

Match Stick to Needle

by MomoDesu

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Note: It might help to read "No One Is Ever Too Old For Toys" to understand this fully, though it can be read alone.

"Alright, Cissy, give it another try."

Narcissa scrunched her nose in concentration, something her mother would have gotten onto her about, and gripped her wand tighter. She performed the wand movements exactly as Andromeda had done them, but the match stick on the table didn't change.

Andromeda shook her head. "No, no. Watch again." Her older sister moved her wand about again, and the match Transfigured into a needle. Another flick of her wand, and the needle changed back into the original match. "Now try again."

The match seemed to be laughing at her. Narcissa narrowed her eyes at the horrible little piece of wood. Again, she did everything that Andromeda had done, yet the smallest change was the end of the stick shaping into a sharp point. "I can't do it," she moaned in defeat.

"There is no such thing as 'can't', Cissy, just 'won't'," she said gently. "Now try again."

Over and over she tried, all with the same results. Andromeda would show her, she would repeat the wand movements, and the match would do nothing. She was beginning to feel like she was never going to get far in Transfiguration.

The hour was growing late, curfew quickly approaching, and Narcissa was ready to pull her hair out over the little mocking match stick. Feeling thoroughly defeated, she started packing away her books, wand, and the terrible match. "I have other homework to do; I should get back to the common room."

Andromeda gave her a look that made Narcissa want to curl into a ball and cry. It wasn't quite pity, but something akin to it. It was a look she had seen on her mother's face one too many times. "It's alright, we'll try again tomorrow," Andromeda told her, patting her on the shoulder. "You'll get it, just you watch! Transfiguration is an art that takes a lot of concentration. Work hard and you'll get it."

Narcissa hugged her elder sister before leaving the library, sullenly walking toward the dungeons. How she hated living in the dungeons. There were rumors that floated around Hogwarts, about how Slytherin had the best common room of all four houses. She snorted at the thought; if they thought that constantly drafty rooms and skulls everywhere were awesome, all power to them. She felt like the low ceilings were closing in on her, plus the fear of the walls crumbling and all of the water in the lake pouring in and flooding Slytherin house, drowning everyone who was inside. The green lamps were pleasant, though. While they gave off a creepy feeling, they almost seemed comforting. They reminded her of the lamps in her Great Aunt Muriel's house.

Great Aunt Murial's stuffy old living room and stale tea cakes would be a welcome break. After four hours in the library with Andromeda and the mocking matchstick she was ready to cry. She fought the frown that was forming, the wibble she could start to feel in her bottom lip, and the tears that she could feel pooling in her eyes. Transfiguration gave her more trouble than any other subject. The looks of near pity from Professor McGonagall made her almost sick to her stomach. Sometimes the woman was too hard on the Slytherins, while she babied her own 'cubs'.

She felt a few tears roll down her cheeks. Maybe she could get inside and into her room before someone, namely Bellatrix, caught her crying. The feeling of failure was bad enough, she didn't need Bella rubbing it in her face. Bella was Little Miss Perfect. Bella could do anything on the first try and make it look like it was old hat.

As she passed by the Potions classroom, she had the strange sensation that she was being followed. She turned and looked around the empty corridor before walking faster, hoping that she could make it to the common room before whoever or whatever was following caught up to her.

The portrait that hid Slytherin House from the rest of the school was in her sights when someone grabbed her wrist and pulled her into one of the many alcoves that lined the dungeon corridors. Another hand covered her mouth to muffle her scream.

Narcissa fought her attacker, elbowing the person in the gut hard enough for him to loosen his grip so she could turn and identify who grabbed her. "Lucius! You jerk!"

Lucius Malfoy grinned at her, still holding her wrist. "Little girls shouldn't be walking the halls alone so close to curfew. You never know what sort of creeps are out and about. Luckily, I am the one that found you."

"The only creep I see right now is you, Lucius Malfoy. Now let me go." She struggled against his grip, dismayed when he seemed to be holding her tighter.

She stared up at him, hoping that she could be intimidating enough for him to let go. Instead of letting her loose, he stared back, almost as if he were studying her. "You've been crying."

"No, I haven't," she said, shaking her head. "You're seeing things."

He let go of her wrist and moved his hand to her face. Narcissa flinched. She hated people being so near her face. She calmed when Lucius brushed the tears from her face. "You've definitely been crying. Why?"

"What does it matter to you?" she fired back, pursing her lips.

Lucius shrugged. "I'm not sure why, but it bothers me."

Narcissa glanced down at her watch. Curfew was quickly approaching. "Come on, I don't want to get caught by Filch."

He nodded and led her by the hand to the common room. "Will you tell me why you are upset?"

Narcissa looked around the common room, searching for her eldest sister. Bella was nowhere to be found, so she felt it was safe to speak. "I'm having problems in Transfiguration."

"You?" Lucius asked. "I thought you had the highest marks of all of the Slytherin firsties."

She shook her head. "Not in Transfiguration," she replied. "And don't call me a firstie. You were one once too, you know."

"Well, I was raised to call a spade a spade," he said, shrugging. "I can help if you want."

"No, it wouldn't do any good. I just can't do it."

Lucius straightened. "There is no 'can't', Narcissa, just 'won't'."

She laughed. "That's the same thing that my sister said."

"A wise girl, your sister, even if she is a Hufflepuff. Now come on, we're going to work on Transfiguration."

Narcissa soon started to feel that the whole situation felt like déjà vu, with the only difference being that her sister was replaced by a handsome blond boy.

"No, no. Watch my wand and try again." Lucius performed the wand movements and the matchstick turned into a needle. He waved his wand again and the needle changed back. "See. Easy peasy."

"Easy for you," she grumbled, replicating the wand movements. She was disappointed when the matchstick only shifted shape slightly instead of changing in full. "I may as well take the failing grade."

"You will not do that, Narcissa Black. You will turn that ruddy match into a needle, and you will do it like a pro!" Lucius declared. "Now try again!"

Again and again she tried, each time changing the match a bit more.

"Maybe you just need the right motivation, or a good luck charm," Lucius mused.

"A good luck charm?"

He nodded. "A good luck charm. How do you think I get through Quidditch matches? On my skill and good looks alone?"

Narcissa snorted. "Skill, maybe? Good looks, definitely not."

"Cheeky!" he said, grinning. "I'll let you in on a little secret, and you have to promise you won't tell a soul."

"Cross my heart and hope to die," she giggled.

Lucius reached back to where his hair was tied back and pulled it down, then presented the ribbon to her. "Do you recognize this?"

She smiled, fondly. "I wrapped the bear I gave you in this ribbon."

"Yes. I also carry the handkerchief during games. They are my good luck charms."

"But what good will that do me?"

He took the ribbon back and tied his shoulder length hair back again, then reached into his robes and pulled something out. "Maybe you need a good luck charm." He handed her the item. "With this, you can do anything."

Narcissa accepted the item. "A four leaf clover?"

"I found it when I was nine, while visiting my uncle in Ireland. He told me that it would bring good luck to whoever held it, Muggle or wizard alike. We pressed it and preserved it with Spellotape." He smiled at her. "Now I want you to have it."

"But what about you?" she asked. "I can't take your good luck charm."

"It's alright, you've given me two new ones."

She could feel her face heating, a sure sign she was blushing like mad. "Thank you, Lucius."

"Don't thank me in words," he replied, a mischievous glint in his eye, "thank me with a match stick Transfigured into a needle."