

# Dice

by anogete

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## Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 1

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*Author's Note: As the summary says, this is in response to the Winter 2007 Potter Place prompt requesting a game of adult dice between Hermione and Severus. Take it easy on me since this is the first thing I've written in well over six months. Oh, evil dry spell, how I hate you.*

Hermione knew taunting Severus Snape was a mistake, but throwing herself into the conversation by telling Nymphadora Tonks and Remus Lupin as much would have been equivalent to stepping into the line of fire. And she certainly wasn't going to throw herself in front of Snape's proverbial gun.

Hermione was surprised that Snape had even shown up that evening. He didn't seem exceedingly happy to be in attendance, and he kept to himself, conversing with only a few people. She suspected Minerva had twisted his arm and threatened a punishment worthy of Headmaster Dumbledore's invention if Snape didn't attend the celebration.

Fred and George had brought more than enough magical party favors to liven up Grimmauld Place for the five year celebration of Lord Voldemort's defeat. After being hit with more than one of their Exploding Party Poppers, she was sure her face looked nearly as sour as Snape's sneering countenance. Her initial intention was to find a place to hide from her overzealous friends for a few moments, but it seemed she had walked in on a very tender situation, one in which Professor Snape look close to exploding in indignation.

"You're just a big old scaredy-cat coward, Snape," Tonks said with a smile.

Hermione winced and prepared to duck for cover. There were many things Hermione had learned in her life, and one of those things was the ramifications of calling Severus Snape a coward. He certainly didn't take kindly to the description. Usually, his explosive temper kicked in and laid waste to the person who had the audacity to throw such a word in his face. Apparently, Remus was following along with Hermione's train of thought because his eyes looked like they might fall out of his head while the smile melted off his face.

Daring a quick glance at Snape, Hermione saw his nostrils flare and his eyes darken. "I am *not* a coward.

Tonks didn't take the hint; she continued on with the teasing, a twinkle of mischief in her eyes. Hermione almost felt sorry for her. Despite the defeat of Voldemort, Snape was still very much the same person he had been when she attended Hogwarts. At best, he was private and elusive, and at worse, he was cruel and petty. After Voldemort fell, she had worked closely with Snape to develop a potion to revive Harry from his comatose state, a side effect of the duel with what had become of Tom Riddle. When he wasn't trying to be nasty, Snape really was a pleasure to talk to, though those times were few and far between. Once they created a successful potion, Hermione had not heard a word from the man. That had been over four years ago.

She had been surprised when the yearly Hogwarts Alumni Newsletter had stated he had accepted the Defense Against the Dark Arts position yet again. He had been

cleared of murder and treason charges during a lengthy trial. Hermione had been a witness, testifying to the Wizengamot that she saw her former professor defend many Order members during the final battle, along with clearing a path for Harry to reach Voldemort. He had never thanked her for her help, but she hadn't expected him to do so. She doubted Minerva had received a thank you either, despite her testimony on Dumbledore's Pensieve memory about his agreement with Snape.

"Right, so you're just a fumbling third-year then? Afraid of the girls, are you?" Tonks threw the taunt out with a broad smile on her face. Hermione saw Remus place a hand on her shoulder and pull her back away from the edge of her seat. There was only a low coffee table between her and Snape, and Snape looked positively murderous.

His eyes gleamed with anger when he swallowed his tantrum to respond. "I believe that you've got it backwards. I'm not afraid of the girls; they are afraid of me."

"Oh, nonsense." Tonks cast around the room with her eyes, searching for something before noticing Hermione sitting on the edge of the alcove with them. "Hermione's not afraid of you."

Hermione's eyes widened and she shook her head at Tonks. "Please don't pull me into this argument."

"You can't be serious. Miss Granger is a former student. It would be highly inappropriate, not to mention disagreeable to both of us," Snape said.

"Every available witch at this party is a former student of yours, you dolt. You need to rearrange your standards if you ever want to have some fun." Tonks looked at Hermione again. "You want to play a little game, don't you, Hermione?"

