

Title: The Dark Lord's Wand

Written: 1/4/2016

Revision: 1.4, 8/16/2023

Summary: The story of the Malfoys right after the Battle of Hogwarts.

Timeframe: The morning after the Battle of Hogwarts in Book 7

Audience: PG

Category: After Book Seven (before Epilog)

Warnings: none

Length: 31 pages

## The Dark Lord's Wand

### Chapter 1 -- After the Battle

It was still early morning. Harry Potter was more exhausted than he had ever been in his life. He walked through the ravaged Great Hall at Hogwarts wearing his invisibly cloak. He sought Ron and Hermione among the celebrating and grieving victors of the Battle of Hogwarts.

**'He spotted the three Malfoys, huddled together as though unsure whether or not they were supposed to be there, but nobody was paying them any attention.'**

Harry continued his search.

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"I think we should leave," said Lucius Malfoy quietly to his wife Narcissa. She was sitting next to him with her arms around their son, Draco.

"We need a *wand*," hissed Narcissa quietly.

"Draco has your wand," replied Lucius.

"No, he doesn't," snapped Narcissa. "He... lost it... during the battle," she explained with obvious regret.

Draco looked at his parents, who were staring at him, expecting an explanation.

He looked away and said without emotion, "It was destroyed by Fiendfyre in the room of hidden things when we went after Potter. Crabbe used the curse but didn't know how to stop it. It killed him." He paused, then hiccupped as he said, "Potter... saved my life... I was trapped and he came back for me. He got me out... Goyle too."

"No!" exclaimed Lucius while Narcissa gripped Draco more tightly on hearing his words.

"Yes, father, it's true," said Draco matter-of-factly, now looking at them again. "I can live with it... Can *you*?" he asked sarcastically.

Lucius opened his mouth to speak, but Narcissa cut him off, saying, "We need to get home *now*, Lucius. Go ask Slughorn for help." It was an order. She knew none of them were skilled enough to perform Apparation without a wand.

Lucius gritted his teeth and glared at his wife. But he got up and walked away.

Narcissa said quietly to Draco, "Your father hasn't been in his right mind since the Dark Lord made you torture us and... Bellatrix..." She gave a small sob after saying her dead sister's name, then continued, "...after Potter and his friends got away from us last month. He blames himself. And now, after all this, what are we going to *do*?" She began weeping quietly.

Draco shook his head and said coldly, "Mother, it's over -- *everything* -- it's gone."

Narcissa did not say anything for a while and then seemed to recover. She changed the subject. "I should have picked up a wand during the confusion after the Dark Lord..." She paused as she searched for a word, then said, "...fell."

Now the Great Hall was back in some semblance of order. The house tables had been replaced and most of the debris had been vanished away. It would be unwise now to attempt to retrieve a wand from one of the dead, who were now being carried out of the Great Hall.

Draco, for the first time, began to gaze around the room. He could not see Goyle. As far as he could tell, he was the only Slytherin student there. He wondered

what history would say since no Slytherins had remained to defend the school. He doubted the Slytherin students returning next year would retain their sense of privilege -- assuming there would still be a Slytherin house allowed. He shook his head imagining the changes to come.

The return of his father brought Draco's mind back to the present.

"Slughorn made us a Portkey," said Lucius, holding out a broken candlestick. "It will activate in about five minutes. Let's go outside."

On the way out, Lucius explained that Slughorn had not had any spare wands and refused to take one from the dead, even from Death Eaters. He also said the Floo Network into and out of Hogwarts was still down on this end.

"I asked him for Bellatrix's wand -- the new one," added Lucius, addressing Narcissa, as they stood in the battle-scarred courtyard, all holding onto the candlestick. "I said you, as her sister, had the right to it. But he said Shacklebolt had ordered all Death Eater's wands to be seized and analyzed via *Priori Incantatem*..." he paused and then said with bitter contempt, "...to reveal evidence of their... *crimes*." He spat on the ground.

Narcissa had winced at the sound of her sister's name but said nothing. Draco stared at his father.

Lucius continued, "On that point, we have nothing to worry about." They all recognized the irony. His and Narcissa's wands had been destroyed. But Draco's wand had been in the possession of Harry Potter for a month.

Just then the candlestick glowed blue, and they disappeared.

They reappeared a moment later in the deserted courtyard of Malfoy Manor.

They trudged through the carriage entrance door and up the curving marble staircase to the first floor.

Narcissa spoke. "We are all exhausted. This is no time to discuss anything. Let's get some sleep and talk this evening." Lucius and Draco agreed, and they all went to bed.

Draco lay awake at first, reliving the previous twenty-four hours in his mind, but the need for sleep soon overcame him.

He dreamed of fire.

## Chapter 2 -- The Search

Draco was the last to arrive in the kitchen. It was now mid evening. They had slept through the day. Their replacement house-elf was nowhere to be found and did not respond to summons. Narcissa had grudgingly prepared some food herself -- bread, cheese and wine had been easy enough. They sat at the kitchen table eating and not talking. They were all very hungry, but the food did not satisfy them. Eating like servants in their own kitchen was humiliating -- an outrage for such a wealthy pure-blood magical family.

Lucius spoke first. "I thought Ollivander had made some wands while he was..."

Draco interrupted him. "There were no spares. They were made to replace lost and broken wands... Wormtail, Selwyn, maybe some others... not *yours* of course."

The last remark caused Narcissa to gasp and look sharply at Draco, but Lucius did not react. Instead, he asked, "Where did Bellatrix get her new wand after Potter escaped from her?"

"From *her!*" snapped Narcissa. "I thought *you* had accepted the blame for that."

"I *did*... but for yours and Draco's sake. I did not want to give Bellatrix -- the Dark Lord's favorite -- the chance to lay blame. She would have sold us out. Look how she deserted her husband for *him*; she made Rodolphus sleep in the servants' quarters."

