

Soul Food

by karelia

Lucius learns over the course of a few years that mushrooms can be a lot more than just fungi.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: Not mine.

Dedicated to sshg316. ;)

2001

Like any self-respecting September in the Scottish Highlands, this one produced copious amounts of rain, sometimes heavy downpours, more often gentle showers that had a most cleansing and healing effect on the earth.

Lucius Malfoy didn't notice the rain soaking through his cloak, or his robes, as he walked deeper into the Forbidden Forest. The idea to come here had hit him suddenly; it was the only magical place he knew that had no memories associated with Narcissa, and as the first anniversary of her death drew nearer, he'd become increasingly desperate to find peace somewhere, anywhere.

Lucius didn't notice when he slid down a tree to sit on the thoroughly soaked moss; he didn't notice the water seep through his clothes. Just sitting there, not thinking of anything, anyone in particular—trying hard not to think of how his day would be if Cissy were still alive and eventually succeeding—granted him a modicum of solace.

He looked up when a voice spoke to him. "Mr Malfoy, you need to get out of the rain. You're soaked!" He vaguely recognised the Lovegood girl.

She placed her mushroom-filled basket on the ground, took her wand out, and in rapid succession cast spells on his clothing as well as person. He felt suddenly more comfortable; his clothing was dry, and his shivers subsided.

2005

Lucius didn't pay particular attention to the weather. Without a second thought, he'd cast a mud-repelling charm on his boots and trousers and a water-repelling one on all his clothing before Apparating to the edge of the Forbidden Forest. As every year on the day Narcissa had died five years ago, he visited the forest anticipating peace.

"No, Mr Malfoy, please don't sit down there." Her voice sounded urgent, almost screechy, as she pointed at a bunch of yellow fungi on the ground, her eyes wide. "It would be a shame to have them squished. They're ever so tasty."

Something made him step away. Maybe it was the fact that in previous years, she'd prevented him from catching pneumonia; he had no idea.

"Have at them, Miss Lovegood." He idly noticed that her hair was as long as his own and of similar colour.

The girl—no, she wasn't quite a girl anymore. The woman—cast an angelic smile his way and bent down to carefully harvest her find.

"Thank you, Mr Malfoy." Her smile was genuine. Or at least it looked that way. "Have a good year." It was barely a whisper.

2007

He fleetingly wondered if she'd be there. *Don't be stupid. It's pure coincidence she's been there each year... mushroom hunting on her part, nothing else.*

Mud- and rain-repelling charms in place, he Apparated to the edge of the forest and made his way deeper in, carefully scanning the ground to avoid stepping on mushrooms. He had no idea why.

He nearly reached *his* tree to slide down on and sit on the moss when he heard her voice.

"This is the tastiest mushroom I've ever tried." She appeared in front of him and held out a sliver of fungus. "Have a taste."

He took it reluctantly, then figured if she'd wanted to kill him, she'd had plenty of opportunity in recent years, so he placed it on his tongue. It was heavenly. "Not bad."

2008

As he slid down his tree, he wondered if she'd turn up. Maybe she'd found another one of those tasty mushrooms. Maybe she'd be willing to share again.

"I've prepared dinner. Would you like to join me? It's... mushrooms. Fresh from the forest."

He'd been sitting on the moss for a while and was startled to find relief wash over him. He looked up from his place at the bottom of the tree. She looked pretty with those large eyes and long hair. He felt his eyes brighten and his face muscles rustily adjust to turn into a smile. "I think I would like that."

She held out a hand, smiling.

He regarded it with curiosity. *If I take it, I'll start a new life, won't I...?*

As if she'd read his thoughts, she said, "Life tends to be easier if you have a friend—a companion. Not to replace what you've lost—never that—but to ease the pain." Her eyes met his.

He took the hand, a small, hopeful smile playing around his lips. "Thank you, Luna."

A/N: Prompt by Lyn_F: Rain, mud, Forbidden Forest

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