

Tea

by Anastasia

"Has no one taught you the proper way to brew tea?"

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: They all belong to JK. No money, just playing.

AN: A short HGSS response to a prompt from Tempest_Dreams on LJ: "The proper way to brew tea." Not exactly what she asked for, but it turned out to be what she needed. My many thanks always to Ariadne, who sends up the writing bat signal whether she means to or not.

Hermione leaned back in an old leather armchair, her fingers absently spread over the pages of a book in her lap. When a rustle of robes was followed by a thumb lightly tracing her jawline, she mumbled hopefully, "Tea?" and lifted her cup.

His thumb stopped its travels, and Severus took the cup, raised it to his nose, and scowled. "Not this. Has no one ever taught you the proper way to brew tea?"

She raised her eyes tiredly as the trace of a grin appeared. "Do enlighten me."

Within minutes, Hermione found herself seated in front of the hearth, inches away from a raging fire while Severus took a small black tin from the mantle. Kneeling beside her, he laid the lid on an ornate tea kettle.

"Shall I take notes?"

Severus looked over his shoulder and raised an eyebrow as he eased a kettle into place over the fire.

"That won't be necessary."

Hermione paused.

Drawing next to her, Severus said in a low whisper, "I highly doubt you'll forget. That is, if my efforts are successful. You see, brewing tea could be considered a mundane ritual by those blind to the art."

After examining the competing shadows rocking over the stone hearth, Hermione found her voice. "Ah, I see."

Touching her neck lightly, a finger trailing along her shoulder, he continued, "It is an art lost on some, yet held in the highest honor by others. The fire is key; too low and the tea may be drawn out – slow to reach its potential, leaving the recipient desiring it faster, begging for the fire to be hotter, pleading for it to be stronger, more tumultuous, its violence spiraling ever higher and higher until the boiling point is so powerful as to blast open the very heavens above from the force."

He leaned closer, his fingers closing, gripping, his thumb a maddeningly light arc on the nape of her neck. Lowering his head, hair slipping forward, he brushed his lips over

her shoulder.

“Too fast and – well...”

She nodded, her hand reaching into his hair. “And it loses the potential for strength.”

A deep breath washed over her throat, and he pushed her onto her back. “Yes.”

Watching the ceiling, her eyes slipping closed when his hair fell over her chest. Fingers trailing along her arm, finding her hand, clasping tight and raising, his teeth high up behind her ear, something was whistling softly lost amongst words whispered on skin, the light blocked, robes dragging over rough stone, the table shifted suddenly and her book tumbled to the floor. Her hands lost in his hair, gripping rough fabric, reaching higher; the sound grew, soaring and falling, muffled, drowned, insisting, begging, pleading and screaming, all at once.