

Rising From The Ashes  
By Oversight (on Discord) FicFinder (on Patreon)  
Hints of Harry/Narcissa

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With a burst of green flames Harry Potter stepped out from an ornate fireplace and into the atrium of the Ministry of Magic.

Hundreds of witches and wizards flowed around him as part of the morning rush into their various jobs, the large crowd allowing Harry some much needed anonymity that was sorely lacking from his life since the fall of Voldemorts regime. As he began to make his way towards the wand security checkpoints, Harry kept an eye on those near him and repressed a nervous tick at the memory of the last time he had been in the cavernous room.

The atrium was mostly unchanged since that narrow escape last year; the walls and ceiling were still clad in murky green tiles and the floor was still a dark polished wood. The only noticeable change Harry could see was that the golden fountain had thankfully been removed and was now an open space with a Daily Prophet vendor handing out newspapers and shouting headlines over the din created by the influx of people.

As Harry waited in the queue for security, he caught a glimpse of one of the adverts that had been repeated on the front page of the Prophet for the last few days and the reason that he was at the Ministry in the first place.

*MINISTRY OF MAGIC SEEKS VOLUNTEERS  
CAPABLE OF THE PATRONUS CHARM*

Harry could only think of one reason that the Auror Office would need people with *that* particular skill, and if his assumption was correct then he was more than happy to help.

With multiple wand checkpoints set up, the wait to get through security was mercifully short. There was a slight hiccup when the official weighing Harry's wand – *or rather Draco's wand* – recognised him, and insisted on thanking him and shaking his hand. Harry managed an awkward "You're welcome", before he was quickly on his way and hidden at the very back of one of the Ministry's many lifts.

Despite it being the very start of the work day, a flock of paper aeroplanes was already circling overhead, with smaller groups coming and going as the lift stopped on the various levels. Eventually a melodious voice announced "Level 2 – Department of Magical Law Enforcement" and the metal grates slid open with a rattle, revealing Harry's destination. He received some shocked looks as he moved past the last few remaining occupants of the lift, as if they couldn't believe that they had shared the compartment with *the* Harry Potter and not known about it.

Harry ignored the looks however, and quickly approached the reception desk, behind which sat a brunette witch, who was bent low, scribbling furiously on a piece of parchment.

“Excuse me,” said Harry, “I was, er, looking for the patronus volunteer meeting?”

“Third door on the right,” the witch replied, gesturing over her shoulder without looking up from her work.

“Thanks,” Harry replied and made his way down the corridor, pushing open the door the woman had indicated.

Inside was a conference room, set up with rows of chairs facing an elevated podium at the front, and milling about the room were many more people than Harry had expected. Some were strangers to him, but he was surprised to recognise most of the witches and wizards in the room to be the surviving members of the DA. Harry stood in the doorway, taking in the sight of so many of his old friends reunited, and thinking of the ones who were painfully absent.

It only lasted a moment before someone noticed him and called out.

“Harry!” Susan Bones practically shouted before yanking him further into the room where he was quickly surrounded by familiar faces, handshakes and hugs. Harry made sure to speak to everyone, whether they were quick catch ups with meaningless small talk or offering heartfelt words of condolence to those who had lost family. Many people asked after Ron and Hermione, and Harry found himself repeating the same explanation over and over again; that they were away in Australia looking for Hermione’s parents but they would be back soon and they should all organise a get together to catch up properly.

At precisely nine o’clock, the door to the conference room opened again, admitting the Minister of Magic himself, Kingsley Shacklebolt and a witch and wizard that Harry recognised as being senior Aurors.

“Alright settle down everyone. If I could ask you to take your seats, we can begin,” Kingsley’s deep voice easily rose over the rest of the talk in the room.

He stepped up on the podium and arranged some papers on a lectern in front of him, with the two aurors standing to either side and slightly behind.

“I’m sure you’re all curious why we’ve asked you here, so lets get straight to it,” he continued, his eyes scanning the assembly. “Approximately two weeks ago, following the Battle of Hogwarts, the Dementors returned to Azkaban and have taken up residence there once again. So far they have been co-operative with the Ministry, but we are obviously being very cautious.

“The issue at hand is the inmates. Under Voldemorts government, many muggleborns and halfbloods were illegally sentenced to life without parole, after which they were thrown into jail and forgotten about. As such the Auror Office has devised an evacuation plan, which Aurors Holloway and Smith will brief you on now.”

Kingsley gestured to the two standing either side of him, who took a step forward to address the crowd.

“The plan is simple,” said the witch in a short, no-nonsense tone of voice. “We will rendezvous here at 0800 tomorrow and split into two teams. Our portkeys are scheduled to depart at 0830, and will transport both Teams A and B to the coast of Northumberland. From there, we will be flying East over the North Sea until we reach the prison.

