

For Love

by darsynia

Narcissa has built her life the way she wanted, but her priorities are about to change.
{DH Spoilers} Written for LJ's luxleviathana ('first kiss' prompt) and LJ's 15pairings community ('play to win' prompt).

For Love

Chapter 1 of 1

Narcissa has built her life the way she wanted, but her priorities are about to change. {DH Spoilers} Written for LJ's luxleviathana ('first kiss' prompt) and LJ's 15pairings community ('play to win' prompt).

All of her life had been directed to this point, Narcissa realized. She'd always seen herself as quietly loyal, graceful in her devotion, but all her efforts had left her life in ruins. Her focus had shifted now, from her own great ambitions to her son--no matter what the consequences. In the moment's time that she had, walking from her place among the Dark Lord's followers to the crumpled body on the ground in front of them, she could feel the constraints she'd placed on herself fall away, the narrow pathway of life on which she'd chosen to walk widen with possibilities.

She could only hope that by trying to save Draco she wasn't condemning Lucius, herself, or their love for each other.

=====

The first time she ever saw Lucius was at a birthday party. She'd long since forgotten who the party had been for, but she could still distinctly remember the house in which it was held--rich, stately, everything a young girl such as she aspired to have. She'd watched him intently in the way that only the young could do without censure, noted his elegant robes, his sleek hair, caught snippets of his conversations about his first year at Hogwarts. She'd turned eleven not long before, and though she'd maintained a steady indifference about school with her elder sisters, something about this young man made her want to speak with him, learn from him. He'd looked as if he already knew his place there--and it wasn't insignificant.

Hogwarts wasn't interesting to her for its academic value, but rather for the chance to make her own way. She wanted to be *Narcissa*, not 'Bella's little sister.' Narcissa had been a pragmatist, even as early as six--there wasn't any use to wasting time and energy trying to outshine her sister at home, she'd decided. Andromeda seemed to truly not care, but Cissy did; she had just been careful not to show it. As her first year at Hogwarts drew closer, however, Narcissa had been plagued by doubts, wondering if she'd placed too much importance on the difference between home and school. Meeting--or, rather, observing--Lucius Malfoy had bolstered her courage. The longer she'd studied him that day, the more she'd decided that her customary practice of learning by example would serve her better; she chose not to approach him.

First impressions were important, after all--and she wanted him to remember her.

The second time she saw him was the night she was sorted. Most of the other first years that surrounded her were exuberant, babbling animatedly to each other and pushing their way about, trying to get a good look at the four house tables in the Great Hall. Narcissa felt the excitement, but it was more valuable to her as something to hold in, to keep private, something she knew about herself that no one else did. There were few names called before hers, but she was the first of her year to walk proudly to her table, rather than run. As she passed him, she saw out of the corner of her eye that he'd begun to turn to watch her, and somehow this was more valuable to Narcissa than the subsequent approval of her own sisters.

Narcissa eventually lost count of the times she'd passed Lucius in the hallways (except for the one tense evening that she ended up seated next to him at dinner) over the

next few years. There was something in the way he held himself, his pride in being a pureblooded member of Slytherin house, perhaps, that continually reminded her of her childhood goal. Her mother had always impressed on her daughters that dignity was invaluable, and secretly Narcissa thought that she was the only child that had taken to heart their mother's true meaning. Bellatrix *commanded* respect, Andromeda appeared indifferent to it--which in and of itself drew respect, but Narcissa found that by the time she was in her fifth year at Hogwarts, she was treated with a subtle deference that her sisters had not been.

She had wondered, sometimes, whether her personality was being expressed or stifled by the way she behaved--she couldn't tell the difference. It didn't matter, however--she'd carved out a place for herself with little more effort than a haughty silence.