"How *dare* you talk about my sister that way!" Narcissa exclaimed. "The Dark Lord forced Draco to torture all of us, including *her*."

Draco winced at the reminder.

"Yes, but he let *her* have a wand again. He made you give yours to Draco to use on us. The Dark Lord loved irony, didn't he?" Lucius said bitterly.

"Voldemort loved nothing," said Draco. "All he did was hate."

"Draco! Do not say..." Lucius hissed.

"Not now, Lucius!" Narcissa yelled, cutting him off. "The subject is *wands*."

Lucius eyed her coldly.

Draco said, "Bellatrix took one from the Snatchers who caught Potter, after I moved them out to the courtyard. She killed them and destroyed the remaining wands."

Lucius asked, "What happened to the Mudblood's and the Blood Traitor's wands?"

Draco said, "Bellatrix destroyed them too -- a small act of revenge, I suppose."

Lucius muttered something inaudible, but then suddenly exclaimed, "Wait! What about all the Gringotts' people yesterday morning in the ballroom? They were all wizards except for the Goblin who foolishly delivered the bad news. There were also some Death Eater's too who... got in the way."

They all rushed out of the kitchen and upstairs to the first floor. The ballroom had been converted into a large meeting room after Voldemort had turned their home into his headquarters. He had wanted a place where he could comfortably meet with all his Death Eaters. Their eager anticipation was quashed as soon as they entered the room. It had been thoroughly cleaned. But it still had the smell of recent death. It must have been from blood that had soaked deep into the wood floor. The memory was vividly recalled in each of their minds.

The Gringotts' representatives had been reporting the impossible break-in of the Lestrangle's vault by Potter and his gang and their incredible escape. Surprisingly, this news had not set Voldemort off, but the Malfoys and Bellatrix had already started to make for the door because they could see his anger rising. Then the Gringotts' Goblin had explained that only a small golden cup had been stolen -- and Voldemort had gone berserk. He slashed everyone from Gringotts to death and then four Death Eaters for good measure -- Mulciber, Avery, Goyle Sr and Nott Sr. They had been too slow to escape his rampage by bailing out of

the room -- like the Malfoys and Bellatrix had. Blood had been spraying everywhere.

After Voldemort had calmed down somewhat, he had walked out into the garden, called Nagini and Disapparated with him. About an hour later, they received a message from Snape for all the Dark Lords followers, not just the Death Eaters, to meet in Hogsmeade for further instructions.

"Who cleaned this up?" asked Lucius. "Everyone left when we received Snape's message."

"The house-elf obviously... Does it matter?" said Narcissa impatiently.

Lucius cursed. "Where *is* it anyway?"

"Gone. I've given up trying to summon *him* -- Blinky is a male," she replied.

"Who cares?" Then Lucius cursed again. "We need to *search* the house. I'm sure there must be a wand here." He sounded desperate. "Going to Diagon Alley is a last resort. The Aurors will have begun hunting down surviving Death Eaters by now."

He paused for a few seconds, and then commanded, "I'll search the mausoleum and the ground floor. Narcissa, you check this floor. Draco, you check the bedrooms and then the old servants' quarters in the attic. Be sure you give Bellatrix's room a thorough search. *Who knows* what she could have been hiding?"

Narcissa started to say something, but Lucius cut her off. "Go *now*. Meet back in the drawing room in an hour, unless anyone finds a wand. In that case, find the others right away. Then we can plan."

Draco headed up the stairs to the next floor. He decided to check the bedrooms there before going to top floor to check the old servants' quarters, which had been occupied by some of the Death Eaters... at Voldemort's request.

He skipped his own bedroom and walked toward Bellatrix's. He passed his parent's bedroom... and stopped. Yes, it was the bedroom where his parents had lately been sleeping, but it was originally just a guest bedroom. When Voldemort had taken over their house, his father had, quite naturally and respectfully,

offered the master suite to Voldemort, who had disrespectfully accepted -- to his mother's constant upset and distress.

The idea suddenly hit him... *Could* it be possible?

He turned and dashed the other way, past the stairs and into the opposite wing of the house. He quickly reached the large double doors of the master suite and paused. Would Voldemort have placed protective spells and enchantments -- or possibly dangerous curses -- on the doors to keep people out... or simply locked it? He had no choice but to try it.

Draco slowly turned the door handle. It was open! Of course, he thought, Voldemort would expect that no one would dare enter his suite without his permission.

Draco pushed open the door and peered in. It was dark. Unlike the hallway, where candles always burned, only the fire was lit, and it was largely blocked by a large high-backed leather arm chair positioned very close to the fire. The heavy green velvet curtains were drawn across all the windows.

Draco cautiously stepped into the room. Nothing happened. He took a few more steps. Still nothing happened. He decided to be bold and walked to the center of the room and looked around.

This was the sitting room. The doors to the bedroom were closed. He walked over and threw them open. Here the curtains were not drawn, and moonlight streamed through the windows. It looked like no one had been in the room in years. Dust covered everything. Cobwebs hung everywhere. The bed had clearly not been slept in since his parents had given up their suite. There was no point checking in here or in the *en suite*. He turned around and went back into the sitting room.

Settees, loveseat, bookcases, tables, and writing desk -- all were quite dusty and seemed to have been untouched. The only thing that appeared to have had any use at all was the leather chair by the fire. He walked up to the back of it and looked down. The chair was empty. It had been moved onto the hearth rug so there were only a few feet between the chair and the fireplace -- just enough room for a great snake to coil at its master's feet. Draco suddenly remembered Charity Burbage and shuddered at the thought.

He looked into the fireplace -- just a magical fire, nothing more. Then he raised his eyes to the mantle and started.

Voldemort's wand -- his original wand -- was just laying there gathering dust.

Draco dashed around the chair and seized the wand.

Even though it was not his wand, he felt a thrill, the kind you feel when reunited with a lost personal treasure. He also sensed the unmistakable power of the wand and imagined the great and terrible things it had done.

