

The Desert and Its Refugees

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As the sun rises and sets in the desert, Lucius discovers the fragility of life and the violence of the real world.

Chapter 1

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CHAPTER 1

It was the heat that woke him up. He felt like he was Narcissa's special strawberry-apple pie slowly being baked in an oven for another one of her dinner parties. It was insane; he desperately wanted to take his remaining clothes off and have a cold drink.

He was staring straight up, trying hopelessly to remember what had happened. The Order had won, he was sure of it he had seen Potter kill the Dark Lord with an Expelliarmus.

A bloody Expelliarmus.

After that they had gone mad. The remaining Death Eaters had started running for their lives. The last thing he remembered was running in the Forbidden Forest, Narcissa behind him. Draco yelled, "Father! Father!" and when he turned to find out what had happened, everything blacked out.

Now he was here on an extremely uncomfortable cot in a tent in some desert. And in a pair of Muggle boxers.

A pair of Muggle boxers with tropical fishes on them. Merlin's beard.

And standing beside the cot, staring down at him, was a big black man who was not very happy to see him awake.

He was sure this was not Azkaban. Azkaban was cold and eerie, and he was hot and sweaty. There was no feeling of imminent death here. And in Azkaban, he wouldn't be wearing a pair of Muggle boxers with tropical fishes on them.

"Bruno, is he " came from the entrance of the tent. The large, black man was apparently named Bruno, as he turned around and nodded.

He lay frozen on the cot, utterly confused.

Where the hell am I?

"Oh, goodie. Nikki's been waiting for him to wake up. Hello, there." The person was a she, an extremely petite woman with short, purple hair which reminded him a lot of Bellatrix's traitor of a cousin.

"My name's Cara, I'm a field worker here. And you are?" She extended her hand.

He stared at her hand. This was all so very strange. Here was this woman extending her hand to him, apparently not knowing who he was. It was either he was dead or the Aurors were playing an incredibly stupid prank on him.

He kept his mouth shut.

She withdrew her hand. "I guess you're not the sociable type. I'll call Dee to take a look at him, but in the meantime, keep an eye on him while we wait for Nikki to come back. Thanks, Bruno."

Cara left, and Bruno turned his gaze back to him, not blinking even once. He remained on the cot, trying to think of a plan to get out of this place.

He needed his wand. And once he had it, he was Apparating out of here, no matter how tacky the tropical fishes were on the Muggle boxers.

That plan never came into fruition.

Bruno never left his side, and summoning his wand through a neat bit of wandless magic didn't help at all. No wand came, and Bruno was still staring at him.

He decided to screw the wand, the Dark Lord had already tainted the thing with his slimy snake-like hand anyway, and just Apparate directly to a hidden Malfoy estate on the French countryside.

Nothing happened. He couldn't Apparate.

Had he suddenly become a Squib?

He tried again, focusing intently and summoning all his willpower and magic to that single point in France.

Again, nothing happened.

What the bloody hell is this place?

Someone else came after Cara. She introduced herself as, "Diandra. But you can call me Dee," as he laid still and she examined him with some sort of hearing device for the chest apparently she was *doctor* (some sort of Muggle healer, he presumed) and concluded that he was, "Fine. Probably still in shock. Keep an eye on him, Bruno. I'll try to get some spare clothes from one of the guys," and then left.

By this time, he had pretty much figured out that he was not in Britain anymore and that he was in the presence of Muggles who were completely ignorant of who he was.

Bloody fucking hell.

She came back with a pair of jeans, a white shirt with a small, light blue logo on the right breast, a pair of white socks and brown hiking boots. She put the clothes down on the small, wooden end table beside the cot and smiled at him. "Nikki's coming soon. She's our head, so you better dress up. Unless, of course, you're comfortable with just the boxers. I won't stop you," she said and chuckled. She gave Bruno a small wave and left.

He stared at the damned Muggle clothes and thought that he had never, in his life, worn Muggle clothes. He had never, in his life, been to a Muggle place and had never, in his life, been touched by a Muggle.

In a span of half an hour, those last two had suddenly become nonexistent.

He sighed, got up and started putting on the jeans and shirt, Bruno still watching him intently.

