

Truth or Dare

by Becky

Laura rubbed her eyes, which were starting to get irritated. It was getting late. She had been thumbing through the files aimlessly all day. She really had had nothing to do, but she had needed to at least pretend to do something. But it hadn't helped. She was too afraid to let her thoughts roam free. Too often they turned to Stefan and their conversation the other day. He had been so cruel.

"Truth or Dare?" a voice asked, breaking into her contemplation.

"What?" Laura asked, looking up confused. She saw her sister standing at the door. "Amy, please, I'm busy."

Amy walked in anyway. "No, you're not, the workday's over. Come on Laura, you need a distraction. You need to take a break, regain your balance. What better way than with a good game of Truth or Dare? Are ya chicken?"

"How old are you?" Laura griped, but a mischievous smile was starting to form. She did need a break from it all.

"Today, I think I'll be twelve," Amy declared. "Remember those times, Laura? We used to do things together. We were sisters." The hurt seeped into her voice.

"Oh, Amy, we are sisters. Don't you know how much you mean to me? It's just that life--"

"I know, I know. It's one drama after another. For at least a few hours, let's just be Amy and Laura, two chicks having fun."

Laura smiled widely. "That sounds wonderful. Why not?" She walked around her desk and plopped down on the floor. "Okay, ask again."

"Truth or Dare?" Amy asked, finding a spot on the floor.

Laura paused. She remembered how ruthless Amy could be at this game. "What are the consequences of not telling the truth or refusing to do the dare?"

"The other person gets to reveal a really juicy secret," Amy responded.

"That's a good consequence," Laura muttered. She wondered if she should bail out now, but she tossed that idea. She needed to have some fun. Which should she pick? "Truth," she decided.

"Who was the last person you slept with?" Amy asked.

Laura glared at her sister. "David Letterman," she said sarcastically.

"Laura..."

"Oh, alright." She paused. "Stefan."

"I knew it! How was he?" Amy grinned.

"Ah, ah, ah, you only get one question. Your turn. Truth or Dare?"

"He just did that so he could win me over," Laura said, looking down.

"Do you really believe that?" Amy said softly.

Laura looked up into her sister's sweet eyes and admitted, "No, I don't. But it's too late now. I can't take back what I said."

"No, but you can apologize and start over."

"That's what I'm trying to do -- with Luke."

Amy let out a silent scream in her head. Taking a few seconds to gather her thoughts, she said, "Laura, it's been a long, long time since I've seen that special look in your eye when you talk about Luke. Now I see it when you talk about Stefan."

"Why don't you date him if you like him so much? I thought we were going to play a game, not talk about Stefan," Laura said.

"You brought him up," Amy said.

"And now I'm changing the subject," Laura snapped.

"Fine. Truth or Dare?"

"Truth. And if you ask---"

Amy gave her a triumphant smile. "How was he?"

"Amy!"

"What? I want to know."

"I refuse to answer."

"Laura!" Amy whined. "Alright, this one then. You're in love with him, aren't you?"

"I'm not going to answer that, either. Double dare."

"Oooh, double dare! Now this requires some serious thought." An idea had already started forming in her head. The question was did she have the guts to go through with it?

Laura put her hand over her face and laid down. "What have I done?" She laughed. "Let me guess. You want me kiss Monica?"

"Hmm..." Amy pretended to consider it. "Nah. I think... yes! I dare you to -- hold on." She got up and walked to the door.

"Amy," Laura said as she got up to follow her. "Where--"

"Wait here," Amy instructed.

Laura sat back down, getting more nervous as the seconds ticked by. Finally, Amy returned and held out her hand for Laura to take it. "Come with me."

Reluctantly, Laura did as she was told. They walked until Amy stopped in front of Stefan's office. "I dare you to kiss Stefan."

"Goodbye," Laura said as she tried to leave, but Amy dragged her in.

"Hello, Stefan," Amy said cheerfully.

Stefan removed his glasses and stared at them. He did not return Amy's smile, though his pulse speeded up a little at the thought that maybe she has dared Laura to kiss him. "May I ask what you think you are doing in my office? This is not the place for childish antics, Ms. Vining, Mrs. Spencer."

"I'm out of here," Laura said, but Amy blocked her way.

"Oh no you don't. You two are going to stay in here until you talk about everything. And I mean everything. Laura, you're my sister, and I love you. Get a backbone and fight for what you really want. Forget about what Lesley wants. This is your life. Stefan, stop being such a heartless bastard to my sister. Don't make me regret this."

