

Draco Malfoy and the Jewels of Power

by MHaydn

Courage and determination save the day.

The Ruby of Rules

Chapter 1 of 3

Courage and determination save the day.

Chapter 1: The Ruby of Rules

"My family and I are under suspicion. I don't want to drag you down with me."

"That's not what you were saying when you were getting in my pants," said Cho.

"I meant every word I said about you," said Theo.

"But not everything you said about us," said Cho.

"I wish everything I said about us were true," said Theo to the departing Cho, but he didn't think she heard or would listen.

Cho hadn't heard. She was walking down the hall, her head spinning with confused and angry thoughts. She would visit the editor, that bastion of strength, and talk about the next story and maybe boy problems, but when she walked in, the editor looked up and gave a bleak, "Hello Cho."

"Let me treat you to a coffee and a muffin," said Cho in an attempt at cheerfulness.

A few minutes later, they were in their favorite coffee shop, but Cho was beginning to think the editor was suffering too. She became convinced of it when the editor crushed her latte cup and said, "That god damned fucking Biff can write any god damned fucking story he god damned fucking likes."

"You can't trust boys," said Cho.

"God damned fucking right."

"We should start the story instead of letting those prats bungle it," said Cho.

"God damned fucking good idea."

Antonia Greengrass beamed. "Daphne's in France. They invited her to join their advanced studies program."

"That's wonderful," said Narcissa, wondering how many times she had already heard it.

Narcissa watched Antonia glance at Draco, but her son evinced no sign that he longed for Daphne and missed her terribly.

"We're all proud of her," said Shackbolt, "but I'm afraid I have some serious news. Trouble is brewing, and action must be taken."

"There're rumors of jewels," said Lucius, "rather potent ones."

"Yes, the Jewels of Power may have resurfaced," said Shackbolt, "and you can imagine the consequences if these were to fall into the wrong hands."

"Hands other than the Ministry," said Astoria.

"Other hands might turn them to evil instead of good," said Shackbolt.

His audience kept a straight face.

"We can share some information on the jewel called the Ruby of Rules," said Shackbolt.

"Isn't that one also known as the Bureaucrats' Stone?" asked Draco.

"It's sometimes been called that," admitted Shackbolt.

"The solution's obvious," said Antonia. "Send in the usual Gryffindor heroes and retrieve it."

Shackbolt was aghast. "We can't do that. If they got close to the Ruby of Rules, it would cripple them, perhaps permanently."

"You're telling us," piped up Astoria, "that if the forces of good abided by the rules they've sworn to uphold, they wouldn't be effective against the forces of evil."

"What a delightful way you have of putting things, my dear," said Shackbolt, "but I'm here to give you what information we have."

He paused to get their attention and continued. "The Parkinsons may or may not have it. It may or may not be at their country estate. It may or may not be guarded."

"I see the Ministry's Intelligence Service has turned in their usual Sterling performance," said Lucius."

Before Shackbolt could reply, Lucius added, "What about the other two jewels?"

"That information remains confidential until such time as the Ministry deems fit to release it," replied Shackbolt.

Right, thought the assembled group. *Keep vital information from us. For our own good. We're deeply touched.*

"If Daphne were here, she would know what to do," said Antonia.

Dizzy dames, thought Theo. *Dizzy dames are everywhere.*

Draco was waiting beside the road leading to the Parkinsons summer estate. Astoria said she would climb out her bedroom window and join him as soon as her parents were asleep.

In the distance, he heard a godawful noise. It was coming his way. What terrors did mundane England hide at night? He would make himself scarce. But wait. What if Astoria was in trouble? He ran around the corner to confront whatever. A beast! He yelped and leaped for cover. There was a clang, and he looked up to see the top half of Astoria appear. *It's eating her, eating her alive*, he thought.

"Draco, what are you doing in the ditch?" she asked

"What is that thing?"

"I think it's called a tank."

