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Lady

Inhaltsangabe

People say that time heals all wounds, but is it true?

Vorwort

Inhaltsverzeichnis

1. Untitled

Untitled

Draco Malfoy was a tall, rather skinny boy with pale skin and light blonde hair just like his mother. But all in all he looked more like his father, looked exactly like Lucius. It was amazing how much he resembled him, how much he resembled him in every way, even in his movements, his choice of words...

"Come in," he said, briefly looking at his opposite, his eyes narrowed. She knew about his thoughts, of course she knew, knew what he seemed to be eager to speak out but held back, for his mother's sake. For just a second she closed her eyes, once again asking herself why she'd come here, why she'd not just decided to go on, to go on and not look back... But then took a deep breath as she followed him by entering the dark, eerie property with her heart beating in her chest like it had never beaten before.

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The message of her sister's passing had reached Andromeda unexpectedly, had hit her without a warning. Over and over again she'd read the letter, until the letters had blurred before her eyes.

I hereby inform you about the death of my mother Narcissa Malfoy. She passed away on Wednesday, November 18th 1999, the funeral was held a day later with myself as the only attendant. She now is buried in the Malfoy family tomb on my family's residence property. I am also asking you to meet me in Malfoy Manor as soon as possible in order to to discuss some last formalities.

*Sincerely,
Draco Malfoy*

How formal his tone of voice had been... Like he'd written to a stranger, not his aunt, not his mother's sister... But weren't they strangers? Weren't they nothing but strangers, never having met each other, never having been in contact before? Andromeda did not know, did not know anything. Narcissa... Dead... Her sister, dead! Slowly she sank down to her chair, covering her face with her hands, shaking.

She'd not even had the chance to say goodbye! Had not even had the chance to say goodbye to her sister, her sweet little...

How many years had passed without contact, how long had they lived their lives pretending not to care, pretending to be happy. Had they hoped to forget about each other? She did not know. Did not know anything. How strange had they become to one another over all these years, how many things had happened to...

No. No! She'd not think about all these things any longer, not now, not that she'd lost everything. Her daughter, her husband whom she'd loved more than her own life... And now? Now she'd also lost her sisters. But hadn't she lost her, hadn't she lost her entire family already in the minute she'd run away? Hadn't she lost them years ago? How long had she hoped to reconcile with her sisters, with Bellatrix, with Narcissa... But now? Now they both were gone, would never come back and she'd not even had the chance to say goodbye...

He wanted to see her... Her nephew wanted to see her... But why? Why would he even talk to her, why would he even... No. No, she'd not go there, wouldn't meet him, not after...

No. Of course she'd go. Of course she'd see him, wouldn't run away again like she'd run away so many times before. She'd meet him, would finally meet her sister's son after so many years and maybe... Maybe, even though he was raised like they'd all been raised, they'd finally be able to forget.

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“My mother left something for you in her desk,” Draco said as they were walking through Malfoy Manor’s endless, barely illuminated corridors. He’d hardly spoken since Andromeda’s arrival, hadn’t even looked at her for longer than just a few seconds.

“So you are the woman my mother once called sister,” his eyes seemed to scream. “The blood traitor, having put shame on her family.”

More than once Andromeda had opened her mouth to speak, wanting to talk to him, wanting to ask him so many questions, but she’d always remained quiet. Dead... Her sister... Dead! Had she even realised what she’d been told in the letter? She did not know. Did not know anything. The past months had been like a dream to her, a dream, a nightmare she was unable to wake up, unable to escape from. All of a sudden she’d found herself living a life she didn’t recognise, a life seeming to belong to someone else.

Like she’d gone into a trance she followed her nephew, would hardly notice how he finally stopped, opening the door to a large bedroom. Andromeda gasped for breath, quickly biting her lip. The scent of death was in the air, still present as if...

“My parents’ bedroom,” the boy muttered, the expression in his eyes having changed all of a sudden, having lost its coldness. For just a second Andromeda closed her eyes, tempted to touch his shoulder, to comfort him but she held back. Of course she held back.

“How...” she whispered barely audible, unable to finish her sentence.

“A potion,” he replied. “She wasn’t the same after my father fell in the war. Her heart was broken, irreparably broken. So one day she decided to...”

He broke off, taking a deep breath. Soon again he’d regained his control, turning away from Andromeda.

“She left something for you in her desk,” he repeated, ready to leave the room. “In the drawer. I am sure that you will find your way out once you are done.”

Quickly Andromeda reached out her hand, wanted to hold him back, wanted to ask him more questions about Narcissa, about himself... But she was too late.