Hermione opened her mouth to respond with an unequivocal no, but Remus interrupted. "Darling, I don't think either of them wants to play. Perhaps we should leave them be."

"Hermione wants to play. She looks bored and could do with a bit of fun."

"No, I really don't," Hermione said, shrinking back into the oversized chair.

Tonks rolled her eyes. "You don't even know what we're playing. Besides, we need one more person. Snape here needs a partner."

"I am not playing this ridiculous game," Snape snapped, preparing to stand from the small sofa he was seated on.

Curiosity was creeping into the fringes of Hermione's mind. Harry, Ron, and Neville had been playing Exploding Snap earlier in the evening before Neville passed out from drinking too much wine. Luna had managed to talk Ginny, Ernie, and Lavender into playing a muddled version of Muggle Monopoly. They were all very confused because Luna was making up the rules as she went along. Those games seemed innocent enough; she wasn't sure why Snape was making such a fuss over playing a game with Remus and Tonks. "What sort of game?" Hermione asked.

Snape huffed and cast an annoyed glance at her. "A completely inappropriate game, Miss Granger."

Tonks was grinning from ear to ear. "It's just dice," she said.

"What's so inappropriate about dice?"

She could see Remus's cheeks flush a light shade of red. "It's *adult* dice, Hermione."

Snape snatched something off the table and tossed it at Hermione. She fumbled as she caught the two red dice. Looking them over, she realized why Snape was so indignant over the suggestion of partnering with her. One of the red die had body parts on each face, while the other had suggestive verbs. It was obvious to Hermione that the dice were to be rolled together, and one person would have to perform the action on the specified body part of their partner.

"Oh." Her face turned redder than Remus's, and she hastily returned the dice to the table, avoiding Snape's eyes as he returned to his seat, obviously enjoying her discomfort. "I really don't think I'm the type to play that sort of game," Hermione mumbled, trying to hide her embarrassment.

"Loosen up, Hermione!" Tonks said, leaning forward and snatching the dice from the table. "It's all in good fun."

"Miss Granger and I are not going to play your silly game, Nymphadora. And, might I suggest, if you and your husband intend on playing such a game, you may want to find a private room where we are not forced to watch." Snape flipped an errant strand of hair from his cheek and settled into the sofa again.

"Coward," Tonks taunted, winking at Hermione.

"Tonks," Hermione and Remus warned.

"I am not..." Snape replied through clenched teeth.

Tonks laughed and tossed the dice on the table. "Prove it, then."

"By participating in his juvenile game?"

"Right. Hermione will be your partner, won't you, Hermione?"

"I really don't think..."

"You know you want to," Tonks said, interrupting Hermione.

Hermione actually didn't want to participate in the game, nor did she think Snape wanted her as his partner. The entire endeavor made her uncomfortable beyond the telling of it. "I really don't think Professor Snape would consent to my being his partner, Tonks," she replied, dropping her gaze to the floor.

"Beggars can't be choosers, right, Snape? Come sit beside him. Remus and I will go first."

"I'm not..."

"Put a sock in it," Tonks snapped, effectively cutting him off. "Remus and I want to play, and you two look absolutely miserable. You both could do with a bit of cheering up. What better way than a fun game?"

"Dear, we shouldn't make them play if they don't want to play," Remus said, placing a hand on Tonks's arm.

She turned to look at him with a smile. "Oh, they want to play. They're both just too chicken to admit it."

"I would appreciate it if you would kindly refrain from insinuating I have substandard character by calling me these derogatory names." Though he didn't look as incensed as he had moments before, Snape still looked extremely annoyed by the young Auror.

"Good, you've agreed. Hermione, come sit by him," Tonks said, a lilt creeping into her voice.

"I..."

"Don't ruin our fun, Hermione. Sit by him." The devilish gleam in Tonks's eyes should have warned Hermione away from the situation, but she couldn't help but notice Snape wasn't protesting any longer. Curiosity grabbed hold of her again, and she carefully moved over to sit beside him, leaving well over a foot of space between their bodies.

