

A Question of Mortality

Von viv-heart

Kapitel 2:

Draco shifted in his armchair, his eyes not leaving his supposed friend Blaise Zabini who sat opposite him, studying Draco.

Hermione had practically fled after Blaise invited them inside, leaving the two of them to deal with each other. That had been two hours ago and they hadn't spoken a word since, opting to watch each other in silence.

Draco felt like this was a power game where speaking meant losing, so he bit his tongue and waited, which was quite difficult as he had ran out of things to count. He had learned that the fine silver armband Blaise wore consisted of 74 pieces if he had guessed the number of pieces he couldn't see correctly, there were 23 roses on the large golden mirror behind Blaise and 15 photographs on the mantle, one of which contained a picture of what he assumed to be his younger self and a girl with short black hair he didn't remember.

Blaise glanced at his wristwatch and his gaze returned to Draco. It was quite unnerving.

Draco could hear faint voices outside the door a second before it was opened. From where the two of them sat in a separated nook, they could neither be seen nor see the door. While he wanted to stand up from his seat and see who arrived, he stayed in his place, just as Blaise did. Judging by the voices, two women walked in.

"Finally, those shoes were killing me!"

The second one laughed. "Then don't wear them!"

"But my legs look great," the black-haired woman Draco had seen on the picture with himself walked around the wall and into plain view before she stopped, "in them," she finished weakly.

Blaise finally averted his gaze from Draco and stood up, still not saying a word.

"What is this?" She gestured between Draco and him, turning to the second woman, a pale thing with high cheekbones and light brown hair, who had just walked around the corner as well, as if asking for help.

Before anybody could answer, the second woman fainted.

"Shit." Blaise moved forward immediately and scooped her up, carrying her off.

The black-haired woman looked at Draco for a long moment as if she wanted to say something. She obviously decided against it because she turned around and went after her friends.

In a lack of better things to do, Draco stood up and followed as well.

"What was that?" he heard the second woman's voice from what he assumed to be a bedroom. "Who's that? He looked- he looked like-"

"Malfoy," Blaise said and glanced at Draco who had moved to stand in the doorway.

"But how?" she asked, looking between her friends and Draco.

"I don't know. I waited for you for this talk," Blaise said, standing up from where he sat next to her. He turned to Draco, who shifted from one foot to another, wiping his sweaty palms on his trousers unconsciously.

"I didn't think it would be fair to start without you, Pansy."

The dark-haired woman ran a hand through her hair, but nodded. "You are probably right. I want to hear this for myself." She shook her head slightly, holding her hand mid-air when it left her air, but let it fall to her side instead of doing anything.

"I am just so confused."

"Imagine how I felt when he turned up here with Granger of all people."

"You are joking!"

"Why would Granger know where you live?" the two women said at the same time and Draco pinched the back of his nose.

It was already clear that explaining everything would be an exhausting affair.

"Could you please introduce yourself before you start questioning me? This is already confusing enough without me having no idea who you people are," Draco cut in, his voice sharp.

Three sets of eyes turned to him and Draco grit his teeth at the mix of curiosity, horror and pity directed at him. He didn't want any of that.

"So Granger wasn't joking when she said you had selective amnesia," Blaise said slowly.

"She wasn't," Draco forced himself to say, already getting sick of the explaining and the reactions he was getting, staring at a porcelain ballerina on a shelf behind Blaise's shoulder so he didn't have to look at them. It would have been a nice piece of work, hadn't it been so pink.

"I thought you would remember Pansy, if nobody else." Blaise ran a hand over his face.

"The only person I remember is Granger, and trust me, I rather wouldn't." Draco felt detached as he spoke, ignoring the gasp of horror from the girl on the bed. He still didn't know her name. "So could you please tell me who you are and what our relationship is? Granger didn't say anything beyond that she was going to leave me with a friend. I don't even know if she meant one of you."

Blaise exchanged a quick glance with Pansy and let out a deep sigh. "You know my name. As for our relationship—" he crossed and uncrossed his arms, "—we weren't exactly close. We knew each other and interacted a lot, but it was—"

"Cold," Pansy said with a meaningful look at Blaise. "It was cold more than anything."

Draco put his hands into his pockets, his gaze moving from Blaise to Pansy; he raised an eyebrow when she didn't continue, daring her to speak.

"I can't believe you remember Granger but not me." She grimaced. "But fine. Pansy Parkinson is my name and I am your oldest friend, Draco!"

Draco flinched slightly at the tone of her voice and a smile appeared on her face.

"I am glad that this still works." She made a tentative step forward and when Draco didn't move away, she closed the remaining distance between them and pulled him into a hug.

He returned it, patting her awkwardly on the back when he heard her sniff.

"I am Daphne Greengrass," the woman on the bed said even before Pansy pulled away, her voice sounding strangely detached. "We used to be friends. Not as close as Pansy and you, but friends."

Draco gave her a weak smile. "Thank you all, and I am sorry for not remembering you." His eyes wandered to Pansy.