"Do you know how to handle it?" he asked.

"No," said Astoria, "but this is no time to be sissies. Get in here and help."

As they clattered down the road, she told him she had seen a movie once where one of these things had driven through a brick wall. It was the very thing they needed. She had discovered a bunch of them parked down the road.

"Wasn't anyone guarding them?" he asked.

"They fell asleep," she told him, "They had lots. You don't think they'll miss one, do you?"

As they thundered toward the wall around the Parkinsons, he asked if crashing the gate wouldn't be better.

"That's not what happened in the movie," she said.

He protested that it was a very thick wall. She replied that he should fire their gun at it. He hesitated.

"Quick, Draco, we're almost there."

BLAM!

She ducked back inside the tank, covered with red brick dust and with her hair a fright.

"Maybe we shouldn't shoot at something when it's that close," she said.

As the tank climbed over the rubble of the wall, they peered out to see a bunch of wizards gathering in front of them. Astoria popped out to tell them to get out of the way. The wizards, who were ready to face the tank, began to back away.

"What are they saying?" she asked, her ears still ringing from the cannon shot.

"They're yelling, 'Flee. Flee for your lives. It's an ugly demon.'"

"Give it some gas, Draco. Run over their sorry asses."

Astoria thought they would keep a Jewel of Power in the shrine behind the house, and she was giving directions. "Turn left. Turn more left. More. No, no,

watch out."

CRASH.

Astoria dropped back into the turret. "My family has known the Parkinsons for ages. I played in their home when I was a little girl, and we just took out the East Wing."

"Brace up, love," said Draco. "We can't lose heart now."

Astoria returned to guiding the tank toward a small shrine where she assumed one of the Jewels of Power was kept. They were close when she said, "I can feel it. I can feel the Jewel."

Her mind was racing. We shouldn't have blown that brick wall away. The proper procedure is to set up the scaffolding and put out the 'Construction in Progress' signs. I'm alone in a vehicle with a boy. At night. We're not even engaged. And about using this tank. I'm certain there's a form that needs to be filled out first.

She was wavering, but Draco put his hands on her shoulders and whispered, "Find your Inner Slytherin."

Thus fortified, she aimed the tank at the shrine and cried out, "You'll impede progress no more, you Foul Stone."

As they crushed the venerated object, an explosion blew the treads off the tank and knocked it sideways into a ravine. Draco helped Astoria out, told her, "Mission accomplished," and remarked they should make their getaway.

"We can't leave the tank here," she said.

"Why not?"

"Suppose someone comes along and steals it," said Astoria.

The editor was drumming the table at the Caffeine Palace with her fingers. "I don't know, Biff. How are they going to continue the arc after that episode? Commandeer a jetliner and crash it into the Pearl of Passion?"

"That's appropriate," said Biff. "Everything, including the story, can go down in flames."

She gave him the glare. "You're not helping."

Meanwhile, back at the office, a different scene was being played out.

"Good job, Theo. Artistic. The Ruby of Rules destroyed by controlled chaos."

He looked up to see Cho of the shining eyes give him an appreciative nod before vanishing down the hall.

Theo was gripping his desk in his pain. *Why does she torture me? I want to watch her face soften as I hold her. I want her warmth. I want to walk through the streets with that woman by my side.*

The Pearl of Passion

Chapter 2 of 3

Courage and cunning win the day.

Chapter 2: The Pearl of Passion

Biff decided to drown his problems in prose.

"We've located the Pearl of Passion," said Narcissa.

Shacklebolt was sitting in the front parlor looking like a groundhog surrounded by coyotes.

"It sounds like a keeper," said Antonia.

"It's passion in the classical sense," said Shacklebolt, trying to regain control. "The person under its influence pursues his destiny in life while exhibiting a desire for excellence in all he does."

He paused for effect. "You can imagine the deleterious effect that would have on our world."

"The end of civilization as we know it," remarked Astoria.

