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# **And the Bible Didn't Mention Us (Not Even Once)**

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# Inhaltsangabe

"It feels different to lose your mind, Cissy."

## Vorwort

# Inhaltsverzeichnis

1. Untitled

# Untitled

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*"I am a creature of grief and dust and bitter longings. There is an empty place within me where my heart was once."*

*-George R.R. Martin, "A Game Of Thrones"*

She had been ill for too long, her sister said, sitting down at the edge of her bed; nearly two months. Bella's eyes were red, with deep shadows under them. She looked tired. Strained. It was strange to see her in a state like this; hadn't she always been the strongest of them all, even stronger than their mother in her short lifetime?

"What happened?" Narcissa asked faintly, her voice breaking. She had no memory of the past weeks, as if they had been erased from her mind, replaced by sheer emptiness. For a moment she closed her eyes, taking a deep breath; she felt light-headed, her entire body was aching, her hands trembling when she reached out to caress her sister's arm.

"You were ill, Cissy," Bellatrix repeated, giving a deep, quiet sigh. "Very ill, and you still are. The fever came over night and nothing would reduce it. No potions, no spells... Nothing. Even the Healers did not know what to do."

She lowered her eyes, her fingers absently stroking over the bed sheets. Minutes had passed when she finally broke the silence. "We thought we'd lose you," she said, the bare imagination causing her to turn as pale as a ghost. Narcissa only shook her head, found herself incapable of believing these words, yet knew that they were true. Only a small glimpse of her bedside table, piled up with books and empty vials, would prove everything said to be real.

"Days came and went," Bellatrix continued eventually, sighing again as she finally looked up to Narcissa, finally looked into her eyes. "They turned into weeks, and nothing changed. When you had finally fallen asleep, you wouldn't wake up, not until today. Longer than a week, Narcissa, you slept longer than a week! Lucius was half-mad with grief and worry, he?"

Her sentence remained unfinished. Narcissa frowned, sat up in her bed, as straight as her body would allow. "Lucius," she whispered absently, trying to remember when she had last seen her husband. It all seemed so far away, like a dream that she once had dreamed many years before. "Where is he? Could you call him for me? I need to talk to him."

Silence again. It was a burning silence, a silence that told everything, yet nothing. A silence that seemed to slowly suffocate her. It was eerie to see her sister's expression change so suddenly, to only hear her gasp for breath, not responding to her questions.

"Bellatrix... Where is my husband?"

For the third time now her sister sighed; a deep, sad sigh. "I'm so sorry, Cissy," she whispered.

"No..." Narcissa's eyes widened with fright. Within a moment she'd understood, still found herself shaking her head in disbelief. A quiet sob escaped from her mouth, turned into a gasp and barely a second later she'd fallen into a fit of coughing, incapable of catching her breath. Her legs wouldn't carry her when she attempted to rise from her bed and she fell, down to the floor before Bellatrix could catch her, tears streaming down her face incessantly.

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There had been a battle. Countless times had they been told to always be prepared, yet none of them had expected an attack that night. Both sides had lost people, but the Aurors had triumphed, celebrating their victory by spitting on Lucius Malfoy's dead body, a man who had been forced to leave behind his wife on her deathbed to go to a war he was destined to lose.

Narcissa had survived, her husband had fallen, denying her the chance to say goodbye. Even Bellatrix was injured. It was hours after she'd awoken when Narcissa noticed the odd stiffness in her sister's right arm, the long, blazing red scar that magic had incised into her flesh, meant to never fade away.

How strange it was, she thought sometimes, opening her eyes to find her entire world changed, slowly falling apart. Bella was all she had left now; her rock, her best friend. She would have followed her husband into the grave within a week if it weren't her sister, taking care of her day by day. Narcissa had expected her strength to return with the fever's reduction, but every day passing seemed to prove her wrong. Grief and weakness had gained full control over her body, wouldn't allow her to leave her bed for longer than an hour each day. Night by night she cried herself to sleep, but not even her dreams would give her the rest she needed so desperately. How cruel her imagination was to, even when awake, make her believe she heard his voice, crying out her name from far away, full of sadness, full of agony.

"Am I losing my mind, Bella?" she asked her sister one night as Bellatrix entered her room to look after her before going to bed herself. Bellatrix looked up in surprise, opened her mouth, only to close it a moment later. Narcissa gave a deep, quiet sigh and closed her eyes in the hope that darkness would ease the splitting pain in her head, helping her to finally get her thoughts in order. It felt strange to speak, to hear a voice come from her lips that she did not recognise. She hadn't talked much in the past weeks, never more than necessary. She had withdrawn into a soothing yet shattering silence, left alone with her memories. Her sister's presence would always give her comfort, gave her back a part of the strength she'd lost too long ago.