"Who should go first?" Tonks asked, satisfied that the opposing team was on board for the game now. No one answered, so she finally nodded. "Right then, we'll go first."

She scooped the dice from the table, gave them a shake in her cupped hand, and tossed them across the polished wooden surface. Hermione watched as they tumbled toward the edge and landed on *kiss neck*.

"This is absurd," Snape muttered under his breath. Hermione had to agree. She couldn't imagine her former professor following the commands on the dice. She especially couldn't see him performing such suggestive commands on her.

"Lean back, love," Tonks said, turning to Remus. He complied and bared his neck to her. She pressed her lips to his neck, lingering on the flesh there.

"A peck would have sufficed," Snape said, interrupting their moment.

Tonks finally pulled away. "Actually, the rules state that the action must be performed for five seconds in the first round, increasing by an additional five second during each consecutive round."

"I certainly never agreed to that."

"Don't be such a baby about it, Snape. Are you afraid Hermione won't like it?"

"Of course she won't like it," he replied. "I'm her professor."

Hermione cleared her throat. "Actually, sir, you're not my professor anymore."

He looked at her for several long seconds, his face not showing any expression she could read. "You know what I meant."

She nodded at him. "Yes, I do. But, if we're really going to play this game, then it might be best if we forget that for now."

"Very well, roll the damned dice," he barked at her.

Tonks giggled in glee as Hermione picked the dice up and tossed them on the low coffee table. She closed her eyes as they scattered across the surface, finally lifting her lids when the sound of tumbling dice stopped. *Rub chest*. Hermione let out a breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding. It was a reasonably non-sexual command, and she thought she could pull it off with a minimum of embarrassment until she looked up to meet Snape's dark gaze. He appeared aloof and bored with the entire situation, his arms crossed over his chest.

"Umm..." Hermione trailed off, unsure how to approach him with what she had to do.

He snorted at her and dropped both arms to his sides. "Get on with it, then."

"For five seconds," Tonks reminded her.

Hermione nervously lifted her hand and pressed it to the middle of Snape's chest. He was surprisingly warm for having such a cold demeanor. Making small circles with her hand, she completed the five seconds and quickly snatched her hand away before he broke a finger or two for her impertinence.

Remus chuckled. "Be nice, Severus."

"Shut up, Lupin," Snape shot back.

Remus leaned forward and plucked the dice from the table, rolling them before anyone could make any further comments. The action die landed on the surprise side while the location die directed him to the lips. Smiling, Remus leaned forward and placed a tender kiss on Tonks's lips. Five seconds later, he reluctantly pulled back.

Tonks giggled and pushed him playfully on the shoulder. "You're such a sodding romantic, Remus."

"Hush. It's Severus's turn," Remus replied.

"I really don't think this is appropriate."

"Roll!" Tonks's voice was so loud that it briefly attracted the attention of several other party goers across the room.

Snape snatched the dice from the table and rolled them with an indigent huff. Hermione held her breath while they floundered on the table, finally falling on *suck* and *surprise*. Her face flushed with color at the thought of Snape sucking on any of her body parts. His pale skin seemed as if it also turned a slight tinge of pink when he saw the command.

"Go on, Severus," Remus goaded him.

"Shut up."

"What are you going to suck on, Snape?" Tonks asked, a smile twitching her lips up at the corners.

Hermione couldn't imagine what he'd choose. Probably something innocent, though she wasn't sure any of the options would be innocent if sucking was involved. She looked up from the table to see Snape watching her, a question in his eyes. She gave a slight nod and waited for him to continue.

Agonizing seconds ticked by before he finally bent his head down to her. Startled, she turned to face him.

"Don't," he whispered. She froze and waited with her hands clasped together in her lap. Another moment passed before she felt his warm breath on the shell of her ear. The sensation sent a charge of electricity up her spine and hitched her breath. After only a brief hesitation, he wrapped his warm lips around her earlobe and gently sucked it further into his mouth.

Hermione slammed her eyes shut and tried desperately to regulate her breathing. Five seconds felt like forever. Slowly, he disengaged and righted himself on the sofa beside her. Her head was swimming, and her earlobe was cold in the open air. Try as she might, Hermione couldn't bring herself to even look at Snape. The situation was just too embarrassing.

