her request that they stop for tea.

Q. Why doesn't Severus go to Hermione? Why does he want her to go on a goose-chase to look for him?

He has already capitulated to her proposal; he will not have the satisfaction of simply following her orders. She proposed; she wants him she jolly well go to him if she does.

Without further ado, I present to you the last letter in the series...

Proestigium or What the Seasons may Bring

Letter 42: Hermione Granger to Severus Snape, 12th January 2001

Hogwarts, Scotland

12th January 2001

My dearest Severus,

I received your note two hours but I miss you already. I cannot help but feel that it is very unseasonable for a potions workshop to be held this time of the year. Unlike you, I do not have all the time in the world. I must remain at Hogwarts to teach.

Mr Prufrock has just sent me word on Women in Philosophical Alchemy as well as its accompanying advance cheque. It is a good thing that the text is for advanced potions students at the undergraduate level, otherwise I will hear no end of it from the 'dunderheads' here. Mr Prufrock also enclosed your cheque for the foreign editions of Magical Drafts and Potions. I will deposit it at Gringotts later today.

I received the most ridiculous letter from Ron. It is enclosed. Perhaps you'll have a bit of a laugh at his expense. I can already see you curling your lips in disdain. Do not waste the effort, save it *for me*.

Your own,

Hermione

P/S I don't know how best to send this to you, so I'll use 'Semper Eadem' on one of the Hogwarts owls and hope it finds you.

~~~~~

Attached note

~~~~~

28 Hartshorne Place,

London

11th January 2001

Dear 'Mione,

Things have been slow after our graduation from the Auror training programme. I thought being an Auror was all action and excitement. Guess you were right, yet again. Don't know why but we actually have to do a lot of paperwork. You know I really hate that. I wish you were here with us so that you can check the reports for Harry and me before we submit them; some of them are really boring.

Hey, I've been meaning to ask you something. Don't get cross at me, yeah? Last week, my mum clipped something from The Wizarding Herald, the new 'serious' British newspaper for wizards published by Luna's father. You remember that Jigger Old Fart whom Harry and I used to tease you about? Yeah, well, this clipping states that he's recently married one of his former students. I'll write down what it says so you can have a laugh too. It says, "*It has come to the editors' attentions that Dr Arsenius Jigger of*

the University of York and Dr Aspasia Presbon, authoress of *Woman in Philosophical Alchemy*, have recently wed. Join us in felicitating the British wizarding community's golden couple of Potions Research and Alchemical Studies." Funny, eh?

I feel kind of sorry for you. All that while when you were wild about Jigger, you could have had him. Don't knock your head on the wall over it; you didn't know he was unmarried. But it stinks, doesn't it? Knowing that you've could have had Arsenius Jigger instead of Severus Snape, the greasy git. How is the git anyhow? Can't say I like him, but seeing how you've made your choice, I have nothing to say. If you ever leave him, come live with Harry and me; we will both protect you.

Anyway, Harry and I will pop down to Edinburgh next week. We'll meet up with you then and catch up.

Hugs,

Ron

~Finis~

Footnotes

Proestigium is Latin for illusion. Ironically, the English word *Prestige* derives from it.

The 'Semper Eadem' reference can be traced to Letter 5 where Snape as Jigger told Hermione, "Alternatively, tell your owl, 'Arsenius Jigger, Semper Eadem' and it will know where to find me."

Semper Eadem is Latin for always constant or always the same. It was Elizabeth I of England's motto. Severus uses it for a good reason at that. I leave you to devise the reason for that.

Acknowledgements

Thank you, one and all, for sticking with me and this story. I know that I am not the most patient of review repliers, and my work is more often than not somewhat esoteric. My heartfelt thanks are extended to my beta Pollinatrix, and my other beta who wishes to remain anonymous you know who you are.

My gratitude also goes out to the ladies at The Potter Place, for their kindness in drawing me into their fold. Thanks are also extended to June, Gala, Keladry Lupin and Southern Witch for their constant encouragement. Readers may be interested to know that I am planning a HG/SS Regency romance next it looks set to be the fluffiest thing that I've ever written, so don't throw rotten foodstuff at me. It carries the title *The Language of Flowers* and is 22 chapters long. I shall most likely release that in late 2005 or early 2006 as soon as I get done with the footnotes and my betas. To give you a hint, I'll tell you that it has 2 duels, 1 attempted abduction, 1 rout party, 1 ball, 1 gaming hell, 1 reformed rake, 1 dandy about the town, interesting ton servants to look out for, and the following couples: Hermione Granger/Severus Snape, Luna Lovegood/Ronald Weasley, Lavender Brown/Harry Potter, Ginerva Weasley/Draco Malfoy, Neville Longbottom/Millicent Bulstride, Sybil Trelawney/Remus Lupin and Albus Dumbledore/Minerva McGonagall. The story is in effect, complete, it just needs to be edited and I have to figure out how to html the tables in the preface. I've seen the instructions as to how to do so, but it has only confused me. If someone would like to html my tables for me, feel free to contact me and I shall credit you in the acknowledgements

To tantalise you, let me give you a sample of *The Language of Flowers*:

"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."

In addition, I am presently working on a Shakespearean HP story entitled *Tanquam Ovis*, I'm up to Act IV scene iii of the first draft, so don't get your hopes up. I may have to abandon it if I can't resolve the other issues with it (it's not easy deliberately writing a problem play). It seeks to utilise artistic license and reinterpret some parts of Book 6 and exculpate our very dear Severus Snape. There is also a Christmas story that I'm planning (working title is *Quietus Est*), but I doubt I have the time to write it as there are other things that require my attention.

It has been quite a path this year or so, and I am leaving fanfic for the rest of the year to settle my own matters. I shall be back with either *The Language of Flowers* or *Tanquam Ovis* (if it materialises), so fear not. I will be still contactable by email if you must write, and I will be replying to reviews as usual. If *Tanquam Ovis* is completed, edited, footnoted by mid August, I shall post it then.

From the way the wind is blowing, it seems that HG and SS fanfics will be AU very shortly if Ms Rowling pairs our pedant with that dolt who really should get some commonsense (no offence Ron fans) and paints Severus to be the one dimensionally 'evil' character (as she appears to be doing). I sincerely hope that people will continue to support our unique HG/SS ship. I also hope that readers of my fanfiction will continue to read my work when I return to the writing fold.

The time grows short and I must return to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* and the draft of *Tanquam Ovis*, thank you once again.

I remain, yours &ca,

Lady Strange.