"Stop being so sappy," she said, her voice a pitch higher than before, "it doesn't suit you."

Draco smiled for real, the first smile since he arrived at the flat, and Blaise cleared his throat to get their attention.

"Now that you know who we are, would you please tell us what the hell is going on?" Draco stiffened. "I don't know. I have no idea what happened before I ran into Granger and she brought me here immediately. Effectively, I have less than three hours of real memories."

"What about your past? You said you remember Granger," Pansy asked, crossing her arms.

Draco clenched his fists in his pockets, swallowing down the bile that rose at the question. He had dreaded it and still didn't know how to answer it properly. But telling those people that he was an angel didn't seem a good idea, even though they claimed to be his friends – more or less, considering what Blaise had said about their relationship. "I remember Granger and only her. Don't ask me why. It's like some of my worst memories are haunting me."

Blaise snorted, earning himself a glare from Pansy that clearly said that she didn't like it when he did that.

"What?" Blaise rose his arms in defense.

"Do you remember Granger besting you in everything? It's not surprising that that is your worst memory." Daphne said in a tone that made Draco cringe. He wondered what had happened between them that she was acting so cold and distant. Had he been a more positive and trusting person, he would have assumed that it was the shock speaking, but being who he was, he was sure something was terribly wrong. The fact that Pansy shot her a glare only reinforced the feeling.

"I remember tormenting her," Draco said, his voice devoid of any emotion.

Pansy studied the carpet with a sudden interest and Draco was sure she had been involved as well. There was laughter in the background of some memories and he was sure he would recognize her in the mass if he heard her laugh.

Daphne looked remotely guilt as well, Blaise being the only one who seemed unfazed by Draco's words.

"Was the bullying the reason why we weren't friends?" Draco asked.

Blaise rose an eyebrow at the question. "Part of it. You were an annoying brat in general," he said with amusement.

Draco nodded, having assumed as much. No pleasant person would have acted the way he had towards Granger. Draco didn't like where his line of thought was going. Thinking about Granger always resulted in a mix of self-hatred and anger towards somebody or something he didn't remember, what irritated him even more.

"Has somebody contacted your parents?" Pansy asked suddenly.

Draco held his breath. His parents? They were alive and well? And obviously in reach and nobody had bothered to tell him.

"It didn't occur to me," Blaise said, rubbing his neck sheepishly. "And I seriously doubt Granger did either."

"It didn't occur to you?" Pansy shrieked. "You have sat there for god knows how long and hadn't informed neither me nor his parents? What the hell were you thinking?" She looked like she wanted to murder Blaise, her cheeks flushed and a dangerous glint in her eyes.

"I was in shock?"

"Pansy, calm down," Daphne spoke up. "Just call them and let's get over with it."

Pansy huffed, but didn't say anything and pushed past Draco to get her phone from her bag, leaving the other three to stare at each other in awkward silence.

"Why does Granger know where all of you live?" Draco asked when he couldn't stand it any longer and Blaise grinned. It was a predatory grin - broad and showing all of his perfectly white teeth.

"I banged her best friend."

"What he wants to say is that he dated the she-Weasel and got dumped by her," Pansy said from behind Draco. "And get your keys, Zabini, we are going to the Manor."

"I didn't get dumped!"

"No, you were never dating but she spend quite some time here and then suddenly she didn't."

Draco could practically hear Pansy roll her eyes as she said that and Daphne laughed. He had almost forgotten that she was in the room. He wasn't sure if the latter was generally such a quiet person or if it was because of him, but he could not imagine that they were ever friends despite what she had said earlier. Pansy on the other hand, that made sense. She was loud and pushy and Draco was sure she could keep up with him and put him in place if she needed to.

"But get moving everybody! The Malfoys have waited enough!"

"They have waited eight years, ten minutes won't kill them," Blaise said and something flew past Draco's head, missing his right ear only by millimetres and straight at Blaise, who caught it, laughing.

"Thanks for the keys," he said and looked at Draco expectantly. "What are you waiting for? Move so we can get you to your parents!"

"I won't be coming with you," Daphne spoke up and three heads turned to look at her. "We can let you out at your place," Pansy said with a smile but Daphne shook her head.

"I'll walk. It's not that far."

Pansy shot her a concerned look but didn't say anything and urged them all out of the flat and on the street.

"Why are you rushing so much?" Blaise asked when the three of them were finally in the car, having said goodbye to Daphne shortly before. "It's rather uncharacteristic."

Pansy looked at him with wide eyes. "Narcissa cried on the phone! She cried!"

Blaise let out a low whistle and looked in the back mirror at Draco. "Prepare to be smothered by hugs."

Draco nodded numbly, not saying anything and Blaise left it at that.

He and Pansy chatted about everything and nothing during the ride while Draco sat in the back, his head against the window, staring out.

Draco had mixed feelings about meeting his parents. On the one hand, he wanted to get to know them, to learn who he was – or had been. He was sure he was a different person now. On the other hand that was exactly why he dreaded meeting them – he wasn't the son they had lost. Blaise had said that he had been missing for about eight years now, probably dead for the same time.

