

Ca' the Yowes

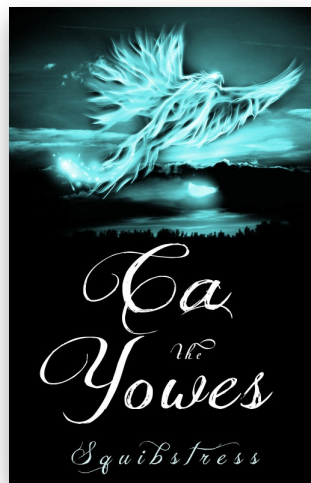
by Squibstress

Minerva awakes in St Mungo's after a Stunner attack to find she has an unusual visitor. A bit of fluff.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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*Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear;
Thou'rt tae love and heav'n sae dear,
Nocht of ill may come thee near,
My bonnie dearie.*

~ Robert Burns, "Ca' the Yowes"

When Minerva McGonagall woke in an unfamiliar room, the severe pain that gripped her chest when she tried to sit up told her immediately both where she was and why she was there.

A thickset, balding man in a green robe hurried over to her bedside. "Professor McGonagall, welcome back! Do you know where you are?"

"St Mungo's, if I'm not very much mistaken," she answered, her voice croaking with disuse.

The Healer smiled. "Yes, good. And can you tell me who is Minister of Magic?" he enquired.

"Cornelius Fudge, unless the old fool has finally managed to get himself the boot," she answered.

The Healer smiled again. The quick return of her even quicker wit was an excellent sign. His Quick-Quotes Quill took notes on a small piece of parchment that hovered in the air next to him as he dictated, "Patient oriented as to time and place," while he passed his wand slowly over Minerva's torso. "Wave readings consistent with post-acute cardiac rhythm," he told the quill. "Repeat q four hours to establish baseline."

He turned his attention back to his patient. "So, how are you feeling?"

"My chest hurts; I'm not certain about anything else just yet," Minerva answered.

"I'll have the mediwizard bring you something to help with the pain," he said.

"Thank you, Healer . . . ?" she asked, searching for his badge and failing to read it in the absence of her glasses.

"Gudgeon."

"Any relation to Davy Gudgeon? He was one of my best N.E.W.T. students a few years back," she said.

Healer Gudgeon gave a little bow. "At your service, Professor," he said with a grin.

"My gods, it can't be!" Minerva exclaimed, sending a quick stab of white heat to her chest. Her hand flew to where it hurt and found a thick bandage.

Gudgeon said, "That can come off in a few days. The skin is healing quite nicely."

Minerva was a bit taken aback to realise her former student had been tending to her chest, but she immediately told herself to stop being silly. It would happen more and more often as she got older, she thought, given that most of the witches and wizards in Britain younger than age fifty had at one time sat under her watchful eye in the Transfiguration classroom.

"I can't believe little Davy Gudgeon is a Healer at St Mungo's. I remember you as a wee, timid thing so anxious to prove your Gryffindor mettle you went and got your eye nearly knocked out playing that foolish game with the Whomping Willow," she said, trying not to laugh, which she knew would hurt like the dickens.

"I think that's what gave me the idea to go into medicine," he replied. "What I remember most, though, is the dressing down you gave me afterwards. I think it scarred me worse than my injury," he joked, pointing to a faded but rather large, jagged cicatrice just below his left eye.

This time she did laugh, and it hurt quite as much as she had expected.

"I'm sorry, Professor," Gudgeon said. "I'll have that mediwizard right in with your pain potion."

"When can I go home?"

"Oh, not for at least a few days. You gave everyone quite a fright, Professor."

"I assure you, it was not in the least my intention," she said. "Can you tell me a bit about what happened? It's not entirely clear to me. I was Stunned, was I not?"

"Yes. Four ruddy times!" Healer Gudgeon said, his face flushing with anger. "Frankly, you're lucky to be alive. For someone of your—" He stopped.

"Age," she finished for him. "Yes, I quite agree. You must be an excellent Healer," she added kindly.

"I had wonderful teachers," he replied, smiling at her again. "And of course, you wouldn't have survived to get to me without Madam Pomfrey's quick thinking and considerable skill."

It wasn't the first time Poppy had saved her life, Minerva thought to herself, then pushed the thought away.

"How long have I been unconscious?" she asked.

"Two days," he answered.

She was shocked. "Do you think I might have some water? My throat is quite dry," she said after a moment.

"Of course," Gudgeon answered, pointing his wand to a glass on the side table and filling it with *anAguamenti*. "And you can try eating a little something if the water stays down all right," he added.

"Thank you, Mr Gudgeon," she said. "Or I suppose I must call you 'Healer Gudgeon' now."

"Just 'Davy' will be fine, Professor," he answered. "I'll order you that pain potion now. You get some more rest," he said, reviewing his notes for a moment before turning to go.

At that moment, she noticed a nearly transparent, silvery figure hovering quietly in the corner of the room. She recognised it immediately as a Patronus, and the familiar avian shape told her whose it was.

"Just a moment, Mr Gud—Davy," she said. "How long has that been there?" she asked, indicating the silvery Phoenix in the corner.

"Oh, I had almost forgotten about your guest," Gudgeon replied, chuckling. "Been here since you arrived, and we couldn't shoo it away. Madam Pomfrey assured me it would be fine to let it stay. Do you want me to see if we can get rid of it?" he asked.

"Oh, no," she answered. "I'm quite fond of it, actually." She was grateful to Poppy for her intervention; it was comforting to realise how well her friend knew her.

"All right," the Healer said, knowing better than to invade Professor McGonagall's privacy by asking more about her mysterious guardian, and left the room.

Minerva looked over at the Patronus. She knew it must have taken a prodigious feat of magic for it to have stayed by her side for two days, but of course, her husband was no ordinary wizard.

What surprised her more and filled her with quiet joy was knowing that it meant Albus had been thinking of nothing but her since he found out about her injury. A Patronus

took tremendous focus, and to maintain it for more than even a few minutes would require that he concentrate on his happiest memories and nothing else. To keep it standing vigil by her bedside meant that the memories were likely of her and that they were of a quantity and intensity to fill forty-eight hours.

The realisation that he had two days' worth of them and that he was willing to drop anything else he had been doing during his enforced absence from Hogwarts in order to focus on them—on *her*—gripped her with a familiar emotion so overwhelming that it was nearly pain.

It took a few minutes before she was ready to release him. When she thought she could finally trust her voice, she summoned her own prodigious magic.

"*Accio* wand."

The simple Alder stick that had been her constant companion for nearly sixty years flew from the wardrobe to its familiar berth in her small, still-trembling hand.

When she finally spoke, she pointed her wand at the Patronus and said very quietly, "Thank you, darling. I think I'll be fine, now. I miss you," then silently performed the spell to send the message. As the ethereal Phoenix vanished into the air, she had to work hard to stifle a sob. She had not been able to add, "I love you" before her throat had closed on the emotion.

It was all right, she thought. He knew.

~FIN~