Again she heard his voice. Again she heard his screams from far away; again she heard her name, being called over and over, and it wouldn't stop. Quickly she opened her eyes, dared not close them again, too afraid of seeing his face right before her, of raising her hand to touch him, reaching into sheer emptiness.

"I'm losing my mind," she repeated hoarsely, shivering at the mere thought and pressing her hands firmly against her ears, as if to silence her own imagination. Wasn't it her imagination trying to fool her? Wasn't it all just in her mind? "I'm losing my mind, aren't I? I'm going mad..."

"You're not going mad," Bellatrix whispered as she sat down on the bed, pulling her into a firm but gentle embrace. "It feels different to lose your mind, Cissy. You're not going mad."

Narcissa would only look at her, stare at her, slowly shaking her head. Finally, she broke her silence, the words bursting out of her mouth uncontrollably. How much she missed him. How much she wished for one last chance to look at him, to touch him, to feel his bare skin against hers. How weak she felt...

"You're all I have left, Bella," she muttered against her sister's shoulder, her voice trembling as much as her entire body. She was exhausted; she clung to Bellatrix like a child to her mother. What a strain she put on her, she thought, how much she burdened her with her illness, her grief. Wouldn't it all be easier if she had died, instead of her husband? If the fever had taken her from this world, made this bed her deathbed, releasing her, releasing them all. She could scarcely walk without her sister's help, scarcely sit or stand without being overwhelmed by dizziness, had no memory of when she'd last been able to eat more than only a few spoons of soup.

There were better days, and worse. Sometimes, Narcissa would almost believe that one day, everything could be forgotten, that, if her soul were destined to suffer forever, one day at least her body's torments would come to an end. But then? Then, she'd find herself even weaker than before, would find herself coughing again, coughs that were deep and dry, slowly choking her from the inside. Whatever had taken possession of her, it would never stop, not until she was destroyed.

Narcissa pulled Bellatrix even closer to her, resting her head against her chest, never wanting her to let go again. It was soothing to feel her hands gently stroking over her hair, to feel her calm breaths beneath her. She opened her mouth to speak, but only a sob would escape, quiet and desperate. How much she wanted to tell her sister, how much she wanted to beg her never to leave, how much she wanted to be near her, forever. Instead she only cried, like she had never before cried in her life.

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They woke up before dawn, arm in arm, like they had fallen asleep. Narcissa opened her eyes only for a moment, quickly brushing over her cheeks. Even sleep had not had the power to dry her tears. How tired she was, how desperately she longed for rest, yet how afraid she was of giving in to sleep. Again, she'd been haunted by nightmares. Again she'd awoken drained and weary.

"I am all you have," Bellatrix said suddenly, her voice strangely emotionless as she repeated the words. She pulled Narcissa even closer into her arms, held her tight, as if to protect her from any more pain. "I love you, Cissy," she whispered, barely audible. "You don't know how much..."

How sad she sounded, Narcissa thought, how worried. She did not have to open her eyes to know how vacantly her sister's gaze was resting on her. Narcissa wanted nothing more than to comfort her, but how? How could she comfort Bellatrix, how could she do anything to repay her if she was confined to her bed, her body frail, her mind drowning in grief? How could she look at her, tell her that everything would be all right, if deep inside they both knew she would not live to see her twenty-fourth birthday?

Narcissa felt her sister wince in pain as she sat up and quickly opened her eyes, glancing at Bellatrix's arm. The wound looked terrible, had shown no sign of improvement for weeks. She did not dare to imagine what kind of curse had caused such an injury.

"Bella?"

"I'm fine," Bellatrix replied quickly, pulling up the bed's blanket to cover the scar. "It's just a cut, Cissy, don't worry about me. Another month and everything will be healed."

It would have been foolish of Narcissa to believe her sister's words.

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The fever had returned. It had overwhelmed her in a moment she'd dared to believe the worst to be over, as if to punish her for her folly. Was this the end? Bella would hardly leave her bedside anymore, watching over her as if she feared to lose her the second she dared to close her eyes. Blindly Narcissa reached out her arm in the darkened bedroom to touch her sister's hand, finding it to be uncontrollably shaking.

"You need rest, Bella," she whispered, her voice tired and faint, strange to her. Every word seemed like a dagger in her mouth, every breath she took would tear her lungs apart from inside. Light-headedness was her

constant companion, would intensify every time she attempted to move. How much she wanted to sleep. Yet, she was too afraid of what her dreams would show her, too afraid of what would await her, deep inside her mind. Would she wake up again, if she gave in now? Or would death finally come to release her, to unify her with her husband once more?

