

The Power of Love

by karelia

Narcissa's journey to healing.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Warning: The central theme of this tale is the recovery from abuse. It isn't graphic and purely meant to show that recovery is possible. However, if you have triggers pertaining to SRA, sexual, or other forms of abuse, please proceed with extreme caution.

1977

The icy hand of fear closes around my heart when I realize that it is now time to do what Lucius expects of me. What any husband would expect of his new wife. The fog of panic that engulfed me the moment I said "yes" makes way for the terror of anticipation. *Stage fright.* What a grotesque thought. I take a deep breath and brace myself for the inevitable.

"Beautiful," Lucius murmurs, obviously mistaking my shivering for excitement or anticipation. Perhaps lust. It is nothing but fear. Fear of failure. Fear of being ridiculed. Fear of being found the dirty whore I am; my father is right.

I can't do this...

"Cissy?" Lucius regards me carefully.

"I..." No. I can't say it. I shake my head.

Not taking his eyes off me, he says in a quiet voice, "For me, you don't have to be a virgin, if that's what you worry about. The day I laid eyes on you I knew we were made for each other. You are perfect as you are."

I take a step back. *If only you knew...* "I'm not." It's barely a whisper, but he hears me. *Just get it over with. You'll live,* I urge myself. Yes, I'll get it over with, escape into a scenario of fantasy, just as I used to when *stop thinking about it!* and it will be over before long.

"You are no less a lady, you know," Lucius croons and starts to undo the ties of my wedding robes. He works his way down slowly, purring with every contact his lips make with the skin on my neck, my collarbone, the spot between my breasts, my stomach.

I shiver, then stiffen, then shiver again. I have no idea which one is worse. Perhaps shivering isn't as bad as going all stiff like some frigid old maid.

Lucius stops suddenly. "Why are you afraid? What are you afraid of?"

"I'm not." It comes out too fast, an automatic denial too often practiced. It doesn't work with Lucius.

"I can taste your fear." He pulls me closer and into an embrace. When my breathing quiets to a more shallow rhythm again, he murmurs, "I may tell lies to the Wizengamot or some reporter, but I promise I will *never* lie to you. I expect the same of you."

I nod against his chest. It feels comfortable, just like when Bella held me in her embrace the first time it happened before ~~he~~ she broke her beyond repair and I only notice his hands on my back when my bra falls down. I stand naked in front of him, and *his* voice echoes in my head. "*Your tits are good for nothing. Even your sister's are better, and that's saying a lot!*" I start to shiver again; it worsens when I meet Lucius's eyes, which have hardened to steel.

"Are you going to do your duty, *wife*? Or would you rather wait a day?" The steel disappears as fast as it had arrived, and his eyes soften further as they wander from my face down the length of my hair.

I shake my head, clueless whether he is joking or not. "Yes. No. I'm fine." To confirm my words, I sit down on the large bed.

He holds my stare as he undresses slowly, as if to offer time to find some explanation for my strange behavior. I have no explanation. At least none that is acceptable to a brand-new husband.

The best I can hope is to get used to the ordeal that is about to begin. When he says, "So the rumors were true. Your father. It's him, isn't it?" I start.

"What... what about my father?" Panic grips me. If ~~he~~ she finds out someone is onto our secret, neither their life nor mine will be guaranteed. More panic envelops me ~~He's~~ *going to send me back!* I won't go. Death is a better solution than that. "Don't send me back home," I plead, sounding pathetic.

"Your home is *here*, Mrs Malfoy." He sits down in the middle of the bed and pulls me closer. "Let me look at you... Beautiful." I relax ever so slightly. He seems to drink me in, and I can hope that his comment about my about *him* is forgotten. I thank Merlin that none of my scars show; they're all neatly tucked away, buried deep inside. Lucius will never have the displeasure of seeing them.

"Let your inhibitions go," he whispers as his fingers circle lazily around my nipples.

I wonder how to do that and say nothing. My eyes scrunch closed, even though the light isn't as bright as I'm used to.

Lucius is perceptive. With a quick flick of his wand, barely interrupting the circles he continues to draw around and on my breasts, the lights dim. "Better?"

"Thank you," I whisper.

