

Repaying The Life Debt

by beaweasley2

This was not what Severus expected when he confronted Hermione Weasley about payment of his life debt.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for March 22.

Repaying The Life Debt

Chapter 1 of 21

This was not what Severus expected when he confronted Hermione Weasley about payment of his life debt.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for March 22.

AN: This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for March 22.

Thanks go to Southern Witch 69 for the read through.

March 22

"Let me remunerate you for this," he snarled.

"I really don't need you to," she replied. "Why can't you just believe I did it because I wanted to?"

"I can name a myriad of reasons, Mrs. Weasley," Severus snarled. "It's bad enough I learn that I owe you a life debt. I don't like being indebted."

"It's Ms. Granger if you don't mind." Hermione hated the acerbic nature of his tone. "I did it because I couldn't just leave you there! You deserved better!" she said, frustrated. "You could pay me back in, say... private tutelage? I'll even pay you for the privilege."

"You must be – you're not, are you? You're serious! So, I'm simply to believe that all you want is private tutorial in potions – with me? And you even wish ~~to~~ pay for the *privilege*?" he asked, still not believing her. "I suppose you also expect me to be nice and sweet to you as well?" he asked sarcastically.

"Yes, I'd really like to be your apprentice. And no, I don't expect you to simply transmute your personality," she said, shaking her head. "That wouldn't be you. Besides, I've come to understand you better, and yes, I think we would work well together."

"My apprentice?" he asked, obviously taken aback. "At least I know you would not be indolent," he stated with a smirk. "But why come to me?"

"Because I want to be your friend!" she stated firmly.

His answering smile was nearly nefarious. "As my apprentice we would be spending countless long hours together. Many of the potions I brew take weeks, and it would necessitate that you be close by, even sleep at my home to tend to your potions."

If he thought that would discourage her, he was grossly mistaken. That was exactly what she had in mind. "I accept."

His expression changed to one of utter disbelief, then hardened into his usual mask of indifference. But she saw it, that momentary flash of curiosity. That Seer she'd bumped into in Middleton Glenn had been right after all.

"Fine, my home on Spinner's End. Don't bring too much stuff; the room you will use is small," he said with chagrin.

Hermione smiled. "Shall I come by tonight or tomorrow?"

He sighed, and for a moment the mask fell. "I shall be expecting you tomorrow, at eight. We'll discuss terms then."

Hermione watched him leave, feeling elated.

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

*Rules:*

1. Use some or all of the following words in a drabble (doesn't have to be 100 words--anything under 1k is fine)
2. Word list changes every Saturday
3. Upload your drabbles here or at the *Petulant Poetess* under the *Potter Place Fun Categories* (any other archive is fine as well)
4. Have fun, baby! Whoot!! It should be interesting to see what we can come out with using *dictionary.com*'s daily words while boosting our vocabulary. Teehee

The word list with definitions below (swiped from the past week's list):

#1. *Remunerate* \rih-MYOO-nuh- rate\, transitive verb:

1. To pay an equivalent to for any service, loss, or expense; to recompense.
2. To compensate for; to make payment for.

-----

#2. *Myriad* \MIR-ee-uhd\, adjective:

1. Consisting of a very great, but indefinite, number; as, myriad stars.
2. Composed of numerous diverse elements or aspects.
3. The number of ten thousand; ten thousand persons or things. (Chiefly in reference to the Greek numeral system, or in translations from Greek or Latin).
4. An immense number; a very great many; an indefinitely large number.

-----

#3. *Acerbic* \uh-SUR-bik\, adjective:

Sharp, biting, or acid in temper, expression, or tone.

-----

#4. *Transmute* \trans-MYOOT; tranz-l\, transitive verb:

1. To change from one nature, form, substance, or state into another; to transform.
2. To undergo transmutation.

-----

#5. *Nefarious* \nuh-FAIR-ee- uhs\, adjective:

Wicked in the extreme; iniquitous

-----

#6. *Indolent* \IN-duh-luhnt\, adjective:

1. Avoiding labor and exertion; habitually idle; lazy; inactive.
2. Conducive to or encouraging laziness or inactivity.
3. Causing little or no pain.
4. Slow to heal, develop, or grow.

-----

#7. *Chagrin* \shuh-GRIN\, noun:

1. Acute vexation, annoyance, or embarrassment, arising from disappointment or failure.
2. To unsettle or vex by disappointment or humiliation; to mortify.

# His New Apprentice

Chapter 2 of 21

It's Hermione's first Friday as Severus's apprentice. Well, if Hermione was going to insist on being Severus's apprentice as repayment of his life debt, he might as well put her to work, right?

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for March 29.

I've a few words to say in thanks to my terrific beta, Southern\_Witch\_69. Thank you so much for giving this a once over to make it presentable! You rock!

March 29

Severus had to give her credit. Ms. Granger had been at his door promptly at eight every morning ready to begin whichever chore he set her, even the task of preparing every disgusting ingredient he could think of.

"I thought there was an anathema set against bloodletting," Hermione said, reading the third potion Severus intended to brew that day.

Actually, the potion would take him the entire weekend to brew and was very time sensitive with each step. For this reason he'd set up a cot in his lab, although he really hated using the old thing. "No, Ms. Granger, Blood-Letting Potion does not, in fact, make the drinker bleed. While bloodletting has been deemed as reprehensible, and there is quite a bit of reprobation regarding its practice, the Plethora Potion, as it's properly called, simply relieves the excessive amount of blood in the system caused by a superabundance of red blood."

"This potion will take at least four days to complete and needs constant attention," she said after scanning the directions. She looked up at him, her brown eyes innocent. "Will I be needed? Am I to sleep there?" she asked, pointing to his cot.

He smirked at her request. "Do not tell me you repine to sleep with me?" he asked smoothly, purposefully using his smooth drawl to both tease her and watch her squirm.

"Would I have reason to repine, Professor? I, er, sorry," she stammered, blushing several shades of red. "I simply meant that I'd be happy to stay with you until the potion is complete."

"Indeed," he said silkily. He smirked in amusement as he watched the dance of color on her cheeks. "Calling me 'Professor' is a misnomer, Ms. Granger. You should refer to me as Master or sir, whichever you prefer."

Hermione swallowed and blushed again as she averted her eyes back to the Potions books on his desk. "I don't know what the hullabaloo is about then if the potion helps people?" she asked, obviously trying to change the subject.

"Only to certain people – the uneducated and narrow minded," he stated. "May I suggest that you sojourn in the spare room, Ms. Granger?" he asked, eyeing her speculatively.

"Then how will I know when I need to wake to assist you with the potion?" she asked demurely. "Besides, we are both mature adults. I'm quite certain you can refrain yourself if I slept on a second cot."

"Have it your way, Ms. Granger," he said, his tone rather acrid, returning to his desk. Mother of Merlin, refrain myself – of course I can, you idiot girl. How dare she imply I cannot.

~TBC~

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

The word list (swiped from the past week's list):

1. *anathema*
2. *plethora*
3. *repine*
4. *misnomer*
5. *acrid*
6. *hullabaloo*
7. *sojourn*

Words with definitions below:

#1. *anathema* \uh-NATH-uh- muh\, noun:

1. A ban or curse pronounced with religious solemnity by ecclesiastical authority, and accompanied by excommunication. Hence: Denunciation of anything as accursed.
2. An imprecation; a curse; a malediction.
3. Any person or thing anathematized, or cursed by ecclesiastical authority.
4. Any person or thing that is intensely disliked.

#2. *plethora* \PLETH-uh-ruh\, noun:

1. An abnormal bodily condition characterized by an excessive amount of blood in the system.

2. *Excess; superabundance.*

#3. *repine* \rih-PINE\, *intransitive verb*:

1. *To feel or express discontent.*

2. *To long for something.*

#4. *misnomer* \mis-NO-muhr\, *noun*:

1. *The misnaming of a person in a legal instrument, as in a complaint or indictment.*

2. *Any misnaming of a person or thing; also, a wrong or inapplicable name or designation.*

#5. *acrid* \AK-rid\, *adjective*:

1. *Sharp and harsh, or bitter to the taste or smell; pungent.*

2. *Caustic in language or tone; bitter.*

#6. *hullabaloo* \HUL-uh-buh- loo\, *noun*:

A confused noise; uproar; tumult.

#7. *sojourn* \SOH-juhrn; so-JURN\, *intransitive verb*:

1. *To stay as a temporary resident; to dwell for a time.*

2. *A temporary stay.*

Author's Notes:

Today it is well-established that bloodletting is not effective for most diseases or at best less effective than modern treatments. Bloodletting still has its place in the treatment of a few diseases and is practiced by specifically trained practitioners in hospitals, using modern techniques. Therapeutic phlebotomy (or bloodletting) refers to the drawing of a unit of blood in specific cases like haemochromatosis, polycythemia, porphyria, etc., to reduce the amount of red blood cells.

Haemochromatosis, also spelled hemochromatosis, is a hereditary disease of improper dietary iron metabolism or an iron overload, which causes the accumulation of iron in a number of body tissues.

Primary polycythemia, often called polycythemia vera (PCV), polycythemia rubra vera (PRV), or erythremia, occurs when excess red blood cells are produced as a result of an abnormality of the bone marrow. Often, excess white blood cells and platelets are also produced.

These two conditions or diseases primarily noted in those of Northern European descent, especially people of English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh descent.

Porphyria cutanea tarda (PCT) is the most common subtype of porohria. The disorder results from low levels of the enzyme responsible for the fifth step in the heme production. Heme is a vital molecule for all of the body's organs. It is a component of hemoglobin, the molecule that carries oxygen in the blood.

Only The Second Week!

Chapter 3 of 21

Two weeks and Hermione is beginning to relax into her new role, much to Severus's chagrin. Although, she treats him more like an assistant than an master.

I wish to give the accolades due to my beta, Southern_Witch_69 for all her time making this story presentable. Thank you, so very much, and I just want you to know I appreciate it very much.

April 5

Severus watched the rise and fall of her pert breasts with each breath under the thin sheet encasing her naked body like a glove. Her curls spread out across the pillow framing her face, which was turned up toward him, plush lips slightly parted as if asking for his kiss...

"Master Snape?" Her voice roused him, pulling him into consciousness. "The potion, sir, you asked me to..."

"Please do not manhandle me," he growled, slowly opening his eyes. "I do not tolerate fawning." *And I was dreaming... dreaming about... Oh Bloody Merlin's beard!* Her

hand on his shoulder felt disconcertingly warm and intimate.

"I had an epiphany last night. Actually, Ron said something..."

"Oh, spare me!" Severus said, rising.

Hermione continued, undaunted. "He said that..."

"Your very own deus ex machine, how enchanting. Pray tell what did the nitwit reveal for you?"

Hermione seethed but controlled her anger. "My *deus ex machine* reminded me about the influence a sprig of peppermint can make in counterbalancing the side effects of Euphoria Elixir. He used it in the Jollification Potion to balance the potion's efficacy and strength. It might help balance the tendency toward excess cringing and spinelessness caused from continual use of the Obsequious Potion," she stated, handing him a cup of tea.

She's prepared it perfectly to my tastes. Well, I'm not going to let her know that He glared at her a moment as he considered her remark. *Bugger, it's brilliant!* "It might." Nevertheless, he retrieved a sprig of peppermint from his shelves.

"So I'm right, it may work?" She was grinning exuberantly as she watched him.

He regarded her coolly. "I suppose you'll tell him that his suggestion is—plausible?"

"Ron was brewing Jollification for the shop, and he added it on a whim."

He glared at her in utter disbelief. "You suggested this based upon one of his experimentations! On an unproven and unreasoned assumption! Why would you listen to him?"

"Because it worked! The shop is doing well, and he and Harry are rated tops in the Auror training program," Hermione stated smugly, proud of her friends' accomplishments.

"I wouldn't be surprised if he became quite the bellwether," Severus stated.

"Sir, why are we brewing this potion?" she asked, diverting the conversation.

"The client obviously suffers severely from a phobia," Snape stated, sipping the tea. "Xenophobia, to be precise. Not an advantageous phobia for someone who works in the International Association of Quidditch. He already has a self-incriminating complex from that hideous excrescence growing on his forehead."

Hermione's brow creased. "Prolonged use of this potion is restricted by Ministry guidelines."

"He pays me quite well for the potion and for keeping his secrets. He, like many of my other clients, pays me for my discretion and skill, allowing me to live in a standard I prefer," Severus stated.

Hermione looked at him with an amused smirk. "Oh, yes, you are one who truly enjoys all the finer things. Your house reeks of excessive ostentation."

"You have only been permitted to see my sitting room and my laboratory," he stated flatly.

"And your kitchen and your loo..."

"Nor my grandfather's house." He smirked at her surprised expression. "This house, my Muggle father's house, served its purpose. Now it serves as my laboratory, exactly as befitting my chosen lifestyle."

She gaped at him, confounded.

"Well, you suggested the ingredient — see if it works."

