

the.redqueen

Her Sweetest Downfall

Veröffentlicht auf Harry Potter Xperts
www.harrypotter-xperts.de

Inhaltsangabe

It's his indifference that hurts her the most.

Vorwort

Inhaltsverzeichnis

1. Untitled

Untitled

They hadn't spoken for weeks; wouldn't even look at each other. Narcissa Malfoy had no memory of when she'd last seen her husband, whether it had been days or weeks. Night by night she waited for him to come to her, to return from wherever he had gone, and night by night it would be in vain. She had stopped counting the hours long ago, had lost the strength and will to feign indifference. She was not indifferent towards him, had never been. There were no words to describe the agony it caused her to look into his eyes, to even smile at him and see nothing in return - nothing at all.

Would he ever notice that his behaviour broke her heart? More than once she'd asked herself the same question; was he aware of what it did to her? Even if he were – would it change anything? Narcissa knew about his affairs; what a fool she'd been to assume he was faithful to a woman he seemed to despise.

If only he did despise her. If only they fought. If only they argued, if only the expression in his eyes would show any kind of emotion! Even hate would be better than his cold, cruel indifference that hurt her more than words, more than actions, more than anything else.

Worthless. He had made her feel worthless, from the moment of their wedding. But how was she entitled to judge his actions – if, perhaps, it was true? What if it was all true, what if her love was not worth anything, what if *she*-

“Just look at you, Narcissa,” she muttered to herself, shaking her head in disgust. “Twenty-four years old, married for over six years and still without a child. What is he supposed to think of you? How is he supposed to *feel*?”

She still had not given him a child, still had not borne an heir. But how could she, if he refused to sleep with her down to the present day? If he still blamed her for the miscarriage she had suffered only six months after their wedding, if he never touched and never even looked at her any more?  

How happy she had been when they'd been married, happier than she had ever been before in her life. It had been like a dream to her, becoming the wife of the man she loved, a dream she'd never wanted to wake up from.

But she'd been blind, too blind to notice the change of expression in his eyes; they had become empty in the moment he became her husband, as if they'd had a choice. As if it had been their choice to get married, as if it had been love and not a contract signed by their fathers to seal their bond. Narcissa had accepted her fate long ago, long before their wedding; she had considered herself lucky to marry Lucius Malfoy, whom she'd considered her closest friend since childhood. The years had passed and she grew fond of him until, by the day of her wedding, she felt nothing but deep, sincere love; a love that would remain unrequited. 

Her husband had never seen her tears; he would never know about all the countless tears she had shed and would shed, forever. But how could he have noticed them if he'd never been there for her; how could he have known? And how could she blame him, if she had done everything to hide them?

You're losing him, she thought, her hands starting to shake at the mere thought. *You're losing him, even though you never had him.*

As if her memories had conjured them, tears started to flow down Narcissa's cheeks: slowly at first, then fast, unstoppable, almost like a waterfall. She held her breath in desperate attempts to suppress the sobs, covering her face with her hands.

He'd be her downfall. Her sweetest downfall, causing her nothing but sorrow. But why was it then that he filled her with so much joy?

Slowly without her noticing, the door opened. Narcissa turned her head, her eyes widening with surprise as she heard steps at her back; she almost screamed as she found her husband had entered the room. He looked tired, old, as if the past weeks had made him age several years. Quickly she raised her hand to brush away the tears, but it was still trembling, not allowing her to regain control over her movements.

"Narcissa," he said, the sound of his voice causing her to wince. When had he last spoken out her name? Had it been weeks? Months? "Are you all right?"

Quickly she turned away from him, ashamed of her weakness, ashamed of having broken down once again, even though she'd sworn to herself to remain strong so many times. "Yes," she replied, her voice hoarse, no more than a whisper.

As if he cared.

"Don't lie to me," he snapped, taking her arm to make her rise, as if he wanted to be eye to eye with her. "Look at me."