He feared that he would disappoint them being who he was now, that they would reject him. Funnily enough, he didn't know who that was. He felt like an empty shell, looking like a boy who had disappeared years ago.

After what felt like an eternity, but was probably only about two or three hours, they arrived at a huge mansion somewhere in the country.

Draco left the car and stared at the building in awe. Despite the grey sky and the rain that obscured the view and soaked his clothes, he was mesmerized by the magnificent

mansion. He was so taken in by it, that he didn't see the petite woman running out of it and towards him.

Only when she pulled him into a fierce hug did he realize what was going on.

"I am not getting any air," Draco said, trying to wiggle free of the woman's grasp. She was about a head shorter than he was but surprisingly strong.

"Naricssa, darling," an older man, who Draco assumed to be his father because of the extreme resemblance to him, limped towards them, leaning on an ornate cane, an umbrella in his hand, "you are smothering him."

Narcissa pulled away, but didn't let go of him, looking him up and down. Her eyes were read and puffy, but she seemed rather happy.

"Oh Draco," she said, happiness radiating off of her as if she was the sun and Draco couldn't help but return her smile.

"Let's get inside," Draco's father said and Pansy joined him under the umbrella.

Narcissa didn't let go of Draco's arm and practically dragged him inside, Blaise following after them, his hands deep in his pockets and an amused grin on his face.

Draco studied his mother out of the corner of his eye. He didn't want her to notice him staring.

She was dressed in all black, a strong contrast to her pale skin and hair. Draco assumed he had inherited his sharp cheekbones and the frail build from her.

He must have inherited everything else from his father, looking so much like him with the almost white hair and height. He was sure his father would have the same gray eyes he had, even though he hadn't been able to see them because of the rain and the distance. One way or another, there was no mistake that these were indeed his parents.

A butler was already waiting for them with fluffy towels that were distributed to those in need and they moved into a large drawing room, where tea had been prepared.

Narcissa finally let go of Draco reluctantly to sit down next to her husband.

Draco took place in an armchair, neither wanting to sit next to his friends nor to his parents and not being interested in tea or snacks.

"What exactly happened?" Draco's father asked, looking between the three young people, his eyes landing on Draco who felt himself shrink under his gaze.

While it was clear that the man didn't mean ill, his grey eyes were still penetrating. Draco had been right about them being gray.

"I don't know," Draco said, sitting up a bit straighter to fight the feeling. "I seem to have selective amnesia. That's at least what Granger called it."

"Granger?" the Malfoys said in unision, exchanging a quick glance.

"What does Miss Granger have to do with anything?" Draco's father was frowning now.

"She brought him to our place," Blaise said, putting down his tea. "She found him."

"Why isn't she here with us then?" Narcissa asked, giving Pansy a stern look when she snorted. The sounds surprised Draco as she had chastised Blaise for it earlier.

"After the interrogation she was put through?" Pansy put down her tea as well. "You are lucky she brought him to us and didn't let him stand in the middle of London all alone."

"Granger wouldn't do that," Draco heard himself say and his eyes widened when he realized what he had just done. The comment earned him curious glances from everyone in the room, but he grit his teeth and didn't elaborate.

"We still have to contact her," Draco's father continued. "We need her testimony for

the police. Yours too," he turned to Pansy and Blaise. "Every detail might help us find the one responsible for this."

They nodded and Blaise stood up. "I think we should get going," he glanced at Pansy. "I am sure you have a lot to talk about."

She stood up as well and went over to Draco to give him another hug before they shook hands with the Malfoys, Narcissa giving Pansy a brief hug.

Pansy's startled expression made Draco wonder if this behaviour was atypical for his mother. He didn't have much time to ponder on it as his friends were gone now and he was left with the undivided attention of his parents.

"Come here, boy. Let me take a look at you," his father beckoned him to him, a fond expression on his face. His posture had relaxed the moment Pansy and Blaise were out of the room.

Draco stood up and went to stand in front of his parents, looking from one to the other unsure what to expect. He felt like a small boy, his parents making sure he was properly dressed for his first school day, their looks both proud and sad that their little boy had grown up so much.

"I am sorry but I don't remember you," Draco blurted out when his mother reached out to take his hand and she froze midway.

"You said you had selective amnesia," his father sounded weak, almost broken when he said it and Draco felt his gut clench. While he didn't remember these people, he remembered that he loved them. It was a weird realization and suddenly, Draco was choking on his tears.

His mother stood up wordlessly and pulled him into a tight hug, which he actually returned, clutching him to her.

His father watched quietly, letting the two have the moment.

"Just know that we love you," Narcissa whispered into his ear. "Nothing else is important."

Draco nodded, biting his lip to stop another wave of tears.

His father stood up and reached out, pulling them to his chest, and Draco felt himself relax in the arms of his parents, not caring that he had lost his memories for the first time in what felt like an eternity.

The moment was destroyed when a shrill voice cut through the air. "How do you know that he is your son and not an imposter?"