Pæan to Priapus VII  a multi-media slash anthology

Circumference
by M. Fae Glasgow
This was the result of a first-line challenge sent out on the Master_Apprentice mailing list. Unfortunately, I can’t remember who issued the challenge—and the sheer volume of messages was so daunting, after a while, I just stopped trying to track it down! My apologies to whoever came up with this first line—thank you for the inspiration.
MY PADAWAN

He talks dirty to me.

He does it behind closed doors, when there’s no one to hear what he says to me. What he promises me. What he threatens.

He talks dirty to me. He says words that he shouldn’t even know—no, that’s not fair. We Jedi have always known all the undersides of every society, we just pretend to be above such things. Untouched by such things.

I am untouched. He doesn’t touch me. Hasn’t touched me.

But he talks dirty to me, and it makes me afraid.

He says things that Jedi aren’t expected to know, words we’re not expected to comprehend, actions and depravities that we’re not expected to understand. I understand, of course. I know exactly what he’s talking about. He only talks dirty to me, but the images I see in my mind, the pictures he paints on my soul, they’re filthier than any words coming from his mouth.

He talks dirty to me, when I least expect it, but says nothing when I’m prepared—the times when I have my barriers in place, the times when I’m bastioned against him, he simply
smiles at me, and talks of studies and practices, of friends and missions.

But when I’m tired, or when I think there’s not an atom of energy left in him, nothing to fuel him, he talks dirty to me. He can sit across the table from me as we hurry through a basic meal, and slide easily from discussion of the day’s meetings into telling me what he wants me to do to him. In detail. In vivid, ball-tightening detail.

It used to bother me, more my reaction than his words. But I could fight against what he said: he could talk till all the suns cool about what he wants me to do to him, and it doesn’t matter. I won’t do any of those things to him. I’m his master, I’m in control of myself and my actions. I won’t do these things to him. He’s my padawan, I won’t lay a finger—or anything else—on him, not till he’s no longer indentured to me.

So he talks dirty to me, and I lean back, cross my arms and smile at him, wait until he winds down, and then I go back to discussing the day’s meetings, or what the Protocols Master said about his last exam.

He used to storm off in a huff, his hair all but bristling with
outrage and offended dignity. It’d make me smile, not that I’d ever let him see that. He’s changed, though. Grown. These days, he lets me go back to discussing whatever we’d been talking about before, but he looks at me now. Looks at me and lets me know he’s allowing me to change the subject. Makes it clear he’s letting me run away.

I’m not, of course, but he needs to think that—it’s a small enough sop to his pride, I can afford to give him that.

But there are times, when he talks dirty to me that I can’t bear it, when I do want to run. He doesn’t tell me what he wants me to do him—come to think of it, he hardly ever does that these days. No, he’s taken to leaning back in his chair and smiling at me while he tells me what he wants to do to me.

And I can’t control that.

I can’t stop him from having his own thoughts, there’s not a sith-bedamned thing I can do about what he wants to do to me.

So I sit there, while he talks dirty to me, and I just sit there, and sit there, and let him talk. Some victory, but it’s better than what I want to do. Run. Just get up and run. Never stop. Never ever stop. Because if I stop, he’ll catch me.
Look at him now. Sitting there on the settee, nose buried in his studies. Final exam first thing tomorrow, and not one of his better subjects. He’ll pass, we both know that, but he wants more than just scraping past. He’s hungry, and no amount of admonition or meditation changes it. It used to worry me, that he’d be driven off course by his hunger, but he—He hones it. He uses it and tames it, if you can tame a wild beast. He thinks he can, and I have to concede, that hunger of his has never led him astray, only deeper into the Light.

It’s me his hunger threatens with the Dark. I’m not the most pristine of Jedi, never have been—was very nearly not chosen when I was a youngster because there was some fear that I could be touched by the Dark. I wasn’t, and I haven’t been, but I can see the temptation of it. I’ve never crossed the line, but I’ve toed it once or twice, scuffed it till it’s just that bit blurred. Nothing really bad, just a little tweak to someone’s mind to get them to do the right thing, just a little nudge of the Force to make something happen the way it ought to.

But that hunger of his, that could hunt me all the way to the Dark.
It recognizes me, you see. Knows me for exactly what I am. Not a Jedi first, but first a man, and then a Jedi. I’ve never been able to turn that around. I’ve always had to follow what was right instead of blindly following the Code with the consequences to mere humans be damned. I just can’t do that. I’ve tried, or at least I used to, when I was younger and full of starry-eyed idealism. Now, I accept that I’ll never be a great Jedi, that a master is as high as I’ll ever go.

He doesn’t understand the blessing that is—it’s that hunger of his. It’d never let him settle for being a master when his talents could take him all the way to the Council. No, he’d not be content to be me, and he’d not settle—he’ll never settle for less.

And he talks dirty to me, to get him what he wants. He thinks I want it too.

And I do.