

Hanging On His Every Word

by juniperus

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Hogwarts' young Transfiguration Mistress rounded the corner into the dungeon corridor that would eventually lead her to the stairs—and to the end of her rounds for the night.

She rubbed her hands down her arms briskly, shivering in the dungeons' chill. The rustle effectively masked the sound of a tapestry shifting as a pale hand extended towards her.

And grasped her shoulder.

And *pulled*.

"*Funiculus!*" rasped a deep baritone voice belonging to the owner of the pale hand.

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"*Lumos!*" Severus smirked as he saw the look of shock on his colleague's face in the flickering light of a single candle. "You really should be more aware of your surroundings, Professor."

She gaped at him. "What is the meaning of this? Let me down!"

"All in good time." He openly admired the sight before him before stepping closer—close enough that he felt the heat of her body and heard the sound of her breath catch. He watched her face carefully, studying it until he found the answer he sought.

"Prof, er, Hermione," he began, his voice so low she strained to hear despite the scant distance between his mouth and her ear. "It appears there is much that needs be said, and I can wait no longer for you to stay put... not if left to your usual over-achieving devices."

She glared.

He chuckled. Then he lowered her slightly, just enough for her to stand comfortably. "Is that better?"

She nodded in response, a look of confusion replacing the glare.

He gazed at her a moment, carefully noting every familiar detail of her face before his eyes met hers and he blushed, slightly.

Her eyes widened.

"Severus, *please*..." She paused before continuing, the sheer *closeness* of the man—not to mention oddness of the situation—scattering her thoughts. "Why did you pull me from the corridor? *W-why am I hanging in an alcove behind a tapestry?*" Her voice rose in timbre with each word, belying her attempt at composure.

He leaned in and nuzzled her earlobe before he replied. "Until I overheard your conversation with Minerva in the staff room last week—you never look to see who might be sitting in the wingback chairs that face the fire—I would never have believed it *possible*... had I known I actually had a chance I would have been less *Slytherin* in communicating how intelligent, how *attractive* I find you."

"Wait—*what?* You *fancy* me? Since *when?*"

He ran his finger down one captured arm, then up the other. "Mmmhmm... since approximately two months after you were hired."

"That was three years ago!" she sputtered, both shocked and not a little annoyed that she spent three years pining for someone who had been, in turn, pining for ~~her~~.

"That is correct," he sighed. "The years didn't pass *this* slowly even when the Dark Lord was alive." With a flick of his wand the ropes disappeared.

"Y-you never told me..." she breathed.

"Let me *show* you," he whispered as he buried his face in her hair. *Nox*."