

A Wish to Protect

by stgulik

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A 400-word drabble

Chapter 1 of 1

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Written for the Protect Challenge at GS100. Comments are welcome -- go on; you know you really want to...

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Mundungus Fletcher sat at a plain wooden table. Anything he said in this interview room could be held against him at the Wizengamot, if it came to that. But Aurors Granger and Snape had nothing on him, nothing.

Snape dumped out two satchels onto the table. After a few minutes of Granger's competent wand-waving—the longest moments of Mundungus's life—more items jumped out. The bags were finally empty.

Snape began to sift through the assortment of merchandise while Granger delivered a bossy lecture about life on the wrong side of the law. Suddenly, a change came over Snape.

"Where did you get this?" he demanded. A silver chain dangled from his fist. Mundungus knew he was done for. Whenever Aurors settled on something particular from his bags, they either wanted the thing as a bribe or as a key exhibit at trial.

And Snape, he knew, could not be bribed.

"Answer him," snapped Granger.

"In the village of Scarperly Downs, as was. Traded for it with the family, right proper."

"You couldn't have," said Snape darkly. "The owner has been dead for decades, and I'm her only living heir." He opened his hand to reveal a silver disk, polished to a mellow gleam. Its face was etched with tiny runes in a spiral. "It's a protective talisman that belonged to my grandmother on the Prince side. Here's the name on the back."

"It's beautiful, Severus," murmured Granger.

"It had always been my hope I might ... give it to someone special someday."

Mundungus looked up in astonishment, but Snape was gazing at Granger with a look that might almost be mistaken for tenderness. And to Mundungus's further surprise, Snape went to Granger's chair and knelt at her side.

"It would be my honor if you would accept this small token, Hermione. I wish to protect you and cherish you, now and ... and forever, if you will have me."

She blinked several times. "Severus," she whispered. "Are you asking me to marry you?"

"Yes, if you will—"

"I will!" She took his face in her hands and kissed him, crying and laughing at the same time.

Mundungus fumbled for a handkerchief to mop his own eyes. "Lovely," he said sentimentally. "Congrats. I'll just pop out now and let you both have a mo'."

"Not so fast, Fletcher."

Mundungus sighed. The man really did not understand how bribery worked.

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