~TBC~

~~~~~o0o~~~~~

*The word list (swiped from the past week's list):*

1. *excrescence*
2. *obsequious*
3. *xenophobia*
4. *jollification*
5. *deus ex machina*
6. *bellwether*
7. *ostentation*

*Words with definitions below:*

*excrescence* \ik-SKRESS-uhn( t)s\, noun:

1. *Something (especially something abnormal) growing out from something else.*
2. *A disfiguring or unwanted mark, part, or addition.*

-----

*obsequious* \ob-SEE-kwee- us\, adjective:

*Servilely compliant, deferential or attentive; compliant to excess; fawning.*

-----

*xenophobia* \ZEN-uh-FOE- bee-uh\, *noun*:

*Fear or hatred of strangers, people from other countries, or of anything that is strange or foreign.*

-----

*jollification* \jol-ih-fuh- KAY-shuhn\ , *noun*:

*Merrymaking; festivity; revelry.*

-----

*deus ex machina* \DAY-uhs-eks- MAH-kuh-nuh; -nah; -MAK-uh-nuh\ , *noun*:

1. *In ancient Greek and Roman drama, a god introduced by means of a crane to unravel and resolve the plot.*

2. *Any active agent who appears unexpectedly to solve an apparently insoluble difficulty.*

-----

*bellwether* \BEL-weth-uh\ , *noun*:

*A leader of a movement or activity; also, a leading indicator of future trends.*

-----

*ostentation* \os-ten-TAY- shuhn\, *noun*:

*Excessive or pretentious display; boastful showiness.*

## The Third Week

### Chapter 4 of 21

It's Hermione's third Friday as Severus's apprentice. Well, if Hermione was going to insist on being Severus's apprentice as repayment of his life debt, he might as well put her to work, right?

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for April 12.

*I wish to give the accolades due to my beta, Southern\_Witch\_69 for checking this over to make sure this story presentable. Thank you so very much! You rock!*

April 12

Severus left the Malfoys' feeling as if he'd just walked away from his camarilla and entered the apothecary in a bad mood. The shop assistant knew better than to assault him with her annoying presence as he selected out his purchases, but that didn't stop the apothecary, Herbert Rottenbacher, from asking about the rumors he'd heard that Severus had accepted an apprentice. By the time Severus made it home with his request list and supplies, he was in a foul mood.

"Oh, sir, let me help you!" Hermione said the moment he walked in, arms full, heading to his supply cupboard.

"Would you cease your importunate solicitation!" he snapped irritably.

"My what? I was – I finished cleaning down the worktables, the floor, scoured the cauldrons, and even cleaned and dusted the shelves and supply cupboards. I was running out of things to clean since you warded your books. Did you forget I'd promised to be here to finish..."

"Must you be so voluble, Miss Granger?" he snapped. "You knew very well that as my apprentice you'd get all the grunge work." He dropped the items on the worktable and stretched, trying to relieve the knot in his back. The ingredients for the potion he intended on brewing that afternoon were on the table, cleaned and ready for him. He deepened his scowl, although he was impressed. "You hardly have a woebegone look about you. Possibly I didn't give you enough to do?"

"It's only one room, and you and I haven't been all that – messy." Hermione looked at him with a contemplative tilt of her head. "Mum and I used to clean the entire house in an afternoon."

"I didn't ask," he started to say while grabbing up several jars and then turned abruptly, his robes in a billowing. "Next time I'll leave you questions to answer and access to the necessary books." Hermione had collected an armload of containers and apparently followed him, nearly colliding into him when he turned around. "Will you..."

"Sir, I have a question regarding the potion directions you left on your desk," she said, handing him one container after another.

"I've no doubt," he said in an exasperated sigh as she hurried to the worktable for more ingredients. Hermione turned, biting her lip, obviously not really wanting to annoy him further. "You might as well ask."

"There are two parallel marks between 'sixteen' and 'anticlockwise,' and again between 'nine rotations' and 'repeated three times.' I don't know what it means."

*A reasonable question.* "The caesura in the directions is my own annotation," he said. "It signifies a change from the directions. The first, for changing from a stirring rod to a wooden spoon; the second, is to remind me to add a clockwise rotation. I suppose I'll have to be more careful of my annotations from now on."

"Have you always deviated from the directions, sir?" she asked and then blushed. "I mean, I know about your annotations in your Potions book Harry had. They were brilliant. Harry never did better in Potions before."

He crossed his arms and glared at her. "My own afflatus while brewing. I don't suppose I'll ever have my book back?"

"I can ask him...?"

"Never mind," he snapped and then swept his hand at the worktable. "Well, since you saw fit to pull all the ingredients – get to work. I'll be monitoring your progress."

"Pugnacious git," Hermione mumbled under her breath as she started the cauldron burner.

Severus smiled. He'd let the impertinence slide, this time. He was wearing her down.

~TBC~

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

Author's Notes:

Oh, give him some time. She may wear on him yet!

The word list (swiped from the dictionary.com's past week's list):

camarilla

importunate

woebegone

voluble

caesura

afflatus

pugnacious

Words with definitions below:

camarilla \kam-uh-RIL- uh; -REE-yuh\, noun:

A group of secret and often scheming advisers, as of a king; a cabal or clique.

importunate \im-POR-chuh- nit\, adjective:

Troublesomely urgent; overly persistent in request or demand; unreasonably solicitous.

woebegone \WOE-bee-gon\ , adjective:

1. Beset or overwhelmed with woe; immersed in grief or sorrow; woeful.
2. Being in a sorry condition; dismal-looking; dilapidated; run-down.

voluble \VOL-yuh-buhl\ , adjective:

1. Characterized by a ready flow of speech.
2. Easily rolling or turning; rotating.
3. (Botany) Having the power or habit of turning or twining.

caesura \sih-ZHUR-uh; -ZUR-l\, noun;

plural caesuras or caesurae \sih-ZHUR-ee; -ZUR-ee\:

1. A break or pause in a line of verse, usually occurring in the middle of a line, and indicated in scanning by a double vertical line; for example, "The proper study || of mankind is man" [Alexander Pope, An Essay on Man].
2. Any break, pause, or interruption.

afflatus \uh-FLAY-tuhs\ , noun:

A divine imparting of knowledge; inspiration, a strong creative impulse, especially as a result of divine inspiration; an impelling mental force acting from within

pugnacious \puhg-NAY-shuhs\ , adjective:

Inclined to fight; combative; quarrelsome.

Her Fourth Week

Chapter 5 of 21

After a rough day with Severus, Hermione meets up with her friends at the Leaky Cauldron and has an unfortunate encounter with Ron.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for April 19.

I wish to give the accolades due to my beta, Southern_Witch_69, for all her time making this story presentable. Thank you, and I just want you to know I appreciate it very much.

April 19

"Miss Granger! Are you trying to suffocate us with these noxious fumes?"

Hermione could hardly wait until she was dismissed for the evening. She'd had to endure his tirade as he objugated her actions nearly all morning for her error. However, even after cleaning away the first failed attempt at his potion, the second was even more disastrous. A thick, vaporous miasma of smoke from the cauldron enveloped the room.

"It is necessary to have a salubrious environment in order to work – let alone breathe!" he snarled. He tried eliminating the smoke unsuccessfully with his wand. He grabbed the parchment with his directions off her worktable, brandished it in her face. "What part of this was beyond your comprehension?"

"None, sir, I followed it precisely as you have it written," she replied, choking. "But I'm really surprised by the substitution of potassium just before the blood brier..."

"Have you completely given leave of any rational thought? Are you suffering from a sudden abulia? What could possibly have possessed you to put the potassium in before the blood brier?" he ranted angrily.

"It was your annotation, sir," she replied, trying a purging spell in combination with a dehumidification spell to condense the smoke. It worked. "You crossed off bread soda and put in potassium on the margin," she replied, "and have the bread soda added in after the blending in of the ground pawpods. I thought that was an error and tried to question you, but you insisted I follow your directions precisely!"

He looked down at the parchment and strode to his desk. "Sir?"

"Go home, Miss Granger," he said softly, his jaw clenched.

Hermione stood rigid, staring at him, but decided to refrain from aggravating him further. "Good night, sir. I'll see you Monday."

"Night," he replied, pinching the bridge of his nose as he started marking the parchment before him.

She collected her things from the guest room upstairs and exited his house. She sent her Patronus to Ginny and Harry, accepting their invite for drinks, and stopped at Gringotts to pick up pin money before meeting up with her friends at the Leaky Cauldron. George, Ron and Ginny warmly greeted her as soon as she entered the pub. "Tom, two bottles of Ogden's Old please," she said to the bar keep and turned to see both guys raise their eyebrows at her. "What? I'm in the mood for some serious roistering tonight, I can tell you that!"

"If he's that dreadful, why are you bothering?" Ron asked.

Hermione sighed. "Believe me, I don't expect him to inveigle me or anything, and he's just as cantankerous as ever, but I do wish he'd – I dunno – lighten up a little." Tom set the liquor and six glasses down on their table.

"Neville," Ron said, indicating the sixth glass. "He and Harry are in the *Daily Prophet* office."

Ginny giggled at Hermione's questioning look. "Taking out an ad regarding the selling of a few things we're getting rid of at the house."

Hermione nodded. "Finally got Mrs. Black off the wall?"

Ron shook his head. "Part of the wall is going with her. So how long are you going put up with the git?"

"I'm going to miss the ol' bat," George said jovially. "So you really are doing an apprenticeship with Snape?"

Hermione nodded. "She's tricked him into it," Ginny stated, laughing.

"Although why you'd want to is beyond me," Ron sneered.

"Ron, he's the best," Hermione said. "Besides, he's actually quite brilliant."

"He's just taking advantage of you," Ron spat. "There is no reason for you to be sleeping at his house unless..."

"The potion I'm brewing is volatile and needs constant watching, or takes a week to brew and there are steps to do at all hours. I explained this to you." Hermione was sick of this discussion. "Besides, you're always so busy with the shop and Auror training you're hardly around yourself. I see more of George than I do of you!"

"I'm busy! At least I try and make time for you, but you're always too busy anymore," Ron spat.

George laid a hand on Ron's shoulder. "Hey, let's keep this..."

"Like you were last week? I told you, Ron, nothing is happening between Severus and me," Hermione said, beginning to bristle. "I revise for my N.E.W.T.s weekends and my free nights, and I have my apprenticeship weekdays! I'm just busy!"

Ron glared at her. "So, now he's Severus, is he? I am beginning to think you'd rather be with him than me."

"Ron, don't be a wanker," George said as Ginny gasped, "Ron, it's not like that."

"But you never want spend time with me," Ron said angrily.

"I tried to have dinner with you Tuesday," she spat back, "and you were busy!"

Neville and Harry walked in, and Harry hugged Ginny from behind. "Hey, Hermione, you're here. Snape let you leave the dungeons long enough to have dinner with us?"

"Apparently!" Ron slammed down his glass and stormed out the door.

Harry looked at Ginny, confused. "What did I say?"

~TBC~

~~~~~o0o~~~~~

The word list (swiped from the past week's list):

objurgate

miasma

pin money

roister

abulia

salubrious

inveigle

-----

Words with definitions below:

objurgate \OB-juhr-gayt\, transitive verb:

To express strong disapproval of; to criticize severely.

-----

miasma \my-AZ-muh; mee-\, noun:

1. A vaporous exhalation (as of marshes or putrid matter) formerly thought to cause disease; broadly, a thick vaporous atmosphere or emanation.
2. A harmful or corrupting atmosphere or influence; also, an atmosphere that obscures; a fog.

-----

pin money \pin money\, noun:

1. An allowance of money given by a husband to his wife for private and personal expenditures.
2. Money for incidental expenses.
3. A trivial sum.

-----

roister \ROY-stur\, intransitive verb:

1. To engage in boisterous merrymaking; to revel; to carouse.
2. To bluster; to swagger.

-----

abulia \uh-BOO-lee- uh; uh-BYOO-\, noun:

Loss or impairment of the ability to act or to make decisions; an abnormal lack of ability to act or to make decisions that is characteristic of certain psychotic and neurotic conditions.

-----

salubrious \suh-LOO-bree- us\, adjective:

Favorable to health; promoting health; healthful.

-----

inveigle \in-VAY-guhl; -VEE-\, transitive verb:

1. To persuade by ingenuity or flattery; to entice.
2. To obtain by ingenuity or flattery.

-----

Does this all scream something to do with Snape to anyone else????

## Her Fifth Week

Chapter 6 of 21

They've been together a month, and although she's his apprentice, Severus is beginning to really regret his acceptance of the arrangement. He's got to nip things in the bud before it simply gets out of hand.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for April 26.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for May 3.

*I wish to give the accolades due to my beta, Southern\_Witch\_69, for all her time making this story presentable. Thank you, so very much, and I just want you to know how much I appreciate it.*

April 26

Her Fifth Week

Severus shifted his position again for the ninth time, as he sat on his sofa, trying, unsuccessfully, to read the ancient tome his grandfather had given to his mum before she was married. Below him, lay Miss Granger, still working her way through the assignment he'd given her.

It was as if he'd been given a portent, sitting in his sitting room, watching Miss Granger sprawled on his floor in her dressing robe, pajamas and tiny T-shirt, her bare feet raised up over her bum, reading and scanning the fifteen books he'd pulled from his shelf for her use. He couldn't tear his eyes away from her, since she seemed completely incapable of holding her feet still, had an annoying habit of rubbing the vane of her quill against her lip when she was thinking, and biting on her lower lip while she wrote. Never mind that from his position, she was showing him the soft swell of her breasts every time she reached for a book, turned a page or otherwise moved thank in part to the curve of the neckline of her T-shirt. It was hardly the shape of a 'T' at all, in his opinion. It resembled a hourglass with a deep 'U' in front, and it obviously was too snug to wear a brassiere. If he was going to keep his sanity, she just simply couldn't wear those snug fitting T-shirts anymore, especially if she insisted on staying the night in his old, childhood bed. Severus shifted again, trying to adjust himself and not be obvious while doing so.

He hadn't really meant to lambaste her so severely on Tuesday, but her innumerable questions were grating on his nerves. If he was going to accomplish anything on his own work, she was just simply going to have to learn to rationalize things out herself and not rely on him or a book. "Sometimes you simply have to theorize, based upon commonalities and comparable reactions," he'd snapped at her. He was simply not ubiquitous!

The potions reactions on his list, which involved the use of Chimera blood and scales, were not in any of the books he allowed her to use. He'd checked each book very carefully, creating a list that would really test her reasoning abilities, and yet still create potions he could sell. Most were very difficult potions to brew, but he knew that she had the skill to do them if she properly applied herself.

He'd been very stern with her when she'd showed up on Wednesday, handing her the list of questions, N.E.W.T. level of course, which she wouldn't be able to cheat her way through. "None of these answers can be found in those books; however, each one contains the basics and the reactions of each ingredient. In order to answer my questions you will have to reason out the probabilities and deduce what the expected results will be. This is a theoretical exercise of trial and error, and experimentation and discovery," he'd explained firmly. "You will not be able to simply regurgitate the information back at me, but will have to reason out your own conclusions. Once you have speculated on what you need to make the potion work, you will brew it. Do not melt any of my cauldrons, or our arrangement will be terminated immediately."

At least she was able to lionize the old family heirlooms from his library, especially the ancient texts he prized so much.

The problem was simply that Miss Granger was too winsome, beguiling, and, well she had turned into a handsome young woman, seemingly overnight. *She's spending nearly three nights a week here in my old bedroom, sharing my loo, and has even begun cooking for me – us. Completely unacceptable behavior for an apprentice!*

However, the fact that she'd actually quoted Lockhart's book, that insipid epigone, had really irked him. But as he sat reading, contemplating what she'd said, it made sense. Lockhart may have been an inferior imitator, but the subjects and events in his books rang with an edge of truth. It was quite possible that he may have quoted and stolen his information from far more gifted wizards and witches than himself.

Still, he was beginning to really regret his acceptance of the arrangements they'd made regarding her apprenticeship. He simply had to gain the upper hand with her, before it got out of control.

~TBC~

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

Author's notes:

The vane is the colorful flat part of the feather made up of the thousands of fine barbs, which branch off the shaft. The barbs are held together by thousands of hooked barbules on each barb, which interlace and look like cloth almost under a microscope. It's the end of the shaft, the part that is actually under the skin, the calamus, which is cut to make the quill tip.

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com):

portent

lambaste

chimera

lionize

ubiquitous

winsome

epigone

portent \POR-tent\, noun:

1. A sign of a coming event or calamity; an omen.
2. Prophetic or menacing significance.
3. Something amazing; a marvel.

lambaste \lam-BAYST\, transitive verb:

1. To give a thrashing to; to beat severely.
2. To scold sharply; to attack verbally; to berate.

chimera \ky-MIR-uh\, noun:

1. (Capitalized) A fire-breathing she-monster represented as having a lion's head, a goat's body, and a serpent's tail.
2. Any imaginary monster made up of grotesquely incongruous parts.
3. An illusion or mental fabrication; a grotesque product of the imagination.
4. An individual, organ, or part consisting of tissues of diverse genetic constitution, produced as a result of organ transplant, grafting, or genetic engineering.

lionize \LY-uh-nyz\, transitive verb:

To treat or regard as an object of great interest or importance.

ubiquitous \yoo-BIK-wih- tuhs\, adjective:

Existing or being everywhere, or in all places, at the same time.

winsome \WIN-suhm\, adjective:

1. Cheerful; merry; gay; light-hearted.
2. Causing joy or pleasure; agreeable; pleasant.

epigone \EP-uh-gohn\ , noun:

An inferior imitator, especially of some distinguished writer, artist, musician, or philosopher.

Her Sixth Week

Chapter 7 of 21

At the end of yet another week with her, Severus contemplates his arrangement with his apprentice, Hermione, and finds himself caught off guard with her.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for May 5.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for March 22.

I wish to give the accolades due to my beta, Southern_Witch_69, for checking this over and making sure I didn't misuse any commas in writing this drabble. Thank you, and

I just want you to know I appreciate it very much.