Silently, Tonks grabbed the dice, rolled, and laughed when it landed on *rub toes*. "Off with those shoes, Remus."

He obediently removed his shoes and kicked both feet into her lap. Just when Remus closed his eyes and started enjoying himself, she stopped. "Time's up," Tonks said with a smile.

"That wasn't nearly long enough. My feet are killing me."

"Ten seconds. That's all you get. Your turn, Hermione." Tonks pushed the dice across the table to her.

With no small amount of trepidation, Hermione rolled the dice. They clattered across the table and came to a stop on *lick lips*. When she saw her command, she nearly swallowed her tongue.

"You can stop anytime you'd like, Miss Granger. There is no spell compelling us to continue this game," Snape said.

She continued to stare at the dice. "Why haven't you stopped, then, sir?"

"I am not a coward, despite Miss Tonks claims to the contrary."

"I'm not a coward either," Hermione whispered, finally looking up at him. "Do you mind if I continue?"

A momentary flash of surprise crossed his features before he schooled his expression to his usual blank stare. "By all means, Miss Granger."

She took a deep breath and exhaled slowly, wetting her lips. She could feel his eyes on her, boring into her, making her skin itch with their intensity. Slowly, she turned to face him, tilting her head up. His lips were thin and pressed tightly together. Hermione extended the tip of her tongue and tentatively touched it to his lower lip. When he didn't push her away, she swept her tongue across the length of his lower lip, following the curve of his mouth to trace the line of his upper lip.

As she cut across the seam of his lips, she felt him relax slightly, parting his lips only the smallest bit. She ran her tongue back and forth along the seam, exploring the texture. He tasted faintly of some sort of herbal tea.

"Hermione, your ten seconds have passed." Remus's voice startled her, and she jumped back, gasping for breath.

Snape cleared his throat. "Go on, Lupin."

While Snape watched Lupin roll the dice, Hermione watched her former professor. His lips were still glistening from her tongue. Absently, he flicked his own tongue out to wet his lips again. Hermione felt light-headed from what she had just done. Most disconcerting of all was that she had enjoyed it. Shaking her head, she pushed the unwanted thoughts aside. It had been too long since her last date.

"Kiss ears." Tonks laughed as Remus grabbed her left ear and gently tugged her closer. He placed fluttering kisses along it while his wife giggled and whispered in his ear. Hermione wished she had someone with which to share that sort of intimacy, but had yet to find anyone worth more than a couple dates.

"Your turn, Severus." Lupin pushed the dice across the table.

Hermione watched the two dice fly across the table before settling on *massage toes*. Snape threw a glance in her direction and raised an eyebrow in question.

"Should I take off my shoes?" she asked.

"It appears so."

"Right." She quickly kicked off her shoes and awkwardly lifted her feet to rest on the sofa between them.

Snape reached out and sat them both into his lap, which pulled a gasp from Hermione's throat. The gasp dwindled into heavy silence as he gently pressed his thumbs into her soles, covering the top of her toes with his long fingers. It took more effort than Hermione thought possible to keep from moaning aloud at his touch. She found herself wondering if he did this often or if he was just naturally talented with his hands.

"Ten seconds, Snape," Tonks said, sounding quite smug. "Unless you're enjoying yourself so much that you just can't stop."

"Don't be so obnoxious, *Nymphadora*." Snape lifted Hermione's feet from his lap and placed them on the floor beside her shoes.

Tonks snatched the dice and rolled. Her command indicated that she should lick Remus's chest. She laughed and turned to her husband. "I'll get you undressed before the night is through, Remus Lupin."

He blushed and unbuttoned his shirt just far enough to expose a sizeable portion of his chest. It was quickly obscured by Tonks and her bright pink hair as she swiped a flat tongue up the expanse of skin. Remus's sharp intake of breath was audible to everyone in the alcove. Hermione dropped her gaze, not wanting to intrude on such a private moment. Finally, after the required fifteen seconds, Tonks pulled away and gave Remus a quick kiss on the lips.

