

Last Stand at Quagmire Pond

by Amita

A daring escapade during the final battle.

Chapter 1 of 1

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Narcissa grabbed Draco's hand and turned to her husband. "We've got to get out of here," she said. "Both the Dark Lord's fighters and Harry's supporters will fire on us."

"There's that little used exit near the Potions lab," he said.

"The one we used to sneak out at night," replied Narcissa.

They looked at Draco, but he was too shell-shocked to take in the implications.

As they raced to the hidden door, Lucius insisted on stopping at the Potions lab to mix several compounds – one explosive and one obnoxious. "It will only take a minute, and it may save our lives," he told his anxious wife.

A few minutes later, they were once again racing to the hidden door when they were ambushed.

"And where do you think you're going?" said a voice from the shadows.

"We were hastening to the Dark Lord's aid," said Narcissa.

"A likely story," said the minion, stepping out from the shadows and pointing his wand. "We've had our eyes on you for quite some time now. Everybody thinks the Malfoys are loyal only to the Malfoys. Now, drop your wands."

Lucius reached inside his cloak and pulled out a tube of his recent brew. "You can't want me to drop this. It'll bring the castle down on our heads."

"My father's a badass Potions man," said Draco.

"Well, give it here," said the minion as he reached for it.

"I'm setting my wand down," said Lucius as he stooped to the floor. As he rose, he pulled out another vial from his cloak. "You better take this one, too."

"What'd you get that one out for?" asked the minion.

"I can't hold it, and I can't drop it," said Lucius.

"Oh, all right," said the minion, sticking his wand in his belt and taking the vial.

As the minion stood with a vial of potion in each hand and before comprehension could dawn on him, Narcissa lifted her skirt, stepped forward, and said, "For Merlin's sake, don't drop them," as she kicked him in the groin. She wrenched them out of his hands as he sank to the floor and handed them back to Lucius. "Battle-worthy concoctions, my dear," she remarked.

They dashed out the door and down the hill, but halfway to the concealing forest, they collided with a figure, whereupon all four landed in a heap. Lucius, Narcissa, and Draco leaped up with their wands out and pointed.

"Lucky for you, my well-honed hunter's skills let me fall in such a way so as to prevent serious injury to you three," said the figure.

"We thank you," said Lucius, "but we're in a bit of a hurry at the moment."

"My sharp senses tell me you are escaping the battle in yon castle," said the hunter.

"We came to rescue our son," said Narcissa.

"As clumsy as you are, I'm surprised you made it this far," said the hunter.

Perhaps, with your woodcraft, you could suggest a good hiding place," said Draco.

"You are indeed a fortunate family to stumble upon me," said the hunter.

Five minutes later, they were in a swampy patch of ground where the stream widened into a shallow pond.

"No one will ever find us here," said the hunter.

Just then a shout went up from a nearby hillside. "There're people hiding in that quagmire," said a voice.

"They can't be followers of the Dark Lord," said another voice. "None of us are hiding tonight."

"We should face them together," said Lucius. "A good volley will drive them off."

"I got your back," said the hunter, disappearing behind them.

"Yes," said Lucius. "How oft in the heat of battle does one, in an excessive show of bravery, neglect the elementary tactics."

"Where'd he go?" asked Draco, looking around.

"He is concealed in yon bramble bush," said Lucius.

"Clever," said Narcissa. "Anyone sneaking up on us will trip over him and break their necks."

"I think there're too many for three to handle," said Draco, "and they're heading straight toward us."

"It's time to listen to your father and restrain our zeal in favor of tactics," said Narcissa.

She discarded her cloak, unbuttoned her blouse enough to reveal her bra, and shortened her skirt to mid-thigh. She stepped out of the bushes and waved. "Yoo hoo, are you handsome men heading to the fight at the castle?" She struck a pose. "I like soldiers."

They turned toward her.

"Oh, but there's too many of you for poor little me," she said. "Perhaps some of you would prefer a reward of gold for your bravery." She took off her ring and held up to show its size and glitter. "Isn't it shiny," she said. "A powerful lord once gave it to me because he liked me so much. Let me toss it to you."

She flung it with all her might into the pond where a wise, old trout swam to the bright object, caught the human scent, and let the bait sink into the ooze.

"Oops," she said. "The powerful lord always said I was clumsy. Do you think that's why he left me?"

Half the brave warriors ran to the pond. The other half approached Narcissa.

"Not here," she said, looking around. "I'm a decent woman. We should hide in the bushes."

As they entered the thicket, Lucius and Draco stepped out of hiding and dispatched the group with merry-making on their minds.

"I didn't know you had a thing for soldiers," said Lucius.

"Oh, but I do, my warrior prince," she said.

A flurry of spells took care of the bunch thrashing around in the pond.

"Why didn't you use a vial of potion on them?" asked Draco.

"What, and pollute a fishing stream?" replied Lucius.

Lucius and Draco performed a high five. Staunch pureblood conservationists.

Finally giving up on locating the ring, they returned and coaxed the hunter out of hiding.

"Is it safe?" he asked.

"We'll escort you home," they said.

Halfway to his hut, he cleared his throat. "I wonder if you could do a small favor for me," he said, "seeing as like I saved you and all that."

"We can try," said Narcissa, "although our efforts will fall short of anything that you could accomplish."

"Normally, I would agree with you," said the hunter, "but it's the wife, you see. She, believe it or not, has doubts about the stories I tell her."

As they approached the hut, a woman stepped out the front door. "Who are these people?" she asked. "What band of loafers are you bringing home this time?"

"Calm down, dearest," said the hunter. "It's just a few people I saved from a gang of cutthroats."

"I don't want to hear another wild story," said his wife.

"But it's true," said Narcissa.

"Indeed," said Lucius.

"Tell her how courageous I was," prompted the hunter.

"Very," said Draco. "His actions inspired us, and we managed to survive."

"Humph," said the hunter's wife.

"We should hasten home," said Lucius, "before the roving bands of thieves recover from the blow your husband has delivered this evening."

They shook the hunter's hand, told his wife to be proud, and returned to the manor.

From a prompt by MuseAmusant: a pond, a wedding ring, a trout.