May 5

It's been six weeks, and she's been in my home now for thirty days and twenty nights under this guise as my apprentice. But who's counting.. Severus looked up from under his curtain of hair as he watched Hermione clean up the workspace in the lab before stopping for the day with a sense of déjà vu. *It is almost like watching one of my students cleaning up the Potions classroom for a detention, except she is actually cleaning, no imbecilic pretense of cleaning, actually cleaning. Not only that, but even after tolerating my chastisement and belittling for another week, she is actually smiling and humming.* Oddly, he rather liked hearing her hum, although he'd never admit it. He did have to admit, when he would allow her to work with him on a potion, it was as if they just seemed to find a natural confluence. He glanced up and caught her eye as he dipped his quill, then quickly lowered his head to hide his smile. *Blasted girl, why in all Hades does she still want to be my apprentice? There are a dozen Potion masters who'd have her, even without my recommendation. Surely she doesn't like me? Six years of my mistreatment, and she comes here asking for more?*

He'd seen fit to posit his authority and set the rules and boundaries regarding her habits of dress in his home. He was still surprised that she seemed to prefer his tiny childhood bed to scurrying away each night after he'd dismissed her. Not that he didn't like the T-shirts and pajama bottoms she wore, but they fit her too well and were highly distracting, especially when she was lying on the floor as she was wont to do, feet in the air, wiggling her toes. In fact, when she wasn't curled up on his sofa, legs crossed underneath her, book balanced on her lap, she was usually on the floor in front of his fireplace, several books in front of her, writing out her findings to the questions he put to her to keep her from engaging in idle chatter. It was fully possible he was being far too lenient with her. The lenity he allowed her made him ponder their reluctant association, but even when his temper got the better of him, she simply nodded and acquiesced his demands with a subtle smile as if it were only a maelstrom to be waited out. But when he'd said he expected her to wear proper nightgowns and dressing robes, the satin dressing robe and long silky nightgowns were not any better. *In fact, I'm simply going to have to insist that she...*

"Sir, I was wondering what you'd like for me to do with this?" Hermione asked, interrupting his thoughts, indicating to a set of scales she'd just cleaned that Dumbledore had given him for Christmas – his last Christmas with the man, before... "It's not like you use these scales, and they seem rather – gaudy. It's gimcrack compared to the standard scales you seem to prefer, what with the extra dials, measuring indicators and such."

"Put them back where they were, Ms Granger!" he snapped at her harshly.

"I'm sorry, sir, I only meant to... Sorry." She set the complicated scales back gingerly, next to the Halcyon nest he'd found with his mum on one of their few summer outings, then turned back to him and smiled. "They mean something to you, don't they? I never see you use them, and well, sorry. I'm prying, aren't I?"

"Yes, you are," Severus replied more sternly than he'd meant to.

Hermione looked at him cloyingly, a smirk gracing her lips. "I saw a set of these once in the apothecary. They were awfully expensive... but you didn't buy them. Were they a gift, sir?"

"Yes, they were a gift," he snarled, angry that she was still prying into his procurement of the scales. She wasn't Slytherin enough for him not to see right through her.

She tilted her head, looking at him expectantly. "They are really quite interesting. Have you ever used them? I heard that the Potions brewers at St. Mungo's use them."

If I don't tell her, she will not let it drop until she figures it out, will she? If you must know, the Headmaster gave them to me." He set down his quill and put away his journal and parchments. "Are you through cleaning? I'd like to go eat," he said, rising from his desk.

"I'd be delighted, sir," she replied, beaming. "I'll just change into something clean and be right back down," Hermione added all too quickly, then turned and ran from the room, her foot falls clearly audible as she ran all the way up to his old bedroom.

Bloody Hell! Does she think that I – did I...? Severus walked into his kitchen in a state of shock. Hermione returned several minutes later wearing very nice, dark green robes and having actually combed and tied her hair into a respectful hairstyle that framed her face nicely. *She looks like she is ready to go out – on a date – with me! How in Hades did I manage to give her the impression I wanted to take her out – on a date no less?*

"I'm ready whenever you are, sir," she said, smiling.

Well, all right. It's not like I have anything edible in the house anyway. "Do you like Thai food, Ms. Granger?" he asked, pleased that he'd given no indication that she'd caught him off guard.

"I love Thai food," she replied, clearly delighted with the prospect of going anywhere with him.

"Shall we?" he asked, indicating the door to the sitting room.

~TBC~

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

Author's Notes:

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com):

1. confluence
2. posit
3. maelstrom
4. gimcrack
5. lenity
6. cloy
7. halcyon

----- Words with definitions -----

confluence \KON-floo-uhn( t)s\, noun:

1. A flowing or coming together; junction.
2. The place where two rivers, streams, etc. meet.
3. A flocking or assemblage of a multitude in one place; a large collection or assemblage.

-----

posit \POZ-it\, transitive verb:

1. To assume as real or conceded.
2. To propose as an explanation; to suggest.
3. To dispose or set firmly or fixedly.

-----

lenity \LEN-uh-tee\ , noun:

The state or quality of being lenient; mildness; gentleness of treatment; leniency.

-----

maelstrom \MAYL-struhm\ , noun:

1. A large, powerful, or destructive whirlpool.
2. Something resembling a maelstrom; a violent, disordered, or turbulent state of affairs.

-----

gimcrack \JIM-krah\, noun:

1. A showy but useless or worthless object; a gewgaw.
2. Tastelessly showy; cheap; gaudy.

-----

cloy \KLOY\, transitive verb:

1. To weary by excess, especially of sweetness, richness, pleasure, etc.
2. To become distasteful through an excess usually of something originally pleasing.

-----

halcyon \HAL-see-uhn\ , noun:

1. A kingfisher.
2. A mythical bird, identified with the kingfisher, that was fabled to nest at sea about the time of the winter solstice and to calm the waves during incubation.
3. Calm; quiet; peaceful; undisturbed; happy; as, "deep, halcyon repose."
4. Marked by peace and prosperity; as, "halcyon years."

## Her Seventh Week

### *Chapter 8 of 21*

While the guys play a little one-on-one Quidditch in the orchard, Hermione and Ginny discuss Hermione's ploy to gain Severus Snape's attention.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for May 10.

May 10

"So far trying to keep this sub rosa from Harry and Ron has been really difficult," Ginny said as she and Hermione sat in the sun, sipping on gillywater while they watched Harry and Ron toss the Quaffle Hermione had given Harry for his birthday. "They suspect something, and it's getting harder to keep them from inquiring or, worse, following you." Both girls applauded when Harry made a spectacular dive, chasing after the Quaffle Ron inadvertently threw in their direction, turning sharply in the air just above their heads. "So how is the seduction to win Snape's attention going?"

"Like playing handball with a Bludger!" Hermione said, exasperated. "I have to admit, Ginny, our relationship is certainly going nowhere. Severus and Ron are as disparate as potion ingredients. They're like Daisy roots and Shrivelfigs, not asphodel and monkshood."

"Don't tell me you are you comparing Snape to Daisy roots?" Ginny said, giggling.

"No more than I am comparing Ron to a Shrivelfig," Hermione retorted, and both girls started laughing, receiving stares from the guys. "You know what I mean." Both girls began clapping as Ron made a great catch, rolling with his broom when Harry fumbled his throw.

"Do you know he actually insists that I wear a wizard's nightshirt now? How can I wear something so boring, so – monstrous? Circe, to wear something like that, yuck!" Hermione exclaimed, referring to the offending garment Ginny had shown her, which Mr. Weasley was prone to wear. "How in Merlin's name do you make that fustian

utilitarian monstrosity look sexy?"

"I dunno, add lace?" Ginny suggested. "I thought that you liked his fustian manner?"

"I do, you know that," Hermione stated, smirking at Ginny's knowing smile.

"I think he's still harbors regrets over Harry's mum, the loss of Dumbledore and many others we may not even know about," Ginny said. She whistled through her fingers as Harry made another spectacular save. "Maybe he's afraid to let someone in, in case they only end up hurting him, too?"

"He's definitely contrite at times," Hermione said. "I don't think he realizes it, and I know he thinks he's hiding it, but I can tell."

"Oh, he's contrite all right: snarky, brooding, dark, mysterious," Ginny started listing off until Hermione gave her a knock-it-off glare. "Okay, sorry, but you've had this thing for him ever since when? Granted, I never thought you and Ron would make it, and I wasn't the least bit surprised when you called off with him. But, really, I never took you for the dark, brooding male type of witch."

"He's had to live his life since his sixth or seventh year kowtowing to a madman, and sixteen or seventeen walking on the edge of a knife, serving two masters, both using him for their own means for so long! And now that that moiety of his life is now over, he is finally able to do what he wants to do: no master, no one dictating him, expecting everything, demanding and controlling him. It's got to be so much better than what he's had to go through. He's sentient, is he not? But he just won't show it – to anyone."

Ron threw the Quaffle as far as he could, and Harry was after it like a shot. Ron chased after him to try to block his catch. The girls watched as they tussled mid-air, Harry still managing to grab the Quaffle but Ron knocking it from his grasp.

"So I suppose we're going shopping tomorrow?" Ginny asked as Ron caught the ball just before it hit the trunk of a tree.

"Yes," Hermione stated, "and you are going to have to help me make two of those wizards' nightshirts more appropriate."

"He'll be quite thrilled, won't he?" Ginny said, laughing again. Ron gave his sister a glare, probably because he thought she was laughing at him. "What if he buys you one?"

"Well, according to the codes of conduct regarding an apprentice's role, I am obliged to do as he demands, or I would be forced to forfeit my apprenticeship!" Hermione bemoaned. "No, I don't think he'll go out and splurge on appropriate dressing gowns and nightwear! Gin, he is positively parsimonious!" she admitted. "But in a good way."

Ginny grinned mischievously. "Well, we can't have you disobeying him on something so frivolous, can we?"

"Thanks, Gin."

~TBC~

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

Authors Notes:

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com):

Sub rosa

Disparate

Fustian

Contrite

Sentient

Moiety

Parsimonious

----- Words with definitions -----

sub rosa \suhb-ROH-zuh\ , *adverb*:

1. *Secretly; privately; confidentially.*
2. *Designed to be secret or confidential; secretive; private.*

disparate \DIS-puh-rit; dis-PAIR-it\ , *adjective*:

1. *Fundamentally different or distinct in quality or kind.*
2. *Composed of or including markedly dissimilar elements.*

fustian \FUHS-chuhn\ , *noun*:

1. *A kind of coarse twilled cotton or cotton and linen stuff, including corduroy, velveteen, etc.*
2. *An inflated style of writing or speech; pompous or pretentious language.*
3. *Made of fustian.*
4. *Pompous; ridiculously inflated; bombastic.*

contrite \KON-tryt; kuhn-TRYT\ , *adjective*:

1. Deeply affected with grief and regret for having done wrong; penitent; as, "a contrite sinner."

2. Expressing or arising from contrition; as, "contrite words."

moiety \MOY-uh-tee\, *noun*:

1. One of two equal parts; a half.

2. An indefinite part; a small portion or share.

3. One of two basic tribal subdivisions.

sentient \SEN-shee-uhnt; -tee-; -shuhnt\, *adjective*:

1. Capable of perceiving by the senses; conscious.

2. Experiencing sensation or feeling.

parsimonious \par-suh-MOH- nee-uhs\, *adjective*:

Sparing in expenditure; frugal to excess.

Her Eighth Week

Chapter 9 of 21

Hermione makes an assumption regarding Severus' potion directions based on certain elements, and tries an unexpected experiment in his lab that produces a surprising result, which truly impresses him.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for May 17.

May 17

He'd always prided himself on his acumen ability to determine others' motives and predict what their reactions would be. It was a talent that had saved his life countless of times. However, Ms. Granger frequently stumped him, frequently doing or saying the exact opposite of what he expected. "I truly hate to cavil about a single omission in your research, but I truly expected better coming from you," Severus sneered, thrusting the parchment back at her.

"Please don't take umbrage with me!" Hermione pleaded, obviously feeling ashamed at the results of her potion. "I resent the implication that I have not followed your every direction, your every annotation to the upmost of my ability! I just thought that this would work." She looked completely contrite, and her remorse of her actions was genuine, still the results could have been disastrous.

"It is my job as your *master* to fetter you and to oversee your work and research," Severus stated firmly, reminding her of her position as his apprentice, watching her shoulders sag slightly under his chastisement. "If you wish to be an apprentice to me, expect to be exposed to that which you lacked in school. And believe me, *your* education was lacking since I could not set individual assignments based upon individual levels of abilities."

"I never felt that your instruction was lacking," she said earnestly.

Severus chose to ignore the compliment, even though he knew she truly meant it. Still he knew that she had been insignificantly challenged under his instruction simply because most of her classmates were complete incompetents, Longbottom being a prime example, not to mention Potter. "So without becoming truly latitudinarian about your experimentation, would you please explain to me why in Merlin's name you chose to exchange the cauldrons?" he asked.

"I just thought, however obviously erroneously, that by choosing a silver cauldron over a pewter one, it would enhance the mercury in the potion and thus concoct a stronger protective material for the... Whatever you intend to do with this," Hermione explained as she picked up his quill. "My father uses a mercury and silver based alloy in dental fillings. So I just assumed with the similar elements in your mixture it might have worked out the same." She wrote a quick chemical formula on the margin of her parchment and handed it back to him. "He was a dentist, sir, and he had explained to me how fillings were made and told me about the alloy. I think he expected me to follow in his footsteps... However, the elements in your potion are the same, minus the silver."

Severus knew what fillings were. He had four since his father had insisted on taking him to a dentist rather than allow his mum to take him to a Healer to check his teeth when he'd had a toothache. Yes, the elements were the same, but the subtle interaction of the ingredients in a cauldron reacted differently than in test tubes, or so he'd thought. He hated to admit it, but the error opened up a range of questions and ideas he hadn't thought of before. "This potion is supposed to be subfusc at this point, not a light, iridescent hue of white!"

Hermione had placed his quill down in his quill cup and turned to face him again. "If I had used a pewter cauldron it would have, I suppose! This particular mixture, however, *is* reacting to the silver in the cauldron..."

The complete supplication in her eyes hit him like a banshee wail. "Do not expect me to paean your praise for ignoring my directions especially when you nearly melted my size six silver cauldron," he admonished her.

"Please, sir, I'm sorry," Hermione apologized.

Severus bit back the retort he wanted to say, instead staring at her eyes, captivated by the openness he saw in them *I suppose I could fall back on the standard punishment for misconduct or wrongdoing, although knowing Ms. Granger, she'll like doing the extra research.* "I expect a full summary regarding your reasoning, substantiated by evidentiary support. I also want a thorough explanation as to why the potion failed and a logical analytical rationale in regards to the reactions of your extermination. You are dismissed. I will see you again on Monday. Have your essay ready by then."

"Yes, sir," she replied, trying to fight back a smile.