Suicide. So it’d been suicide... Her sister had killed herself, had... Andromeda wanted to scream, wanted to scream as loud as she could, shook her head, over and over again, unable to believe what she’d heard...

“No...” she whispered, covering her face with her hands. “No no no no no!”

This couldn’t be true, Narcissa couldn’t just have... Of course she could. Of course she could have killed herself, of course it could be true... But why? Why! There were so many questions, so many questions she’d never find an answer to...

Why had she come here, why hadn’t she just ignored her nephew’s request to see him? Why hadn’t she just... Was it a trap? Was all this a trap?

My mother left something for you in her desk.

Why hadn’t he just sent her a parcel? Why hadn’t he just sent her an owl, why had he asked her to come here, why hadn’t he just... So many questions, so many answers she’d probably never find...

Dead. Her sister... Dead... Her sister, her once best friend, gone! Gone... How much had she loved her, how close had they once been, sheer inseparable. But then... Then, everything had changed and now Andromeda would never be able to look into her sister's eyes again, would never hear her voice again. Never.

Absent-mindedly, not even noticing her own movements, she took a few steps forward until she reached the desk, reaching out her hand for the drawer, hesitant at first, but then determined.

She'd almost have started to laugh, a sharp, desperate laugh. Parchment... The drawer contained nothing but parchment! Of course... Of course it couldn't have been true. Had he just called her to hurt her? To break her heart even more, as a punishment for her betrayal?

Quickly she turned around, wanted to leave, wanted nothing more than to just leave the room her sister had died in, wanted nothing more than to just leave this horrible house and never look back, to just forget she'd ever come here.

But still, she held back, held back not even knowing why, would have another look at the parchment... Andromeda gasped for breath, closing her eyes for a moment just to make sure her imagination had not been trying to fool her. No... No, those weren't only old pieces of parchment! Those were letters... Letters addressed to her.

Again she reached out her hand, trembling so much that she'd almost dropped the small pack down to the floor. She'd written her... Narcissa had written her, had written her so many letters, so many...

Slowly Andromeda sank down to the floor, determined to throw the letters away, determined to rip the parchment into a thousand pieces, never reading the words written on it, never wanting to spend a single thought on all this again as long as she lived. Wouldn't the letters only contain insults? Insults, reproaches for what she'd done, for everything she'd been punished for so many years ago? They'd never forgiven her, never. But had she even forgiven herself? She did not know. Did not know anything.

Still, those letters were the last memory of Narcissa she'd ever have, the last remaining proof that they'd once been sisters... She had to open them, had to read them! And wasn't she also curious? Again Andromeda closed her eyes, taking a deep breath... Then, quickly, as if it had caught fire and would now burn her hands, she opened the envelope, unfolding the parchment, carefully, almost lovingly.

Again she'd hesitate, shook her head, unable to believe what she held in her hands, that her sister had written her... Seconds, minutes seemed to pass until she finally looked down on the letter in her hands. Only three words were written on the parchment, in black ink that slowly had started to fade away during the past years.

How dare you.

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1971. September.

Tears were streaming down her face as she put down her quill, rising from her desk. She knew it was foolish of her to still cry, to still shed tears over Andromeda's betrayal, but she was angry, so incredibly angry! So incredibly hurt... Why'd she left her, why'd she left them! She'd run away, had turned away from them as if they'd not even be worth looking at, had betrayed them...

Of course she missed her. Of course she missed her, more than she'd ever dare to admit, wanted nothing more than to just follow her, to see her, one last time, to hear her voice again... Hadn't they been more than sisters? Hadn't they also been best friends, always there for each other, always listening? Had it all been an

illusion, nothing but an illusion?

How selfish she'd been... How selfish, how... Had she ever thought about them, making the decision to marry a Muggle-born? Had Andromeda ever thought about her family, about how much shame she'd put on them, about how much she'd hurt them? No... No, of course she hadn't. Of course she'd only thought about herself...

"Cissy..." a cold, quiet voice suddenly said behind her, she couldn't suppress a wince as she felt a hand on her shoulder. "She's been gone for three months now; you finally need to forget about her. She's not worth your tears."

"I wish I could..." Narcissa whispered, quickly brushing over her face as she turned around, looking into her eldest sister's dark brown eyes. How much she resembled Andromeda... How alike they looked, almost like twins... "But she's our sister!"