He looks at me again, as if trying to figure me out. After a long pause even his fingers stop their languid movements he asks, "Do you trust me?"

I startle. It's a justified question, I suppose. Remembering his demand for absolute honesty between us, I accept the contract by answering, "I don't know." ~~I want~~ to trust him. But have I ever trusted anyone since Bella was broken? I don't think I have. Perhaps my mother, at least before I found out she knew. But that was so long ago, my memory is fuzzy at best.

My husband is looking at me again in this... odd way. I wonder what he's thinking; I'm not exactly an open book to read. Carrying your heart on your sleeve isn't a good idea if you're a Black.

"Do you believe me when I say I want you to heal? To be whole again?" he prods.

I nearly laugh, but it would be a horrible laugh filled with self-derision, even hate, and I don't want Lucius to see my ugly side. He is not the guilty one here. He probably means it, so I say, "Yes." It is the truth. I suppose his life will be a lot easier if he doesn't have damaged goods at his side.

"All right," he allows. "Do you trust me to help you heal?"

I remain silent.

The movement of his hands stops again, and his lungs fill audibly with air. "Cissy, there is no need to be ashamed of what happened to you." His tone sounds urgent, and for a moment, I believe him.

He continues before I can ponder his words at length. "What you and I have, what should culminate in making love because ~~we~~ we love one another even if we are clueless about the details at this stage is absolutely *nothing* like the perverted acts your father subjected you to. And your sisters probably, too. He is a criminal of the worst kind!"

The scream I hear comes from my own throat. I start to shiver again and cannot contain it. "He... he..." I pant, "... he'll kill us both if he finds out you know."

"Shh," he soothes and pulls me into a tight embrace.

I feel my fences lowering.

"Given time, everything will be all right."

I feel... I don't know how I feel. But it's not bad, and that's enough for me. Then I remember what he just said, and I start again. "If he knows, he'll kill us both." A few minutes ago, I was content to die. Now I'm not.

"He won't know," Lucius assures me. His right hand moving down and up my back and his left holding me close, I relax again until he grabs his wand from the bedside table and conjures an eye mask. It's the kind wealthy witches wear overnight, soaked in rejuvenating potions.

He holds it up in front of me. "You don't like the light, but given the situation, I would like to see what I'm doing in order not to hurt you."

I nod, too numb to speak. He lays me back down on the bed, this time in the center, and gently fastens the silken mask. I know a moment of panic when I realize I can't see, but I can move my hands freely, unlike in previous situations, and I calm quickly.

"If you don't like what I'm doing, say 'no,' and I'll stop, all right?" His soothing voice finds my mind without detour.

"All right," I grind out. So far, so good. I have no idea what Lucius has in mind, but I trust him enough to not hurt me, at least not intentionally. It isn't my idea of a wedding day, but then I really had no idea beyond the handfasting ceremony. I've attended those often enough to know every single nuance of any priestess conducting it.

For a moment, I feel nothing; then Khachaturian's Adagio from Spartacus begins to play softly, and I'm conscious of Lucius's hands on my stomach making light downward strokes. His body shifts, and judging by the position of his hands now, he sits in front of me with a perfect view of my sex.

The expected agony of something hard driving into me does not come. Instead, a gentle finger strokes my lips, stops here and there, then comes to a halt right at the center front where it starts lightly circling around something I had no idea was there.

I gasp, it feels so good. It feels so wrong. This isn't supposed to be pleasure; it's meant to be agony, always has been. I cross my legs, effectively forcing his finger away. "No!" I rip my mask off, furious.

Lucius crawls up to me and puts his arm around my shoulder, his lips kissing my hair. "Oh, Cissy..."

I can't move because his arms hold me firmly on the bed, but his kisses spreading from my hair to my forehead, down my cheek to my neck are soothing, and the tension slowly disappears. "I'm sorry," I sob. I mean it. From the way his finger was moving, he was enjoying himself, and then I spoiled the fun. I hate myself.

His kisses stop, but his arms hold me tightly. "It's meant to be pleasure," he says quietly and lifts his head to look at me.

I stare at him. "No."