"If this jewel is as you describe it, I have a modest proposal," said Lucius. "We send in Hermione Granger. We'll hardly notice any difference."

"Of course we will, my love," said Narcissa. "Don't be cruel. The poor dear will spend the next six months ensconced in the library."

"We won't be cruel, mum," said Draco. "We'll bring her food. And additional volumes."

"This is no time for levity," said Shacklebolt.

"Right, only serious proposals," agreed Antonia. "And along those lines, I say we stop fooling around and dispatch a troop of zombies."

"Zombies?" asked Shacklebolt.

"Being undead, the Pearl of Passion will waste its substance on them, and when it is depleted, anyone can walk in with a hammer and smash it," said Antonia.

"But what about the zombies?" asked Shacklebolt.

"The standard solution," said Lucius, "is to send in a squad of vampires to wipe them out."

Lucius looked at Shacklebolt quizzically. "Don't you ever watch Reality TV?"

"And don't worry about the vampires," said Antonia. "Send in your SWAT team of Gryffindors with AK-47s and wood bullets."

Back in his office, Shacklebolt was fuming. A bunch of fugitives from justice had been making fun of him. But wait, what if they were serious? He wasn't dealing with the most balanced group of people in the Western Hemisphere. What if they did conjure up zombies and vampires?

"I don't have a SWAT team," he yelled.

"Sir?" asked his assistant, appearing in the door.

"Nothing," said Shacklebolt.

The editor wasn't certain that, at this point, any of the narrative could be saved.

What pearls lie within us, and having brought these to fruition will not the pearls that lie about us not respond in resonate harmony for they are not merely attracted to the shining finality of accomplishment but to the deeper fire and determination that produced the shiny objects that do but mark the striving that makes us most human and, with this in mind, should not a talented writer not be put off by superficial obstacles that stand between him and one who admires him with all her being but continue striving with the understanding that surely the power lies within him to open the hard shell that life has formed around her soul and thereupon polish that which she wishes to give wholeheartedly to her desired one and thus become the one and only centerpiece for the necklace of his life.

Theo was thinking Biff had left him with no lead-ins whatsoever and, whatever was going on between Biff and the editor, he hoped they resolved it before it affected the whole office.

"What's that sludge?"

"Infected Chesapeake Bay water," said Draco. "It's destroying their oyster beds."

"Will it destroy pearls, too?"

"We enhanced it," said Draco.

"Enhanced sludge? Is that what you brought me?" asked Lucius.

The group had had a serious discussion after Shacklebolt had left. Someone would have to approach the Pearl and neutralize it. This person would have to have more than a brave heart. He would have to have a spirit devoid of the higher sentiments that the jewel affected: someone calculating, ruthless, and lacking empathy.

"Why are you looking at me?" Lucius had asked.

They had replied that they would equip him for all eventualities: a gas mask in case the Pearl's essence was airborne, earplugs if it was by sound, solar eclipse goggles if it was by sight, and, over all of that, a hazmat suit. When Lucius had protested that he would be deaf and blind, they had told him not to worry since they would supply him with a seeking-wand made from a Mulberry twig with the core a feather from a homing pigeon.

On the chosen night, they deposited Lucius a safe distance from the Pearl of Passion and let its silk threads of enticement draw the wand toward it – with Lucius firmly attached.

As the wand approached, the power of the Pearl worked its magic, and the twig sprouted leaves and flowers – and fruit that ripened and dropped in his path.

He could feel the mulberries squishing underfoot. *I'll never get these stains out of my shoes*, he thought.

Then, even through the protective gear, the jewel reached Lucius. He realized he had been a sluggard and a slacker. The wizard world needed more of his kind. More heirs. Narcissa was still young enough. And even more heirs. Pansy wasn't being used. And he needed to provide for them. The Malfoy fortune needed more active management. He would increase it many fold.

