

The Twelve Dark Days of Christmas

by sshg316

Severus takes drastic measures to secure Hermione's love. Response to the Twelve Days of Christmas challenge at GS100. This is not a Christmas story.

Twelve, Eleven, and Ten

Chapter 1 of 4

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A/N: If you've read my other stories, you will soon discover that this is very different from what I normally write. This is my attempt at writing a darker fic. Although I am posting these here in groups of three, I wanted to include the titles for each of the twelve sections as they are the only way the story relates to the challenge. They are not included in the word count.

A huge thank you to the members at GrangerSnape100. Your enthusiastic response to this story gave me the courage to post it here.

Twelve Ashwinder Eggs

The ill-lit room was silent but for the hissing, sputtering brew in the small black cauldron. After turning down the flame, the hook-nosed man began to meticulously add the next ingredient.

"It is vital that the Ashwinder eggs be frozen, Miss Granger," he intoned, "and exactly twelve in number. Any less, and the Amortentia will not be effective. Any more, and the consumer will perish. Tempting though it may be, death is not the objective of our work this evening."

He turned to face the frightened, young witch he had magically bound and silenced.

"No, that wouldn't do at all."

Eleven Self-Recriminations

Hermione was terrified. She should have known that dealing with Severus Snape, former Death Eater and Head of Slytherin, would be disastrous. She had believed he.... Well, it no longer mattered what she had believed. Now, she was in this squalid cellar, trapped inside her own body, thanks to an amazingly strong Body-Binding Curse, completely at his mercy. Amortentia. What was he planning to do with that? She had already said she loved him, and he had immediately withdrawn from her. Why was he doing this?

"Because, my darling," he drawled, having obviously read her thoughts, "it will never last."

Ten Leaves of Peppermint

Severus smirked grimly at the astonishment in Hermione's eyes. "Surely you don't believe that such a fickle thing as love would last forever." He shook his head in mock reproach as he prepared the peppermint leaves. "We both know that you would have eventually recognised the sort of man to whom you had so foolishly chosen to bestow your affections, and then where would we be, hmm?"

After adding the peppermint to the brew, he Charmed the stirring rod.

"The potion must be stirred for several minutes." His black eyes glittered menacingly. "Whatever could we do to pass the time?"

Nine, Eight, and Seven

Chapter 2 of 4

Severus takes drastic measures to secure Hermione's love. Response to the Twelve Days of Christmas challenge at GS100. This is not a Christmas story.

A/N: Warning: There is a bit of non-consensual touching. Nothing graphic or extreme, but I wanted to warn you.

Nine Minutes of Stirring

Bound and silenced, Hermione was helpless as Severus knelt beside her.

She felt his warmth as he unfastened the top three buttons of her blouse and then buried his face in her neck. "You always smell so divine." Breathing hotly against her skin, he kissed and suckled. His caresses became bolder, his hands fondled, and his fingers tweaked.

Hermione had never seen this side of him. Just how far would he go? *Please, stop.*

Suddenly, he stood. "There, do you see? *This* is the man you claim to love. It would never last. Eventually, your love would turn to disgust."

Eight Explanations

Severus plunged his hands into his lank hair and pulled. His mind was a jumble of thoughts and emotions. Why had she interrupted his brewing? She would have never known had she stayed away as he had requested. Now it was too late. She *knew*. For his plan to work, he would have to offer her an explanation for his actions.

"Don't you see?" His tone was all but pleading as he paced in front of his captive lover. "I want you. I need you... to care for me, to *love* me. Without that... without you, I am nothing. *NOTHING!*"

Seven Shards of Glass

Hermione's eyes widened in fright as Severus threw several phials against the wall in rapid succession, showering them both in glass. His spine was rigid and his breathing heavy as he struggled to regain control. She had never imagined her declaration would affect him like this. She wanted to reassure him... yet she wished to flee.

