

If You Didn't Get It Right the First Time ...

by diabolica

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One-Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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For my darling Tales of Snape on the occasion of her birthday. Her prompt was a quote by Oscar Wilde *When a woman marries again, it is because she detested her first husband. When a man marries again, it is because he adored his first wife.*

Lucius straightened his already-straight cravat and turned away from the mirror. He needed something to do with his hands for the next half hour while they waited for the ceremony to begin, or the anxiety would overwhelm him. Before he could take that thought any further, Severus handed him a balloon glass.

'What is this?'

'Brandy,' Severus said. 'Sit down. You're making us all nervous.'

'Do I appear nervous?'

No one spoke, but Severus and Draco gave him matching looks of disdain, eyebrows arched at identical angles. They had obviously spent too much time in each other's company since the war.

'Well, it's certainly not uncommon to be nervous under such circumstances. She may ... I don't know ... change her mind.' These last words trailed off in such a quiet rush that Lucius wasn't certain the others had heard. Until Draco's eyes narrowed in the same dangerous way as Lucius's did when someone caused him offence.

'Hardly likely,' Severus said, his tone dry. 'She will have her reasons, which I would no doubt be hard pressed to fathom, but she will stand firm.'

As soon as the words were out of Severus's mouth, all ribbing aside, Lucius recognised them as true. Whatever else could be said of his bride-to-be, she had always honoured her commitments.

'So,' continued Severus, 'in order to keep you from pacing a hole in the carpet, which would likely earn you a tongue-lashing from your lady wife and thus start this marriage off on the wrong note entirely, may I propose a toast?' Severus lifted his glass and Draco rose from his seat, a glass in his own hand.

'To your continued good health and happiness. May you live long and well and *peacefully* with the woman you have come to love above all others, the brightest witch of her generation—and the most dangerous as well, if you believe what Potter tells the newspapers.'

Draco tipped his glass at Severus. 'Single-handedly defeated Voldemort, if rumours are to be believed.'

'Quite so,' Severus replied. Here he nodded to Lucius to indicate he would resume the toast. Then his mouth twitched. 'And may she, in turn, see fit to put up with you.'

Draco nodded in exaggerated, world-weary accord. 'I still haven't the faintest idea why she agreed to this,' he said to Severus, in a voice that skated over the surface of light covering a dark chasm.

Lucius laughed and clinked glasses with his son and best friend. 'Thank you, Severus, for your kind words and good wishes. And for not roasting me whole.'

Severus smirked. 'Wait until you hear the remarks I've prepared for the reception.'

'I should have seen that coming,' said Lucius, and the three of them drank to his second marriage.

The knot in Lucius's chest eased somewhat, but something continued to niggle at him. Draco set his glass down, and Lucius realised what it was.

'Draco,' he began and then stopped, unsure how to continue. Perhaps the brandy loosened his tongue, or perhaps some fears were meant to be spoken. 'Whatever you may have been led to believe about me over the years, I am under no illusions that I deserve her. But I will spend the rest of my life proving myself; that, I can promise you. This time around, things will be different.'

The shadow on Draco's brow cleared. He smiled in earnest. 'She loves you, Father. Truly. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll just go and—' Draco gestured towards the door.

'Of course,' said Lucius with a glance at the clock. 'It's nearly time.'

'Draco will be giving the bride away?' asked Severus.

'Nothing so traditional,' Lucius answered, which Draco followed with, 'She will be giving *herself* away. I am merely to escort her down the aisle, as her father is unavailable.'

Severus exhaled through his nose. 'Typical.'

'Typical,' Lucius said with a smile. Draco left through the side door, and Lucius and Severus exited towards the garden, where a few select guests had gathered on the lawn. As they took their places beside the Augurer at the end of the long silver carpet, Severus whispered, 'Do try not to fidget.'

Lucius shot his best man a warning glare, but then turned his eyes to the place where, any moment, Narcissa would appear on Draco's arm, no doubt looking as beautiful as she did on the day he married her the first time.