Yes, of course the girl actually likes the assignment When she'd left, Severus looked at the sample of her potion he'd scooped out earlier, noticing that the substance had thickening to a hard yet pliable shell as it cooled. *She might actually be onto something here...*

~~~~~x~~~~~

May18

Being a spy gave Severus a sharp acumen into others' ulterior motives that few of his rivals possessed, acquired, he would say, by observation of their actions, expressions and what they said. However, the actions and mannerisms of his apprentice baffled him. Hermione continuously did far more than was required, stayed at his home longer than was necessary, and yet she displayed such a comfortable, nonchalant demeanor toward him whenever they are outside the lab. Nevertheless, her habitude toward him was almost flirtatious, if her attire was any indication.

He simply couldn't understand her choices of evening wear. *The light cotton nightshirt with that deep plunging neckline did nothing to conceal her breasts, not to mention that the hemline bordered on indecent! It was barely a hand span longer than her bum, and the side slits exposed her knickers when she sat down! The damn thing was even more enticing than her silky negligee!*

And then the disastrous suggestion that she should wear her school uniforms while working with him instead of her jeans and T-shirts *The uniform obviously didn't fit her anymore, but the places where it stretched... When had she developed such a figure? The damn thing was giving me ideas no student had ever elicited since I was a randy teen, and I'd managed to suppress those compunctions for the female students, successfully, for over sixteen years!*

But the low riding jeans and T-shirts she seemed to prefer were always too snug, and her T-shirts exposed her midriff every time she reached or something. If he was going to maintain his sanity, he was simply going to have to insist that she wear properly fitting, modest attire when downstairs, especially when they were together in the lab and sitting room!

If it weren't for the exemplary results of her potions, her proficient attention to detail, her ability of following his directions exactly and the fact that she was starting to extend herself into the realms of experimentation, he'd have terminated this arrangement weeks ago. But the girl was finally showing the promise of the true scope of her intelligence and just beginning to trust in her instincts rather than blindly follow the directions of every insipid book. She was finally becoming the witch he knew she could be, and the realization daunted him on those rare occasions when he was lying in bed contemplating the continuation of her apprenticeship. The truth was, he was loath to let her go, but he was losing sleep thinking about her. In fact, Hermione no, Ms. Granger was becoming an enigma he just couldn't get out of his head.

~ TBC ~

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

Authors Notes:

Thank you, Southern_Witch_69, for not only agreeing to beta each one of my drabbles in this saga, but for also giving us the list of vocabulary words so I can play with them! I'm really having a fun time seeing just how creative I can be with this!

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com):

1. acumen
2. cavil
3. umbrage
4. fetter
5. paeon
6. subfusc
7. latitudinarian

----- Words with definitions -----

acumen \uh-KYOO-muhn; AK-yuh-muhn\ , noun:

Quickness of perception or discernment; shrewdness shown by keen insight.

cavil \KAV-uhl\, intransitive verb:

1. To raise trivial or frivolous objections; to find fault without good reason.
2. To raise trivial objections to.
3. A trivial or frivolous objection.

umbrage \UHM-brij\, noun:

1. Shade; shadow; hence, something that affords a shade, as a screen of trees or foliage.
2. A vague or indistinct indication or suggestion; a hint.
3. Reason for doubt; suspicion.
4. Suspicion of injury or wrong; offense; resentment.

fetter \FET-uh\u, noun:

1. A chain or shackle for the feet; a bond; a shackle.
2. Anything that confines or restrains; a restraint.
3. To put fetters upon; to shackle or confine.
4. To restrain from progress or action; to impose restraints on; to confine.

paeon \PEE-uhn\u, noun:

1. A joyous song of praise, triumph, or thanksgiving.
2. An expression of praise or joy.

subfusc \sub-FUHSK\u, adjective:

Dark or dull in color; drab, dusky.

latitudinarian \lat-uh-too- din-AIR-ee- un; -tyoo-\, adjective:

1. Having or expressing broad and tolerant views, especially in religious matters.
2. A person who is broad-minded and tolerant; one who displays freedom in thinking, especially in religious matters.
3. [Often capitalized] A member of the Church of England, in the time of Charles II, who adopted more liberal notions in respect to the authority, government, and doctrines of the church than generally prevailed.

Check in the reveiws. I have a prezzie for the first one I answer!

Her Ninth Week

Chapter 10 of 21

Severus has a visit from a private customer requesting an unusual potion. Returning from The Promenade, a posh alternative to Diagon Alley, Hermione pieces together some information regarding Severus' alternative potion line and realizes she's been entrusted with a secret.

May 23

Severus had ushered Ms. Granger away for the evening after he'd received a note by owl. He'd firmly told her he would not tolerate a tirade from her, but she'd tried pleading with him that her potion would be ruined if she didn't finish the last two steps. Nevertheless, he'd put his foot down, insisting she was to leave and not return until the following morning. It had amused him how adamant she'd been to see the conclusion of the tricky potion. But he knew that the success of the potion could not be determined until the last ingredient was added, simply because the color change only happened at the end, and there was no indication if the potion had been brewed properly before that.

Severus had been reading alone, waiting patiently in the sitting room as the clock chimed six, when a tap on his door announced his expected visitor. "Prompt as always," he said, opening the door. "Your note said that this was urgent. Please come in."

"I really hate to intrude on your blissful evening, but I couldn't meet with you somewhere more respectable," Lucius said as he entered the small room as if entering a wizard's club. "I'd much rather meet with you at the Greengrass Pub or the Madam Lovelle's Gentlewizards Club, but this is a matter of some delicacy."

"Lucius, you are a true boulevardier," Severus replied. "May I offer you something to drink?"

Lucius smiled at the offer but politely declined. He studied the room as he removed his gloves. "I do not understand why you insist on maintaining this residence. It is such a misrepresentation of your true talents. Surely you could unload the place for a more suitable accommodation for your laboratory?"

"It suits my purpose. Besides if I should have an accidental explosion, I don't have to worry about blowing up the neighbors," Severus replied amiably.

"I should certainly hope not," Lucius said smoothly before his brow furrowed. "Are there actually people living in the domicile next to you?"

"Next to me, no," Severus said, indicating he should sit. "To what do I owe this visit?"

"I came in order to cadge upon you a small favor regarding a rather delicate matter that needs someone of your caliber in order for it to be done properly," Lucius said, sitting on the offered chair. "Suffice it to say, money is of no object if I can rely on your discretion. Not that I need to ask for your confidentiality, as we've always been discreet wizards."

"I pride myself on maintaining full sub rosa for my clients, especially those who are latitudinarian in regards to certain questionable potions," Severus said smoothly, effectively hiding his curiosity.

"I believe you understand me aright," Lucius stated, pulling a piece of parchment from his pocket and handing it to Severus. "Here is the potion I request."

Severus read the slip without so much as a flicker of expression. "One week, thirty-five Galleons."

Lucius nodded without flinching at Severus fee. "Fine. I shall return in a week." He rose to leave, stopping to face Severus' before reaching the door. "Let me ruminate," he said, his grey eyes becoming frosty as he stared at Severus a moment before continuing. "I would appreciate an understanding that your apprentice will not know the true nature of my request or if she should discern its use, that you will Oblivate her."

"My apprentice will not be a problem," Severus assured him.

Lucius nodded and exited the house, leaving Severus alone to ponder Lucius' need for the Exfoliative Potion.

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

May 24

That morning, Severus had taken Hermione with him to The Promenade to purchase potion ingredients and necessary supplies.

Returning to lab, Severus dropped his packages on the worktable, turning to face Hermione, before she once again started asking questions. "Before you resume your voluble tirade of the night before, let me remind you that as my apprentice, there is on occasion the necessity for your obedience."

"Far for it to me to obtrude on your business affairs, but I was nearly finished, and I wanted to see what color the potion would take," she said with just a slight hint of a pout. "Wouldn't it have sufficed if I had stayed in your lab while you met your client? Besides, as your apprentice, it would have been all right to expect me to tend the potions while you..."

"Enough," he said forcefully. "No. If I require you to vacate the premises, I have my reasons. Let me explain, if you are going to continue as my apprentice, you must understand that I have my private customers as well as my general clientele, many whom wish to remain nameless and unknown, even by you." He pulled off his traveling cloak, throwing it on his chair. "Now if I could cadge upon you to put the supplies away, preferably without any further lamenting, I need to begin my base."

"I understand, sir," she replied, carrying her bags to the storeroom. "Sir, if you want to be so discreet, why were we shopping at Madam Jacqueline's and Cartwright Apothecary on The Promenade?"

"Why do you think?" he snapped. "Because they carry what I required."

"You've never struck me as a boulevardier, yet that is exactly the clientele I saw there, that and the prices were outrageous," she stated as she continued storing away his purchases. "In fact the entire scene was more like a Potemkin village, in my book."

"What, exactly, are you suggesting?" he asked. *Damn she's just too bright and curious for her own good.*

"It's a false front, a posh equivalent of Knockturn Alley, where nothing is as it seems and everything you could want is available for a price," she stated.

Severus was impressed despite himself. "Very good," he said smoothly. "In those shops you can, if you know the proprietors, and which questions to ask, obtain all manner of supplies unavailable by general means, things not always available in either Diagon Alley or Knockturn Alley."

She nodded, saying, "I understand, sir," as she turned her back and carefully levitated a large jar to the top shelf.

"Besides, the reason you were with me is that if I need to send you to The Promenade, I wanted to be assured that the proprietors would conduct business with you and not snub you as inconsequential," he said smoothly. Hermione turned, her eyes wide. "I see you understand my implication. However, understand that if, and I mean *if*, I entrust you to procure items for me there, you will not to divulge information to anyone. Do I make myself plain?"

"Yes, sir," she answered, smiling.

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

~ TBC ~

Authors Notes:

Thank you, Southern_Witch_69, for not only agreeing to beta each one of my drabbles in this saga, but for also giving us the list of vocabulary words so I can play with them! I'm really having a fun time seeing just how creative I can be with this!

Exfoliative dermatitis (or ED) is a definitive term that refers to a scaling erythematous dermatitis involving 90% or more of the skin surface of the body.

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

1. tirade
2. obtrude
3. Potemkin village
4. boulevardier
5. cadge
6. aright
7. ruminate

----- Words with Definitions -----

tirade \TY-raid; tih-RAID\, noun:

A long angry speech; a violent denunciation; a prolonged outburst full of censure or abuse.

obtrude \uhb-TROOD; ob-\, transitive verb:

1. To thrust out; to push out.
2. To force or impose (one's self, remarks, opinions, etc.) on others with undue insistence or without solicitation.

3. To thrust upon a group or upon attention; to intrude.

Potemkin village \puh-TEM(P)- kin\, noun:

An impressive facade or display that hides an undesirable fact or state; a false front.

boulevardier \boo-luh-var- DYAY; bul-uh-\, noun:

1. A frequenter of city boulevards, especially in Paris.

2. A sophisticated, worldly, and socially active man; a man who frequents fashionable places; a man-about-town.

cadge \KAJ\, transitive verb:

1. To beg or obtain by begging; to sponge.

2. To beg; to sponge.

aright \uh-RYT\, adverb:

Rightly; correctly; properly; in a right way or manner.

ruminate \ROO-muh-nayt\, intransitive verb:

1. To chew the cud; to chew again what has been slightly chewed and swallowed. "Cattle free to ruminate." --Wordsworth.

2. To think again and again; to muse; to meditate; to ponder; to reflect.

3. To chew over again.

4. To meditate or ponder over; to muse on.

Don't forget the hidden review bonus!

Her Tenth Week

Chapter 11 of 21

Severus' thoughts dwelled on Hermione nearly all day. Nevertheless, it was the subtle touch of her hand and an unexpected action on her part that really surprised him the most, completely catching him off-guard.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for May 31.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for March 22.

May 31

Severus paced about his storeroom, trying to find the bottle of magnesium, finding his beryllium and boron on the shelf, but not what he was looking for. He finally found the empty magnesium jar in a box on the floor, along with many other valuable ingredients, including his piscidermis pods and wood-lily rhizomes.

Damn, blast-ended witch! Hermione had placed several jars and bottles in the box, most being ingredients that he'd collected himself *She had no right! Two months of this! No, that's not accurate.* He looked at his calendar, mentally counting off the days she'd been here. *Fifty days, not counting the weekends! That's a full two months and two weeks, and I still haven't made her scurry away.* Not that he'd actually been trying as vehemently as he could have. The truth of it was that she was quite helpful when she didn't reorganize his shelves and remove valuable ingredients.

He picked up the jar of knotgrass, about to set it on the shelf, and noticed it was molding. He picked up the next jar, noticing that the frog parts were unusable, as were the jaberknoll parts, puffer-fish, lion-fish, Lacewings flies, Antlions, seaside billy witches and spang beetles... He quickly assessed each item in the box, nearly reaching the end when he spied a slip of parchment. It was a list of each ingredient, what was wrong with it, and the expiration date from each container, many of which shouldn't have expired yet. *And she couldn't have put this on top of the box?* he grumbled.

Well, I was going to the Apothecary today anyway. He didn't bother checking the rest of the shelves. Ms. Granger had apparently already done it for him *No point forgoing the inevitable. The question is do I take my apprentice with me. She will have to learn how to select the best quality ingredients from the mediocre. Besides, I like trading ribald jokes with Jenson, the man has a great repertoire of them, and it will be amusing to see if Ms. Granger can appreciate them.*

The potions Severus required Hermione to brew were of reasonable quality, some he'd even rate as excellent, even by his own exacting standards. Jenson at the Apothecary in Diagon Alley had been quite pleased with them, offering top Galleon for his apprentice's work, which satisfied Severus greatly. However, Plitheroa in the

Cartwright Apothecary on The Promenade was refusing Ms. Granger's potions because of her blood status, even her Alexindora Potion, which most of the ladies paid dearly for. *Somewhere out there are some truly witless purebloods refusing Hermione's potions simply because they refuse to believe that she's more capable than most of the nitwits I've had to teach all these years.* His contention with such nonsense was tinged with schadenfreude for such idiocy! *It's their own downfall over their complete inability to accept reality.*

When he left the storeroom and entered the lab to tell Ms. Granger she'd be accompanying him, he saw her bent over his desk, obviously using some type of cleaning wax. It's not that he cared about the patina on his desk, but seeing her leaning over his desk like that definitely elicited those thoughts he'd been trying so desperately to suppress, never mind the way his body reacted.

She'd been so listless before lunch, not indolent, but certainly not her usual voluble self. However, after his sharp rebuke, she'd just shrugged, saying something about an article in the *Daily Prophet* having been ludicrous. "Lucius Malfoy apparently still harbors delusions of being a wizard grandee and is attempting to influence Ministry politics again," she'd said as she handed him her essays.

Now it seemed she was hell bent to drive him mad with her insistent cleaning.

She stood and looked at him. "I'll be in the sitting room reshelving the books, all right?" she said, her hand touching his chest as she passed.

"Granger!" he yelled for her.

With one arm on the doorframe, she swung around into the doorway, nearly colliding into him, but their faces touched, his lips to hers.

Without thinking, he cupped her head and tightened his arm around her waist, pulling her off balance so that she leaned against him as he deepened the kiss.

~~~~~Later that night~~~~~

*What in the bloody hell was I thinking!* Severus chastised himself as he lay in bed, staring at the ceiling. *I kissed her! I bloody kissed her!*

The kiss had lasted only a few minutes. He'd been standing on the single step that separated his house from his potions lab when she'd swung through the door and kissed him. He'd reacted without thought or reason and embraced her. *Well, if I hadn't the girl would have knocked me backwards on my bum* he rationalized. Still, he'd wrapped his arm around her waist and grasped her head, deepening the kiss when she'd lost her balance and literally fell into his embrace. *She definitely hugged me back, or it could have just been that she was trying to grab onto me to steady herself but she did not push away. She kissed me back. She kissed me... She's a child!* Okay, that was a lie, she was a young woman, but that fact he wasn't ready to admit to himself.

*I'm twenty years older than she is!* Which was the average age difference in most pureblood marriages up until the last few decades or so. Nevertheless, it was still an acceptable age difference in the wizarding world.

*I was her professor, and now she's my apprentice* Not that that would really matter in the social mores of their world.

*She is the Potter's best friend and socializes with the Weasleys, Longbottoms, and Lovegoods* All now considered pillars of the wizarding community. *She was a bane of my existence her entire school years!* Which was true, she had really tested his patience, skills and fortitude countless of times. *Not to mention Ms. Granger's friends all of them!* But the golden trio and members of the Dumbledore's Army were exalted heroes of the war.

*Moreover, she's even considered an honorary member of the Order even though the girl was too young to have joined and they will all flay me alive for seducing her. Besides, she was Weasley's wife, albeit briefly if you believe the press surrounding the girl. I'll have all of the Weasleys to contend with!* Well, according to the *Daily Prophet*, but they were not always accurate with their facts.