"Sister!" Bellatrix cried out, again causing her to wince. "She's a traitor! Nothing but a traitor! Didn't she leave us, without saying goodbye? Didn't she just run off to marry a Mudblood, not spending a single thought on us? Look at you, Narcissa; you're not yourself anymore! She broke your heart and you still call her your sister? Once and for all, forget about her. She's not a Black; she's not a member of our family and never was. She's worthless."

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Andromeda bit her lip, shaking her head as the parchment fell down to the floor. Of course she knew why her sister had written to her, of course she knew what she'd meant... Had she ever thought about her sisters when making the decision to leave? When running away, not looking back, when... No. No, she hadn't, had only thought about herself... How selfish she'd been! How much she'd missed them...

"I never wanted to leave you," she whispered barely audible, talking to Narcissa as if she were here, here with her, looking at her, her ice blue eyes so full of sadness, so full of reproach... "I only left our parents! Not you, how could I ever leave you, knowing I'd never see you again? But... Understand... Cissy, please... You have to understand! I loved him... I loved him so much... What would you have done? Tell me, what would you have done?"

Quickly she opened another letter, scared of the words it'd contain... But she'd read, would read every single sentence, even if they hurt, even if they hurt more than anything else, knowing she'd never forgive herself if she didn't.

Andromeda,

How many times have I written you already, how many times have I just thrown the parchment away, too afraid of the consequences. Will I ever finish this letter? Will your hands ever touch the paper that had been lying on my desk for too long, will you ever read these lines, not having torn the parchment apart in the moment you saw my name? I don't know. There are so many things I do not know, so many things I am eager to find an answer for but unable to ask anyone. So many years have passed; so much time has gone by without us noticing.

Will we ever see each other again? Will we ever stand eye to eye again, will we recognise each other? What has time done to us... I wish I could undo what has been done; I wish I could look into your eyes again without feeling shame burning in my heart. Didn't we once call ourselves sisters? Didn't we once call ourselves best friends; didn't we trust each other? I know we cannot turn back time, I know we cannot forget about the past, but can't we just make a new beginning? The wars have changed our lives, have changed

everything, so can't we just change as well? Can't we just... I wish I knew what to do, I wish I knew what to think.

Perhaps it's impossible. Perhaps we are destined to live our lives separately, pretending we never knew each other, perhaps too much has happened between us to be able to just close our eyes and start anew. Maybe we finally need to accept that we're not girls anymore...

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1998. January.

It had already become dark as Narcissa rose from her desk, leaving the letter behind unfinished. For a moment she closed her eyes, taking a deep breath... How many times had she sworn herself not to write to her any longer, how many times had she sworn herself to forget about her, to finally forget about the woman she'd once called her sister... But she couldn't, just couldn't! Even after all these years had passed, even though she'd betrayed them, even though she'd left them, Andromeda would still be a part of her, would always be a part of her thoughts, her soul, unwilling to ever allow her to forget.

With a quiet sigh Narcissa took a step forward, looking out of the window, down to the gate... He still hadn't returned. Lucius still hadn't returned home, still hadn't given her a sign that he was alive. How long had he been gone now, how long hadn't she looked into his eyes anymore? She did not know. Had lost any feeling for time.

Over and over again Narcissa had tried to tell herself that everything was all right, that, one day, he'd come back like he'd always come back... How many times had she begged him to stay? To just stay, not to leave her behind again, never certain if he'd return... But he'd not listened to her. Of course he hadn't. Had only kissed her, kissed her, looking deeply into her eyes, whispering to her not to worry... But of course she worried! Worried about him every minute, every second he was out, out to fight in a war she'd realised they were destined to lose...

Why wouldn't he just return? Why wouldn't he just hold her, tell her that everything was all right...

Narcissa would almost have started to scream as she heard the door to her bedroom open, quickly turned around. Lucius... Could it be Lucius, finally having returned home?

"Draco," she said quietly, hardly able to suppress the disappointment in her voice. For just a second she closed her eyes, attempting to regain control, not wanting her son to notice her weakness. "Are there any news about your father?"

She'd not even have to wait for his response. Would only look into his eyes to know what had happened, to know that...

"No..." she whispered barely audible, stumbling a few steps back before she sank down to her bed, covering her face with her hands, her desperate attempts to remain calm failing. "No... Please..."

Could it be true? Could her worst nightmare really have come true? Had he... No. No, she'd not even dare to finish her thought. He had to be alive, Lucius had to be alive! Had to be all right... He couldn't have fallen, not now! Now, that she needed him the most...

"Mother?" Draco's quiet voice asked behind her back, unable to suppress a wince as she felt his hand carefully touching her shoulder. Narcissa wouldn't reply, wouldn't even look at him. Seconds, minutes of silence passed before she finally turned around, opening her mouth to speak, to ask him to leave her alone, but no sound would escape from her lips.