"Why, yes, Mrs Malfoy, and even if it wasn't and I decided it was, then it would be." His grin is boyish, and I fall in love with him again, just like I did when he started courting me in my sixth year at Hogwarts and I had no idea what I was letting myself into. "But be assured it is meant to be pleasure. Tomorrow, I will find a book or two on the subject for you to read. Never let it be said a Malfoy can't back up his claims."

I smile at that, his claim of it supposedly being pleasure still ringing in my ears.

"Try again?" he asks.

Is it really meant to be pleasure, I wonder, but then realize I won't find out until I try. "All right," I say hesitantly. I hold on to the mask, but do not put it on. I find I'm interested in watching his face, and the dim light doesn't hurt my eyes.

Soon I'm lost in his expressions of delight as he explores my sex, one or two fingers stroking, tickling, teasing, occasional flurries of kisses placed here and there, but then something shifts, and a fire begins somewhere deep inside me, so I quickly put my mask back on.

His strokes and circles stoke the fire until my entire being is nothing but flames. Bliss. Pure Bliss. Until I cool down, my face wet with tears, and once again safely ensconced in Lucius's embrace. "What...?" I don't have the energy to ask what happened, though I can't help notice him looking smug as he smiles at me.

"Pleasurable?" he asks. "Or painful?"

"Ye... Yes," I say, then add firmly, "Pleasure." I don't know if I will file it under *Pleasure*, but it surely wasn't pain or agony or any other negative. For now, it's something I like but don't know enough about. It will do.

Suddenly, I remember shamefully that he's given me some form of pleasure and didn't take any himself. "Lucius?" I ask.

"Hm?" I love it when his voice is a mere rumble.

"What about *your* pleasure?"

He rumbles a deep laugh. "Did you not see my pleasure on my face before you put your mask back on?"

Yes. Yes, I did. But that was a different kind of pleasure. "Yes, but..."

"No but. It was more than a straight-forward wedding night could have given me, my love."

I'm not sure I believe him, but he interrupts my thinking.

"Let's get some sleep. Tomorrow is another day."

I suddenly realize how exhausted I am from the long day and settle into a comfortable position. When he puts his arm around my middle, I feel safe, and for the first time in I don't know how long, I fall asleep without being afraid.

1979

"Cissa! You there?" My mother makes her first call to Malfoy Manor, so I know something has happened.

I rush to the fireplace. "Yes, Mother, I'm here. What is it?" I don't waste time on niceties. We both know there's no love lost between us.

She doesn't even bother to enter the living room. Her head dances in the fire as she says, "It's your father. He's died." Unemotional as ever. She might as well have told me she killed a spider in the bathroom; it would have been no different.

My heart contracts. My father wasn't that old, and I can't help but suspect... No. I won't even think it. "How?" I ask instead.

"No idea." Mother sneers. "You know how all the Mudbloods have infiltrated the Aurory. They claim there isn't any evidence to suggest it was murder."

I breathe a very quiet sigh of relief and silently thank the Mudbloods for the favor. Then I regain my senses. "When is the funeral?" I ask. I can't say I'm sorry he's dead.

I barely hear her say, "Tuesday."

She continues. "No need to bother coming to the funeral. I'm having him *burned*."

Before I can answer, she disappears.

I sit down in front of the fireplace, as if life has left me. Lucius finds me there, and for the first time, I feel a need to pleasure him.

I don't even make the time to take his robes off, just shove them out of the way, then focus on his manhood. He quickly becomes stiffer than I was on our wedding night before... before things became interesting, all the while careful to not hurt him with any sharp edges of my teeth.

He tastes... not bad. My tongue enjoys his skin and becomes more enthusiastic, all the while careful to not graze him. He cries out, and I know it's a win. I may be clumsy, but I reached my goal.

He isn't clumsy, and making love in front of the fireplace is a lot more fun than in bed. Or perhaps a good foreplay. We shall see.

1991

"No." I put my foot down on this one. "Draco will *not* attend Durmstrang. He does not need an education in the Dark Arts he's had that from you in better ways than any school could offer and Hogwarts is much closer to Wiltshire!" I will not budge an inch on this. My angel... It's bad enough he's ripped from me just because he's reached the age when wizarding schools accept students. But to another country some fifteen hundred miles east? No.

Lucius sighs. "All right, milady. As you say. Hogwarts it is."