It was the same time of year as that long-ago birthday that Narcissa once again saw Lucius at a social function, held at a lavish mansion--his family's own. There was no need to be covert about observing him this time--from the moment she'd stepped onto his property, he'd sought her out. They'd never really spoken at school, too busy forging ties with other students, making friends and good impressions. She couldn't help but be taken by the way he'd simply walked up to her, handing her a delicate glass of a sweet-smelling liquid before offering her his arm to stroll around the grounds. It seemed like an unconscious--or, perhaps conscious, Lucius liked ceremony, she'd later come to realize--imitation of the adult couples that were scattered around them. From the beginning he'd spoken to her as if to an equal, and Narcissa had wondered if he would have done so if his first recollection of her had been that of a small, wispy-haired child, the younger sister of a star that burned more hotly than she did.

It didn't matter now. She'd learned her lessons well, no matter that they'd been taught by emulation than instruction.

The two of them had drifted farther and farther away from the main building. Lucius had dominated their conversation, expressing his concern for the future of the great wizarding houses, the current weakness of the Ministry's leadership, and other such subjects, all within the themes of pride and discontent. She'd been captivated by his intensity, so caught up by his fervor that she didn't notice what was missing in his words--the catalyst for change. When he'd turned to her and complimented her on her beauty and dignity, telling her that she was exactly the kind of woman he would look for as a pureblood seeking to uphold traditional values, however, Narcissa felt as though she'd played the game a few steps too far. With her now customary coolness, she'd thanked him for such a high compliment, managing to appear flattered and yet detached at the same time.

That night, Narcissa had flown into a rare rage, wondering if her careful planning for her life had gone awry. She'd railed against the idea that the respect she craved had to be combined with dispassionate regard, that her future was in being *valued* rather than cherished.

It had been with great surprise, then, that she'd looked up to see him in the doorway of her compartment on the Hogwarts Express that fall. When he'd asked her if he might sit with her, it was the first time she'd ever seen insecurity in him, and it touched her to the quick. She'd allowed her customary haughtiness to slip--again following his example, she'd realized later. Building on her warm greeting, the two of them had spent the train ride speaking earnestly to each other, sliding back into their public personas only briefly. She'd learned that Lucius had chosen to speak to her so formally at his estate because he had been nervous, worked up into a passion over the issues he cared most about. She'd hinted at her true reasons for rebuffing him, and her heart had raced when he'd told her that there were many ways that he saw her as valuable, touching the hair around her face with a tenderness that she'd never thought him capable of.

He'd kissed her then, just as the train began to slow for its approach to Hogsmeade station. The kiss had been full of passion and hunger, not the sort of kiss one would associate with dignity, but Narcissa felt that this and every kiss they'd shared since then connected her to Lucius, explained without words his love for her, his possessiveness, his hope for the future...

=====

She could hear her sister's ragged breaths as she moved closer to the boy on the forest floor. How much the quest for power had altered Bella's view of her own dignity! Yet, still powerful, Bellatrix was--and she, Narcissa, felt as though she had lost everything in that same struggle, as had Lucius. No wand, no respect, no reason to hold his head high--and for what? She saw Him as He truly was, now, saw how He was going to lose. Voldemort had no hope for the future, only plans, plans that didn't include the sort of dignity she'd striven for her entire life--had she not been loyal? Had she not done all she could? Still, the wasted shell of a man had treated her as he might a dog on the street, shooting a hex at her to demand her service. After all that had happened to herself, to her family, the only truth left to her was what she found valuable. Her son. Her husband. Their love.

He was going to lose.

Her heart pounding, Narcissa knelt beside the body of Harry Potter, allowing her unkempt hair to slide from her shoulders and conceal her face, her hands. Her entire body trembling, she leaned over, far over, so that her lips were as close to his ear as possible, and quietly, oh, so quietly, she asked after Draco. His answer was immediate and, for her, life-changing. Hope surged, and she no longer ruthlessly suppressed it. She held onto that hope as she had done her anticipation on the day of her sorting, used it to lift herself up to face the throng of Death Eaters that surrounded them.

"He is dead!" she cried out, her triumphant tone fueled by something that the Dark Lord would never understand.