The sound of his voice had become quiet over time, but would never fall silent. Still, she heard him call her name, weaker and weaker, as if even her imagination seemed to slowly lose all strength. Had she become too languid, even to grieve?

Narcissa was freezing, shivering with cold, but dared not ask her sister to close the window. She was in desperate need of fresh air, couldn't go out for a walk like she always had when she'd found herself overwhelmed by her thoughts.

It was as if Bella had read her mind. She squeezed Narcissa's hand gently and sighed, like she had sighed so often in these past weeks. Narcissa knew the words she wanted to speak, knew the despairing lie that would not pass her lips, no matter how much they both wanted to believe. Silence spoke the truth. Things would never be the same again; nothing would be all right, nothing. She'd take one potion after another, day by day, and none would ever show effect, shattering even the last ray of hope they had both desperately clung to. What fools they had been, allowing themselves to hope...

"I swore myself to always protect you," Bellatrix muttered absently, as if for a moment she had gone into a trance-like state. "And I can't... I just can't, Cissy..."

Narcissa bit her lip as she heard her sister's quiet sobs; she could barely breathe. How much pain she caused her, how much pain she'd caused Lucius during his last days on this earth... If only she could end all this, if only she could free herself from all her agony, if only she could free Bellatrix! She was so afraid, afraid of death, afraid of leaving behind whom she loved the most. Still, she wanted nothing more than to finally find relief.

"I'm so sorry, Bella," she murmured hoarsely before she gave in to sleep at last, in the silent hope that it would take her away from this world forever.

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Narcissa was woken by her sister's voice, screaming with horror. Quickly she sat up in her bed, only to feel gravity push her down to her pillow a second later, her head splitting. For a moment she opened her eyes, and finding her bedroom empty, she held her breath to listen...

Silence. It had only been a dream, nothing but a dream. She gave a quiet resigned sigh, shaking her head in dismay. Had it once been safe to trust her senses, to believe everything she heard to be real? Now it was sheer madness. She was tired, confused. She covered her face with her hands in an attempt to calm down, to get her thoughts back in order.

Again, the sound of Bella's voice, loud and clear, leaving behind no doubt that it had not been a dream, that it truly had been her sister's shouts waking her from her restless sleep. Narcissa was unable to suppress a wince, bit her lip as if it helped her understand the words cried out from far away, yet so close, the words she was so eager to hear.

Bellatrix wasn't alone; there was another voice, a man's voice, so familiar to her... No. Impossible, it was impossible. It couldn't be him! It was the fever, playing its cruel games with her mind, slowly pushing her into the dark abyss of insanity. Hadn't she walked on its edge for too long?

Still, Narcissa got up from her bed; she was dizzy and her entire body was trembling. She'd barely taken a step forward when she fell. How helpless she felt, how weak... Her head was spinning, more than ever before in her life, but she forced herself to rise, to walk, to stumble towards the door, afraid of what would await her when she finally stepped outside.

The voices grew louder and louder, as if they were approaching her room, coming to get her. Desperately she dug her fingers into the wall, trying to find hold where none could be given.

"I want to see her," the man said, his voice faint, yet filled with anger and despair. "I have a right to see her, Bellatrix!"

"Leave my house. Now."

"It is *our* house; my wife's and mine, not yours. I want to see her and you are not going to prevent me!"

"She's dead," Bellatrix replied, again causing Narcissa to wince. She recognised her sister's voice, yet its emotion frightened her. It was so cold, so cruel, as if she spoke to her bitter enemy. "Now leave before I forget myself."

Silence followed. Then a cry, a desperate cry, as if for a moment he had believed her words. "Don't lie to me," he hissed, barely audible. "Don't you dare lie to me! She's alive, as alive as you and I! And she's your prisoner! Enjoying a toy that's too sick to refuse, are you? Don't you dare deny it, I know you're keeping her captive right in this room, like you kept me captive in your cellar for all those weeks! What did you tell her, that I was dead? That I fell in battle while in her sleep she fought for her life? You're mad, Bellatrix, mad with grief!"

"How dare you speak to me in such a way! She's her illness' prisoner, but how can you know? How can you know anything about her illness? How can you know??"

"I want to see her," the man repeated, sharply cutting off Bellatrix's words. "Let me through, or I will forget myself. I already took away the use of your right arm; are you really willing to lose the second one as well?"