When we return from King's Cross, we must realize simultaneously that we have the house to ourselves, for Lucius snaps the buttons on my sweater with his wand while I use mine to free him of his clothing altogether.

He banishes the house-elves from the living room as we roll on the floor in utter delight, tasting, licking, kissing each other.

"Take me, Lucius," I gasp, "like a husband would a proper wife!"

He laughs at me. "As if you aren't a proper wife!" He picks me up and carries me to the bedroom.

I falter. I feel miserable. "I'm not."

"Oh, you silly witch!" he exclaims and promises, "I shall now take you like I would take a proper wife, my proper wife."

He conjures a silk mask, fits it over my eyes, then ties my arms, making me gasp. I can't see him, and not hearing him speak disconcerts me. I wriggle, but he takes no notice.

Eventually, I hear his voice. "You want to feel, Cissy, my love, because if you see, it may bring up unwanted memories," he purrs as his fingers circle my nipples and work their way slowly downward until they reach *there*, that place I didn't know I had before him.

I'm glad he didn't think of silencing me because I so enjoy gasping at his ministrations. Bliss overcomes me with great strength, severing more of the memories of my childhood.

When I calm down from my high, I take him in my mouth, by now a familiar action and a pleasurable one at that. When he's close to completion, he enters me, not for procreation but for pleasure. I accept him willingly.

Lucius has kept his promise of healing me, and I trust him as much as I'll ever trust anyone.

1996

I've been spending my waking hours filing petitions to visit Lucius in Azkaban, but the bastards won't even let him see his wife. I die a little each day I don't get to see him, and now the problem with Draco. I have no idea how to cope with this. I need to go see Severus.

Bella couldn't save me as a child, so why on earth does she think she's responsible for me now? She is nothing but a shell. A crazy one. At least I got Severus to make an Unbreakable Vow. I know he doesn't care about dying. I guess he is where I was on my wedding night. Death seemed a perfectly acceptable option before Lucius put his hands on me.

I just... I know Severus has great potential as a human being, and I would hate for him to die, especially if he dies for Draco's shortcomings, but how can my little angel be expected to kill a wizard like Dumbledore? I'm at a loss. And I miss Lucius so badly. I cry myself to sleep every night.

1998

Draco is alive! I heard it from Potter, and I know he wouldn't lie. It's not within him to lie, just as it's not within Lucius to lie to me. Good heavens! Why can't all of the wizarding world be like Potter? Be honest at all times, and you'll save yourselves all the troubles. I'm so tired, and Lucius looks ten times more tired than I feel. I hope Potter can defeat the Dark Lord. I want my home back, preferably refurbished to erase all trace of the Dark Lord.

*

We are, at last, back home. I am not sure how I feel. Lucius, my wonderful Lucius, is pacing the carpet on the bedroom floor now. Draco is resting and keen on finding out what happened to one Astoria. I don't care if she is a pureblood or half-blood or Mudblood. As long as she's alive and well, it's all that counts.

I want my Lucius back with all my might.

*

And finally. My Lucius.

"Promise you'll always be yourself."

"I promise," I answer. Making this promise is easy enough. I've never been anyone but myself.

"Come." He holds his hand out, and I take it, letting him lead me to the bedroom. He undresses me the same way he did on our wedding night, undoing the ties of my robe one by one. The light is dim, and shadows cast by the fire dance on the walls. I hold onto him, treasuring the softness of his bare skin, before he lays me on the bed. Our lovemaking is soft, gentle, and goes a long way towards healing the wounds of recent years.

The next day, I tell Draco, "Go to her, my son. If you feel love for her, she's probably the right person for you."

He arches an eyebrow and then smiles. "I love you, Mother."

"And I love you." I watch him as he walks towards the door and only turn back once he grabs his cloak and exits.

The future has its uncertainties, but now with the war over, our home under our own control once again, and Lucius once more by my side, I'm ready to face whatever comes.

A/N: I cannot express enough gratitude for my First Readers: Aurette, my alpha-reader, whose deft hand at digging up the many weak points in my writing is priceless, and Lyn_F, my beta-reader, whose deft hand at Anglicizing my Germanic sentences is invaluable. Without them, my writing would be nothing but drivel, so if you like what you read, it is Aurette and Lyn who deserve most of the credit.