Drawing himself to full height, Severus turned, a series of small cuts now marring his pale cheeks and forehead. "I am incapable of being the man you need. If I do not do this, you will leave me... and I cannot be without you."

Six, Five, and Four

Chapter 3 of 4

Severus takes drastic measures to secure Hermione's love. Response to the Twelve Days of Christmas challenge at GS100. This is not a Christmas story.

Six Slices of Hellebore

Having regained control over his volatile emotions, Severus returned to the worktable and calmly began to slice the freshly harvested hellebore. "I realize that I have

betrayed your trust," he said conversationally, "and for that, I do apologise. However, surely you can now see how imperative the Amortentia is to our future happiness." He added the plant to the cauldron.

He had to convince her that this was the best, the *only* solution. It wasn't necessary that she be a willing participant, but he could not alienate her affection. Without her love, everything he had done would be for naught.

Five Pomegranate Seeds

Hermione watched in horrified fascination as the man she loved brewed the destruction of their future. He clearly wasn't thinking—something in his mind had obviously snapped. A Potions master of Severus' calibre was well aware that Amortentia was temporary. The man wasn't stupid—he knew that when the potion's effects dissipated, she would remember what he had done. The result of his treachery would be the very thing he was attempting to prevent—she would leave him.

Her eyes filled with angry tears. How dare he do this to her—to *them*? It was unconscionable.

She had to escape.

Four Escape Attempts

Hermione felt the Body-Binding Curse begin to weaken. Her eyes flitted to the door. There were anti-Apparition wards inside the lab, but if she could get into the hallway, she could Apparate. It wasn't an ideal plan, but without her wand, it was her only option.

Her heart pounded within her chest as she waited, until at last, the Curse released. She held herself still, watching and waiting for the perfect opportunity....

Severus walked into the storeroom.

Now!

Hermione bolted for the door and yanked on the knob, panicking when it would not open.

"You should not have done that."

A/N: Tomorrow, the conclusion.

Three, Two, and One

Chapter 4 of 4

Severus takes drastic measures to secure Hermione's love. Response to the Twelve Days of Christmas challenge at GS100. This is not a Christmas story.

A/N: And we've reached the end. I wrote the last two early on in the series, and despite wanting to change it at times, I have left it as written. I hope it doesn't disappoint.

Three Silver Knives

"*Petrificus Totalus!*" Severus caught her before she hit the floor. "Foolish girl!" he admonished, his lips brushing against her temple. He returned her to the wooden chair, then took her head in his hands, staring at her intently. "Hermione, I know you are angry, but you must listen! Love potions do not create love—they merely enhance the feelings that are already present. You must remember that. I'm doing what is best for *us*."

He stood and walked to the worktable. His long fingers wrapped around the hilt of a silver knife. "It is time for the final two ingredients."

Two Drops of Blood

He approached, the silver knife clutched in his hand.

No, Hermione protested as he gripped her wrist. Once, she had trusted him to never hurt her, but now....

Ignoring her unspoken plea, Severus eased the blade along her palm, blood flowing in its wake. "Lovely," he rasped before running his tongue along the shallow cut.

Hermione shuddered.

He returned to the potion, adding one drop of her blood to the brew before pricking his finger and adding his own. But why? Blood was not used in Amortentia.

"Yes!" Severus hissed in triumphant glee. "The effects will now be permanent—*eternal!*"

And Amortentia in a Gold Phial

He clasped her Bound form to him, his hand cradling the gold phial against her chest.

"It's time, darling," Severus whispered hoarsely. "Soon, our love will last for all eternity."

He pulled her stiffened body closer, and then....

"*Finite Incantatem!*" He released her as he raised the phial to his lips, consuming the pearlescent liquid in one swallow.

The potion took immediate effect, the maniacal gleam leaving his eyes and his harsh grasp softening into a lover's embrace.

"I love you, Hermione." He smiled.

Trembling in shock and despair, a tear trailed down her cheek. "I know, Severus. I know."