Draco suddenly thought, 'Its master is dead, defeated. It must *know*.' Then he spoke softly, "It was never won and now / have it." Then he began to imagine what he could do with this wand...

Draco's mind reeled.

He wondered, amazed, how could Voldemort have parted with something both so powerful and so much a part of himself? Then he remembered what Potter had said in the Great Hall as he and Voldemort had circled each other right before dawn -- could it have only been just this morning? The so-called *unbeatable* wand... and who its true master was... was *TOSH!*

Suddenly his thoughts refocused sharply. Voldemort's obsession with that other wand, the Elder Wand, had been his undoing... the *fool!*

Then Draco thought soberly, and once again spoke aloud to himself, "Would I be just as foolish in thinking I could master *this* wand?" He knew the answer.

### Chapter 3 -- A Better Man

Draco was sitting at the large table in drawing room of Malfoy Manor, the same table Voldemort used to meet with his inner circle. Had been waiting for most of the hour when his mother and father returned as all had agreed. They both sat down and looked frustrated.

Lucius asked, "Did either of you finish your searches?"

Narcissa and Draco both said, "No."



"Neither did I," said Lucius. "We'll take a short break and resume. I'm going need some kind of tool to pry open the crypts in the mausoleum."

"Lucius, surely you're not going to open your family's graves," protested Narcissa.

"I'll do whatever is necessary. I'm sure some were buried with their wands," he said coldly.

"Father, what are you going to do when you find a wand?" asked Draco.

"We're going to go far abroad. The Ministry will be looking for us soon. I have no intention of living under this regime or going back to Azkaban. We'll go someplace where having pure blood still receives proper respect."

"Maybe you can just say you were under the Imperius Curse again," suggested Narcissa. "It worked the last time... I don't want to give up everything we have here."

"Fudge isn't the Minister this time. Shackbolt can't be bought," Lucius said bitterly.

"I'm not going *anywhere*," said Draco.

His parents looked at him.

"I'm ready to face the consequences, whatever they are. I want to start a new life, even if it means years in Azkaban first."

"Son, what are you *saying*?" Lucius asked angrily. "Are you *denying* everything we stood for?"

"If you're saying you still believe in Voldemort and what he did... then I *don't*," said Draco firmly.

His father flinched when Draco said the forbidden name, but he did not object.

Draco continued, "I realize I will always be branded..." He lifted his left forearm and clutched it with his right hand, "...as someone who supported Voldemort. I can't change that, but I can change what I do going forward."

"I don't *believe* this," said Lucius shaking his head.

Narcissa exclaimed, "Didn't you *hear* Voldemort in the Great Hall!"

Now, even she had dared to say the name.

Narcissa glared at her husband. "He said he was going to kill Draco if it meant he would become master of his new wand." She looked exasperated. "Wanting to escape from the Ministry Aurors is one thing; saying you still support Voldemort is something else entirely. I can't agree with that. Voldemort was a *monster!*"

"Narcissa!" pleaded Lucius.

"And that is the reason I am not going to give you *this*," Draco said determinedly to his father as he stood up and pulled Voldemort's wand from his robes and held it up for them to see.

They both gasped.

Narcissa said "Where...?"

But Lucius was already lunging for it across the table.

Draco turned on the spot and Disapparated.

## Chapter 4 -- One for One

It was the next day. The serious cleanup after the Battle of Hogwarts had only just begun. Repairs had not really started. Bodies and even some injured were still being found. Professor McGonagall already had everything organized and a plan in place. She was determined to have the school fully ready to open as usual on the first of September. That gave her almost four months. She also planned to offer a special session in August for those students needing to study for and take OWL and NEWT exams, which already had been rescheduled.

Everyone was pitching in: teachers, students, parents, villagers from Hogsmeade, healers from Saint Mungo's, a disaster recovery team from the Ministry of Magic, and even volunteers from Beauxbatons and Durmstrang. Everyone had gotten some sleep by now. The Hogwarts house-elves had outdone themselves preparing meals and snacks. One table in the Great Hall was constantly supplied with food and drink around the clock. And the house-elves were now all over the castle, not hidden away, asking to be given orders.

Harry Potter walked the halls and grounds. He had wanted to work like the others, but McGonagall had told him his role was to be seen everywhere. He could lend a hand when needed, but he was to be out and about. Everyone still wanted to share their jubilation -- and their sorrow -- with him.

Hermione and Ron were tending to the wounded house-elves. Hagrid was tending to his giant half-brother Grawp, Firenze, Buckbeak, and the Thestrals. Harry suspected he was also looking after some of the giant spiders somewhere in the Forbidden Forest.

Harry was on his way to meet Ron and Hermione when Luna saw him in the Entrance Hall and called out to him. He stopped and she came over.

"You'll never guess who wants to see you," she said teasingly with her eyes wide open.

"Uh, Umbridge?" guessed Harry playing along.

"Oh, *no*." said Luna with a giggle, amused by his guess. "...Draco Malfoy. He's in Snape's old office waiting for you now."

"Draco?" said Harry surprised.

"Yes," said Luna earnestly. "Are you going to see him? If not, I'll tell him you're too busy."

Harry thought for a moment, and then said, "I'll see him."

"All right," said Luna, smiling dreamily. She turned and walked into the Great Hall.

Harry went down the stairs to the Dungeon and walked the corridor. There was no evidence of the battle down here. The door to Snape's old office was wide open. He could see Draco sitting on the desk facing him, his arms folded. He walked in until he stood about six feet from Draco.

"What do you want?" asked Harry plainly.

"Like I told you in the room of hidden things, I want my *wand* back," replied Draco.

"Like I told *you*, *winner's keepers*," retorted Harry. He thought this might set Malfoy off, but it did not.

Draco said, "You don't need it anymore. You won Voldemort's new wand."

Harry was a bit startled that Draco has said Voldemort's name, but then, more importantly, he realized Draco was trying to make a rational argument for getting his wand back. Harry lied and said, "I don't have it anymore. I destroyed it."

