

Just another story

by Memory

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Chapter 1 of 1

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All my gratitude to my patient previewer **Tearsofphoenix**, and to my wonderful beta **DementedLeaf**. Many thanks to my kind readers and reviewers.

With a disturbing creak, the door began to open, then suddenly stopped its movement.

"You should leave your wand here. No potential weapons are admitted inside," the jailer said with his rough accent. "It's safer: prisoners are unarmed, but you never know what they could do."

"I'll take the risk." The voice answering was calm, almost arrogant. "I know the accused since her days in school. I think I can handle the situation."

The door resumed its slow motion, and two shapes obscured the light for a moment. Dark eyes stared at hazelnut eyes, and an astonished silence followed, broken by an incredulous whisper.

"You..."

There was no direct answer, only a meaningful glance. Silence fell again, until a commanding voice spoke.

"You can leave us now. We will be all right." The tone didn't allow replies, so the jailer chewed his lower lip in hesitation, scratched his head and, after a last doubtful glance, turned and left.

They were alone. And with an entire world of questions. He sat at the other side of the table. She raised her eyes at him, and the skirmish began.

"Why did you come here?"

"I am your solicitor."

"You are WHAT? I'm not ready to start writing my will."

She was evidently doing her best to sound sarcastic, and his lips curled in that disdainful smile she remembered so well.

"Perhaps you don't know the whole meaning of this word. I didn't either, till two months ago. A solicitor is somebody who gives legal advice, draws up legal documents and does preparatory work for barristers."

"B-barristers?" Now she looked puzzled.

"You really are not familiar with legal terms, I see. Unbelievable. A subject missing from your encyclopaedic knowledge. A barrister is a lawyer who is qualified to represent clients in the higher law courts in England and Wales."

She looked even more puzzled. And scared.

"Higher law courts?"

"Are you going to repeat every word I say? Though I know that prison can have devastating effects on mind and reactivity, you shouldn't be so surprised. You MUST have imagined that your past story and current situation would bring you before a tribunal."

An angry reaction followed. "I have imagined NOTHING! Why should I have? I don't even know why I am being kept here!"

"Because this is a different story. Now may I remind you that you are wasting time that would be better spent on more useful questions?"

Her eyes glared in the half-obscurity; then a sigh of defeat followed.

"You are right. So, why did you decide to accept this task?" Her voice tried to sound detached, but an immense bitterness vibrated behind her words. "I thought you disliked me, especially after what happened in my third year at school."

"You mean that scene in the Shack? Or are you alluding to those repeated little thefts? Perhaps to my comment about your teeth?"

"Everything," she said, closing her eyes in discomfort.

"Well, that disgraceful moment in the Shack surely was the beginning of an even more disgraceful chain of events... the ones that have lead you here."

Her fists clenched, but he continued, unperturbed at that signal of mounting rage.

"I hope you won't deny your many faults."

"My... faults?! I was trying to help!" Desolation had substituted rage.

"Yes, I know it. This is why I am here, by the way. I am the only one who still believes you, after what happened."

"You... you mean that nobody else... But I have only done what I was requested to do!"

"That's what you think; but if you go back to the Shack's episode, you see that you have slowly built yourself a trap."

"But how? HOW?"

"Letting Wormtail free was a very bad move, for instance. They now think that it was planned by you in advance, using a device. Perhaps even your cat Crookshanks, to communicate with him."

"But I... I didn't let him free! It was Harry!"

"Well, the report Potter made was a bit strange. Perhaps you Confounded him while pretending to talk with me?"

"This... this a complete nonsense! I want a solicitor!"

"I AM your solicitor," he coldly reminded her.

"Then why are you accusing me?"

"I am only exposing the facts, the information that will lead you before a jury. And let me tell you that, if this is the way you are going to defend yourself, your cause is lost in advance."

"But I am telling the truth!"

"YOUR truth," the inexorable reply was.

"Then what I should do? Should I lie?"

"Perhaps you should begin by explaining to me why you did what you did."

"I did what... I did? What is this, a riddle? I thought you knew why! Weren't we all on the same side?"

"This is another story. We can't prove anything with intentions or thoughts."

"What about witnesses? Isn't there anybody who could talk in my defence?"

"I'm afraid they wouldn't be believed, because, most unfortunately indeed, the majority of your friends are in prison as well."

"In prison?! How could this happen?" The anguish in her question was indescribable.

"As I told you, this is another story. You must think about your defence now; otherwise, your trial will be unsuccessful, given your scarce cooperation."

"But I want to cooperate!"

A short, terrified pause followed, then her panic exploded.

"Please! Please help me! Tell me what I have to do and I'll do it!"

"Well, as I was saying, perhaps you could start by telling me how you got involved in Dumbledore's murder."

"Dumbledore's... murder?" she repeated with a disoriented look.

"Yes, and then we could talk about the many criminal activities you performed in the last years; being a spy, playing a double role, keeping in touch with an illegal group of

activists promoting a clandestine war, helping their murderous plans against important representatives of the wizarding world, interfering in the Ministry's programs with the clear purpose of creating confusion..."

Her brows raised in shock.

"Wait... wait a minute! You mean... you mean I am accused of all these crimes?"

He nodded quietly and she burst out in terror, "But... but this is false! This is crazy! This... this... you cannot believe this!"

Panic in her voice had reached its peak, and she began to sob desperately.

Straightening in his full, impressive length, Professor Snape crossed his arms.

"Miss Granger," he said slowly. "As I have stated many times, THIS is another story."

She looked at him blankly. Then, suddenly, she realised: her hand dashed to cover her mouth, and her eyes widened in shocked, immense horror. He shot her an apologetic glance.

"I'm sorry, Miss Granger... This time it's your turn to play the villain."