Dead... Lucius... Dead! Only slowly she seemed to realise what had happened, only slowly she seemed to realise that he was gone... Gone, gone forever! That she'd never see him again... Never would she be able to look into his eyes again, never would she hear his voice, never would she feel his touch again... Gone... He was gone...

She'd not even attempt to suppress her sobs, tears started to stream down her face, unstoppably, blurring her sight within only a few seconds. But she'd not bother brush them away, wouldn't care about her son seeing her in a state like this, wouldn't care about weakness, about control... No. No, not now, not now that she'd lost him! Now that she'd lost her husband, now that Draco had lost his father... Forever.

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Over and over again Andromeda shook her head as she finished the letter, barely able to believe what she'd read. Narcissa, asking her for a new beginning? Her sister, asking her to forget about the past, after all these things that had happened? It seemed sheer impossible to even think about it, to even consider she'd ever... Was it possible she could have changed? Was it really possible that Narcissa could have changed, that she'd have been willing to meet her, to meet her, to even reconcile?

Quickly Andromeda put away the parchment, desperately attempting to distract herself from the questions that had come up in her mind. All these questions only one person would have known an answer to...

Why had she come here? Why had she just come here, why had she decided to open the first envelope, to read what had been written on the parchment? Of course she missed her, of course she missed her more than anything else, but... Wouldn't it have been best if she'd never been told about the letters? Wouldn't it have been best if she'd just...

No. No... She had the right to know about them, she had the right to read them! Had a right to know about her sister's feelings, to know about her thoughts. Andromeda gave a quiet sigh, closed her eyes for a moment as she reached out her hand for another letter, scared of the words her sister had written on the parchment... She frowned, hesitating to open it for a moment. The parchment looked different to the others, newer, so much newer, like the drawer had not given it shelter for longer than just a few weeks instead of so many years.

Andromeda couldn't suppress a wince as she finally opened the envelope, knowing, feeling what she held in her hands. She bit her lip until she tasted blood in her mouth, praying it'd be something else, praying she was mistaken...

My dearest Andy,

I wish I wouldn't be forced to write you to tell you how much I miss you. I wish I'd be able to look into your eyes again, to hold you, to just hold you and never let you go. Have I ever missed you, have I ever needed you this much than in this moment right now? I don't know. Who have we become, not to look into each other's eyes when our paths cross on the street, who have we become, to pretend we are strangers although we once used to be sisters?

How much have we changed... How much have I changed, how much has the war broken me... I barely recognise myself when looking at my reflection in the mirror, when speaking, even when thinking. It's over, they tell me, the war is finally over; everything will be all right. But has it really finished? Is it really over, will it ever be over for those of us who have lost everything? I used to have so much, but now? Now only my son has remained. My son... My everything... But even he seems to slip away more and more with every day passing.

I love you, Andromeda; I've always loved you, even when everyone told me it was wrong. Even when I myself used to believe it to be wrong... Traitor, they called you, blood traitor, putting more and more shame on our family's name with every day passing. And I? I believed them; I used to believe every word they said, used to believe in something called purity of blood.

I swore myself never to forgive you your betrayal, swore myself never to forgive you having run away without looking back, having left us behind as if we were worthless, as if you'd never cared about us... But now I realise, wasn't my own behaviour the real betrayal? I gave you up in the minute you closed the door behind your back, blinded by our family's reaction. Didn't I betray you in a cruel, unforgivable way?

All you did was follow your heart, too late I realise that your only chance to be happy was to escape. Don't we all have a right to be happy, without being abandoned by those we love the most? Don't we all have a right to live our lives like we want them to live, not like we are supposed to, not like we are told to?

I am not asking you forgiveness, nor am I asking you to understand what I have done to you. It wasn't you, having left, it wasn't you, having abandoned us; it was us. It was us, being unable to accept that, over the years, our values have become worthless. No. No, I am not asking you for forgiveness, I only want you to know how deeply I regret. If I could turn back time, if I had the possibility to undo what I have done, I would.

I miss you, Andy; I miss you more than anything else. I love you... I wish I would have realised my mistakes, I wish I would have come to you earlier, so much earlier, before we both lost everything...

But it is too late. It is too late to start a new beginning, too late to pretend that we are able to forget about the past. I am not as strong as you are, always going on, no matter how many times you fall. My life on this earth has come to an end; I am no longer able to just go on, to just live my life as nothing but the shell of the woman I once used to be, I once used to know.

