

"What did you say?"

"I did not say anything. I should have known better than to have tackled him when he was cooking. But, as he seems to do nothing but cook, that would mean to hang about indefinitely, and I've got to start back in two hours."

"Well . . . what did he say, finally?" demanded Hermione, with impatience.

Applebo gave her his laziest and most maddening look. Hermione reached for her stick, and he proceeded more briskly.

"He said, after the trout were finished, 'Huh . . . h'm . . . so you want to marry Cécile, do you?'"

"'No, sir,' said I; 'Hermione.'"

"'Why,' said he, 'Hermione! What are you talkin' about? Why, you cradle-robber, Hermione's only a kid!'"

Hermione snorted.

"I told him," continued Applebo, with maddening languor, "that I quite agreed with him that you were a simple, untutored child, quite too young to know your own mind, impulsive, undisciplined . . ."

*Thwack!*

"Ow . . . !"