Draco looked startled, but then laughed. "I don't believe you."

"See for yourself." Harry slowly drew his wand from inside his robes and held it out for Draco to see.

It was Harry's original wand from Ollivander's. Draco was very familiar with it; he had seen Potter use it for six years.

"No. That's not possible," Draco said uncertainly. "I saw Bellatrix perform *Priori Incantatem* on the Mud..." He stopped and corrected himself, "...on *Granger's* wand. It showed that she had broken your wand and failed to repair it. Ollivander had already told us a broken wand could not be repaired."

"I used the wand I won from Voldemort's to repair it," said Harry matter-of-factly.

"Then it *truly is* the most powerful wand in the world," said Draco in surprise.

"Yes..." said Harry, pausing for emphasis. "It was Dumbledore's wand you know. Then it was yours... and finally... *mine*. What I said in the Great Hall to Voldemort was *all true*." Harry could not keep the irony out of his voice.

But Draco was not focused on irony. He asked calmly, "And you claim you *destroyed* it. Why?" He sounded... interested... rather than surprised or shocked.

"That wand was deadly to anyone who possessed it," explained Harry. "It was too powerful, too sought after, to be allowed to exist,"

Harry expected Draco to argue, but instead he said, "I understand... And now I know you'll give me *my* wand back for the same reason."

Draco unfolded his arms and slowly withdrew a wand from his robes and held it out as Harry had.

Harry was open mouthed for a moment and then said, "How did you *get* it?"

Harry had first seen that wand in the graveyard of Little Hangleton three years ago, a year later in the atrium of the Ministry of Magic, and then many times when he had looked into Voldemort's mind...

Draco interrupted his recollections.

"Does it matter?" chuckled Malfoy. "You give me my wand back and I'll give you this one... to *destroy* too. We don't want another extraordinarily powerful wand developing into a legend, do we? If you want, you can duel me for it. However, I understand the twin cores in these wands prevent either one from winning over the other... So, do we have a deal?"

"Yes, we do," said Harry without hesitation. "But I'll have to go get your wand."

"I'll wait right here," said Draco and he twirled Voldemort's wand in his hand and smiled.

Harry started to go, but turned back and said, "We'll have to figure out some way for you to win it from me."

"I don't think so," said Draco. "If you truly and willingly give it to me, you are surrendering ownership. That's how wands are passed down in families."

"We'll see," said Harry and again turned to leave, but again turned back, "You said, '*Voldemort*'." He raised his eyebrows.

“Did I?” said Draco dryly. “Fancy that.”

Harry turned again and this time left Snape's office.

## Chapter 5 -- The Exchange

Harry walked quickly to his old dorm room in Gryffindor Tower and retrieved Draco's wand from the drawer in his bedside table. He thought about the Elder Wand. It was still in his robe wand pocket, as it had been while talking to Draco in Snape's office. He, Hermione and Ron had already agreed to place it back into Dumbledore's tomb -- with the blessing of Dumbledore himself -- at least the portrait of Dumbledore in the Headmaster's office. But now Harry had doubts.

He put his own wand back into his pocket next to the Elder Wand and walked quickly back to Snape's office carrying Draco's.

“*Expelliarmus!*” Draco shouted as soon as Harry had begun to enter Snape's office again. The wand flew out of Harry's hand, spinning high across the office. Draco caught it. It felt perfect in his hand, just as it always had.

“I thought you said I could just *give* it to you,” said Harry angrily, more annoyed with himself for being caught off guard. “What if I had been carrying *my* wand and not yours?”

“I *saw* it was mine. But if I had been mistaken, I think the twin cores would have intervened somehow. Anyway, I did it because I had to be *sure*. How could I know if, in your heart, you were truly giving it to me?”

“You sound like Hermione,” said Harry as he walked up to Draco.

“I'll take that as a compliment,” said Draco. “Here...” He tossed Voldemort's wand to Harry. “...Now break it.”

Harry looked at the wand in his hands. He looked at Draco; and without looking down at the wand again, he snapped it cleanly in two. He tossed one half of it back to Draco, who caught it.

“That's so we both know nothing will ever bring it back,” said Harry.

Draco nodded. He pocketed his own wand and his half of Voldemort's wand and said, cheerfully, "Nice doing business with you, Potter." He walked by Harry toward the door.

Harry turned and called to him, "What are you going to do now, Malfoy?"

Without looking back, Draco said casually, "Oh, probably about ten to twenty in Azkaban..." as he walked out the door.

## Chapter 6 -- Coming Quietly

Draco walked slowly out of the Hogwarts grounds. It was a beautiful day. He was especially enjoying it because he did not expect to see many more for a long time. He did not Disapparate immediately after passing out the great iron gate of Hogwarts with its pillars topped with winged boars. Instead, he walked all the way to Hogsmeade.

On the way, he took out his half of Voldemort's wand and broke it into smaller pieces and cast them here and there as he walked. It gave him great satisfaction.

When he arrived in Hogsmeade, it still seemed deserted. He had spent the previous night there after leaving Malfoy Manor. No one had been minding the Three Broomsticks, so he had helped himself to room and board. Surprising himself, he had left money in the till for Madam Rosmerta. He remembered how he had used the Imperius Curse on her in his failed attempt to kill Dumbledore. This was not a happy memory. It had really never been one, but now it was something he wished he could forget.

With this interruption to his enjoyment of the day, he stopped walking. He pondered his next actions for a minute, then he Disapparated with a loud crack.

Draco Apparated into the foyer at the top of the grand staircase on the first floor of Malfoy Manor.

He called out loudly, "Mother! Father!" but there was no answer.

He knew anyone in the house would have heard him. He wondered if his parents had found a wand and departed or if they were still looking. The mausoleum seemed the only place where they might be. So, he entered the drawing room,

intending to enter the gardens through the large glass doors opening onto the terrace, when a man's voice yelled, "Freeze! And keep your hands where I can see them."

