

Zazza's Tale

by sinbad

The story of a witch's fight, as told by her familiar, Zazza the dragon.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Old Zazza lay comfortably on the rocky ledge outside her cave, feeling the hot sun soothe the ache of her old bones. She stretched and yawned, then peered down the trail that led to her home. Soon the little ones would come, shepherded by their teachers, to perch as best they could in the cramped area, and listen once again to Zazza's Tale.

They had come on Summer Solstice noon for many years now, but Zazza knew this was to be the last time. The Great Winged One had whispered to her, telling her she would not survive another winter's hibernation.

A few more minutes passed, then came the high piping sound of children's voices, mixed with the sounds of dragons' claws sliding on rock, and accompanied by the harassed sound of human adults charged with keeping order.

But soon all the young ones settled down. The human children tended to be frightened by the huge size and fearsome natural weaponry of a Hungarian Horntail dragon. The young dragons were reverent in the presence of such a famous elder. And then Zazza began her story.

"Listen, little ones, and I will tell you the true story of Parvati's Flight. Listen, and remember, for the brave and beautiful Parvati should be remembered forever. Listen, open your hearts as well as your ears, and give honor to the great warrior witch!

"To understand Parvati, first you must learn about me. It was I who failed to guard the golden egg from the legendary Harry Potter, although in those days he was just a young boy who showed great promise as a wizard. I obeyed the instructions of my human friend Hagrid, and did my best to protect the egg. I chased Harry through the skies over Hogwart's, but as all the world knows, I failed. Grieved by the loss of my treasure, I withdrew in shame.

"The humans were occupied by the TriWizard Tournament. Then, in the aftermath of Cedric Diggory's tragic death, and the terrifying word that Voldemort was back, we dragons were almost forgotten. But Hagrid (may his name be praised!) never forgot to care for us. Young Parvati agreed to help him, and so I met the human who would become my soul's companion.

"We dragons would have died in those days were it not for Hagrid and Parvati. Hibernation time was upon us, but we were so bound by spells and chains we could not hunt for the food we would need to survive. Fear and hunger, and the need for sleep, made us savage beyond imagining. We believed we would never see the Carpathian Mountains again, never again fly over the land humans call Romania.

"Most of the humans forgot about us; any who remembered were afraid to approach us. Some humans thought we should be destroyed, saying we were allies of Voldemort. Other humans thought we should be killed, not because we were evil, but because in such troubled times it might be dangerous to the young humans to care for us. There were others who feared servants of Voldemort might tamper with a Portkey and waylay wizards, as he did with Diggory and Potter. But Mighty Hagrid brought us food, and

Parvati cast spells to enhance its quality and magnify our bodies' use, and so we survived. Charlie Weasley and his companions knew they had a duty to return us to our homes, and begged for a Portkey to transport us safely back home in time for our Deep Sleep. It took a lot of effort, but Hagrid and Parvati never failed us and, in truth, neither did the Weasley man.

"Years flew by. The Great War raged on and on. Sometimes it seemed certain Voldemort's side would win, but the wizards never gave up. Most of dragonkind watched closely, worried, but reluctant to become embroiled in the war.

"Parvati and I had become friends. We sent messages back and forth. She and her sister, the equally lovely Padma, came to our country on an errand for the Ministry, and stopped to visit with me. We dragons are not good judges of human appearance, but even I could marvel at the shine of Parvati's black hair and the grace of her swaying walk, the dexterity of her long, slender fingers.

"Later, when she attained her full stature as witch, she visited again and asked me to become her familiar. I consented. I was the first dragon to do this."

A young dragon lifted his head and, using the communication device so that all present could understand, stared directly into Zazza's eyes and asked, "Please, Elder, I do not understand. You dared to do what no dragon had done before: join with a human heart to heart, spirit to spirit, defy the usual custom of dragons of that day, to fight what many considered the superior force. Why? Why did you agree to become her familiar? And why did Parvati (and we do honor her name and memory!) want to bond with a dragon?"

Zazza shifted her weight, making herself more comfortable. "I agreed because of my friendship with Parvati, and my gratitude for the days when I depended on her and Hagrid to keep us young dragons alive. And because I understood the pain and fury that raged in her soul. By this time Parvati was consumed by her need for vengeance. No ordinary familiar would do. She needed the strength and fire of a dragon, and could only trust a dragon that was bonded deeply to her. Parvati had a mission: she would never rest until she destroyed every Dementor in existence, thus avenging the cruel fate of her sister."

A human voice piped up: "What cruel fate?"

"The Dementors were an evil breed, who for many years posed as lawful keepers of the criminals confined to Azkaban Prison. But they were always servants of Voldemort, and when he revealed himself, they flocked to his banner.

"There was no way to control their appetite. They fed on human spirits, sucking the emotion and intelligence from their bodies and souls. They were pleased to aid the Evil One by gorging themselves on any witch or wizard who could not withstand them. And one day a ravenous pack of Dementors found Padma alone. Her strength and talent were insufficient to protect her, and the greedy Dementors left her nothing but a shell of a person: alive, but with no more wit than a day-old hatchling. And when Parvati found her sister in such condition, she swore she'd exact a terrible revenge.

