

Treachery

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One-Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: The characters are not mine. I am just borrowing them to do my bidding.

Through the darkness, Snape could see the blond boy running just ahead of him. Snape ran towards the front gates of Hogwarts, the squawking Hippogriff chasing him, scratching him with deadly talons. He tried yelling at Draco to wait for him, but he was winded from running and hoarse from screaming at Potter. Anger and disgust were pulsing through his body, driving him on through the castle's gates. Draco disappeared with a sharp *CRACK!* just as Snape reached the Apparition point.

Snape took one last look over his shoulder at the place he had called home for the past sixteen years. There was nothing left for him; Hogwarts and Dumbledore were both lost to him now. He turned and Apparated to the Dark Lord's side.

When Snape arrived, Voldemort was waiting for him. The other Death Eaters that had survived the night had taken their places in the circle. Snape noted that the circle was growing larger, empty places were being filled with new, young Death Eaters. Even hidden behind their masks, he knew who they were. He was glad he did not recognize Draco in the throng. Voldemort was quick to attend to business; he swept amongst his loyal subjects, casting *Crucio* on the few who were not quick enough to supplicate him. Snape observed and listened carefully; he was no longer unsure of Draco's assignment, but wanted to find Draco and, at the same time, placate the Dark Lord. After all, Draco did not complete his task; it had, in the end, been left up to him. He needed to speak with Narcissa and find out how much she knew about Voldemort's plan when she bound him to that Unbreakable Vow.

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Snape knew how to find Narcissa. All he had to do was return to Spinner's End and wait. Pettigrew had stayed with Voldemort; now that Dumbledore was dead, there was no need for him to shadow Snape.

Snape sat in a dusty, threadbare chair drinking firewhiskey and waiting. He had finished half the bottle by the time Narcissa knocked lightly on his door. He let her in, expecting Bella to follow her inside, but the darker sister was not there.

"No older sister to make sure things go according to plan?" Snape queried.

"The plan has been executed. I am here to collect my son," Narcissa answered coldly.

"I do not know where he is. Draco Disapparated from Hogwarts before me," Snape said matter-of-factly.

"But you promised to protect him." Narcissa's voice became a low growl. "You took the Unbreakable Vow to help him, and protect him, and finish what he could not finish."

"I am well aware of what I promised Narcissa." Snape's eyes grew dark. "I have killed Dumbledore, just hours ago. I have met with the Dark Lord. He is aware that I have completed the task that he gave to your son. I think between your husband and your son, the Dark Lord is not happy with your family. The question is, where is your beloved son?"

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Draco was sitting in a back room of the old Riddle house, waiting. His young impatience was getting the best of him. He thought he should be at the Dark Lord's side, not biding his time in some filthy Muggle home.

"Snape just took over on the Astronomy Tower, but I am not afraid of him. The other Death Eaters backed away when he showed up, but I stood my ground," he said to himself. "Father would have been proud of me, of my ingeniousness, of getting those Death Eaters into Hogwarts, right under Dumbledore's nose. The Dark Lord would be proud of me too, if Snape hadn't interfered. Snape treats me like a child. I do not need protecting; I have the Dark Mark now."

The Dark Lord was aware of his newest Death Eater's feelings. He thought it best to let him contemplate them for a while. Draco had failed at his first task, but he would complete his second. Voldemort knew just how to prepare him. Aunt Bella would fuel the fires.

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"I thought he would stay with you. I told him that he could trust you," Narcissa said, almost crying.

"But he did not trust me. Instead, he preferred the assistance of two bumbling Slytherins. He could have gotten himself killed if I had not intervened. I am just curious as to how much you knew of the Dark Lord's plan before you and your sister misled me into taking the Unbreakable Vow."

Narcissa looked down at the worn wood floor. "I had no choice, Severus. I had already lost my husband. I could not also lose my son. Bella told me that Draco had to kill someone to become a Death Eater and replace Lucius at the Dark Lord's side, but I did not know who the victim would be."

"But Bella did?" Snape questioned.

"I don't know," Narcissa uttered.

"She certainly seemed to derive a sick pleasure from performing the bonding, almost as if she had her own agenda," Snape noted.

Snape delved into Narcissa's mind. She let him roam freely through her thoughts. She was desperate for her son, and Snape seemed to be her only solution. He had not broken the Unbreakable Vow.

He could feel her desperation and knew she was telling the truth now.

"We need to find Draco before the Dark Lord does," Snape insisted.

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The door opened abruptly. Draco was still sulking. He looked up to find Bellatrix entering the room.

"So, my little nephew, you have come into the fold. Does anyone know you are here?" she asked.

"No, I followed your directions precisely."

"Are you sure Snape does not suspect anything?"

"No, he thinks he is protecting me from the Dark Lord," Draco replied.

"Good, Snape will come looking for you as a favor to your mother, but we will be ready for him." Bella sounded confident.

"Then I will kill the traitor and avenge my father," said Draco.

"The Dark Lord will be very pleased."