

There Are No Death Eaters In The Woods

by Orpheus Samhain

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"There are no Death Eaters in the woods!" Waving his fake sword, Draco shouted at the top of his lungs upon running into his parents' bedroom. "There are no Death Eaters in the woods!" he shouted, running out and into the corridor. His shoes pounded on the marble floor in the otherwise quiet house.

Draco's mother and father had gone out to attend Ministry functions, leaving him alone. His mother had been worried he would be scared. It would be getting dark soon. Draco was big enough to attend the party with his parents and also big enough to know that...

"There are no Death Eaters in the woods!" he shouted, running into his father's study, just because he wasn't allowed to. He feigned the sword fight with a thick velvet curtain and ran out into the corridor, again.

Another door and another empty room heard his announcement: "There are no Death Eaters in the woods!" Draco banged the door shut after himself. The house-elves wouldn't dare admonish him, and his parents had left him home to rot. His eyes searched the room for another object to fight with. He made an impeccable lunge at empty air. "There are no Death Eaters in the woods!"

"Who told you that?" a faint voice, somewhere at his elbow level, asked. "You're such a child! Of course there are!"

Draco stilled and looked around the room. There was no one.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Pansy."

Draco's eyes swept the room again.

"Where are you?"

"You are standing next to my house." The voice was impatient.

Slowly, Draco turned his head. In his wild chase, he had run into his mother's study. Just beside the door there was a small table on which stood a dollhouse she had played with when she was little.

Draco walked to it and took off the roof to look inside, just like he had done thousands of times before. Not to play, of course...he would never play with a doll...just to have a look. He knew what he would see there: a tiny parlour, furnished with tiny table, arm-chairs and cabinets. And a little doll with black hair and upturned nose.

One with black eyes that were currently blinking at him. Draco blinked back, twice.

The doll stood up briskly from her chair, shook off her frilly, pink dress and looked up at him.

"Who told you that rubbish? Everybody knows that there are legions of them lurking in the woods, just waiting for the occasion to slip into the house and take what they can. Come on, take a look yourself."

She gestured with her hand to the window on her right, and without thinking, Draco obediently bent lower to be able to peep with one eye through her tiny window.

"Careful! Take a peek from behind the curtains so that Walden won't notice you," whispered Pansy, grabbing his robes haltingly.

There should be only the flowery wallpaper visible through the tiny hole in the cardboard box, yet Draco saw something else entirely. There was a dark forest in his mother's study. There was no study at all. Behind the nearest tree stood a man with a white mask in his hand, sporting a black moustache and black cloak.

"You were saying?" asked Pansy triumphantly. "Doesn't he look like a Death Eater? Next time, think before you open your mouth!"

"Is this..." Draco swallowed. "Is this Walden Macnair?"

"You bet," said Pansy. "It's Macnair all right. He's an executioner and has forty Death Eaters at his beck and call."

Only now Draco noticed that behind almost every tree there was a Death Eater in a white mask.

"Why do they wear those masks? They make them visible in the darkness."

"That's because they are stupid," said Pansy cheerfully.

"Did you lock all the doors?"

"Of course, I did. I'm not mad," Pansy assured him. "Surely, I locked the doors. A lonely girl in a house with an invaluable locket? Naturally...I locked all the doors!"

"Do you really have the invaluable locket?" asked Draco, astounded.

"Look here!" She took the locket she had around her neck and turned it in her fingers. A golden snake coiled on the front, staring at them with an emerald, unblinking eye.

Draco had seen it thousands of times. *Not so invaluable, after all*, he thought.

"It has an unimaginable value," explained Pansy. "This is the reason why the Dark Lord sent Walden Macnair here; I hope you understand."

Draco became worried for good.

Pansy, however, didn't seem concerned.

"Ah, well. Let's go down to the kitchen and make us some hot chocolate."

There were stairs leading down. Pansy put one leg over the banister and slid down. She landed with a thud on the dining room floor. Draco slid after her.

A few minutes later they were sitting at the kitchen table, drinking their chocolate, and dipping buns in it.

"Another bun?" asked Pansy.

Right then they heard that someone was moving the kitchen door handle.

"Macnair!" whispered Pansy, knocking over her cup of hot chocolate. She looked frightened.

"Are you sure that the door is locked?" Draco asked in a whisper.

They saw someone pressing the handle and heard him yanking the door. The door didn't budge, though.

"Ha! Serves him right!" shouted Pansy happily.

They heard the retreating, stealthy steps and hurriedly looked out the kitchen window. It was completely dark in the woods now, and the Death Eaters had lit a camp fire that tinged the nearby trees an ominous red.

"They are going to stay the night here, it seems," said Pansy. "Give them a good scare with your sword!"

Draco opened the window and hit the sword against the window frame. The glass panes rattled, and the forest echoed the bang. It sounded terrifyingly. All the Death Eaters leapt to their feet with wild faces. Pansy leaned out of the window.

"Here!" she shouted. "Now you know what awaits you here, Macnair! This gentleman," she pointed at Draco, "will be defending me to the last drop of blood." She took Draco by the hand. "You will do it, won't you?" she whispered urgently.

Draco nodded. Yes. Yes, he would defend her to the last drop of blood...he had no other choice!

Pansy shut the window with a loud 'bang' to taunt all the Death Eaters outside and yawned.

"Best if we try to catch a few winks of sleep," she said. "But first, I have to hide the locket. In case..."

"In case what?" asked Draco.

"In case Macnair comes when we're asleep..." explained Pansy. Draco could see that she was pondering something.

"I know!" she exclaimed at last. "Come, I'll show you!"

On the parlour table stood a pot with a lily. Pansy took it out, the whole root ball, placed the locket on the bottom of the pot, and then replanted the lily.