Once again I am going to leave those I love the most behind, once again I am... But I have no choice! I don't have a choice... Please, try to understand. Please, try to forgive me...

I know that, one day, we'll meet again, that one day we'll be able to hold each other in our arms again, in a better life, far away from hatred, far away from war. But until then, all I wish is that you won't forget me.

*Love always, even in death,
Narcissa*

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1999. November.

The quill fell down to the floor, leaving behind a large, dark spot of ink on the carpet. Narcissa's entire body had started to tremble as she rose from her chair, pacing around the room before she sank down to her bed, remaining motionless for seconds, minutes...

Finally, as if she'd gone into a trance, she reached out her hand for the tiny glass phial on her bedside locker, looking, staring at the clear blue liquid it contained... But why'd she hesitate? Why did she hesitate, why wouldn't she just... She didn't have another chance! For just a second she closed her eyes, bit her lip...

"Forgive me, Draco..." Narcissa whispered barely audible, winced at the sound of her own voice, shook her head as if she were unable to believe what she did. She'd break his heart... She'd... No. No! She couldn't stay, just couldn't! Would be unable to bear this life any longer.

But how... How could she do it, knowing she'd leave her son behind? Knowing she'd hurt him, more than anything else, knowing she'd abandon him just like his father had abandoned them? She had to stay alive, had to learn how to cope, for him! For Draco...

As if she'd ever learn how to cope. As if she'd ever be able to break away from everything that had happened, as if she'd ever be able to forget, to live a life worth living... Never had she spent a thought on herself before, never had she worried about her own life instead of her family's, never! Hadn't she only lived for others? So why... Why couldn't she just let go, now that it was time to let go?

Let go... As if there'd be anything left to still hold her, as if she'd have to lose anything, anything except her son... Draco... Her little boy... Wouldn't he be able to go on without her? Wouldn't he forget her, as soon as she'd left this world? Of course he would. Of course...

Again she'd hesitate. Again she'd only look at it, but then, then she'd finally open the phial, would finally bring it to her lips, emptying it at a stroke...

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She'd been right. Of course Andromeda had been right, of course she'd known what... No. No! She wouldn't even finish her thought. Just wanted to get up, wanted to get up and leave, forgetting about everything she'd read, forgetting about everything that had happened, but she seemed paralysed, unable to move, unable to even breathe.

Had she ever cried since she'd received the message of Narcissa's passing? Had she ever shed a single tear? She did not know. Did not know anything... Was empty. Empty... Even her tears seemed to have run dry.

Cissy... Dead... Her sister, dead! Dead! Gone and she'd never return. Why hadn't she just come to her? Why hadn't Narcissa just come to her, forgetting about what had happened between them, why hadn't she just taken heart and just come to her, talked to her?

"As if I could have saved her..." Andromeda muttered to herself, shaking her head. As if she could've saved her, as if she could've changed anything! Of course not. Of course she wouldn't.

Over and over again she'd read the letter, until the words started to blur before her eyes. She'd hardly recognized her sister's handwriting, small and shaky, having lost any shine but never its elegance.

Why... Why'd Narcissa given up, why'd she left them, why had she abandoned her family? Hadn't she seen what pain she'd cause them, especially her son, her only child? Hadn't she seen that...

Finally Andromeda rose, just to sink back down to the floor only a second later, her knees, her entire body trembling. She'd still hold the parchment in her hands, would never let release it again. Never.

Her sister... Dead... Dead...

I know that, one day, we'll meet again, that one day we'll be able to hold each other in our arms again, in a better life, far away from hatred, far away from war. But until then, all I wish is that you won't forget me.

One day they'd meet again... One day they'd be reunited, finally reunited, one day they'd look into each other's eyes again, knowing that everything would be all right.

"I will never forget you, Cissy," Andromeda whispered barely audible, unable to suppress a wince, hearing the sound of her own voice. "I promise you. Never."

For just a moment she closed her eyes just to see her sister's face right in front of her, just to see her smile, her beautiful yet incredibly sad smile. For just a moment she closed her eyes, desperate to pretend that this was just a dream, that all this was just a dream... But she failed. Of course she failed. How much she'd loved her... How much she'd loved her sister, even after everything that had happened, even after they'd lost each other...

The letters, all these letters that had been forgotten for so many years were the last remaining memory of Narcissa, the last remaining proof that they'd once called themselves sisters. Slowly Andromeda turned her head, turned away from the parchment, just away, unable to look at it any longer. Slowly she turned away, feeling tears stream down her face.