"And so she thought of me. No kitty cat, nor owl, nor bat, nor rat could do what a dragon could: be both faster and better transportation than a broomstick and an intelligent weapon to work with her as partner and ally in her mission. And who better to approach, than someone who was already her friend?"

A chorus of voices, not all youngsters, eagerly asked: "But Parvati's Flight? The Battle of Malfoy Manor? The famous duel between you and Parvati and the Chief Dementor and his bodyguard? What of that? Tell us! Tell us!"

Zazza sat up straighter on her haunches. "Yes, I will tell you. At this time the humans were demoralized. There had been too many defeats, too many deaths. Our dear friend and protector, the Mighty Hagrid, died defending his charges. The great Dumbledore was gone. Hogwarts had been attacked, and staff died protecting the students and covering their escape. Times were very dark indeed, and the Dementors fed continuously, making it worse. Parvati and I had fought them many times, but as many as we destroyed, it seemed there were always more, growing bolder and more ravenous by the day.

"So we talked it over, and decided the best thing to do was destroy the Chief Dementor. Let the others feel demoralized now! Besides, we suspected (and were later proven right), the Dementors could not replenish their numbers without the magic of their Chief. And so we made a plan, and set Parvati's house elf, Iggy, as a spy in the enemy's camp, gathering information on Dementors, and most especially specific information about their Chief's movements and the routine of their headquarters.

"At first our elders, both human and dragon, tried to forbid what they called madness. They said the Manor was too closely guarded, the Dementors too strong, and it was suicide for us to confront the Chief in his very stronghold.

"But Parvati swore over and over that she would do this thing, with or without the help of the wizards, and at the very least we would take a great many Dementors with us. And so, after much heated discussion, a plan was made.

"Our spies would spread a rumor that a Horcrux was hidden in the Chamber of Secrets, Slytherin's secret rooms which once concealed his basilisk. We claimed it had been placed there for safekeeping by Ginny Weasley, while she was under the influence of Tom Riddle's diary. We hoped Voldemort would send much of his army out on our false lead. Hopefully, this main body of his army would be defeated by the Order of the Phoenix and the Aurors waiting in ambush. While most of the Dementors were thus engaged, Parvati and I would fly in under cover of darkness. Parvati would break into the Manor, find the Chief, destroy him, while I guarded the outside and flamed any creature who tried to interfere."

Zazza sighed. "A simple plan. Too simple, perhaps. While Voldemort did not dare to ignore the possibility he could lay hands on a Horcrux, he mistrusted the rumors. So he ordered a raiding party, not committing a great number of his minions to the effort. And so, when we flew to the Manor, we found it still heavily guarded.

"Parvati would not be denied her chance at vengeance. Perhaps I should have tried to stop her, reasoned with her, maybe even refused her foolhardy demands. But I, too, hated Dementors. So I agreed to stay with the original plan.

Zazza shuddered. "I still remember the shrieks of joy when the Dementors realized at last they had a chance to destroy their most dangerous and determined enemies. They came boiling up out of the Manor like bats from a cave. The air was thick with them, and our ears ached with the noise of their keening.

"If Parvati was afraid, she didn't show it. Me, I think she was so filled with hate and anger she never stopped for a second to think what they could do to us. Even a dragon was not immune to the powers of Dementors! I confess to you now: I was afraid. But I roared my defiance, and flamed every one who ventured near. Finally, the Chief appeared. But he was wiser than the others. He attempted to cast a spell while flying beneath my outstretched talons, knowing Parvati could not aim her wand if she didn't have direct line of sight.

"Truly, even I was amazed at what happened next. Parvati dared to leap from my back, aiming her wand and hurling her Patronus as she fell to the ground. And so, for those few vital moments, I was free to flame in all directions. And somehow, maybe because our bond was so deep and strong, I was able to swoop down and catch her in my talons just seconds before she hit the ground."

Zazza relaxed her posture. "To this day, no one can be sure exactly what happened. Perhaps Parvati's spell was enhanced by her desperation. Perhaps it was my desperation that lent more heat and range to my flames. In any case, the Chief was destroyed, along with his minions and Malfoy Manor.

"That wasn't the end of the war, of course. It took the combined power of Harry Potter and his friends to confront and kill Voldemort. That happened later.

"But even after Voldemort was gone, some Dementors who fled for their lives had managed to escape to many parts of the world. We hunted them down, one by one. We fought well together, she and I, and though it took years, we left not a single Dementor alive."

Zazza sighed again, and dragon tears formed in her eyes. "Once all the Dementors were gone, Parvati had no reason to live. She faded, and ten years after the end of the war, I covered her with my wing while she breathed her soul away. I have always hoped Padma was there to greet her when she passed."

Zazza's tears fell to the ground. The humans stared in astonishment at what appeared to be large, tear-drop-shaped, yellow diamonds. "Take my tears, human children. I know that humans consider dragon tears rare and valuable. Take them, and keep them, and remember always the human girl who was even more rare and valuable than a

dragon's tears."

~fin~

Author's notes: Much thanks to my beta, Merrin who had to put up with not only me, but my mother as well. This story is a one shot written by sinbad and Misty taking place approximately one hundred and fifty years in the future.