"All yours, Hermione," she said.

Hermione picked up the dice and rolled them. The action was *massage*, but the location was up to her because the die had landed on the side with *surprise* written in small block letters. She entertained the thought of making him take off his shoes to return the favor, but she didn't want to make him feel undignified or put out. Instead, she decided that the best course of action would be his neck.

"Could you turn around, sir?"

"I thought we were pretending that you weren't my student," he murmured.

"Okay." Hermione took a deep breath. "Could you turn around, Severus?"

He complied without any commentary on her use of his given name. Once his back was to her, she brought both hands up to knead the muscles in his neck. After a few seconds, Hermione felt him lean into her touch slightly. It gave her the courage to bring her mouth closer to his ear, trying to elicit some sort of reaction from him. Just as he tensed up at her light breath in his ear, Remus announced that her fifteen seconds had passed.

Reluctantly, she pulled away from Snape. Severus, she corrected herself and returned to her spot on the sofa. She watched him from the corner of her eye as he turned around with jerky movements, pressing his fingertips into his thighs. Hermione wondered if he had enjoyed her touch and then realized that she hoped he had.

While her attention was focused on her partner, Remus had already rolled the dice and was in the middle of sucking on Tonks's neck while she alternated between moans and giggles.

Hermione looked away and caught Severus's eye. He raised his brow and glanced in the married couple's direction. Hermione tried to stifle her nervous laughter.

After what was certainly more than fifteen seconds, Remus pulled away and motioned toward the dice. His voice was husky as he said, "Your turn, Severus."

Severus scooped up the dice and tossed them across the table. The action die landed on the surprise side, but the location die pointed him toward her chest. "Are you still with me, Miss Granger?" he asked softly.

Hermione's ears were roaring, and her mind was darting back and forth, wondering what he would choose to do. "Yes," she said, though her voice sounded very far away.

"Perhaps you could unbutton the top three buttons on your shirt for me," he murmured.

Tonks leaned forward in her seat, watching with wide eyes. Remus was just as interested, but he was hiding it a bit better than his counterpart.

She fumbled with the first three buttons on her blouse. When she finally managed to undo them, Severus said, "Lean back."

Hermione distantly heard Tonks choke back a sound of disbelief. She tried to ignore the audience as she settled back into the soft cushions on the sofa. Snape leaned over her, bracing one hand on the cushion beside her shoulder. Slowly, he dipped his head down to her naked chest and let his breath flutter over the exposed skin and the edges of her powder blue, lace bra. She exhaled a shuddering breath just as he descended on her and ran a wet tongue up her breastbone.

She closed her eyes and clamped her teeth together to prevent the 'oh god' from falling from her lips. Severus deftly moved his tongue back down her breastbone and over to trace the lace of her bra, occasionally dipping it beneath the edge to taste the swell of her breast.

Just as he moved to the other side to lave her left breast with his tongue, Remus cleared his throat. "Fifteen seconds," he said.

Severus didn't stop. Through the blood rushing in her ears, Hermione heard Tonks tell Remus to hush.

After several additional seconds of Severus lazily tracing her breasts, Hermione felt him pull away. She cracked her eyelids open to see Severus still hovering over her, watching her expression with dark eyes and dilated pupils. "Perhaps we should stop this game after all," he said, standing up.

"But we were just getting started," Tonks protested.

"I should leave." With a swift bow in Hermione's direction, he swept out of the alcove and disappeared around the corner.

"Are you okay, Hermione?" Remus's soft voice asked.

She nodded, still staring at the space where Severus had been standing. "I'm fine." Her voice sounded distant, even to her. "I should go, too." Hermione paused. "Thank you for the, uh, game."

With half her mind intact, Hermione made her way to the back door. Some fresh air in the garden would cool her flushed skin and clear her head. When she had agreed to play the game, she had no idea that latent feelings for Severus Snape would be brought to the surface. She had always admired him for his intellect and loyalty, but she had no idea that his tongue and fingers could arouse such desire within her. And, most surprising of all, he seemed affected by her as well. Thinking of him made her heart beat faster.