“Team A will be lead by myself and comprised entirely of Aurors, who will be entering Azkaban to extract all prisoners as quickly and cleanly as possible. They will be transported via portkey to Ministry holding cells where they will be processed and receive medical attention from a specialist group of healers on loan from St Mungos.”

“Meanwhile I will be leading Team B which will be comprised of yourselves,” continued the wizard. “Our objective is to maintain the perimeter and contain the Dementors in the local area, whilst allowing Team A to focus their attention on their targets. Once Team A has given the all clear, we will be herding the Dementors back into Azkaban, and I will activate the protective enchantments to seal them inside.”

Their briefings given the two Aurors stepped back behind Kingsley.

“Yes thank you,” said the Minister. “Does anyone have any questions?”

When no one raised a hand, Kingsley nodded appearing satisfied.

“Good. You are of course all volunteers, so you are under no obligation to aid with this operation. That being said, your help would be greatly appreciated. If you could sign the roster with Auror Holloway, we will know to expect you tomorrow. Thank you.”

With that the meeting broke up and the members of the DA began to chat excitedly between themselves. As Harry made his way through the group, bidding everyone farewell and telling them he would see them tomorrow, he was pulled aside by a large, firm hand on his shoulder.

“I wonder if I might have a quick word with you Harry,” said Kingsley in an undertone, as he led Harry over to the far corner of the conference room.

“Yeah sure,” said Harry and with a swipe of his wand, the noise from the rest of the room was muted to a dull murmur and the two of them were left in a pocket of privacy. “What can I do you for Kingsley?”

The Minister studied him for a moment, as though trying to come to a decision, before he replied.

“The Death Eaters that were captured at the Battle of Hogwarts are currently being held here, in the Ministry. It’s not ideal and the plan is to keep them here until we have evacuated Azkaban, and then transfer them to the prison whilst they await their trials before the Wizengamot.”

“Okay.....” Harry said questioningly.

“Put simply, they can tell something is happening. Many of them know what Azkaban is like and they’re getting desperate.”

“I don’t see what that has to do with – ”

“One of them has asked to see you,” Kingsley cut him off.

“What?” said Harry, completely shocked. “Who?”

“Narcissa Malfoy.”

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The interrogation room that Harry found himself in was spartan. The only items were a plain table, with two chairs on either side and bare, neutral coloured walls. Lit by a single overhead lamp that was uncomfortably bright, Harry thought that if he had to wait in the room for any length of time he would slowly start to go mad with boredom. Luckily, it was only a few minutes after he was shown in by Kingsley that the solid metal door opened and an auror escorted in the woman plaguing his thoughts.

Despite being directed into a chair at wand point, Narcissa Malfoy was just as poised and elegant as every other time Harry had crossed paths with her. She wore bedraggled Ministry issued robes as though she were modelling them in a high end boutique, with her shoulders back and her head held high. When the auror finished securing her handcuffs to the table, she clasped her hands together as though she was taking part in some kind of high profile business meeting.

As her escort retreated back out of the room, Narcissa stared at Harry, her eyes a piercing blue, with long, straight pale blonde hair and dark brunette eyebrows. Her cheekbones and jawline were sharp, with a long straight nose and thin, wide mouth. The only signs of her age were the veins on the backs of her hands and a few lines around her eyes, and if Harry had not known she had a son his age, he would have thought she was thirty-five at most. She wore the expression of a lion that had caught a young wildebeest and was now deciding on how best to enjoy her meal and Harry had to admit that the woman's beauty and presence was intimidating him, if only slightly.

There was a beat of silence as the two considered each other across the table before Harry spoke.

"Good morning Mrs Malfoy. How have you been?"

She smiled at him charmingly. "As well as can be expected, given my *current predicament*, thank you. Yourself Mr Potter?"

"As well as can be expected," Harry replied evenly. "I wanted to say thank you. For what you did in the forest."

"You are most welcome of course, but your gratitude is appreciated all the same."

"Why did you do it? I've been curious since that night. It was a terrible risk, to lie to Voldemorts face like that." Harry felt a small hint of satisfaction as the name caused Narcissa's face to twitch, but she remained otherwise composed.

"A risk yes, but a calculated one. I will admit I was anxious to know that Draco was safe, but as soon as I felt that you were alive, I realised that the battle could still go either way. If you were to emerge victorious, then my assistance would have been invaluable, as indeed did end up being the case."

Harry sighed. Trust a Slytherin to try and capitalise on every situation. "And now that your gamble has paid off, you've asked for me here so that you can cash in your prize."

Narcissa's smile gained a predatory edge. "In a manner of speaking."

"And what is it that you want?"