Draco, naturally, was startled, but he had been anticipating such a scenario. He stopped and put his hands out to his sides. Then he turned his head enough to see behind him.

There was a tall man standing to the side of the doorway. He had his wand out pointing at him. He said, "Turn around slowly."

Draco did so and saw another man on the other side of the doorway also pointing a wand at him. These men were obviously Aurors. The first one looked familiar. Draco seemed to remember seeing him with Fudge when he came to visit his father several years ago, but he did not know his name. He must have been doing security duty then. He still had the ponytail.

The first man said, "Get his wand, Dawlish, and check him."

The second man came over and took Draco's wand from his cloak, the wand he had just spent so much time recovering. Then he roughly patted him down. Finding nothing else, he stepped back.

"Where are my parents?" Draco asked respectfully.

"On their way to Azkaban by now," said the first man, "Awaiting trial. The same goes for you."

"Since I now understand this isn't a robbery, I assume you are arresting me. Aren't you supposed to tell me what I'm being arrested for?" he asked a little too sarcastically.

"Don't get smart with us, Draco," said Dawlish.

"I'm sorry, we haven't been introduced," Draco replied, feigning politeness.

The first man said, "Agents Williamson and Dawlish... You're under arrest for sedition, for a start. You'll hear the rest of the charges later."

"I see," said Draco. "We'll then, we should be off," he added matter-of-factly.



"I warn you not to resist," said Dawlish.

"Let me make it perfectly clear to you. I'm coming quietly. Whenever you're ready..." Draco hands were still held out to his sides.

"Alright then," said Williamson. He gestured to Dawlish and they both approached Draco. They each tightly grabbed one of his arms and pulled them down behind his back. Draco felt himself turning and he Disapparated with the two Aurors.

Draco was several times disappointed. He was disappointed because he had not been able to see his parents again. He was disappointed because he had not been able to tell them what he had done and what he was planning to do. And most of all, he was disappointed because he had not been able to turn himself in to the Ministry.

Being arrested was not going to look as good.

## Chapter 7 -- Azkaban

The cell door closed with a thud. A key turned and a heavy bolt slid closed. Footsteps retreated down the long corridor. Draco looked around. The cell was all stone about six-by-eight-by-eight feet. The floor sloped to a small drain hole in a back corner. A small chamber pot sat close to it with an old newspaper, yellow with age, lying nearby. He could make out the large headline, *Mass Breakout from Azkaban*.

The door was iron-clad wood. There was a peep hole about shoulder high, closed from the outside. There was also a cat door, also closed, at the very bottom for sliding things in and out -- food and water bowls and, apparently, chamber pots. How pleasant, he thought.

There was a small slit of a window high on the outside wall, too high to look out. It was the only source of light and, though midafternoon, very dim in the cell.

The last thing of interest was the bed, really just a small wood-framed canvas cot. It had a thin lumpy mattress with a heavily stained cover. There was a shabby wool blanket sloppily folded at the foot and no pillow.

The guard had said the prison rules and schedule were written on the back of the door. But all Draco could see were dregs of paper here and there stuck to the iron. It looked like someone had scraped it off using their fingernails.

Draco sat on the bed. It sagged under his weight. His prison robes only came to his knees. The slippers were too large. He shivered and pulled the sad blanket around himself.

He spoke aloud, “*Oh*, this place is *awful*. I can’t imagine what it must have been like with *Dementors*.” Then he laughed. “I must be going *mad* already -- talking to myself.”

The irony was that no talking was allowed in the cellblocks except to answer a question by a prison official or to ask for a Healer. The guard had told him that rule.

Upon arrival, Draco had also been told the Ministry had banished the Dementors for supporting Voldemort. The Aurors were now in charge until Magical Law Enforcement could create a new department for prison management. He was also told his trial would likely take place within a month. He would be able to request and talk to a solicitor in his defense once the date had been set.

Before being taken to his cell, Draco requested to see his mother. He was told it would be arranged... if *she* wanted to see him.

So now he waited.

Food and water came twice a day; the chamber pot was exchanged once a day. He was let out for a one-minute shower and clean robes once a week. Keeping his hands clean was the biggest problem. He nicked a piece of soap from the shower room and used some of his daily water ration to wash them. His robes were his towel.

He kept track of the days by scratching notches onto his bed frame with his fingernail. He had not been the only one. After three weeks, a guard arrived and took him to another cell. This one was a little larger but was empty except for a small wooden table and two chairs. He sat down and waited.

A few minutes later, the door opened again, and his mother came in. A voice from outside said, "You have five minutes." The door slammed shut but the peep hole snapped open, and he assumed the guard was listening outside.

His mother looked dreadful -- as *he* must have looked to her. She sat down and took his hands into her own.

"How are you, Draco?" she asked sadly.

"Mother, we have five minutes..."

"Have you seen your father?" she asked.

"No. What's the point?"

"Draco, he loves you. He tried to persuade Voldemort to let him search for you during the battle."

"But he remained loyal. He still wants the world that Voldemort represented," retorted Draco.

"Yes, I know, but that's not important now. Our trial date has been set, your father's and mine. We are being tried together. Has yours?" she asked.

Draco shook his head.

His mother continued. "It's next week. We are being allowed time every day to send letters in our defense. We have written letters to all our friends on the Wizengamot." In a whisper, she said, "In case this ever happened, we secretly prearranged substantial 'gifts' to be given through Gringotts to them and other influential people in the Ministry -- purebloods and sympathizers, old loyal friends. We're staking all we have on it."

"Count me out," said Draco disdainfully.

"Do you want to spend the rest of your *life* in Azkaban?" she hissed.

"It's not going to work this time. You're wasting the family fortune," said Draco, shaking his head.

"It's the *only* hope we have," she said. She removed her hands from Draco and placed them over her face, but she did not cry.