Narcissa felt her heart palpitating in her chest, pressed both her hands firmly against her ears, her body collapsing against the wall. "It's the fever," she muttered to herself, over and over again, refusing to listen to any more of his words, yet they'd cut through the wall continuously. The fever... The fever! It was the fever fooling her; it wasn't real... It was the fever...

The door opened from outside, all of the light suffusing the room, blinding her.

And there he stood, right before her, his grey eyes resting on her, wide open with fright. Lucius. Narcissa screamed, screamed with fright, gasped for breath as if she were to choke. She stumbled, fell, right into his arms, and together they sank down to the floor.

"I'm here, Cissy," he whispered, pressing her shaking body tightly against his, as if he never wanted to let go of her again. "I'm here... You're safe now..."

How real his touch felt, how incredibly real... How gently he kissed her blazing hot forehead, how... He was here, here with her. And it wasn't a dream, wasn't a fantasy. Slowly, carefully, he pulled her to her feet, still held her in his arms to prevent her from falling. For a moment she forgot about everything; the fever, the pain she'd been forced to endure, even?

"You are not going to take her away from me!" Bellatrix cried out suddenly, causing them both to wince. For a second, Narcissa's gaze would cross her sister's, a second that changed everything. Never before had she



seen such an expression in her eyes, never before had she seen her face twisted to such a terrible grimace. Tears were streaming down her pale cheeks incessantly, mingling with blood that came pouring from a gaping wound close to her left eye, but she did not bother brushing them away. Had she lost her mind?

*It feels different to lose your mind, Cissy.*

"She's mine," Bellatrix hissed, heavily breathing as if it cost her great effort to speak, as if every word was an endless struggle. "She's always been mine! Nothing will take her away from me?no damned fever, and not you, Lucius Malfoy!"

The response would never pass his lips. His body became heavy in her arms, hit the floor hard as it slipped away from her, pushing the dagger even deeper into his back. He was gone. Slowly, as if she had gone into a trance, Narcissa covered her mouth with her hands, smearing his blood all over her face. Then she began to scream, to hysterically scream. She too fell to the ground, unconscious before her cries had dried out.

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The first thing Narcissa saw when she woke was her sister, sitting down at the edge of her bed, gently dabbing her forehead. Even the softest touch would make her wince in pain. She found herself unable to move, to even sit up, and she could scarcely breathe. If only sleep would come back to her, if only she could close her eyes and escape into a world far away from this terrible reality; far away from nightmares, far away from feverish dreams.

"The fever still hasn't gone down," Bellatrix said quietly. How worried she sounded, how tired, how softly she spoke to her. As if nothing had happened. Narcissa did not dare look into her eyes, did not dare to speak. The memory of the past night seemed so far away, still seemed to slowly crush her. Her entire body started to shake at the mere thought of what had happened, of what had felt like an obscure dream, and at the same time so horribly real.

He was gone, had died through her sister's hand, whom she had trusted more than anybody else. For the second time she'd lost him, and only slowly she began to realise that it was forever. What if Bellatrix were to end her life, too? Narcissa would not be able to refuse; she knew that she was completely and utterly at Bellatrix's mercy and that she would always be, until death came for her naturally.

Finally their gazes crossed, causing Narcissa to wince, barely noticeable. She was terrified by the look in her sister's eyes, a look that she was incapable of reading. How much she wanted to run away, to just run away... Yet, she found herself paralysed with fear and confusion. She'd loved her, had loved her so much, and still loved her!

It had not been real. None of it had been real. It was just a dream; a cruel, feverish dream! Narcissa cried out in despair, firmly bit her lip until she tasted blood slowly flow down her throat. It could not have been real... Still she felt his arms around her body, holding her, supporting her; still she felt his lips against her skin, as if...

Nothing but a dream.

"Don't be afraid, Cissy," Bella muttered, slowly leaning forward to place a kiss on her hairline. The scar on her cheek was gone, her skin pristine, showing no signs of an injury like Lucius had inflicted on her. None of it had been real. None. "Whatever scared you, it was just a nightmare. I'm here now... I'm here..."

Carefully, she pulled her into her arms, embracing her closely but gently, cradling her like a child. "No

illness is ever going to take you away from me," she breathed against her ear. "You're mine..."

Her sister's words resounded in her ears, over and over again. They seemed so familiar, and yet so strange... How mistaken she was, Narcissa thought, resting her head against Bellatrix's chest. She felt a single tear escape from the corner of her eye, slowly rolling down her cheek. She was so weak, so helpless. She needed Bellatrix, needed her so much, more than anything else! Bella was all she had... Death was close, would release her from her suffering, would finally liberate her from her pain. Soon everything would be past, soon everything would be forgotten...

"I'm yours, Bella," she whispered, closing her eyes.