"I am no fool Mr Potter, I know that I cannot avoid the repercussions of the war completely, but Draco... he would not fare well in Azkaban. He used to be such a gentle soul, when he was young, but the decisions he was forced to make, the expectations placed on him by his father, they weigh heavily upon him. Show him mercy, commute his sentence, whatever it ends up being, and place him under house arrest instead."

For the first time since entering the room, Harry saw the first glimmer of real emotion from Narcissa. Despite her declaration that she had helped him mainly to curry favour with the winning side, he could tell she wanted nothing more than to save Draco, just as badly as she did on the night of the battle. Shrewd Slytherin she may be, but she was also a devoted mother terrified for her son.

"Just Draco?" Harry asked sceptically. "Not yourself? Not Lucius?"

Narcissa scoffed. "Lucius can rot for all I care. He brought that *monster* into our house and put *my son* in his path." She took a breath, trying to calm her rage. "As for me? I would gladly spend the rest of my life in Azkaban if it means that Draco never has to step foot in the place."

A brief silence settled over them as Harry considered her request.

"Even if I could somehow influence Draco's sentencing – and I have no idea if I can – what makes you think I will? What do I get out of this?" he asked.

Narcissa's eyes narrowed. "I saved your life. You owe me."

"Well yes, I know that and you know that, but nobody else does. This conversation isn't being monitored, I could walk out of here right now, get on with my life and forget you ever existed. I'm not the same honourable little boy I once was."

Harry let Narcissa stew with that information for a moment before continuing.

"But I won't."

Blank shock appeared on her face for a moment, before it turned to suspicion. "You won't?"

"No. Not for your sake, but for Andromedas."

Narcissa's shock reappeared and remained as she whispered, "Andi?"

Harry nodded. "Her husband and daughter died in the war, but she does have a grandchild, Teddy, your grandnephew and my godson. Even then, I can tell by the way she talks about her past that she misses you, or at least the idea of you. If I can give her even the chance of having some family back, then I will take it."

Narcissa stared into the space over his shoulder as if she were lost in memories of her childhood with her sisters, the same way Harry had seen Andromeda lose herself once or twice a day since the battle some weeks ago. Seeing that no answer was forthcoming, Harry stood from his chair and pushed it back under the table with a loud scrape. Narcissa jumped at the noise and refocused on him. She tried to regain the confident superiority with which she had entered, but her eyes betrayed the hope that she was feeling at the idea of saving her son and reuniting with her long lost sister.

Harry rounded the table and stopped by the door, her eyes tracking him all the way.

“You and Draco will take unbreakable vows to ensure good behaviour, and you will provide information and testify against any supporters of Voldemort that you have knowledge of. In return, I will find a way to keep you both out of Azkaban and placed under house arrest for the duration of your sentence. Do we have a deal, Mrs Malfoy?”

Narcissa regarded him with a sense of begrudging respect. “We have a deal Mr Potter.”

Harry nodded and rapped on the door, which was promptly opened to allow him to exit, Narcissa’s gaze following him all the way until he turned the corner at the end of the corridor.

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The heavy rain fell in sheets and a fierce wind lashed at his robes as Harry flew at breakneck speed over the North Sea, bent low over the broom he’d *borrowed* from the Ministry. The sun was setting behind him, dark grey clouds were billowing overhead and the waves below thrashed violently. On the horizon a small black spec was growing larger, making Harry think back to the operation that they had performed there earlier that day. The Aurors evacuation plan had gone off without a hitch, and so the only occupants of Azkaban prison were the wardens themselves. Now Harry was returning to the island for the second time, under the cover of darkness, to carry out the task that had been at the forefront of his mind ever since he had first seen the advert in the Daily Prophet.

Harry slowed as he approached the prison, and took a look at the looming structure for only the second time since seeing it that morning.

Azkaban was massive; a towering three sided obelisk of dull grey stone, pockmarked with hundreds of tiny barred windows, and even as the sun dipped below the horizon, no lights shone from within. The column was perched on an outcropping of rock that looked barely large enough to support it, and was constantly battered by the ferocious black water below. As Harry approached, he felt the temperature drop significantly, and his breath became visible in front of him. He thought he could hear distant screaming, but he pushed through and did his best to ignore his mothers final moments replaying in the back of his mind.

Floating at the base of the stronghold, Harry placed himself near one of the many small windows and reached into his robes. Withdrawing his hand, he looked down at the pale white wand of yew and phoenix feather that he had taken from Voldemorts corpse, revolted at how *right* it felt in his grip.

Catching a flicker of movement off to his right, Harry looked up just in time to see a Dementor lunge at him from within the prison. It was too large to fit through the window and the enchantments on the building kept it contained, but it could still fit its scaly, putrid arm through the bars, and it tried to reach for Harry like a starving animal. He regarded it with a look of hatred, pointed the yew wand, and thought back for the spell that he needed, the spell that he had only seen once before, in the Room of Requirement. Unbidden, one of Snapes lectures from sixth year echoed inside his head.