*Oh, this just cannot happen! I have to end this! I just simply cannot have an apprentice that that I want to sleep with!* Severus looked at the clock on his bedside table. *Three bloody in the morning! Bugger. Bugger. Bugger.*

~~~~~earlier~~~~~

"Ginny, I did it! I kissed him and he kissed me back!" Hermione said as soon as she'd dragged her friend into the lounge.

"You did? Where?" Ginny asked, pulling Hermione's hand so that she'd sit on the sofa with her.

Hermione followed, eager to tell Ginny everything. "On the lips...in the doorway to the lab!" she said excitedly.

"You kissed who?" Ron asked, entering the room, scowling at Hermione.

"No one!" both girls exclaimed, then looked at each other and started giggling.

Ron crossed his arms, frowning so hard he looked comical. "Fine, if you don't want to tell me...fine!" he said as he turned and stormed out.

"Ron, what's wrong?" the girls heard Harry ask from the entryway.

"Nothing. Hermione's snogging someone," Ron answered, trying to push his way past.

Harry looked into the lounge and then quickly turned around. "She's not snogging anyone...that's Ginny."

"Well then you ask her because that's what she said...she kissed him!" Ron snarled. A few seconds later, a door slammed.

Harry looked at the girls, but they both only shrugged and looked back at him with blank expressions. As soon as Harry left, Ginny turned back to Hermione. "Okay, now give. What happened?"

~ TBC ~

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

Authors Notes:

*The cockchafer (or may bug, as it is colloquially called, or sometimes billy witch or spang beetle, particularly in East Anglia) is a European beetle of the genus Melolontha, in the family Scarabaeidae. Once abundant throughout Europe and a major pest in the periodical years of "mass flight", it has been decimated in the middle of the 20th century through extensive use of pesticides and has even been locally exterminated in many regions. However, since a change in pest control beginning in the 1980's, its numbers have started to grow again. As they don't tolerate pollution well, their presence is usually a marker of low pollution levels. Their use in potions is not canon and is my own assumption used for this story.* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cockchafer>

*Thank you, Southern\_Witch\_69, for not only agreeing to beta each one of my drabbles in this saga, but for also giving us the list of vocabulary words so I can play with*

*them! I'm really having a fun time seeing just how creative I can be with this!*

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

1. listless
2. vehement
3. ribald
4. forgo
5. schadenfreude
6. grandee
7. patina

-----words with definitions- -----

listless \LIST-lis\, adjective:

Having no desire or inclination; indifferent; heedless; spiritless.

-- listlessly, adverb listlessness, noun

-----

vehement \VEE-uh-muhnt\, adjective:

1. Characterized by intensity of emotions or convictions, or forcefulness of expression.
2. Characterized by or acting with great force or energy; strong.

-----

ribald \RIB-uhld; RY-bawld\, adjective:

1. Characterized by or given to vulgar humor; coarse.
2. A ribald person; a lewd fellow.

-----

forgo \for-GO\, transitive verb;

1. Inflected forms: forwent, forgone, forgoing, forgoes:
2. To abstain from; to do without.

-----

schadenfreude \SHOD-n-froy- duh\, noun:

A malicious satisfaction obtained from the misfortunes of others.

-----

grandee \gran-DEE\, noun:

1. A man of elevated rank or station.
2. In Spain or Portugal, a nobleman of the first rank.

-----

patina \PAT-n-uh; puh-TEEN-uh\, noun:

1. The color or incrustation which age gives to works of art; especially, the green rust which covers ancient bronzes, coins, and medals.
2. The sheen on any surface, produced by age and use.
3. An appearance or aura produced by habit, practice, or use.
4. A superficial layer or exterior.

## Her Eleventh Week

*Chapter 12 of 21*

Severus was angry with himself. Things had been going along so well all day he'd offered to answer any of Ms. Granger's questions. He simply wasn't prepared for what she'd ask.

*I wish to give the accolades due to my beta, Southern\_Witch\_69, for checking this over for me. Thank you, and I just want you to know I appreciate it very much.*

June 7

It had been a busy day. Nine difficult potions had already been completed and bottled, ready for delivery. He'd been pleased with her; she had worked very hard, and her resulting potions were once again meeting his exacting expectations. However, what had started as an offer for tutorial questions and answers was turning into a personal conversation. "Look, it is my prerogative to countermand any offer I have given you," Severus said, trying to control his annoyance. He didn't really like talking while he worked, but he'd opened himself up to her innumerable questions. He just hadn't expected her questions to become personal.

"If you don't like it here, why live here?" she persisted.

He looked at her with a smirk. "Who says I live here? This is where I work."

Hermione turned her head sharply to look at him, and her stunned expression amused him. "You have another house?"

He carefully measured out the armadillo bile, forcibly controlling his expression into his usual indifferent mask. "Yes." *Think on that – the Hogwarts greasy git owns property. You know so little about me, my dear.*

"But you're here five to six days of the week," she stated, still surprised by the revelation.

He moved to stand behind her as she picked up his new suntoku knife. "Yes, occasionally the potions I brew require attendance and long hours – so I sleep here, as you very well know, since you are with me here as well." It didn't escape Severus' notice that Hermione's hand was slightly tremulous when he leaned over her shoulder to check her progress. "Your point?"

"I don't think I understand," she replied, her voice slightly flustered and choked.

"Careful or you'll cut your finger. Blood will ruin the potion, even a miniscule droplet," he admonished. He took her hand in his and adjusted the way in which she was gripping the handle. "It works best if you pinch the bolster." He leaned in closer to show her the proper technique. "What isn't there to understand? This is my father's house. This is where I do my experimentation," he stated, practically in her ear.

"What was he like? What were your parents like?" Hermione asked, looking over her shoulder to look up at him, bringing her face too close to his for comfort.

For a split second, Severus entertained the idea of kissing her, just moving his head one inch to capture her mouth with his, and their lips touched – a soft brush with a sensual sweep. He released her hand quickly and stepped back. "I would have assumed that Potter told you everything already."

Hermione let out a slow, labored breath. "Not everything. No, I don't think so," she stammered, her cheeks tinged pink from blushing.

His lip curled in a slight smile at the effect his proximity had on her. "Did he or did he not divulge every detail, every fact he gained with you and Weasley?" he asked, scrutinizing her carefully forced movements as she finished her potion.

"Well, yes," she replied, her head lowered so as to not look directly at him.

He bristled momentarily at her confession. "Then you already know my father was an abusive drunk and my mother was a harridan, when she wasn't lachrymose, except for the nights when *he'd* pass out drunk, and then Mum would read to me."

She had stilled, watching him as he spoke, and then turned her attention back to her cutting. "No, if Harry knew anything about your parents, he never said anything to me," she replied, apparently nervous under his stare. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have..."

"Don't be. It's a bagatelle," he said dismissively. "I'm going to rescind my offer; *no personal* questions. You may ask questions related to Potions, potions ingredients or their interactions – *only*."

"I have one more," she said, turning to him bravely.

"Oh, of course you do," he said smoothly, suppressing his sigh.

"Why did you kiss me?" she asked brazenly.

He was unprepared for that particular question, and he was certainly not going to give her a truthful answer. "If you've completed the last potion, reshelve your unused ingredients and finish putting up the supplies. Then you may leave," Severus stated, sounding like a potentate as he finished shredding his lemongrass for his potion.

Hermione watched him, her warm brown eyes searching his face with an expression that almost reflected regret. "The containers in the storeroom are completely refilled, and the Pimpies are fed to repletion. I should be able to start another potion if you like, sir."

*Of course it's regret. I'm an old man making advances at his young apprentice. How cliché* He simply nodded, watching his own potion, his mind awhirl. *What in the world has gotten into me? That's the second time I've kissed her.*

She set her cauldron on the cooling racks to be bottled and then picked up the last request sheet, scanning the directions and list of ingredients. "I think I could get this one done up to where it would simply need to be set to simmer, possibly..."

"You don't have time to finish the last potion tonight. It is a tricky potion with multiple steps with quick timing, and the cauldron will be overly full; therefore, it cannot be left overnight on stasis for completion. It must be watched as it simmers, so it will be left for Monday." He sounded curter than he'd intended, but the fact remained, she'd asked about the kiss. But which one, the one last week or just now? Probably both. He ground the poppy seeds a little harder than was necessary, trying to avoid her stare. *This cannot happen! I am not going to seduce the girl. End it – just put an end to this and go back to your quiet, normal life – the one you deserve!* "Go. I'll see you again on Monday. Now go."

Hermione nodded and turned to leave. "All right, sir. I'll see you on Monday. Have a pleasant night."

*Not bloody likely! Damn bloody horntails – I wanted to kiss her! Again!* "Good night."

~TBC~

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

Authors Notes:

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

1. harridan
2. countermand
3. bagatelle
4. lachrymose
5. tremulous
6. repletion
7. potentate

harridan \HAIR-uh-din\ , noun:

A worn-out strumpet; a vixenish woman; a hag.

countermand \KOWN-tuhr-mand; kown-tuhr-MAND\ , transitive verb:

1. To revoke (a former command); to cancel or rescind by giving an order contrary to one previously given.
2. To recall or order back by a contrary order.
3. A contrary order.
4. Revocation of a former order or command.

bagatelle \bag-uh-TEL\ , noun:

1. A trifle; a thing of little or no importance.
2. A short, light musical or literary piece.
3. A game played with a cue and balls on an oblong table having cups or arches at one end.

lachrymose \LAK-ruh-mohs\ , adjective:

1. Generating or shedding tears; given to shedding tears; suffused with tears; tearful.
2. Causing or tending to cause tears.

tremulous \TREM-yuh-luhs\ , adjective:

1. Shaking; shivering; quivering; as, a tremulous motion of the hand or the lips; the tremulous leaf of the poplar.
2. Affected with fear or timidity; trembling.

repletion \rih-PLÉE-shun\ , noun:

1. The condition of being completely filled or supplied.
2. Excessive fullness, as from overeating.

potentate \POH-tuhn-tayt\ , noun:

One who possesses great power or sway; a ruler, sovereign, or monarch.

Her Twelfth Week

Once again, Severus finds himself in a compromising situation with the press, only this time with the insidious rag *The Quibbler*. However, Hermione's reaction to the article throws Severus completely off guard.

Thank you, Southern_Witch_69, for not only agreeing to beta each one of my drabbles in this saga, but for also giving us the list of vocabulary words so I can play with them! I'm really having a fun time seeing just how creative I can be with this!

June 14

Severus threw the copy of *The Quibbler* into the fireplace, ignoring Hermione's brief outcry in protest as she quickly Summoned it to her wandlessly. "I *do not* believe the audacity of that man to print such scandalous lies!" He'd come into the sitting room expecting to find Hermione lying on the floor in his dressing robe and tiny, sheer nightshirt, diligently working on the questions he'd set for her. Instead, she'd been sprawled on his sofa reading the trash-rag with one shapely, smooth, bare leg dangling over the other.

"What lies? We *were* seen together in each other's company, hence the photograph! I don't know what has your wand in a knot. The article merely stated that you are brewing again, supplying the apothecary with the more difficult and hard to acquire potions, and continuing to assist to those suffering from the war, which I happen to know is true. The caption under the picture only stated that you are alive and well fit!" she said as she tried smoothing out the page. "Besides, I think you look smashing in the picture! I wanted to keep it!"

"I do not want to remain in the public eye! I've had enough of that thank you. There is only one recourse one can take to permanently to ensure that this nonsense is suppressed!" he snarled. "Of course, the surfeit of Aurors who'd like me to exercise my darker tendencies is the only reason I don't Apparate there immediately and shove this rubbish into his gut from both accesses!"

"There is no point in being minatory about it," Hermione said, carefully wiping away the soot from the edges while she attempted to flatten the page. "Xeno Lovegood is really quite the raconteur. No one is going to believe this!"

"That is not all the article implied." Severus scowled at the picture in *The Quibbler* she was smoothing out on her bare thigh. "I do not like this hyperbole about our being paramours! How dare he. It's absurd."

"Why would it be absurd if I was dating you?" Hermione asked with a look that obviously indicated she was possibly insulted.

"What? You cannot be serious! You couldn't possibly..." He quickly controlled his expression back to his usual indifference. "What happened today could not possibly be considered a date. We were simply procuring necessary potion ingredients," he stated firmly to dispel her delusion.

"And having lunch in the Greengrass café," she said with a smirk. "I hate to apprise you of the facts, but you were quite the gentleman: opening the door, pulling out my chair, ordering for me, even selecting the wine, and the possessive hand on the small of my back. No, not date-like at all; you were just being a finely refined man with proper manners and taste."

"I am hardly a patrician," he sneered. *A date? She took it as a date? That would be twice no this doesn't count! I was simply hungry and asked if she was and... Oh, shite! Just like last time.*

"It could have fooled me. Look, you have always been impeccably dressed, and you have always conducted yourself well," she stated, looking up at him with an odd expression he didn't want to identify.

"Hardly," he sneered. "You have me confused with someone like Lucius."

"All right, so you've never been one to prink," she said with a smirk. "I have always found you handsome in a unique and dignified way when you're not scowling and sneering at me or some student."

Handsome? Did she say handsome first smashing and now handsome. When was she hit in the head with a Bludger? And since when have you held to the delusion that I am handsome?"

She tilted her head, her gaze sweeping up and down his body as if assessing his appearance to rethink her opinion. "Since I dunno my second year. Or my fifth. Actually, it was my fourth. You have to admit you looked dashing in your robes at the Yule Ball."

The Yule Ball. Oh, he'd remembered it well. She had worn dress robes of the lightest periwinkle-blue, tamed her wild, curly hair into an elegant sleek coiffeur, and her smile all evening had been dazzling. It was the first time he'd noticed her and seen the potential for the lovely woman she'd become. "They were hardly bedizen in design and hardly ostentatious. They were simply my usual robes and frock coat," he stated.

Hermione grinned. "With a waist coat in the darkest green, tight black trousers that you'd tucked into a pair of black boots that went up to your knee. Hardly bedizen, as you put it, but definitely elegant."

He squared his shoulders and glared at her. *So you remember my outfit for the ball as well.* For the first time Severus was beginning to rethink the girl's actions these last twelve weeks. *Could it truly be possibly that she has developed an infatuation towards me?* He turned his head to the wall. *The outfits, the sleeping arrangement, the dinners she prepares, the way she surreptitiously glances at me...* He stepped up to the bookshelf as if simply making his choice for his evening reading. *It's possible. Not that the female students didn't occasionally demonstrate such childish infatuations, but I'd just simply demolish any such nonsense as soon as it became apparent. Nevertheless, she's insinuating an attraction to me.* He was going to have to consider what the best course of action, if any, he should take in this matter.

~~~~~ the next morning ~~~~~

The next morning after breakfast, he decided to investigate her intentions and her apparent crush on him. "I thought you were married to Weasley," he said as she handed him a plate. Hermione was washing the morning dishes by hand, which surprised him, especially since she'd insinuated he should dry them, and he'd relented *only* because it amused him to do so.

"I was never married to Ron. The *Daily Prophet* said that Ron and I got married; only they forgot to tell me about it!" she said venomously. "But from what I've read, apparently it was a lovely affair!"

Severus looked at her in complete disbelief.

"It never happened," she stated, handing him the second plate. "Okay! Fine. We were *engaged* briefly. It was disaster and it's over. *If* I had married him, it would have never worked out."

"And yet you still wear his ring on your hand," he pointed out.



"This was my grandmother's. My mum gave it to me when I told them about what happened in the war, my part in it and all. She said I was just like her," Hermione said, slipping off the glove and gazing at the antique diamond ring on her right hand. She looked up at him, her eyes still glazed over in thought. "It's not what anyone thinks. Ron proposed at a Ministry party, in front of everyone, which just happened to be the week before we left to go retrieve my parents from Australia." She put the glove back on and turned back to the sink, cleaning the skillet as she continued. "Apparently fighting throughout a twenty-three hour flight, three weeks explaining everything to my parents, helping them sell everything and repack to return to London, and then having Ron sulk at me for another twenty-nine hour flight home because I wouldn't *do it* in the loo on the plane constituted a wedding and honeymoon to Rita Skeeter!" She handed him the skillet and unplugged the sink. "Oh, and yes, apparently, it's normal to bring one's best friends, all four of them, a wizard from the Accidental Magical Reversal Office and a Healer along on a honeymoon. I only saw the article when I came home and it was already a well-circulated rumor."