She didn't move, only stood there, turning her back to him, afraid to speak, afraid to breathe. Why had he come to her? Had he grown tired of his life alone, deciding now to claim what he thought was due to him? How many times she had longed to have him by her side, to feel his skin against hers, his arms around her waist, holding her, supporting her, whenever she needed him - but now? Now even the thought of his touch disgusted her and made her want to scream.

How much she loved him - but she understood that he would only hurt her, that his indifference toward her would never change, but only continue to tear her apart into a thousand pieces.

"Narcissa," he said again, his voice sharp, causing her to instinctively turn around. For a split second, no longer than a heartbeat, their glances met, causing her to lose balance, to stumble. She would have fallen if he'd not caught her with a single movement of his arms.

"Let go of me," she whispered, but her strength seemed to leave her in the moment he released his grip. Firmly he pulled her into his arms, holding her, unwilling to let her go again.

His eyes were expressionless. Still, she was incapable of looking away, as if a magical force kept her from turning her head. Expressionless...

No.

No! Was it her mind, attempting to fool her? Was it just her imagination, or - No. No, for just a second the look in his eyes had changed, had shown a hint of - worry?

Could it have been worry she'd seen flashing in his eyes? Again Narcissa felt tears against her skin, rolling down her cheeks; she closed her eyes with shame. She knew that she had lost the battle against her tears long ago, knew she had no choice than to allow it to happen.

"You don't think that a man, too, deserves to be loved, do you?" Lucius asked her quietly, all of a sudden breaking the soothing silence. His voice had lost any harshness, becoming sad, almost soft.

"You didn't want mine," she whispered.

Now it was his turn to gasp for breath. His eyes widened with surprise, but only a moment later he regained his composure. Yet, something seemed to have changed. "I never thought you'd give it," he said, barely

audible.

Narcissa turned her head away from him, but barely a second later found herself looking at him again. Silence followed, not giving her comfort this time like it always had before. How little they spoke even now, now that they seemed closer to one another than they had ever been before. But still, something had changed between them; something had changed everything.

"You look sad," he said quietly, gently; Narcissa only shook her head, biting her lip in an attempt to suppress another sob.

"What about you?" she asked eventually. "Are you the happiest and saddest right now that you've ever been?"

"Of course I am."

"Why?"

"Because nothing makes me happier and nothing makes me sadder than you."

"How can you say that?" she whispered and again, like so many times before, felt her heart burst. "When I know that you find comfort in other women, rather than your wife?"

Again he gasped; again his eyes widened, this time with fright. "No," he breathed. "No. There never was anybody else but you, never! How can you assume I'd be able to hurt you in that way?"

"As if you cared about me!"

"Narcissa..." Lucius fastened his grip around her body, as if he wanted to prove to her the opposite. "Is there something - *anything* - that I might have done or said to upset you?"

Again, silence. Narcissa closed her eyes as if it helped her to escape, to escape from him. Was he taunting her? Was it all just a farce to taunt her, to humiliate her?

"Six years," she breathed. "Six long years I longed for a sign that you cared, to show me any kind of emotion. I never expected love from you; never. All I wanted was to know-"

For a moment she broke off; she opened her eyes again, looking at her husband, looked deeply into his eyes.

"But you gave me nothing," she continued. "Nothing at all! As if I wasn't worth your feelings. Night after night I waited for you in vain, worrying, crying myself to sleep because once again you had disappeared. I needed you, Lucius, especially after I lost our child! I still need you! But you don't care. You never cared. It's not your words that hurt me – how can they, if you hardly speak to me? No. It's your indifference."

For a moment he let go of her, as if he were in shock at her outburst. He didn't reply, only looked at her, looking deeply into her eyes. Narcissa only shook her head and turned around, away from him, ashamed and disappointed. Why had she allowed herself to hope, to hope that they still had a chance? She turned her head and took a step forward but he took her wrist, pulled her back into his arms - not to keep her from falling but to hold her, to just hold her like a husband held his wife.

"I was never indifferent," he whispered into her ear. "You just didn't look deeply enough."