*Fiendfyre. Deceptively easy to conjure, impossible to control. I advise you only do so should you wish for a quick but exceedingly painful death.*

Harry had no idea how to actually conjure the fire, but he had a good enough guess if even Crabbe had been able to perform the spell. Closing his eyes, Harry did the exact opposite of what he would do when summoning a patronus; he brought forward every bad memory he could think of and immersed himself within them. He listened intently to his mother's screams, to Voldemort's high laughter, and Bellatrix's mad cackles. He imagined Sirius spending years locked away in this god-forsaken place, and his look of shock as he fell backward through the veil. Harry allowed himself to feel the grief, stress and *rage* that he had been burying for so long, until he wanted nothing more than to *burn* the world to the ground for the injustice of it all.

"Fiendfyre," he growled.

Sickly green flames leapt from the tip of his wand and poured through the window, immediately engulfing the Dementor, which let out an ear-splitting shriek as its tattered robes and dead skin were immolated instantly. The fire quickly began to spread out from the cell, taking the form of galloping stags, howling wolves and snarling grims that stalked through the halls of Azkaban, like vengeful wraiths from the underworld.

Harry stayed to stoke the fire for as long as he could, but eventually the heat became intolerable, and he drew his arm back and threw Voldemort's wand, still gushing flames, through the window and into the inferno. Flying up and away, Harry put some distance between himself and the prison, before turning to survey his handywork. As he watched, the blaze spread upwards from the lowest levels more quickly than he could have imagined, until the entire obsidian pillar was wreathed in emerald flames. Gouts of fire erupted from the many windows and the stone around them began to melt and turn orange, like some kind of macabre sculpture. Otherworldly screams could be heard from within, mixing with the roar of the flames and the crashing of the waves to create a beautiful, terrible melody.

Harry did not know for how long he hung in midair, watching as the building deteriorated but eventually, with a mournful groan, the left side of the tower gave way. Almost as if in slow motion, Azkaban prison began to collapse into the sea, the waves swallowing it greedily, until all that was left was a glowing, smoking crag of rock.

Only then did Harry allow himself a small smile of satisfaction, before he disappeared with a *CRACK*.

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Narcissa's legs gave way as the portkey deposited her unceremoniously at her unknown destination, and she let out a small *oof* as her knees hit the floor. Light laughter greeted her, and she looked up to see Harry Potter offering her a hand up.

"It's nice to see that you're not so flawlessly elegant in everything that you do, Mrs Malfoy," he smirked at her.

She huffed and averted her gaze, but accepted his hand. He pulled her up with surprising strength and set her on her feet. Taking a look at her surroundings Narcissa saw that she had arrived in a handsomely decorated drawing room, filled with plump sofas, ornate side tables, and lined with dark wallpaper. She felt a strange sense of familiarity, as if she had been here

before, but couldn't quite remember when. It was on the tip of her tongue, but every time she tried to grasp it, it slipped away.

Turning back to the young man beside her, she saw that he was giving her a smug grin that made him look annoyingly charming. "Where are we?"

"Mrs Malfoy, welcome to your new prison, Number 12 Grimmauld Place."

All at once years worth of memories that she didn't know she had lost came rushing back. Spending her childhood relaxing in the mornings with Andi in the library and hardworking afternoons in the basement duelling with Bella. Her sisters laughter as they chased Sirius through every room in the house, back when life was so much simpler. Her hand flew to her mouth and tears gathered in the corners of her eyes. She was *home*.

"How?" She forced herself to say, "How am I here? I only saw you a few days ago."

Harry collected a newspaper from a nearby table and handed it to her. The front page was dominated by a large picture showing a smouldering rock in the middle of an ocean, and under it were the words:

*AZKABAN DESTROYED  
DEMENTORS NO MORE*

"Turns out the Ministry has a bit of a prison crisis," said Harry, "Kingsley is speaking with the ICW about housing the worst of the worst in Nurmengard, at least until he can get a more permanent solution in place. When I offered to take a couple of his prisoners off his hands, he nearly bit my arm off he was so enthusiastic. He's hoping that I will be able to convince you to testify, and if you do, he'll agree to show Draco leniency too."

Narcissa looked up from the paper in shock, almost at a loss for words. "You did this?"

He shrugged, "*I stoked the fire, so to speak.*"

Surging forward, she grabbed him in a bone crushing hug. "Thank you," she whispered emotionally in his ear, "Thank you."

He rubbed her back consolingly, until she composed herself and stepped away, dapping at her eyes.

"Kreacher should have finished in the kitchen by now," said Harry, smiling and offering her the crook of his elbow. "Will you join me for breakfast Mrs Malfoy?"

"It would be my pleasure Mr Potter," she replied, looping her arm through his.