Draco imagined her thinking about spending many years here, growing old here.

He changed the subject. "So how did you get caught?"

Narcissa dropped her hands into her lap and sighed. "When you Disapparated, Lucius was beside himself with anger. I tried to persuade him to leave, for us to take the gold and jewelry in the house and hide in the Muggle world until we could get a wand. But he would not listen. He went back to the mausoleum to open the crypts. The Aurors were waiting for him outside. He tried to run, but what can you do without a wand? I heard the commotion. I tried hiding in the secret chamber under the drawing room, but they obviously knew about it and found me. With no wand, I just surrendered. And you?"

"They were waiting for me in the drawing room when I returned," he said simply.

"Where did you go; what did you do? Why wouldn't you use Voldemort's wand to help us? You wouldn't have had to give it to your father." She was imploring him for an explanation.

"I'll tell you, but you won't understand... Voldemort's wand was too *dangerous*. It had to be destroyed. I would have done it myself, but I needed it to get *my* wand back. I went to see Potter at Hogwarts and traded it for my wand. *He* understood. We destroyed Voldemort's wand together. He had already destroyed Voldemort's new one -- the supposedly '*unbeatable*' wand. Now they are *both* destroyed."

Narcissa shook her head in disbelief. She snarled, "You *fool!* A lot of good it did you. Where is *your* precious wand *now*? ...Locked up in some evidence room at the Ministry waiting to be used against you. *We* could have *gotten away!*"

"I told you; you wouldn't understand," Draco said without emotion.

"If your father heard this, he'd *disown* you," she snapped.

Draco was unmoved. "Please *tell* him for me, mother. We have taken different paths."

Just then, the door swung open. The guard appeared in the doorway and growled, "Time's up."

Narcissa stood up indignantly and glared at her son. Without saying anything else, she turned her back on him and walked out.

## Chapter 8 -- The Trial

Kingsley Shacklebolt's voice boomed in the courtroom, "Draco Malfoy, you are charged with sedition; the attempted murder of Professor Albus Dumbledore; the cursing of Miss Katherine Bell; the poisoning of Mister Ronald Weasley; consorting with the Dark Wizard known as Lord Voldemort as one of his Death Eaters, for which you bear the mark on your left forearm; facilitating the murderous attack on Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry by Death Eaters last year; and a host of other charges detailed in the indictment, which was sent to you in Azkaban last week when this trial date was set."

Draco looked up from the chair he was shackled to into the high benches before him. The witches and wizards of the Wizengamot were all present in their official court robes and hats and looked... bored.

They had been doing this all day long for almost two months now. Countless other Death Eaters and Voldemort supporters had already seen justice. They had heard it all before.

"How do plead?" finished Shacklebolt.

"Guilty," said Draco loudly. This caused a little stir from the benches, some shifting and murmuring.

"Guilty?" questioned Shacklebolt sounding surprised. "But there are witnesses in your *defense*."

Draco looked confused. "I didn't ask for any witnesses."

"Nevertheless, there are witnesses." Shacklebolt gestured to an Auror standing at the courtroom door. "The defense calls Mr Harry James Potter, Miss Hermione Jean Granger, and Mr Ronald Bilius Weasley to the courtroom."

Harry, Ron, and Hermione walked into the courtroom and stood to the side and slightly in front of Draco. They did not look at him.

Draco was astonished. Apparently, so were many members of the Wizengamot, who were jabbering in hushed tones and whispers among themselves.

Shacklebolt continued, "I have seen all your sworn written statements. However, Mister Malfoy has pleaded guilty. Do you still wish to testify... in mitigation?"

"Yes," they all said together.

"Very well, Mister Potter, you go first," instructed Kingsley.

Harry took another step forward. He noticed Rita Skeeter in the gallery writing furiously with her acid green quill.

Harry spoke clearly, "I'm not going to read my formal statement, which has already been submitted in evidence. I'm just going to briefly tell you what happened." He paused and then continued.

"Draco Malfoy saved my life. He refused to identify me to his parents and Bellatrix Lestrange when the three of us," indicating Ron and Hermione, "were taken to Malfoy Manor by Snatchers wanting to turn us over to Voldemort. Draco was given multiple opportunities to do so and did not. It was obvious to me he knew who I was even though my face was swollen by a Stinging Jinx. When we made our escape, he made no real effort to stop us."

There were more murmurs in the crowd.

Harry continued. "The year before, Draco figured a way for the Death Eaters to get into Hogwarts. But I know from overhearing a conversation he had with Severus Snape, who was trying to find out what Draco was up to, that Draco was under duress and had not wanted to do it. Also, when he confronted Professor Dumbledore at the top of the Astronomy tower, he would not kill him. In fact, he was lowering his wand and I am convinced he was going to accept the protection that Dumbledore offered him and his family just before the other Death Eaters arrived."

The murmurings continued.

“Finally, the day after the Battle of Hogwarts, Draco came to me at Hogwarts and gave me Voldemort’s wand and asked that I destroy it.”

Harry pulled the remaining half of Voldemort’s wand from his pocket and held it up.

There were now many loud mutterings and whisperings from the benches.

“Draco said he did not want Voldemort’s wand to be used for any more death and destruction. This was not just talk; this was a significant sacrifice. We all know that Voldemort’s wand could have become a dangerous symbol and a rallying point for any remaining Death Eaters or future Dark Wizards.”

Harry raised his voice. “I believe Draco Malfoy deserves the greatest possible leniency. He requested no defense. He pled guilty and was ready to accept his sentence. I believe he changed a long time ago but was caught up in a nightmare he could not escape from without causing the death of his family.”

Harry finished and stepped back.

There was silence in the courtroom. Draco assumed it was shocked silence because he himself was shocked. He could not understand why Harry Potter was doing this for him -- Harry Potter, who had every reason in the world to hate him - - his sworn enemy for seven years.