As Lucius was glorying in his new ambition and insight, the seeking-wand reached the jewel. It bumped it, and the vial in its cleft dumped its contents onto the smooth sphere.

The full force of the Pearl of Passion invigorated the virus in the sludge, and it outdid all other viruses in the galaxy. It mutated into its full destructive glory. The pearl dissolved in its own apotheosis.

The office lights were going out, and Theo was about to take his empty mind home to his empty evening when he noticed Cho standing in the doorway.

Her eyes twinkled with literary insight. "You destroyed the Pearl by letting it be consumed by its own power."

"A resolution only you could imagine," said Cho with a ghost of a smile. "Brilliant. Poetic. Heartless."

"I don't deserve that," said Theo to the empty doorway.

The Diamond of Deceit

The final task. Nobility comes through.

Chapter 3: The Diamond of Deceit

"I have information for you," said the cloaked figure, "but it's only a rumor."

Draco paid for the sherry and waited.

The cloaked figure downed the sherry and whispered, "The story is that a sorcerer seeking power produced a Diamond of Deceit, but experiencing its full force, the sorcerer deceived himself about his motives and spent the rest of his life doing good works. According to legend, he would periodically decide that destroying the diamond would be a good work, but when he got close, the jewel would manifest itself as a savior of wizardkind."

"Diabolical," said Draco, "but why are you taking the chance of revealing this to me."

"To thwart the people trying to collect the Jewels of Power," declared the cloaked figure. "Acting on false information that my family had one of them, a band of brigands, a large band, tore up our favorite country estate. I vowed to fight them even though they're a ferocious gang of cutthroats."

The cloaked figure paused to gather its courage. "It may mean the end of me. One of the gang is strong enough that he took out the East Wing of the house with a single clatter of his wand."

"Pansy?" asked Draco. "Pansy, is that you?"

The cloaked figure glared at him. "How did you know it was me? And how did you know about the East Wing?"

"One hears rumors," said Draco.

"When I find the one who destroyed my favorite gazebo, I'm going to rip open his chest, fill his lungs with diazomethane, and light the fuse."

Diazomethane? thought Draco.

"There's a rumor they accidentally destroyed the jewel they were after, some kind of ruby," said Pansy. "They're powerful, but they're ill-informed and clumsy."

Her eyes were gleaming. "My best strategy is to take advantage of their stupidity."

Draco had to agree.

Cho dropped the intro on the absent Theo's desk. *Write your way out of that one, you talented, soulless twerp.*

The editor, unable to locate Biff, wandered down to Theo's office. It was empty, but she examined the manuscript dropped by Cho. *The perfect lead-in*, she thought.

How deep runs revenge, how it impinges on us as a sacred duty, how much we give up for it, that godly duty, the need to balance the books, that pursuit of poetic justice, the primary driver of our thoughts, the major theme of our popular entertainment, and are we not a lesser person if we turn it over to officialdom, those bureaucrats more eager to observe correct procedures than to push things through to their proper conclusion, but despite this universal acknowledgement, how strange it is that someone engaged on this holy mission must hide his motive, must disguise his intent, as if polite society refuses to recognize what all long for and so seldom manage to achieve.

Biff, safe in an out-of-the-way pub, tried for a subplot.

An incognito Shacklebolt, like a monk in front of a chorus line, was enjoying the festival. The food was good: the beer was better; and the exotic dancers would be great. In this pleasant state of mind, he noticed the Personnel Director had joined him. They acquired another pint. He had known the Personnel Director a long time, a discrete soul.

"What if I were to confide in you?" asked Shacklebolt.

When the other nodded that he could keep a confidence, Shacklebolt, aware of the coming conflict and the need to gather the appropriate forces said, "What if I were looking for some zombies?"

His friend nodded. "The living dead, we have them. I've been trying to get them to retire for ages with no success. It would be great if this became a Ministry priority."

