

# *Marge's Day Out*

"We're terribly sorry about this, Mrs Dursley," said the uniformed Ministry official, as the large, inflated woman slowly fell to the ground. "I imagine that's somewhat uncomfortable."

"Uncomfortable?!" she bellowed, her voice amplified by the masses of air escaping her. "UNCOMFORTABLE?! I felt like I was going to burst! That maniac boy... He should be locked up!"

"I know, Ma'am, I'm very sorry. Now, if you could just hold still, I can, er, give you something to make you feel better," said the official, pulling out his wand and trying to remember how Professor Flitwick had taught him how to perform a Memory Charm. NEWTs seemed so long ago...

"Fat chance!" shouted Marge, taking advantage of his confusion. She floored him with an almighty punch, wrested the wand from his hand and spun around to run away.

Suddenly, everything went black, and a powerful squeezing sensation gripped her. She was going to suffocate, she was sure... and then the sensation was released, and she fell to the floor of a large, tiled hall.

She wasn't quite sure why she'd taken the narrow piece of wood from that man. What could he possibly have done with it? But he seemed to be holding it like a weapon, and it seemed best, in those circumstances, to disarm him. What had Colonel Fubster taught her about defence when he'd come around for tea that day?

But it seemed that that—what on earth was it?—that twig thing had taken her there: after all, now she thought about it, she had felt a slight burning sensation in the hand holding it as she'd been pulled through that tunnel thing. Perhaps she should keep hold of it, she thought. But where was it?

Out of the corner of her eye, she spotted something rolling across the floor. Towards a fire filled with green flames...

"SHIT!" shouted Marge, as the wand rolled into the fire and went up in smoke. She still didn't know quite why, but something instinctive was telling her she needed another one. There had to be one somewhere in this hall.

"... wand just come in from Hogwarts," she overheard from a man walking past. "Weasley's son broke it. Need to take it for safe disposal—it's been up to all sorts of tricks. Rumours that it was the culprit behind Lockhart's memory loss—could've been worse, I guess..."

Marge, still lying on the floor, stuck out her leg. The man tripped and fell, the wand rolling out of his hand. She reached out and grabbed it—it was broken, and stuck together with unusually shiny sticky tape, but it was better than nothing—then she stood up as quickly as she could, and ran towards the large doors. Were they the exit?

She didn't know quite what was happening, but the next thing she knew she seemed to be standing in a toilet. Not again, she thought, as she clambered out, shook off her legs—but there was no water, how strange—and went for the door.

Marge emerged in the middle of London. Ordinary, normal, everyday London. She sighed with relief as she stood at the zebra crossing, and motioned to stride purposefully across the road, swinging out her arm still clutching that broken piece of wood...

A large purple bus suddenly appeared speeding down the road, and Marge jumped back just in time as it knocked over a Belisha beacon and came to a stop with half its wheels on the pavement.

"Welcome to the Knight Bus, emergency transport for the stranded witch or wizard. Just stick out your—"

"I can tell you where to stick your bus, you blithering idiot!" shouted Marge at the spotty teenager standing at the door of the double—wait, no, triple-decker bus. "You nearly ran me over!"

"Ee, Ern, get this 'un!" said the teenager to the driver of the bus. "As if we'd run 'er over! Magicked you out o' the way, didn't we? Anyway, as I was sayin', 'op on, and we'll take you wherever you wanna go. Woss your name, anyway?"

"It's Marjorie Dursley, and what the hell do you mean, take me where I want to go? This is a bus, not a taxi, isn't it?"

"... Ain't you 'eard o' the Knight Bus before?"

"Course I haven't. It's not as if you've been doing this for a while, is it?"

"We 'ave—it's not our fault if you 'aven't noticed, is it? Anyway, where d'you wanna go? We'll give you it 'alf price seein' as we nearly, er, ran you over."

"Privet Drive, Little Whingeing, Surrey", she said, clambering up the steps—well, she'd have to get a taxi anyway, and this would probably be cheaper, and the driving wasn't *much* worse...

The doors shut, and the bus sped off. "That'll be five Sickles and, er, fourteen Knuts, then, Mrs Dursley."

"Sickles? Knuts? What in blazes are you talking about?"

"... You not from 'round 'ere, Ma'am?"

"Course I am."

"Then 'ow come you don't know what money is?"

"That's the trouble with you young ones, no respect for authority. I don't know what kind of scrip you're using there, but I spend pounds and pence, and nothing else!"

“... 'Ey, you're a Muggle, aren' you?”

“A WHAT?!”

“You are! Quick, Ern, go back, we need the Ministry for this. So 'ow did you get on 'ere?”

“What?!”

“'Ey, you've got a wand in your 'and, aven' choo. Must've been some magic left in it.”

“Stop talking nonsense, boy—there's no such thing as magic!” shouted Marge, more to convince herself than him.

The bus pulled up, just as several Healers arrived at the entrance to the Ministry, panting from the run from St Mungo's. They were shouting something about an escaped Muggle woman who'd been inflated.

“She's on 'ere!” shouted Stan to the Healers.

“Stupefy!” shouted one, pointing her wand at Marge—and she fell to the floor of the bus, unconscious.

The next thing Marge knew, she was lying on the sofa of Number Four, Privet Drive. She felt dazed.

“What happened, Vernon?” she asked her brother, who was sitting on the armchair.

“Potter boy attacked you, knocked you out. I told you, Marge, he's deranged. Don't worry, we've sent him away; he's not coming back.”

“Good,” said Marge, as she flicked the piece of unusually-shiny sticky tape off her large finger. “Never liked that boy.”