She stumbled through the door and stepped into the noticeably cooler air outside. Sucking in a deep breath, she wrapped her arms tightly around herself and walked down the overgrown path toward some particularly nasty-looking bushes. Harry really hadn't done much to the overgrown garden behind the house. Then again, gardening didn't seem to be of much interest to him.

"Are you cold?"

The voice startled Hermione, and she nearly tripped over an uneven stone on the path. A strong hand with long fingers wrapped around her arm to steady her. She knew who it was without looking. Severus Snape's voice was unmistakable.

"No, I'm fine. I just stepped out for a breath of fresh air."

"And here I thought you were following me, Miss Granger."

"Hermione," she corrected.

"We're not playing the game anymore, Hermione. We're back to you being my former student."

"I don't think I can go back to thinking like that anymore, *Professor*." His gentle grip on her arm was extremely distracting, especially since his thumb was lightly brushing over her inner arm.

When she looked up to meet his eyes, she found that his gaze was directed firmly at the ground. "I'm afraid that game of dice was a mistake."

"Why?" she asked.

"We...I...shouldn't have done that."

"Done what?"

Severus sighed and lifted his head to look at her. "All of it. It was inappropriate. I'm twenty years your senior, you're a former student of mine, I I'm...It's just not..."

"You regret it," Hermione said.

"Yes."

"I don't."

Severus looked incredulous. "You must be joking, Hermione." His astonished tone and the glimmer of hope that followed on its heels softened her heart to him.

"Actually, I'm not. Do you really regret it so much?"

He sighed and released her arm, stepping away to turn his back on her. "It's just not... proper. People will talk; they'll think I'm a dirty old man who slipped you a potion."

Hermione laughed. She couldn't help herself. "Since when do you care what anyone thinks?"

He turned on her again, this time with an annoyed expression on his face. "Are you telling me that you *enjoyed* what happened back there?"

"Yes. I enjoyed it a great deal." She took a step toward Severus, clasping her hands behind her back in an effort to hide their trembling from him.

"Even my tongue on your body?" he murmured softly, dropping his eyes to the ground again.

"Especially that." Hermione took another step closer. "But I do regret one thing."

"Yes?"

She smiled. "We stopped before the dice told us to kiss."

He hesitantly lifted his eyes to look at her again. "Would you be averse to kissing without the dice?"

"Not at all. But I do have a question."

Severus lifted his brows. "Ask."

"Where did this come from?"

"Where did what come from, Hermione?"

"You, your feelings for me."

"I'm afraid we've been the victims of an elaborate ploy by Tonks," he said.

Hermione furrowed her brow. "What do you mean?"

His voice was barely above a whisper, but it carried well in the quiet garden. "When we were developing the potion...the one used to revive Potter...Tonks found herself under the impression that I harbored feelings for you. She mentioned it to me, but I denied it, of course."

"And how did she figure that you like me?"

"She saw me watching you one day. You were working in my laboratory. We had just experienced a setback on the potion, and you had started from scratch again. I was watching you when she brought the ingredients we had requested."

"And she thought you had feelings for me?"

"Yes."

"Did you?"

Severus hesitated for a moment. "Simply put, yes, I did. Though, I didn't see them as romantic feelings at the time. I was very confused, and you're very complicated. I spent most of our time together trying not to think of you in an improper fashion." He sighed and ran a hand through his dark hair. "I suppose the trauma of the war with Voldemort had more of an effect on me than I originally thought. You were the first person to treat me with any kind of warmth after the trial. I found it very appealing. I found you very appealing."

Hermione didn't know how to respond. They had worked together over four years ago. To hear that he had harbored feelings for her during that time was nothing short of astounding. She had no idea he reciprocated her feelings to some degree, although, at the time, she had not thought of anything beyond a friendship with him. Tonks and her devious little game had had an effect on both of them it seemed.