His brain swimming in the excellent brew, Shacklebolt made a suggestion. "Of course, we then need to round up some vampires."

"Ah, vampires," replied his friend. "We do have a bunch of blood-sucking parasites. They might be worse than the deadwood."

While Shacklebolt was contemplating his good fortune, his friend said, "Look, if you want to cleanse the Ministry, come and see me Monday."

"By the way, do they have belly dancers for this festival?" asked the Personnel Director.

"That's what I'm waiting for," said Shacklebolt.

After the dancers had finished and his friend had left and some of the fumes of alcohol had evaporated, Shacklebolt was left wondering if he and his friend had been on the same page.

Not certain the story could support a subplot, Biff tried another tack.

"I played in the East Wing when I was a little girl," said Pansy. "When I catch the one who ruined my memories, I'm going to cut off his arms, hack off his legs, and chop off his head."

"Five out of six ain't bad," said Draco.

"And that's after I perform a little rite on his schlong," said Pansy.

She declared she had the right tool for their adventure. She had absconded with the Parkinson Peacemaker: a mace with a head of steel wrought from the meteor what had done for Elsie the dragon and with a handle carved from a yew tree once cursed by Merlin.

She cackled. "My family tried to hide it from me. They think I'm too immature to wield it." She cackled some more.

Later, when Draco told Pansy that his family had discovered a group of dark wizards were hiding the Diamond of Deceit on a wild patch by Loch Lomond, she gripped the family mace and quivered like a ferret at the entrance to a mouse maze.

Cho was on her way to her office when she overheard Biff and the editor talking to Theo.

"One more section and we're finished."

"Don't let us down, Theo. Don't let it become an action/adventure."

"No romantic ending."

"No heroics."

What a crew, thought Cho.

The last thing Cho heard before closing her office door was the editor saying, "I brought triple espressos."

"Here I am, dressed like a 1920's bimbo as requested."

Pansy was wearing sandals, a black bikini, and a straw skimmer although she thought the effect was ruined by the addition of a white shirt that was too large for her. Nevertheless, she lounged provocatively on the bow of the boat and waved at all the men until she provoked a water skier into showing off. His passage threw up a huge spray. Pansy squealed; the wet shirt clung to her; the water skier looked back and noticed the outline of her black bikini. He fell off his skis.

"I've figured out your plan, you conniving fiend: I attract the boys, they get me wet, and that provides a distraction."

"Keep it up, sweetheart. You're doing great," said Draco. "There're the guards for the jewel."

Pansy struck a pose and waved at the wizards patrolling a stretch of shoreline. They made rude gestures back.

"I'm going to get you for this, Draco."

Late that evening, he eased the boat into a hidden cove, and the two of them began their cautious approach. A passing shadow caused Draco to pull Pansy down into a ditch containing a small stream.

"Do you get off on getting girls wet?" hissed Pansy.

They were within a few feet of the structure they thought hid the jewel when Pansy growled, grabbed her mace, and burst into the enclosure where she received the full blast of the Diamond of Deceit. She would devote her life to noble deeds. She would raise sons who would restore the Empire. The Parkinson name would reign supreme. Its crest would be a dragon.

She faced the three guards with every fibre of her being clamoring for justice.

She kned the first in the groin. "That's for the stone wall." She poked the second in the eye. "That's for the East Wing." She stomped the third in the instep. "That's for my favorite gazebo."

She swung the mace with its head of a killer comet and its handle of weird wood. "For Dragons and My Right."

The shards of light from the shattered jewel pierced the night.

Draco appeared, took the dazed Pansy by the hand, and led her away from the growing pandemonium.

Draco was worried that the jewel might have permanently affected Pansy, but as they were walking along some high ground by the water, she asked, "Are we safe now?"

"Yes."

"Good. Your turn to get wet," said Pansy as she pushed him over the edge.

Her normal self is back, no permanent damage done, thought Draco on his high road to the bonny, bonny banks.

END