Severus crossed his arms regarding her thoughtfully. *Sounds like something Weasley would do and that insufferable reporter as well* "How long do you propose to continue this charade?"

"Pardon me?" she asked, confusion in her tone.

"This apprenticeship," he said curtly, crossing his arms. "How long do you plan on continuing this arrangement with me?"

"You want to be done with me?" she asked, somewhat choked, as she placed the two plates in the cupboard.

He was surprised that the hurt in her tone and reflecting in her eyes bothered him. "I thought I was done with you on June third, the day of the final battle," he said curtly, putting the skillet and teapot away with a flick of his wand.

She placed her hand on his sleeve, and his gaze fell to her hand. "Do you really want to be rid of me?" she inquired.

"I..." Well-guarded, dark eyes met warm brown ones full of wanting and need. It surprised him. "I find the arrangement convenient," he said, staring at her face, taking in the display of emotions she didn't try to conceal.

She nodded, turned, her shoulder slightly slumped, and walked away.

"Ms. Hermione." He said her first name aloud for the first time in her presence, although he'd said in plenty of times in private.

She stopped in the doorway to the sitting room but didn't turn around. "If you really want to be rid of me, we could just say you've repaid your life debt to me in these last two months."

"That I've repaid you my life debt? In only two months?" he scoffed at her. "Do you really place such a low value on my life?"

"No!" she exclaimed, spinning to face him. "That I would consider the value of your private tutelage to be so high!"

"Hermione, why me?" he asked softly, walking across the room toward her.

She watched him approach, staring at his face. "To get to know the man that I think you are. To spend time with you to be around you... I'm sorry. Maybe I shouldn't have..."

Severus had moved swiftly and was standing right in front of her. He raised his hand as if to cup her cheek, but paused before making contact. Hermione tilted her head before he could retract it, resting her cheek against his palm with her eyes closed, and the acerbic mask he'd always worn, faded from his features. "You may continue as my apprentice, if you so choose."

"Thank you," she said, raising her head to look him in the eye. When she'd moved, he'd schooled his features quickly before she'd notice his momentary lapse and nodded. "So what are we going to do today?" she asked innocently.

Her question sent a shiver down his entire body. "Finish our potions for delivery, naturally."

~TBC~

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

Authors Notes:

I thought I'd clarify what actually happened regarding Hermione's 'marriage' to Ron.

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

1. minatory
2. raconteur
3. surfeit
4. patrician
5. hyperbole
6. apprise
7. prink

minatory \MIN-uh-tor- ee\, adjective:

Threatening; menacing.

raconteur \rack-on-TUR\, noun:

One who excels in telling stories and anecdotes.

surfeit \SUR-fit\, noun:

1. An excessive amount or supply.

2. Overindulgence, as in food or drink.
3. Disgust caused by overindulgence or excess.
4. To feed or supply to excess.

----- --
patrician \puh-TRISH-un\ , noun:

1. A member of one of the original citizen families of ancient Rome.
2. A person of high birth; a nobleman.
3. A person of refined upbringing, manners, and taste.
4. Of or pertaining to the patrician families of ancient Rome.
5. Of, pertaining to, or appropriate to, a person of high birth; noble; not plebeian.
6. Befitting or characteristic of refined upbringing, manners, and taste.

hyperbole \hy-PUHR-buh- lee\, noun:

Extravagant exaggeration.

apprise \uh-PRYZ\, transitive verb:

To give notice to; to inform; -- often followed by of; as, we will

apprise the general of an intended attack; he apprised the commander

of what he had done.

prink \PRINGK\, transitive verb:

1. To dress up; to deck for show.
2. To dress or arrange oneself for show; to primp.

Her Thirteenth Week

Chapter 14 of 21

Hermione and Severus discuss the newest publications to come out, which incidentally were about them, or at least had expounded upon their escapades. Severus' attitude on the publications are of course quite different from Hermione's, but it's her reaction, which clearly startles him.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for June 21.
This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for March 22.

I wish to give the accolades due to my beta, Southern_Witch_69, for checking this over to make sure this story presentable and for giving us this fun vocabulary challenge. Thank you so very much! You rock!

June 21

"You are scowling," she said, checking the cauldron on her right.

"I am not," Severus snapped at her. "The potion should turn a slight verdure when complete. Do not let a crust form on its surface, or it will be ruined."

"Why are you cross?" she asked, still watching the potion in her cauldron for the first bubble to appear.

Severus set the stirring rod down and added the Flobberworm mucus to thicken his potion. "I am not cross – okay, I did not appreciate the claque of fawning admirers following us Wednesday in Diagon alley."

"They were just youngsters, enthralled with the stories that have circulated about the fall of Vole-d, er, the Dark Lord," Hermione replied as she stirred the potion on her left for the last time before setting it to simmer.

"I don't like to be dilatory when I am expected or have an appointment to keep," Severus stated gruffly as he sliced his Erumpent-ear begonia tubers.

"It's the new book, Maybell Craigmyle's *The Rise and Fall of Darkness*. It has everyone talking, and of course, the new *Hogwarts, A History* has come out in print. It is

current, right up to the castle's reconstruction." Hermione turned her head to smile at him, and he pointed his knife at her cauldron.

"Mind your second cauldron," he snapped. "The book was utter tripe."

"I found Ms. Craigmyle's version to be an eloquent, cogent analysis, and is one of the most truthful and intelligent versions of the *Harry years* to date," Hermione said, adding in her ground cynara seeds. "I think she portrayed you admirably."

"It was romantic tripe! I was portrayed as the dark, brooding, double agent spy whosacrificed himself for *Potter*... It was delusional," he said as he lowered his flame to allow his potion to simmer. "The book even rationalized my abandonment of the school as necessary to bid time for the professors to organize, evacuate the school and prepare to defend the castle."

"Well, in a way she was right," Hermione said, removing the cauldron on her right and carrying it over to the cooling racks.

"You think the book was right? You must be delusional; I wanted to defenestrate the book right on the spot." Severus checked the consistency of her second potion; it was perfect. "I think that you have some fantasy that you harbor feelings for me," he said smoothly when she returned to his side.

She blushed at his statement and lowered her head as if to hide it. "No, of course not. I like you, sure. I think you're an amazing man as well as an exceptional teacher, and I do like you – but I was there, remember? I saw the memories you gave Harry. I know what happened – most of it anyway. The good thing is the reevaluation and reorganization happening in the Ministry and nascent rising of equality among all wizardkind and our magical brethren."

"If you believe the nonsense printed in the *Daily Prophet* or *The Quibbler*. It's bad enough that that insipid reporter Rita Skeeter wrote that ridiculous biography about me," he sneered venomously.

"I loved her book! I think she was quite fair to you..." His dark scowl made her turn her attention back to her potion to hide her embarrassment. "I liked it. You know, you could have controlled your choler when the boys asked you to sign their copies," she said, keeping her eyes on her cauldron.

"I could have placed a malediction on their books," he said, passing her the bayern roots. "Why would you have purchased a copy of her book?"

She looked up at him, her cheeks flushed and her expression earnest. "It was about you."

Ah, so it's true – she harbors a crush on me "You've now implied three times to having an attraction to me. There is no foundation for such attraction. Such is completely inappropriate and if continued would necessitate the negation of our arrangement." *There, let's see how she reacts to that*

"Does there have to be? I mean just because you've never shown me any indication you like me doesn't mean I can't develop an attraction toward you," Hermione pointed out assuredly as she added the roots and lowered the flame under the potion.

"Hermione, I was a Death Eater and murderer, as well as having done many other horrendous things," he stated.

"And acquitted of all charges and even given a pardon of that which you had to do under Dumbledore's orders," she stated.

"I'm surly and harsh, hardly a kind man," he pointed out.

"When you want to be, but you can be quite charming and amiable as well," she countered. "You are fascinating because of your complexity."

That was not the reaction he'd expected. "I'm old enough to be your father," he reasoned, trying to make her see the improbability of her thinking.

"That's not true – my father was your age when he had me!" she stated challengingly. "Next excuse?"

"These are not excuses!" he snapped at her.

She did the unexpected. "Yes, they are," she said as she stepped forward, grabbed his robe and pulled him into her as she stretched up onto her toes to kiss him. It was all he could do to grab onto her to keep from tumbling both of them to the floor. When he opened his mouth to protest, her tongue entered and stroked his demandingly, her kiss ardent. It was his undoing. He was now fully cognizant of her intentions, and he kissed her back, fervently, crushing her body to his. *Oh, Merlin's balls, this cannot be real!*

~TBC~

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

*Authors Notes:*

*Oh, yes, she is finally getting to him! Whoot woo!*

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

- 1.claque
- 2.dilatory
- 3.cogent
- 4.defenestrate
- 5.renascent
- 6.choler
- 7.malediction

-----  
Words with definitions:

claque \KLACK\, noun:

1. A group hired to applaud at a performance.
2. A group of fawning admirers.

-----

dilatory \DIL-uh-tor- ee\, adjective:

1. Tending to put off what ought to be done at once; given to procrastination.
2. Marked by procrastination or delay; intended to cause delay; -- said of actions or measures.

-----  
cogent \KOH-juhnt\, adjective:

Having the power to compel conviction; appealing to the mind or to reason; convincing.

-----  
defenestrate \dee-FEN-uh- strayt\, transitive verb:

To throw out of a window.

-----  
renascent \rih-NAS-uhnt\ , adjective:

Springing or rising again into being; showing renewed vigor.

-----  
choler \KOLL-ur; KOLE-ur\, noun:

Irritation of the passions; anger; wrath.

-----  
malediction \mal-uh-DIK- shun\, noun:

A curse or execration.

## Three Months And One Week

*Chapter 15 of 21*

Hermione spends an evening with her friends and attends a party for the Order, but realizes she'd rather be somewhere else.

Severus has a visit from Lucius just before he decides to attend the party as well.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for June 28.

*Thank you, Southern\_Witch\_69, for not only agreeing to beta each one of my drabbles in this saga, but for also giving us the list of vocabulary words so I can play with them! I'm really having a fun time seeing just how creative I can be with this!*

~June 29~

Hermione had gone home that Friday feeling positively elated. Right after her N.E.W.T. lessons the following Saturday, she showered quickly, grabbed her robes for the party and Apparated to the Burrow to meet up with Ginny and Luna. As soon as she'd walked in the bedroom door, Ginny had jumped up to meet her. "You look positively winsome! What happened?" Ginny asked, pulling her over to the bed.

"Well, beside a goodnight kiss?" Hermione asked, grinning. "He kisses me goodnight now! Friday, we snogged for an hour!" she said as she spun around and collapsed on the bed.

"So much for blow-him-off or play-mind-games," Luna said, slipping on her dress robes.

"I did that Monday, and he was livid! Plus, I turned him down for tonight, and he just got that stony expression. And I've been playing mind games all along!" Hermione said exasperatedly as Ginny arranged her hair. "I've reinvented myself, worn provocative clothing, and tried to respect his privacy. I helped stock his fridge with what I *think* are his favorites, although that's hard to tell sometimes, just so we can actually eat decent meals. All we do is cook and brew together. I've applied lip-gloss in his presence only to be told to wipe it off! Either I'm not any good at this get-your-man thing, or he's just really dense! So I finally just told him I like him and then kissed him."

"He's probably just not used to a witch having any interest in him," Luna stated as she made big check marks on the copy of the article they'd posted up on the wall. "Maybe you should try the suggestions on, 'What pleases him' or this one, 'Do you send out sexy vibes'?"

"I don't think I'm ready to tickle his balls just yet," Hermione replied, making Ginny giggle uncontrollably. "I haven't even gotten to where he's trying anything, yet."

"Maybe you should start wearing my blouses again for a while," Ginny suggested, still laughing.

Hermione cringed. "I'm not sure that worked very well. You should've seen him scowl! And I busted a button!"

"But you *are* getting somewhere. Far better than I'd have thought, considering we're talking about Snape. Well, tonight we can cross 'be-a-social-butterfly' off your Cosmo list," Ginny said, laughing, handing Hermione her dress robes.

The capacious room in the Cockaigne Café the surviving Order members had reserved for the party was lavishly decorated, almost to the point of being ostentatious. However, the lavish robes, many quite bedizen, only added to the décor. An hour later, Hermione began to feel listless. She wished she'd invited him to come, even though she knew he'd have refused. Hermione helped herself to a savory as a house-elf passed by with the tray, immediately regretting picking up the glutinous sweet.

"My gods, Hermione, it's a party! Why do you look so forlorn?" George asked as he sat down at her table.

She managed a weak smile. "I've a lot on my mind," she said as she wrote on the napkin with a pencil.

"You're acting like a harbinger. What's gotten into you?" Harry asked, joining them.

"What's that you're drawing?" Ron asked, leaning over her shoulder. "Don't tell me he actually gave you an essay or... Arithmancy equations to do over the weekend?"

"It's for my N.E.W.T.s. I just can't figure it out, that's all. Every time I try, it looks... mazy," she said, dropping the pencil.

Ron picked it up to examine it. "What's this?"

"A pencil," George stated as Harry interpolated, "It's what Muggles use to write with."

George continued as if uninterrupted, "Muggle children use them. Dad saw a kid drop one once and brought it home. Goes dull quickly."

Hermione looked around the room, wishing she'd plucked up the nerve to ask Severus to come.

~\*~

Severus had been sitting in his lounge, listening to music and feeling a little forlorn. Miss Granger had opted to spend the evening with her friends, a previous engagement she'd said, of which she was obliged to attend. He knew very well it was the party at the Cockaigne Café for the surviving Order members, but he'd had no inclination of attending. He hated formal parties.

Lucius had stopped by just as Severus had considered going home to change into his dress robes.

"Your space is hardly capacious, Severus," he'd said, twirling his walking stick indolently in his fingers. "Surely, for *arara avis* such as this, you would prefer a more... accommodating environment," Lucius had suggested as he'd examined the glutinous substance in the vial he'd been holding in his other hand. "I'd be happy to remunerate you for your time."

Severus knew that of the potions Lucius wanted, one would take at least five days and the other two weeks, depending on the quality of the Chimera blood and horn-toothed viper eggs. Given the current situation developing in his own lab, he didn't wish to be gone for a week. "The Recherche Potion holds no guarantee of success, you know," he'd stated, keeping any emotional infection out of his voice.

"It would behoove you to consider my offer," Lucius had stated amiably. "You may even bring your apprentice by the house as long as she doesn't intrude upon the rest of the house."

"If Miss Granger were to come with me, she would most certainly not only know what I'm brewing but would in fact, assist me." Lucius had looked up, and his eyes had narrowed at Severus' statement. "Just like last time. She is *not* a *paramour*, Lucius, she's my apprentice and thus my assistant, as you well know. You can go back to your Cockaigne and tell your harbinger that I am not coming. If you need something, I will brew it in *my* lab, respectfully and with the precision you expect. You are, after all, a valued customer."

Lucius had left, carrying his latest purchase. Severus had smiled as he'd pocketed the Galleons in his pocket. He'd overcharged Lucius and both knew it, but few knew the secret added ingredients he'd used so that the Exfoliative Potion only removed the excess hairs grown from the Anguicomus Curse and not the person's own natural body hair. He'd wondered if it was Narcissa or Lucius' latest paramour who was the cause of Lucius' need of the exfoliate.

Severus arrived at the Cockaigne late, making his way through the mazy arrangement of tables and chairs while avoiding as many people as possible. He saw Hermione from across the room, looking resplendent in rich amber dress robes. He made up his mind to speak to her and ask her to dance.