Shacklebolt had Ron and Hermione each give their testimony. They related the same story about Malfoy Manor and added contemporaneous recollections of Harry telling them what happened in the other instances. Hermione had to keep clearing her throat to keep Ron from digressing while he spoke.

There were no questions from the members of the Wizengamot for any of them.

Shacklebolt’s voice boomed out again. “In light of this evidence, the Wizengamot shall enter into closed session to consider sentencing. The witnesses are dismissed. Take the accused back to holding.” He banged his gavel loudly.

As Harry, Ron and Hermione turned to leave, they looked at Draco for the first time. He stared at them but said nothing. Then the Auror unshackled him from the chair and led him out a side door.

As Draco was being led down a dimly lit narrow corridor to the holding cell, the Auror spoke to him for the first time. "You are the luckiest Death Eater alive -- having Harry Potter himself defend you. If what he said is true, maybe you deserve a break... It worked for your mum."

Draco, in shock, stumbled. The Auror had to catch Draco, who asked anxiously, "What do you *mean* about my mother?"

"You haven't *heard*? Everyone's talking about it," the Auror said in amazement. "It got a huge headline in the Daily Prophet."

"What?" said Draco impatiently.

"Well, she *got off*... that is, got off *light* -- twenty-year sentence, but eighteen suspended. Only *two* years in Azkaban... if she stays out of trouble. With two months already served, she might be out in a year on good behavior."

"I don't understand," said Draco. "*Why*?"

"Well, *Harry Potter*, of course!" The Auror was obviously enjoying being the one to tell the story to Draco.

"He testified in *her* defense too. He said she saved his life by lying to You-Know-Who. It happened when he went into the Forbidden Forest to face You-Know-Who during the Battle of Hogwarts and You-Know-Who used the killing curse on him again. You-Know-Who ordered your mum to check Potter out while he was just pretending to be dead. She did and told You-Know-Who that Potter was dead -- even though she knew he was alive. She must have turned against You-Know-Who. Almost unbelievable, isn't it? Potter really *was* the Chosen One -- You-Know-Who couldn't kill him; he killed You-Know-Who."

Draco was speechless. His mind was reeling.

The Auror kept on talking. "Well, it was a *huge* story in the Prophet, almost as big as the one reporting You-Know-Who's downfall. I was there in the courtroom. Your mum and dad were being tried together; did you know that?" he asked.

"Yes. I spoke to my mother in Azkaban," answered Draco distractedly, thinking there could not possibly be more to the story -- but there was.



The Auror continued, "Well, when your father heard Potter's testimony, he went berserk, calling your mother a traitor and worse. I won't repeat it. They had to silence him for the rest of the trial. He got life in Azkaban."

They had reached the barred door of the holding cell. Draco went in. He could hardly comprehend what he had heard.

The Auror locked the door and said through the bars, "Well, I don't think you'll have a long wait, otherwise they would have told me to send you back to Azkaban." Then he chuckled, "I guess you've got something *new* to think about," and left.

Draco had never been more confused in his life.

## Chapter 9 -- The Sentence

"That sorry *git*," said Ron, obviously annoyed. "He didn't even say 'thank you'."

Harry, Ron and Hermione waited on a bench in the corridor outside the courtroom. It was the same one where Harry had faced his disciplinary hearing before his fourth year.

"Well, we never thanked him for saving our lives at Malfoy Manor," said Harry.

"Harry, we never got the chance," complained Ron.

"What about in the Great Hall after the Battle of Hogwarts? We all saw him," Harry said.

"Come on, that wasn't a good time. His parents were with him," was Ron's excuse.

Harry raised his eyebrows. "It's not just you, Ron. *I* didn't thank him. And I talked with him later when he brought me Voldemort's wand."

Hermione said, "Well, I think it will come in due time, and probably sooner than we think. And besides, it's our actions that count more than our words." As always, Hermione always looked for the best in people. "He saved us at Malfoy Manor; we saved him in the Room of Requirement."

“And from that masked Death Eater on the stairs,” added Ron. Then, pausing for effect, he said in a low theatrical voice, “...and, *just now.*”

Hermione rolled her eyes.

The courtroom door opened and the Auror who had been stationed there before said, “The court is back in session.”

They went in and this time took seats in the visitor gallery.

Harry accidentally made eye contact with Rita Skeeter across the courtroom. She smiled and wiggled her fingers at him. He could see her silently mouth the word ‘Bi-og-ra-phy’ at him. He groaned and looked away.

“What?” whispered Hermione.

“I’ll tell you later,” he said.

Draco had been returned to the accused’s chair and was again shackled.

Kingsley hammered his gavel once and said, “The Wizengamot is called to order.” He looked grave.

The chatter ceased. It became deathly still except for the scratching of Rita Skeeter’s quill, which was now quite audible. The chains binding Draco clinked as he adjusted his arms nervously in his chair.

Shacklebolt’s voice boomed once again. “Draco Malfoy, the Wizengamot sentences you to twenty years in Azkaban...” there was a pause, everyone hanging on Shacklebolt’s words. “...*fully suspended,*” he finished dramatically. His deep sonorous voice echoed.

Draco’s head dropped forward, his chin on his chest. He sobbed.

Kingsley continued, now sounding simply official, “...under the following conditions: never to perform Dark Magic nor associate with Dark Wizards again. You shall report to the Department for Magical Law Enforcement tomorrow to receive your supervision requirements. You are free to go.”

The shackles binding Draco to the chair released.

“This session of the Wizengamot is adjourned.” Kingsley banged the gavel and then got up. He stretched his legs and arms and turned to talk to the some of the members near him.

The Auror who had escorted Draco went over to him and helped him to his feet. He still seemed shaken.

The Auror said something to him and patted him on the back. They both turned to look at Harry, Ron and Hermione, who had remained in their seats, watching.

Draco moved to the rail of the visitor gallery where they sat.

He looked at them, focused on Harry, and said, “Thank you. I owe you.”