After a moment of opening and closing her mouth in an excellent imitation of a fish, Hermione finally spoke. "I don't know what to say," she admitted. "I had no idea you... felt anything for me. Well, other than annoyance over my more abrasive personality traits."

Severus rubbed the bridge of his nose wearily. "I assure you, any annoyance I had stemmed from my own confused feelings at the time. It had absolutely nothing to do with you."

"Were you never going to say anything to me? About your feelings, that is."

"Of course I wasn't, Hermione. Why would I make a fool of myself by acting like a lovesick teenage boy? I didn't think you felt any affection for me beyond our classroom roles. Besides, you're better off without me."

"I'm glad you're telling me now, even if we've wasted several years."

Snape snorted. "Don't be absurd, Hermione. Nothing is going to come of this. The game with a mistake, and this is a mistake."

"So, you're over it, over me?"

"That's not what I'm saying," he said with a deep sigh.

"Then what are you saying? That you're trying to be noble and proper by sending me off to date boys I don't have any interest in because you're afraid of what people might say?"

"You're simplifying the situation a bit much, don't you think?"

"Actually, no, I think I'm just cutting to the heart of the matter."

Snape pulled out a pocket watch and made a show of checking the time by the dim light in the garden. "It's late. I should go."

"Are you going to make me get the dice, or are you going to kiss me without them?" Hermione asked, stepping in front of him.

"Hermione..."

"Severus, please."

"This isn't right." His voice had a pleading quality to it.

She smiled softly at him. "I'll get the dice. I really will. And I'm sure I could spell them to land in a certain sequence."

The playful teasing made him give her a faint smile. "Is that so?"

"Oh, yes. I'd like to try the licking chest thing again."

Snape opened his smirking mouth to reply, but snapped it shut before any sound came out. Instead, he frowned at her and changed his course. "You're making this very difficult for me, Hermione."

"Actually, I think it's you who is making this difficult. I'd just like a kiss."

Hermione watched his eyes narrow and the gears in his brain grinding together in this uncharted territory. Just when she thought he was going to turn away and Apparate out of the garden, he pulled her into his arms and pressed his lips against hers. The shock of his actions made her gasp, giving Severus ample space to slip his tongue between her soft lips. Slowly, he explored her mouth in a kiss that would have been leisurely if it weren't for the desperation lacing each movement of his lips against hers.

Hermione didn't remember when her arms wrapped around his neck, but sometime during the kiss she had wound them tightly around him. His hands on the small of her back and buried in her hair felt much more erotic than they should have. Her mind was racing, but she wasn't getting anywhere. All her thoughts were chanting the same thing. *He's kissing me!*

By the time he released her lips, she was gasping for air, her chest rising and falling roughly. His lanky hair brushed against her cheek as he rested his forehead against hers. They stood in silence, each anticipating the next move.

"I knew it!"

The shout from the back door caused Severus and Hermione to jump apart in shock.

Tonks and her pink hair bobbed out into the garden, Remus trailing behind with a smile plastered on his face and his shirt rumpled and buttoned incorrectly. "I told you, Remus. I told you he liked her."

"But how did you know she liked him?" Remus asked.

"Oh, Hermione's easier to read than old Snape here. She always asked about him, wanting to know how he's doing, what he's working on. If someone actually wants to talk about Mr. Sourpuss here, then it's got to be love, right?"

Remus grinned. "Right you are, my dear." He slowly walked over to stand beside Severus. "Thought you might want these," Remus said, holding out the dice before slipping them in Severus's pocket.

"Be seeing you!" Tonks called over her shoulder as she dragged her husband off.

It was all Hermione could do to control her giggles until after the other couple had left.

"I will not be made into a laughing stock," Severus said, trying to infuse his voice with anger he just wasn't feeling.

"I would love to find a nice, quiet place to play a bit more of that dice game," she whispered, leaning into Severus.

He considered her proposal for only a moment. "I would find that amenable. I would, however, prefer a private place where we won't be interrupted by meddling Aurors and tiresome werewolves."

"Oh, I think that can be arranged," Hermione whispered, tugging on the front of his shirt and pulling him in for another kiss.

THE END