Somehow, Horace Slughorn managed to corner him while he'd been distracted by Miss Granger. "Ah, Severus, just the man! I was telling Miss Sunhed about your use of my Acromantula venom in curing Lengerathy Syndrome for those suffering extended abuse from the Cruciatus Curse. I was pleasantly surprised that you won the Dagworth-Granger Award of Potions Excellence, my boy. He was a colleague of mine, you know, Constance, and one of my prized students. Has a head for..."

"Pardon me," Severus interpolated and made his escape as Slughorn continued telling the witch about his academic prowess.

Just as Severus made it across the room to where he'd seen Miss Granger last, he watched as she slipped through the back door.

"Severus, you came!" he heard Hestia Jones exclaim behind him as he headed for the door to follow her.

~~~~~o0o~~~~~

~ TBC ~

Authors Notes:

I thought a bit of reaction from friends was in order, so I wrote this as both Hermione's POV and Severus'. The list Hermione rattles off is from my roommate's Cosmo, in the article '12 ways to get your man.' They include: Blow him off, share your own fears, reinvent yourself, respect his privacy, make him happier, don his clothes, be a social butterfly, play mind games, act like the grand prize, let him see you primp, cook together, and stock your pad. Apparently, it isn't working very well on Severus.

Poor Lucius, he thinks he can buy anything, doesn't he?

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

1. capacious
2. glutinous
3. forlorn
4. Cockaigne
5. harbinger

6. mazy

7. interpolate

-----Words with definitions- ----- -

capacious \kuh-PAY-shuhs\ , adjective:

Able to contain much; roomy; spacious.

----- --

glutinous \GLOOT-nuhs\ , adjective:

Of the nature of glue; resembling glue; sticky.

----- --

forlorn \fur-LORN; for-\, adjective:

1. Sad and lonely because deserted, abandoned, or lost.
2. Bereft; forsaken.
3. Wretched or pitiful in appearance or condition.
4. Almost hopeless; desperate.

----- --

Cockaigne \kah-KAYN\, noun:

An imaginary land of ease and luxury.

----- --

harbinger \HAR-bin-juhr\ , noun:

1. (Archaic) One who provides lodgings; especially, the officer of the English royal household who formerly preceded the court when traveling, to provide and prepare lodgings.
2. A forerunner; a precursor; one that presages or foreshadows what is to come.
3. To signal the approach of; to presage; to be a harbinger of.

----- --

mazy \MAY-zee\, adjective:

Resembling a maze in form or complexity; winding; intricate; confusing; perplexing.

----- --

interpolate \in-TUR-puh- layt\, transitive verb:

1. To alter or corrupt (as a book or text) by the insertion of new or foreign matter.
2. To insert (material) into a text or conversation.
3. To insert between other elements or parts.
4. [Mathematics] to estimate a value of (a function) between two known values.
5. To make insertions.

The spell I created, Anguicomus, is Latin for: having snaky hair.

The Latin comes from my favorite translation source <http://catholic.archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/lookdown.pl>

Her Fifteenth Week

Chapter 16 of 21

Severus and Hermione share a quiet moment by the fireplace after a long day brewing potions.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for July 5.

~July 5~

"Just because I grew up poor doesn't mean I'm indigent. I told you once, I'm quite frugal. I have little need *fathings*." Severus looked down at Hermione nestled against

him on the sofa. The soft light from the fireplace bathed her face in a warm glow and made highlights in her hair. "Besides, it fit the persona to continue thus so – and it's become a part of me."

"I suppose, considering how you appeared at school, you just seemed..." Hermione stammered. Severus simply raised his eyebrow, making her blush and lower her head. "I suppose I assumed. That's not fair, is it?" she asked, and he shook his head.

"It is who I am, Hermione. It's what has made me what I am. You can't bury your past – it has a way of haunting you. Besides, as a child I always felt I was condign of the reputation I had." There was a soft note of regret in his tone. "I was into the Dark Arts; I thought that they would make me strong. Potter and Black hated me from the first day on the train – and we got into many nasty duels. Lily Evans was my first real friend. When I lost Lily's friendship, I lost a part of me... I wanted to be someone, be with those who I thought were – powerful. I wanted to belong. My dorm mates accepted me but only because – like you – I was much smarter than they were, and they needed me to check their essays."

"But now that all that is behind you, you no longer have to hold up those pretenses. So why do you? You're neither that boy in school, nor the horrible Death Eater either. Why do you think – why hold onto it and berate yourself so?"

"We all live with the repercussions of our choices, and I made some very drastic choices. Many that I do regret, deeply." He ran a lock of her hair through his fingers. "You asked me why I turned. There were so many reasons. Mostly, I just lost my belief in... It just didn't seem as important when the Dark Lord threatened and then killed her. And I wanted revenge – I wanted her avenged."

Hermione looked up at him, watching the firelight dance in his eyes. "I always thought you were laconic; what's made you become so garrulous all of a sudden?"

"At what point in my years of tutelage did you ever get the impression I wasn't talkative?" he asked, giving her one of his infamous smirks.

Hermione smiled back at him. "You always just seemed so – quiet. I never heard you or saw you just stay and talk to anyone at Grimmauld Place. And at school the only time I can recall you being vocal was when you'd lecture us. Even then you were concise and to the point."

"I hated that house." He turned his head, and she followed his gaze, watching the dappled effect of the firelight on his books. "I'd given those lectures so often, it was pure recitation for me. I can brew any one of those potions with my eyes blindfolded. I knew which mistakes would be made by whom even before each class started, and I'd read every Potions book in the library a dozen times – simply from the plagiarism of the students." He looked back at the flames dancing in the grate. "Besides, it is in my nature to be aware. After twenty years, yes, I suppose I was concise and to the point – elaboration was unnecessary."

"I bet," she said, laughing softly. "You are so meticulous when you work. I love just watching you."

"You're becoming just as precise when you brew. I just wish you'd think outside the parameter set forth in the books and begin to theorize and hypothesize for yourself. If you do not, you'll never develop the intrinsic ability to become great at potions," he said as he toyed with the lock of her hair.

Hermione tried to quell the sting she felt at his words, letting her thoughts drift with the feeling of his fingers in her hair.

"I don't wish to palaver anymore," he replied, turning to look at her.

Hermione still felt her cheeks burn each time he looked at her so intently. "What do you want?" she asked, trying to lower her head from his gaze.

He cupped her chin, forcing her to look into his dark eyes. "This," he said and leaned down to kiss her.

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

~ TBC ~

*Authors Notes:*

*Thank you, Southern\_Witch\_69, for not only agreeing to beta each one of my drabbles in this saga, but for also giving us the list of vocabulary words so I can play with them! I'm really having a fun time seeing just how creative I can be with this!*

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

1. indigent
2. condign
3. laconic
4. tutelage
5. dapple
6. meticulous
7. palaver

-----Words with definitions-----

indigent \IN-dih-juhnt\ , adjective:

Extremely poor; not having the necessities of life, such as food, clothing and shelter.

-----

condign \kuhn-DINE; KON-dine\, adjective:

Suitable to the fault or crime; deserved; adequate.

-----

laconic \luh-KON-ik\ , adjective:

Using or marked by the use of a minimum of words; brief and pithy; brusque.

-----

tutelage \TOO-tuhl-ij; TYOO-, noun:

1. The act of guarding or protecting; guardianship; protection.

2. The state of being under a guardian or tutor.
3. Instruction, especially individual instruction accompanied by close attention and guidance.

-----  
dapple \DAP-uhl\, noun:

1. A small contrasting spot or blotch.
2. A mottled appearance, especially of the coat of an animal (as a horse).
3. To mark with patches of a color or shade; to spot.
4. To become dappled.
5. Marked with contrasting patches or spots; dappled.

-----  
meticulous \muh-TIK-yuh- luhs\, adjective:

Extremely or excessively careful about details.

-----  
palaver \puh-LAV-uhr; puh-LAH-vur\ , noun:

1. Idle talk
2. Talk intended to beguile or deceive.
3. A parley usually between persons of different backgrounds or cultures or levels of sophistication; a talk; hence, a public conference and deliberation.
4. To talk idly.
5. To flatter; to cajole.

## A Friendly Confrontation

*Chapter 17 of 21*

The next day's little run-in with Lucius goes far better than Severus had hoped.

This is my second response, or the second half, for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for July 5.

~July 6~

"Slumming again, I see," Lucius Malfoy said as he walked up behind Severus.

Severus was hardly surprised. He'd been watching Lucius' reflection on his tankard ever since the man walked in. "I'm hardly indigent and you know it," he said, raising his eyebrow as Lucius sat down in the chair Hermione had vacated. "I happen to like the soups that are served here. So how is your retribution to society coming along?"

"I hate it. Yours?" Lucius replied curtly.

"The same," Severus admitted.

"I hardly consider brewing Wolfsbane every month for St. Mungo's as condign repayment," Lucius said smoothly. Just then, Hermione returned from the ladies' loo. "Well, hello, Miss Granger, or is it Mrs. Weasley? How are you enjoying your private tutelage?"

"It's Miss Granger still," she corrected him as he summoned another chair for her. "And I enjoy it quite well, thank you." Hermione sat down, looking pointedly at Severus, but he offered no indication to her about this unexpected visit.

Tom waked over, wiping his hands on his stain-dappled apron. "The stew for me, Tom, and I believe Miss Granger wanted your chicken vegetable soup," Severus said, ordering for her. "We both want your fresh rolls, a Dunkel for me, and a Weissbier for the lady."

Hermione smiled and turned to Lucius. "What I appreciate most is that I've been able to perfect my techniques and experiment, all while working with one of the best Potions masters in the country."

"Yes, I know how meticulous Severus can be," Lucius replied, eyeing her speculatively. "I can hardly believe you allow experimentation from your apprentice, Severus. I thought you discouraged your students from wreaking havoc in your labs?"

"Only those who do not have the predisposition for the subtle art and exact precision of potion making, or the ability and intrinsic understanding of the various ingredient reactions and interactions," Severus stated smoothly. "I saw so few worthy of my private tutelage over the years. By the way, what is Draco up to these days? The last I heard, he was opting for running a Quidditch team."

Lucius' eyes narrowed. "No, he's having to rethink that adventure. I'm not financing a Quidditch team." Tom arrived with their lunch. "Well, I'll be on my way then. Are we still on for drinks tonight?"



"Yes," Severus answered. "I'll come by at eight-thirty."

"Until then," Lucius said with a nod. He turned to Hermione, his smile losing its magnanimous nature. "Miss Granger," he said smoothly as if her name still made him want to gag.

"Mr. Malfoy," Hermione answered back, although her smile was radiant instead of false. "It was good of you to stop by. Do extend my best to Draco."

"Oh, I shall," Lucius said and left.

Turning back to Severus, Hermione asked, "What was that about?"

"Oh, just a bit of a palaver, belying the true nature of his intent," Severus stated, placing his napkin on his lap.

"Are you going to tell me?" she asked.

"No. It's unimportant," he said. "Now where were we... Ah, yes. Your intention of starting equal rights laws for werewolves. And just how do you think you're going to accomplish this?"

Hermione smiled as she placed her napkin on her lap and began outlining her ideas while they ate.

~~~~~o0o~~~~~

~ TBC ~

Authors Notes:

I just want to give my deepest gratitude to Southern_Witch_69 for not only giving me big words to play with, but for also correcting my mistakes! You're the best!

I'm using the same words as in last chapter. Do you remember what they are? Good luck!

Oh, and yes, I'm at it again. Don't forget to check the reviews!

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

1. indigent
2. condign
3. laconic
4. tutelage
5. dapple
6. meticulous
7. palaver

Her Sixteenth Week

Chapter 18 of 21

Light banter between Severus and Hermione as they discuss a client while brewing leads to a interesting question.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for July 12.

I just want to give my deepest gratitude to Southern_Witch_69 for not only giving me big words to play with, but for also correcting my mistakes! You're the best!

~July 12~

"I certainly don't see how anyone could drink this," Hermione stated, mixing in the last ingredient into the cauldron.

"Gustatory revulsion aside, it works," Severus stated as he lowered the flame under his potion. "I would rather you used the silver cauldron for the next one."

"Severus, the wizard we're taking this one to," Hermione inquired as she stirred, "why was he insistent on my coming to his home if he doesn't want to meet me?"

"He's a troglodyte, much like most of the ancient wizards," Severus explained, but when Hermione simply gave him a questioning look, he elaborated. "While quite eccentric, his magical ability is still strong. However, he is quite antediluvian in his ways. He holds tightly to the old traditions while many others might condemn them. Therefore, he insisted on seeing you, but was not forthright in his reasons why. He does, nevertheless, deal fairly."

"So he is another of your private customers?"

"No, we trade – services. He is a Searcher of rare lichens, tubers, and fungi," Severus stated. "It was he who set forth this propound we have, and I've found it very profitable. He simply wishes to see you."

"I don't understand," she said, still not understanding the reason. "I'm to come – but I cannot enter his home. He wants to see me – but not meet me. He sounds dodgy."

"Don't be puerile," Severus snapped, although he knew that he had really piqued her curiosity. "He's an old acquaintance with unusual habits. And he's curious about you. You're famous, you know."

"As are you," she teased him.

He smirked at her retort. "Too bad fame doesn't provide emolument."

Hermione smiled, lifting the cauldron of the flame to cool, pleased that they were so comfortable with each other. She quickly read the direction for the potion he wanted her to brew next. "So, this one takes five to six hours. Should I wait until after dinner to begin?" she asked with a hopeful glint in her eye.

"I suppose, if you repine sleeping on the cots all night," he said crossing his arms and narrowing his eyes slightly at her.

She bent to retrieve the silver cauldron to hide her smile. "You're the one who wants it done by tomorrow." When she stood up, he was still watching her. "And yes, I'm staying the night."

"After dinner then," he decided. "So, which sleeping attire are you going to subject me to tonight?"

"Whichever one you want me to," she replied with a sly grin.

His eyebrow rose and he smiled. "I like the silky one."

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

~ TBC ~

*Authors Notes:*

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

1. gustatory
2. troglodyte
3. emolument
4. contemn
5. propound
6. puerile
7. antediluvian

\*\*\*\*\*Words with definitions\* \*\*\*\*

-----

gustatory \GUS-tuh-tor- ee\, adjective:

Of or pertaining to the sense of taste.

-----

troglodyte \TROG-luh-dyt\ , noun:

1. A member of a primitive people that lived in caves, dens, or holes; a cave dweller.
2. One who is regarded as reclusive, reactionary, out of date, or brutish.

-----

emolument \ih-MOL-yuh- muhnt\, noun:

The wages or perquisites arising from office, employment, or labor; gain; compensation.

-----

contemn \kuhn-TEM\, transitive verb:

To regard or treat with disdain or contempt; to scorn; to despise.

-----

propound \pruh-POWND\ , transitive verb:

To offer for consideration; to put forward; to propose.

-----

puerile \PYOO-uhr-uhl; PYOOR-uhl\, adjective:

Displaying or suggesting a lack of maturity; juvenile; childish.

-----

antediluvian \an-tih-duh- LOO-vee-uhn\ , adjective:

1. Of or relating to the period before the Biblical flood.
2. Antiquated; from or belonging to a much earlier time.
3. One who lived before the Biblical flood.
4. A very old (or old-fashioned) person.

# Her Seventeenth Week – The Tides Turn

Chapter 19 of 21

Severus decides it's time to bring Hermione home.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for July 19.

The Tides Turn

~July 19~

Hermione had been in his company for nearly four months. He noticed that ever since he'd been more solicitous towards her, allowing intimacies to develop between them, she hadn't left him. She was sleeping with him in his house practically every night, except for Saturday, which she spent at the castle for her N.E.W.T. lessons, and Sunday when she stayed at Potter's home. He also now knew how long she'd been interested in him, which he found unbelievable. She even tolerated his bouts of insensate nature and his acerbic personality, which seemed to be waning as of late. She had even claimed to like his fustian ways and his sarcastic sense of humor. Still, he knew he was opening up to her, even showing her his softer side. The fact was she brought out the best in him, and he knew it.