Before Harry could respond, Draco turned and walked back to the Auror, who escorted him out of the courtroom.

Ron said, “That’s Draco for you. He’s still a git.”

As Hermione was about to speak, Rita Skeeter jumped down between Harry and Hermione from the bench above, and, out of breath from her run through the gallery, gasped, “What did Malfoy say?”

Harry said evenly, “You’ll never know.” He climbed down from the gallery followed by Hermione and Ron.

“Oh, *Harry*,” Rita called sweetly just before they reached the courtroom door.

They all turned back to look at her.

She again silently mouthed, ‘Bi-og-ra-phy,’ and smiled mischievously.

Hermione huffed and then mouthed back, ‘Un-reg-is-tered A-ni-ma-gus,’ with just enough sound that both Harry and Ron heard her.

Rita’s smile turned into a scowl.

Harry, Ron and Hermione all laughed and left the courtroom.

## Chapter 10 -- A New Path

The Auror helped Draco get his wand back from the evidence vault. He also told him to keep the robes and slippers he had been given to wear in the courtroom. He said it was standard procedure since the Azkaban robes underneath would have attracted unwanted attention once he was released from custody. He told Draco he could get his old clothes back from Azkaban if he wanted them. He didn't. He never wanted to go back there again.

Draco quickly walked to the atrium of the Ministry of Magic and returned to Malfoy Manor. The house was quiet, but it was not dark. He went to the drawing room. The candles there were lit and also in the main hallway. He also smelled food -- delicious food. His mouth watered and his stomach rumbled.

"Mother!" he called without thinking as he ran into the hallway and into the dining room. Then he remembered she was still in Azkaban. No one was there, but one place setting had been laid out at the head of the long ornate dining table. This was the table Voldemort had ordered moved into the drawing room for meetings with his inner circle. Someone had moved it back to its proper place after he and his parents had been arrested. There were covered silver chafing dishes with at least four courses ready for serving and chilled red wine ready to pour.

There could only be one answer. The replacement house-elf had returned. He did not remember the name his mother had mentioned. She had always dealt with it and the one before it -- the one that had betrayed his family.

No... he realized he did not think that anymore. Potter had tricked his father into freeing it. He remembered his father years ago railing about it for weeks. And just months ago, it had saved Potter, his friends, and the hostages. Until then, he had not realized that house-elves were more than faceless servants, or, as his family had treated them -- *slaves*. They were loyal, intelligent caring magical beings with feelings.

His mother had gotten a replacement house-elf soon after the first one had been freed. He could only recall seeing it once or twice in the last five years. He was sorry he did not remember its name.

He decided to try and summon it.

“House-elf, come here!” he commanded in a loud voice.

There was a loud pop and standing before him was a quaking little creature with bandages all over its hands, arms, legs, feet and face. There were probably more under the pillowcase it wore over its torso.

“You is calling, Master Draco?” asked the squeaky voice.

“Yes. What is your name?” asked Draco.

“Blinky, sir.”

“What happened to you?” asked Draco looking at all the bandages. There were more bandages than skin from what he could see.

“Blinky is having to punish himself, sir.”

“Why?” asked Draco, though he thought he knew.

“Blinky left Malfoy Manor and is not coming when his Mistress is calling. He is having to punish himself most grievously, sir.”

“Where did you go and why?” Draco asked.

“Blinky is having to go to Hogwarts to help his sister, sir.”

Draco said, “Blinky, I don’t want to play question and answer. Please, tell me the whole story.”

“Yes, sir. Blinky is being called by his sister, Winky. She is telling Blinky, Hogwarts is being attacked and she and the other house-elves is being in danger. Blinky is seeing the Malfoy house is empty, so Blinky is going to help. Blinky is staying to help after the fighting is over even when his Mistress is calling again.” He trembled visibly at the last statement. “Blinky is having to punish himself very much for this.”

“Blinky, my mother won’t be returning for at least a year, maybe two. My father is *never* returning,” said Draco, not surprised it caused him no distress.

"Blinky is hearing this. Blinky is also hearing that you is free now. Blinky is preparing the house and dinner for Master Draco's return."

"Yes, very nice. Thank you, Blinky. Do you still want to serve this house, Blinky?" he asked gently.

"Oh yes, Master Draco, Blinky does," he said emphatically nodding his head so vigorously, his long ears quivered.

"Even after what you have seen here, the terrible things, for the last three years? Are you sure?" he asked.

"Master Draco, a house-elf is not to be judging his Master," said Blinky warily.

"Nonsense," said Draco. "You can tell the difference between right and wrong, good and evil. What happened here was *evil*. You know it. That's why you went to help your sister and fight at Hogwarts. *And* why you did not answer my mother's call. *And* why you only came back after we were gone."

Blinky trembled but did not speak.

Draco went on. "In fact, I bet you only came back after you had heard what happened to me." He paused, and when Blinky still said nothing, he said, "Answer, me."

The small elf trembled even more, but squeaked, "Ah, sir, it *is* so. Blinky is returning only an hour ago, sir, after he is hearing of your bravery. Blinky is hoping you is *changed*."

"I have changed, Blinky. I need someone to talk to. I haven't talked to anyone for two months... no, much longer -- almost two *years*. Will you *talk* with me, Blinky?" he said, his voice choking up.

"Blinky is liking to be talking with Master Draco," he said happily.

"Can we go eat *together* in the kitchen? I don't want to eat in here again, not at this table -- for a very long time." He still could not get the image of Charity Burbage and Voldemort's snake out of his mind.

“Yes, Master Draco,” squeaked Blinky. He snapped his fingers and everything on the table vanished.

“Oh, and one other thing, Blinky, I don’t want you to punish yourself again without my permission. Now, lead the way,” he said.

Blinky smiled and led Draco out of the dining room.

The End

End Notes: The quotation in **bold** text in Chapter 1 of this story is from Chapter Thirty-Six of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, by J. K. Rowling.