That said she quickly walked out, slammed the door and locked it. She sat down and smiled, ignoring the pounding on the door and the threats coming from both Laura and Stefan. She wished she had thought to bring food. This could take a while.

The End

Laura looked away for a second. That was the last question she was expecting, or wanting to answer. Her mind raced, trying to think of something to say.

"Stefan's probably still at the hospital," Nikolas continued, watching his mother carefully.

Laura turned and walked a few steps as he spoke. She turned back to her son. "I'll go to see him, Nikolas. I will -- when the time is right."

"Do you love him at all?" Nikolas said impulsively, his unanswered question more blunt this time. "I'm sorry. That was rude to ask."

"No, it's okay," Laura said quickly, then paused. She answered him, her words coming out slowly this time. "I care about Stefan very much, and I always will. But, no, I'm not in love with him anymore."

Nikolas tried not to show his disappointment in his mother's words. He thought he had left that fantasy of his parent's being together behind him, but obviously he hadn't. "I put you on the spot. I'm sorry."

"But we both love you very, very much, and that's something that will never, ever change," Laura told him, meaning every word.

"Well, sometimes things don't work out no matter how much you love someone," Nikolas said thoughtfully. "You hold on to what you can and you let go of the rest."

"You know that already?" Laura asked.

"Maybe. Well, I'm -- I'm trying. I'm trying."

"You're amazing," Laura said, hugging him again. "I'm so proud of you."

"I love you," Nikolas told her.

There was a knock on the door, and they separated as Gia popped her head through the door. "I hate to bother you. Nikolas your car is double-parked, and they're not going to wait much longer. What do you want me to tell them?"

"Uh, just tell them I'll be down in a second."

"No, no, you go on ahead," Laura urged. "Go see your uncle."

"Are you sure?"

Laura nodded, "I'm positive. Really. Go see him, okay?" She kissed him on the cheek.

"I love you," Nikolas said.

"I love you," Laura replied. She turned to Gia. "Nice meeting you."

"You, too," Gia answered, but she noticed Nikolas' mother wasn't really paying attention, so she followed Nikolas out without another word.

Laura stared at the door, barely noticing when it shut. It took her a moment or two, maybe three, to remember she was standing in the middle of her office. She turned and stopped, her decision-making abilities suddenly impaired. She slowly walked to the window, once again taking in the beautiful view. But this time her eyes were searching for something. They finally landed on the familiar building.

General Hospital.

He was there. She touched the window glass without thinking. 'Stefan,' she mouthed. She had a moment of fear, feeling as if her uttering his name would make him disappear again.

She turned her back to the window and again stared at the closed door.

I'm not in love with him anymore. Her words echoed in the empty room, taunting her. "I'm not," she said out loud.

And she also wasn't going to General Hospital. Nope, she definitely wasn't going there.

As she rounded the corner that led to the hospital, Laura had repeated in her mind the very plausible reason why she was there, until she started believing herself.

She parked in a remote place and sat in her car for a few minutes. She was feeling sick, her stomach was twisting, her mouth was dry. It had to be all that stress from the new business. That was it. It was a good thing she was here.

She got out of her car and walked halfway through the parking garage and suddenly stopped, and turned. Then turned back.

"I have as much right to be here as anybody," she muttered.

She finally reached the elevator and pressed the 'up' button. She waited two seconds before becoming impatient and deciding that taking the stairs was the way to go.

She had barely gone up a few stairs, when she heard the soft chiming sound indicating that the elevator was coming.

Retracing her steps, she was about to leave the last stair when she heard it.

His voice, it was unmistakable. She would have recognized it anywhere.

All she had to do was take one more step and she would be able to see him. She curled her fingers around the edge of the wall, and leaned over just enough to remain hidden.

She saw him, and time froze.

She gripped the stone wall, fighting every impulse in her that was wanting to touch him, and make sure he was really real.

Her eyes took in all of him, drinking in everything that had been missing in her life for the past months. He looked

thinner, she noticed, but there didn't seem to be any signs of any abuse. In fact, he looked almost happy.

She thought she saw his head turn in her direction, and she immediately backed into the stair wall, her heart pounding in her chest.

A few seconds passed, enough for fantasies of him to pass through her mind of him finding her and kissing her until her knees weakened.

That didn't happen, and she slowly looked over the edge, overtaken with disappointment as she saw a now empty space, accompanied by a deafening silence, except for the still-strong beating of her heart.

She sat down, her body beginning to shake, tears pouring down her cheeks.

He was alive.

And Laura began to breathe easier.

~The End~