"Now let mister silly billy Walden Macnair look for it!" she exclaimed. "I bet he's too dull to discover such an excellent hiding place."

She yawned again and ran into the bedroom. There, she threw herself on the bed. Draco curled up on the edge with his sword. Who knew whether he wouldn't need it!

"It's too hot in here," declared Pansy in a minute. "I have to open the window."

"Yes, but Macnair..." started Draco warningly.

"Ah, but he won't clamber up to the first floor," replied Pansy, opening the window wide.

The room cooled off nicely as soon as the fresh air flowed in. Draco was already falling asleep when Pansy suddenly sat up straight on the bed.

"Did you hear that?" she whispered.

Draco heard that someone was climbing up the wall.

In a flash, they leapt to the window. All forty Death Eaters stood by the wall, one over the other with Walden on top of them. His moustache was already over the sill. Just then Draco raised his sword and hit Walden Macnair square in the head. A terrible noise could be heard. It was forty Death Eaters crumbling down to the ground.

All forty...except for Walden, who hadn't let go of the sill. Quite the opposite; he was hauling himself up, higher and higher. Finally, he put one leg inside. And he was laughing, terrifyingly so.

"Let's hide in the parlour!" Pansy shouted to Draco.

Just the moment they were locking the door between the bedroom and parlour, Walden put his other leg into the bedroom.

"We have to barricade the door with furniture," she was saying, out of breath.

They already could hear Walden yanking the handle with all he was worth. Hurriedly, they moved the cabinet to the door and placed all the chairs that were in here on top of it.

They could hear him muttering on the other side of the door, still pounding on it. Unfortunately, the door itself wasn't all that thick or strong. It let go. The cabinet scratched over the floor while it moved to the side, and Macnair stuck his ugly moustache into the parlour. Exactly at that moment all the chairs fell on his head.

"Hadn't I been that scared, I would have died of laughter!" assured Pansy.

Draco bravely stood in front of her with his sword raised to deal a blow. He didn't need to wait for long for the executioner to charge at him. Macnair wasn't unarmed, either.

"Woe unto you, poor soul!" he cried at Draco with his hoarse, Death Eater-y voice and raised his axe.

"Woe unto you, Your Highest Stupidity!" shouted Pansy, and stuck out her tongue.

The fight had begun. Fourteen times Walden Macnair chased Draco around the table: seven times in one direction and seven in another, in their fencing skirmish. Finally, the worst happened. Macnair knocked the sword out of Draco's hand. The sword fell on the ground, and a second later, Walden put his foot on it.

"Go home and get some sleep, Walden," said Pansy angrily. "Why do you come here and make a fuss? You will never get the locket!"

The executioner laughed scarier than ever before. "We'll see. We'll see!" he said and began looking for it.

Pansy and Draco hopped on to the sill and perched there to watch him search.

"He'll never find it," whispered Pansy to Draco.

Macnair looked inside the cabinet and under the carpet, under the pillows on the sofa and behind the lamp, behind the pictures and inside the fireplace. He didn't look in the flower pot, though, because, really, how was he supposed to know that the locket was right there? Then, he searched the whole house, and Pansy and Draco were running behind him, giggling upon seeing the silly places Walden was looking in.

"Had I been this stupid, Macnair," said Pansy, "I would have hanged myself with my own moustache."

It made the executioner mad...so mad that he looked around for something to throw at Pansy. They were in the parlour again because Macnair had wanted to check whether the locket hadn't been hanged on the nail inside the fireplace. It was then when he felt so mad at Pansy. The only thing suitable to throw at her was the flower pot. He raised it high above his head. Pansy and Draco screamed...not from fear, mind you...they simply didn't want him to find the locket.

Macnair flung the pot at Pansy, but she jumped aside. The ceramic vessel hit the floor and broke.

The locket lay on the floor.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed Macnair at this sight. "I've found it!"

And he took Pansy's invaluable locket with his crude, Death Eater's fingers. Draco couldn't do anything to stop it.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed Macnair, leaving through the window. The forty Death Eaters were standing by the wall again, one over the other, so that he could climb down.

Pansy balled her little fists and ran to the window. She yanked at Macnair's moustache. Hard. He couldn't do a thing about it, so he started to kick his legs in the air because, obviously, it hurt a lot. All the Death Eaters crumbled to the ground. There was a whole heap of them outside the window.

But the locket! Alas, Macnair still had the locket. He and his forty companions disappeared with it into the dark forest.

"Are you worried about the locket much?" asked Draco.

Pansy clapped her palms against her thighs and laughed so hard that she started to jump.

"The locket that Walden took isn't worth a single Knut, and you can buy it in every toy shop," she puffed. "It's only an imitation. The genuine locket is here."

She came to a flower pot sitting on the window sill in the parlour. There was a narcissus growing in it. She lifted the plant and took the locket from underneath. It looked exactly the same as the one Macnair had taken.

"A locket of immeasurable value," said Pansy, putting it on. Then, she looked at Draco. "You silly thing. Of course there are Death Eaters in the woods. Remember this next time."

"Oh, here you are." Draco's mother's voice sounded behind him, and he turned around. "I asked your father to leave the party early. I was worried about you," she added, tenderly pushing the fringe out of Draco's eyes.

They were standing in her study, in the gathering darkness, with light pouring in from the corridor.

"I did very well. Only..." Draco hesitated for a moment, "...one of the lockets is gone. Macnair took it for the Dark Lord, and I couldn't stop him. But don't worry, he took the fake one."

Narcissa stared at her son in disbelief. "I had two made. One of them went missing a long time ago. How did you know about it?" Draco looked up at his mother and she ruffled his hair. "Oh, well. Time for bed."

2009, July - August