

After Azkaban

by *WriterMerrin*

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Reunion

Chapter 1 of 1

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Bella hadn't been like this when she escaped Azkaban. Then again, she'd been crazy to start with.

Now I sound like the *Daily Prophet*.

Still, I can not complain. Our home may not be ours anymore, but Lucius is here with me, and that has to be all that matters. Tonight, it is all that matters.

The tension in the ballroom was unmistakable. With the Dark Lord pulling the Minister's strings, there was no need for a heroic breakout. An order was signed, and a contingent was sent to the island to retrieve them. Just like that.

The Dark Lord's mood, however, was harder to predict. His memory was long and his forgiveness hard to attain. He was fortunate that he had marked all of his followers in the old days. The new generation would not so easily follow so difficult a leader in exchange for dubious rewards.

Was it enough that he had branded our son and taken over our home? I didn't know what I'd do if I had to watch him torture Lucius.

When the group entered the hall, my eyes fixed themselves on Lucius. Leaning heavily on Severus, he blinked around the room in recognition. Yes, that is the wallpaper we fought over three years ago and the chandelier you bought for our anniversary. His eyes widened when they found mine. If not for Severus nudging him, we both might have missed the words I'd so hoped to hear.

"Narcissa, you may take your husband up to your suite. I will speak to you both in the morning."

I have rarely been so grateful for Severus. He spoke very little as he helped Lucius up the stairs and into the suite that had been mine in recent weeks. Setting Lucius on the edge of the tub, he leaned down and kissed my forehead, waving away my teary thanks in a manner wholly his own.

Finally alone with my husband, I gently embraced him. He still looked so scared and disoriented. I smoothed the hair away from his face, being careful where it was tangling with his beard. In all the years I'd known him, I'd never seen him with more than two week's growth on his face. He looked ever so much older than I remembered.

"Cissa?"

"Yes!" I whispered, tears streaming down my cheeks. "Yes, Luce." Hearing names we had rarely used since Draco's birth made me smile and laugh with something bordering hysteria. Then, taking a few deep breaths, I tried again. "Lucius, I'm going to draw a bath."

With my wand, I turned the taps for warm water and spicy bubbles. Placing it on the bench beside the sink, I reached for the cloak covering Lucius' gray robe. I made a mental note to thank Severus for that, too, after the elves had washed and pressed it.

I opened each button of his prison robe gently, not for the sake of the fabric, which would be burned, but for Lucius' nerves. For my peace of mind. He wore nothing beneath, so then it was a simple matter of removing his flimsy shoes and guiding him into the water. His appreciative groans sparked an urgency within me. I conjured a jug, filled it with soapy water, and poured it over his head. Then, armed with a handful of shampoo, I began to work it through his hair. His sleepy murmurs warmed my heart as the flaxen shine began to emerge.

Impatient, I took care of his beard next, revealing his chapped lips. I leaned down and pressed my lips to his, and he sighed, opening them just a little before yawning. My poor, exhausted wizard. I summoned some balm from my dressing table and carefully applied it. Then, I added a generous amount of soap to a flannel and began to bathe him in earnest, draining the tub and refilling it while keeping a warming charm over him so he didn't get cold and go into shock.

When all the bubbles had drained away the second time, I helped him to stand, dried him off, and dressed him in pajamas that I'd kept prepared for his return all year.

A tray of light fare and weak tea awaited us in the bedroom, but Lucius insisted he was too tired to eat. The food in prison may not have been anything to write home about, but it was filling. "My wife and bed, on the other hand, I've sorely missed."

His eyes warmed briefly again. After about five seconds of sleepy kisses, he guided my head to his chest and began to softly snore.

After waking violently three times in the night, he is asleep now. I won't deny him Dreamless Sleep tonight. Like so many other things, I'll worry about the side-effects tomorrow. For now, I've got a bluebell flame lit as a night light, and I will as long as he needs it. He doesn't seem to hear the quill scratching as I write my to-do list. I must be sure Draco sees his father before the Dark Lord summons us in the morning. I shove fears of the morning away and consider his wand. Fortunately, it had been entrusted to my safekeeping when he had been imprisoned, so that will be another glad reunion.

He's shivering. I guess one doesn't require dreams to have such reactions. I close my ledger, lay down my quill, and Levitate the flame toward his side of the bed, where it will lend light and heat.

I envelop him in my arms and lay his head against my bosom. For him who has been my warmth, strength and safety for over half of my life, tonight I am his warmth, comfort, and security.

I don't know what he will be like when he awakens in the morning, but he will be here, and he will be mine, and we will find each other again soon, whole.

A/N: Not in response to any particular prompt except a general desire in chat to see Lucius with less clothing. Inspired by Piper and Karelia, with special thanks to Karelia for beta reading.