He sat on the edge of the cot, dressed and ready to meet this Nikki character they'd been talking about. Bruno continued to stare at him closely from the other end of the tent, and he stared back. He was uneasy wearing the shirt and jeans not that the clothes were uncomfortable, but the fact that they were *Muggle clothing* was enough to make his skin crawl.

He had a million questions on his mind. Where was he? Why couldn't he Apparate out? And where the hell was his wand? He wanted to get out of this place, find his family and go into hiding. The Order and probably the whole Aurory were after the remaining Death Eaters, he was sure of it. He wasn't sure, however, if they could weasel their way out of Azkaban again. Worse than that, he was sure that this time the Order was prepared to give out death sentences to each and every Death Eater present in both the First and Second wars.

His mind lingered on Narcissa and Draco. Where were they now? Were they safe? He wished he knew. He longed to see his wife and son. And if they were in Azkaban, well... He wanted to be there with them. At least they would be there as a family.

He looked up at Bruno. Bruno huffed and turned to the tent's entrance. A rather tall woman entered pretty with long brown hair tied in a ponytail, big brown eyes, a perfectly shaped nose and a small mouth. She was wearing the exact same clothes as he was, her white shirt tucked in and her jeans and boots dirty and rugged.

She stood there, staring at him, her hands to her hips, her lips pursed. She was studying him, he presumed. He wished he had the time to look at the state of his appearance. After the battle at Hogwarts, he was sure his hair was disheveled and his face dirty. It was a sin, he believed, to look so unkempt in front of an attractive woman. He stood up out of courtesy.

"Nikki Ayala. Head of north Bizambe refugee camp." She stuck her hand out for a shake. He stared at it, his mouth shut.

This could not be the 'leader' they were all talking about. She was a *woman*, for one thing, and she looked very young. Not only that, she was rather striking. In his world, good-looking, young women were not allowed to head *anything*.

"Alright then," she said, looking at him curiously. She withdrew her hand. "So, Mister...?"

Did he dare answer? Apparently the gray eyes and the blond hair did not register with her. And she was a Muggle, for crying out loud.

A goddamned Muggle.

She waited for an answer, but he was still deciding on his next course of action. He rather thought he'd had enough Muggle interaction for one day.

"Lost your voice?" she asked, suspicious. Bruno, noticing her tone, stood up and walked over beside her, his arms crossed, his face serious. "Three of my peacekeeping officers found you naked three miles north of the camp. You were unconscious and injured, with some superficial scarring on your chest and back. With your pale skin and blond hair, they figured that you were probably a European national and brought you here. You've been unconscious for three days, and my doctors have been tending to

you. Now, for the sake of argument, you're not the bastard that I think you are, and you will kindly tell me who *the fuck* you are or I'm feeding you to the rebels outside of my camp who would gladly rip a wandering European national like you to shreds." Her eyes were predatory and territorial. She was quite serious.

He felt a tremble in his throat and swallowed. He had to hand it to her, she was fierce.

There were more questions in his mind now. She was mentioning terms he did not understand: rebels, refugee camp, north Bizambe, European national. He was sure this was Muggle territory, but what kind of territory? They were in tents in a furnace of a desert. And she clearly didn't know who he was. He couldn't put two and two together; he was utterly confused.

He realized then, with her's and Bruno's predatory stares, that they were not to be fucked with; that in order to live, in order to return to his family, he needed to cooperate with these people. Never mind if they were Muggles. The Dark Lord had fallen and the cause had died, and he was sure the Order would completely overhaul the Ministry and trash every pro-pureblood law that he had helped write and pass.

But, he guessed, he had given the fight up a long time ago, when he had chosen his family over the cause; when Narcissa had chosen their son and saved Potter in the Forbidden Forest. Sometimes, he guessed, love did rule above all other things. That madman Albus Dumbledore may have been right after all.

Maybe it was time to change things. Just maybe, though.

He stretched out his hand to her. "Lucius Malfoy. A pleasure."

A/N: Hello, there! First of all, thank you for taking the time to read my humble fic. I've had this story in mind for quite some time now, and I only began to outline it last month. This is my first attempt at publishing online for the public to read and review, so please do! Reviews feed my hungry and tortured writer's soul. Thanks, everyone.

PS: *Bizambe* is a fictional country below Tunisia, in between Algeria and Libya. More of that will be explained in the later chapters.