He'd decided it was time to show her his home. He'd Apparated her to a grassy spot between the trees and the river that gave her the best view of the house. The two story stone cottage hardly needed the Fidelus Charm to conceal it. Huge trees grew on the property, and vines and climbing roses covered most of the house. "Home," he'd said as soon as they'd arrived.

Her sharp intake of breath and wide-eyed stare made him smile. "It's beautiful."

"It's a house. Prince cottage actually. Once a thriving farm, but most of the grounds were turned into gardens by my great grandfather." He held up his hand for her to walk up the path to the door.

Hermione's eyes swept the front garden as they walked. "White willow, fenugreek, octane lilies, eyebright, burdock, whippervills, cleavers, arnica, hawthorn, meadowsweet, angelica, horse chestnut... He suffered from pain?" she asked, looking up at him with concern.

Severus laughed softly at her intuitive nature. "My grandfather made Anodyne Potions for all types of ailments. It was his specialty." He opened the door and guided her around, stopping in the parlor where the portraits of his family hung.

"Delphinine Prince. She was my great grandfather's sister," Severus said, indicating a very old oil painting. The witch nodded politely as Severus pointed to the next frame. "Her husband, Ralph Kensington."

The wizard in fancy robes bowed slightly and said, "Greetings, my lady."

"My great grandmother, Edithe Prince, a malingering if ever there was one," Severus said, pointing out a somber woman lounging on a settee in a stiff bodice dress robe in the next frame, who seemed to take offence at his words. "If it weren't for her house-elf, this place would have been a sty. My great grandfather, Henry Prince, a tatterdemalion," he said, indicating a tall wizard who more closely resembled an absent-minded professor with long fingers and dark, glinting eyes. "He loved tending his gardens." The wizards bowed and smiled at his introduction. Severus gently guided Hermione to the next painting. "My mother, Eileen, and my grandmother, Stephanie," he said with a warmth to his tone that made both witches in the portrait and Hermione smile. "This was done before my mother married."

Hermione politely greeted his mum and grandmother as she stared at them, taking in their features.

Severus scowled slightly when he moved to the next painting of a man with heavy brows, dark eyes and a long, pallid face. "My grandfather, Marion Prince, had all the cupidity and prejudices of the elitist pureblood families, but he was at least accepting of me. He acted as fiduciary for me, even though he'd disowned my mother. I think it was my affinity for potions." The wizard regarded Severus and Hermione with an air of pretentious superiority. "There was always a type of mephitic odor about him, and dirt under his nails, but his potions were highly desired."

The portrait scowled with a look of acute vexation. "Well, I never. I did right by you, boy," he said as Severus backed away.

Severus watched Hermione as she gazed at the faces of his ancestors. She had a soft smile as she accessed the portraits. "I can see where you get your incredible eyes," she said as she turned around, wrapping her arms around his waist.

"Really," he said, leaning down to kiss her.

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

~ TBC ~

Authors Notes:

I just want to give my deepest gratitude to Southern_Witch_69 for not only giving me big words to play with but for also correcting my mistakes! You're the best!

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com):

1. cupidity
2. fiduciary
3. mephitic
4. anodyne
5. tatterdemalion
6. malingering

7. insensate

===== words with definitions =====

cupidity \kyoo-PID-uh- tee\, noun:

Eager or excessive desire, especially for wealth; greed; avarice.

fiduciary \fih-DOO-shee- air-ee\, adjective:

1. Relating to the holding of something in trust for another.
2. Someone who stands in a special relation of trust, confidence, or responsibility in certain obligations to others; a trustee.

mephitic \muh-FIT-ik\ , adjective:

1. Offensive to the smell; as, mephitic odors.
2. Poisonous; noxious.

anodyne \AN-uh-dyn\, adjective:

1. Serving to relieve pain; soothing.
2. Not likely to offend; bland; innocuous.
3. A medicine that relieves pain.
4. Anything that calms, comforts, or soothes disturbed feelings.

tatterdemalion \tat-uh-dih- MAYL-yuhn; -MAY-lee-uhn\ , noun:

1. A person dressed in tattered or ragged clothing; a ragamuffin.
2. Tattered; ragged.

malinger \muh-LING-guhr\ , intransitive verb:

To feign or exaggerate illness or inability in order to avoid duty or work.

insensate \in-SEN-sayt; -sit\, adjective:

1. Lacking sensation or awareness; inanimate.
2. Lacking human feeling or sensitivity; brutal; cruel.
3. Lacking sense; stupid; foolish.

Oh, I'm at it again! I'm going to hide a tidbit in the reviews again! Two this time!

Her Eighteenth Week – She Gets What She Wanted

Chapter 20 of 21

Severus makes a confession Hermione's been waiting to hear.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for July 26.

~July 26~

Severus looked forward to this time of day – actually, this time of the week – every week. Friday night. The potions were finished, bottled, labeled for delivery, and the bill statements written out. He'd made sure that the evening would be unencumbered and his time with Hermione would be uninterrupted. Before, he'd have dismissed her for the weekend, finally having the solitude he used to crave after a busy week. But not now. She was truly a gamine, his Hermione. When he'd first been tricked into taking her as his apprentice, he thought that she would be supernumerary, always in his way, and an annoyance. He was sure that he'd have to oversee her every potion and lose valuable potion brewing time. Instead, his little business was booming, and he found that he truly enjoyed her company. Even his penchant of vituperation had been diminished.

"Severus, what are you thinking?" Hermione asked, shifting her weight so she could look up at him from where she was snuggled against his side on the sofa.

The soft music from the wireless filled the silence as he looked down at her upturned face from where it had been resting on his shoulder. "About you." Severus slowly stroked her cheek as he gazed into her warm brown eyes. "And the unexpected mélange of events that has currently rearranged my priorities."

"And I am one of those events?" she asked, a playful grin lighting up her face. She shifted again, so she could look at him more directly, and he tightened his arm around her, pulling her closer.

"You had any doubt?" he asked in return. She pushed away from him, sitting up to face him, and he tried to draw her back to him, missing her warmth. "I suppose you expect me to extol your significance in my life?"

"Heavens, no. You? I'd never presume you'd do that." She smiled mischievously as she got up and straddled his lap. "No, but a diadem would be nice."

"Too bad you destroyed it," he said as she kissed his nose. *Who would have ever thought she of all people would find that protuberance kissable.*

"Absolutely necessary, I'm afraid," she said as she kissed his cheek, her hands making quick work of his buttons. "Well, if not that, you could just elevate me to journeyman..."

"Oh, I have something else in mind regarding your elevation," he said, pushing her blouse off her shoulders. She was so beautiful in the soft glow of the candlelight. His fingers glided on her silky, soft skin while she continued to tug and pull at his clothes, trying to divest him of the barrier to what she obviously wanted.

He looked at the woman on his lap, sliding his hands in her hair so he could push it back and see her face. "I love you."

She looked at him, stunned, for a moment before crushing his lips with hers. "I love you, too," she said breathlessly when she came up for air. She squealed in delight as he flipped her over on the sofa.

~~~~~oOo~~~~~

~ TBC ~

*Authors Notes:*

I just want to give my deepest gratitude to Southern\_Witch\_69 for not only giving me big words to play with, but for also correcting my mistakes! You're the best!

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

1. supernumerary
2. gamine
3. vituperation
4. mélange
5. sempiternal
6. diadem
7. extol

.....Words with Definitions. ....

supernumerary \soo-puhr-NOO- muh-rair- ee; -NYOO-\, adjective:

1. Exceeding the stated, standard, or prescribed number.
2. Exceeding what is necessary or desired; superfluous.
3. A supernumerary person or thing.
4. An actor without a speaking part, as a walk-on or an extra in a crowd scene.

-----

gamine \gam-EEN; GAM-eeen\, noun:

1. A girl who wanders about the streets; an urchin.
2. A playfully mischievous girl or young woman.

-----

vituperation \vy-too-puh- RAY-shuhn, -tyoo-\, noun:

1. The act or an instance of speaking abusively to or about.
2. Sustained and severely abusive language.

-----

mélange \may-LAHNZH\ , noun:

A mixture; a medley.

-----

sempiternal \sem-pih-TUR- nuhl\, adjective:

Of never ending duration; having beginning but no end; everlasting; endless.

-----

diadem \DY-uh-dem\, noun:

1. A crown.
2. An ornamental headband worn (as by Eastern monarchs) as a badge of royalty.
3. Regal power; sovereignty; empire; -- considered as symbolized by the crown.
4. To adorn with a diadem; to crown.

extol \ik-STOHL\, transitive verb:

To praise highly; to glorify; to exalt.

## Apprentice No More

Chapter 21 of 21

Severus has decided to end the charade. So he tells Hermione that she can no longer be his apprentice.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for August 2.

This is my response for the Dictionary Drabbles Fun Challenge for March 22.

### Apprentice No More

~August 2~

Severus arrived at Grimmauld Place at the appointed time to speak to Potter about Hermione. He knew that with her parents back in Australia closing escrow, Potter was the next closest thing Hermione had to family. Him and the Weasleys. Severus wasn't ready to face the Weasleys.

The old house-elf opened the door and escorted Severus to the brummagem drawing room. Potter and Miss Weasley were waiting for him. Severus smiled as he recognized Hermione's blouse on the girl. "Hello, Professor Snape. Or may I call you Severus?" she asked, holding out her hand.

Severus cringed inwardly but accepted her hand. "You may," he said smoothly. *Might as well. I'll be seeing a great deal of you in my future, I'm sure* "Although I am your quondam professor, I no longer serve Hogwarts in that capacity. Since I'm sure we shall be well acquainted in the future, first names are appropriate." He turned to Potter, considering how best to approach the matter at hand. "Mr. Potter," he said with a nod to the boy, extending his hand cordially. He noticed that Potter had grown since he'd last seen him and was definitely a young man now.

"Harry," he replied, accepting to shake his hand, "if you'd like. I assume I'm allowed to call you Severus as well?"

Severus nodded.

"What brings you here?" Harry asked politely.

*At least the boy is being civil* "I came to ask your consent regarding my intentions toward Miss Granger," Severus said smoothly. Miss Weasley's smile grew to one of absolute delight. Apparently, she approves at least.

~ \* ~

Severus had practiced what to say nearly all week. He'd even practiced what he wanted to say in the mirror. He'd considered a lovely sesquipedalian sentiment, but somehow actually saying such a speech in the mirror just didn't feel right. He felt positively pusillanimous, considering that this was supposed to be a very simple matter. "You just simply tell the girl she will no longer be your apprentice," he murmured to himself as he sorted out his bills and receipts. "Oh, bloody hell, blokes do this all the time," he snarled, dropping the hand clutching the receipts on the desk.

"Do what all the time, Severus?"

He looked up to see Hermione staring at him. "I think we need to redefine the nature of our association." *There that's as good a start as any.* "I do not believe that you intend to pursue a career in Potions, and therefore, we should reconsider absolving our arrangement and redefining our relationship."

Hermione turned to face him, the task to reorganize the panoply of vials and jars on his shelves momentarily forgotten. "Pardon?"

"I believe I was telling you that I think we should reconsider having you continue with your apprenticeship," he said, keeping his tone smooth to hopefully avoid sparking her temper.

"Not this again," she said with a sigh. "I don't want to end the apprenticeship."

*I knew she'd say that* "It really is for the best that you do," he replied, hoping to reason with her.

"When?" she asked resolutely, one hand on her hip and the other holding a very expensive jar of Re'em blood.

"Tonight is as good a time as any," he stated, relieved she was being so reasonable. "Besides, your time would be better served in pursuit of your education. I think it best that when school begins in September, you should finish your last year."

"I am already taking N.E.W.T. study courses! I see no reason to return to the school in the fall," she said, brandishing the jar with a defiant flourish of her hand. Severus cringed inwardly. "It would be best if you served out a full curriculum," he suggested calmly, hoping she wouldn't actually drop the expensive ingredient.

"I don't need to," Hermione stated, crossing her arms.

"Would you please be sapient, woman," he demanded, agitated. "It would be for the best. As of tonight, the apprenticeship is to be dissolved."

"So that's it? It's over, no discussion?" she asked. "You simply want me to leave for school?"

"Yes. Obtaining your N.E.W.T.s is important. With the abbreviated schedule you are receiving an abridged course of study not a full comprehensive curriculum," he explained, knowing his logic was flawless.

"But that also means I'd be gone from your life. That's it, isn't it?" Severus cringed at the righteous indignation in her tone. "You want me out of your life."

Severus stood up and leaned forward with both hands placed firmly on his desk. "Who ever said I want you out of my life?"

"You did!" she snapped at him.

"I did not!" he snarled at her. "I simply said that I no longer want you serving me in the capacity of my apprentice and that you should return to school."

"Why, for bloody Merlin's sake?" she demanded angrily.

"Because after you finish school, I want you to become my wife!" he shouted, slamming his hand down on his desk.

Hermione's mouth opened and closed.

Severus could feel his heart pound in his chest.

The clock on the worktable struck six.

Hermione turned to set the jar of Re'em blood on the shelf.

Severus swore softly as he closed his ledger, crumpling the receipts as he did so, and shoved the mess in his desk. He wished he could simply egress and avoid the rejection. He started for the door, not looking in her direction.

Hermione suddenly threw herself at him, wrapping her arms around his neck and pulling him off balance. He barely had time to grab onto her before she nearly bowled him over. "Yes! Oh, yes! Yes!" she repeated over and over as she kissed his face.

"Yes?" he asked. "To which part? Marrying me?"

"Yes," she said exuberantly. "To all of it except ending my apprenticeship. I'll just ask Professor McGonagall for permission to have my Potions tutorage on weekends!"

Severus smiled at her, hugging her tighter. "My brilliant witch. I'll draft the necessary letters."

~ \* ~

Hermione owed Ginny and Luna as soon as they got home. She couldn't stop staring at the exquisite ring on her finger and the way it caught the light. She was going to be Mrs. Hermione Snape.

~~~~~o0o~~~~~

~ The End ~

Authors Notes:

Apparently Severus likes westerns as much as I do. He did after all quote Val Kilmer from Tombstone.

Thank you, Southern_Witch_69, so much for this chance to try these new words. I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed this challenge. And thank you also for helping me clean this up and catching my mistakes! You're the best!

Yes, this is the end of the story. Thank you so much for all of you who have followed this attempt I made at taking weekly vocabulary words and creating a story worth reading. A special thank you to everyone who left a review. They are appreciated more than you can know.

The word list (swiped from the past week's list from dictionary.com) :

1. quondam
2. pusillanimous
3. sesquipedalian
4. egress
5. panoply
6. sapient
7. brummagem

.....Words with Definitions.

quondam \KWAHN-duhm; KWAHN-dam\, adjective:

Having been formerly; former; sometime.

pusillanimous \pyoo-suh-LAN- uh-muhs\, adjective:

Lacking in courage and resolution; contemptibly fearful; cowardly.

sesquipedalian \ses-kwuh-puh- DAYL-yuhn\ , adjective:

1. Given to or characterized by the use of long words.
2. Long and ponderous; having many syllables.
3. A long word.

egress \EE-gress\, noun:

1. The act of going out or leaving, or the right or freedom to leave; departure.
2. A means of going out or leaving; an exit; an outlet.
3. To go out; to depart; to leave.

panoply \PAN-uh-plee\ , noun:

1. A splendid or impressive array.
2. Ceremonial attire.
3. A full suit of armor; a complete defense or covering.

sapient \SAY-pee-uhnt\ , adjective:

Wise; sage; discerning.

brummagem \BRUHM-uh-juhm\ , adjective:

Cheap and showy, tawdry; also, spurious, counterfeit.