

A Question of Mortality

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Inhaltsverzeichnis

Kapitel 1:	2
Kapitel 2:	8
Kapitel 3:	14
Kapitel 4:	19
Kapitel 5:	24

Kapitel 1:

Without thinking Draco launched forward, his wings carrying him at lightning speed. Before he could blink, he was leaning over Hermione, worry all over his face, barely registering the pain that shot through his wings when the van hit him.

She was staring at him with wide eyes, shaking like a leaf in the wind, obviously unable to process what had happened.

"Are you alright, Granger?" he asked, still out of breath. He commanded his wings to disappear before he stood up carefully, offering his hand to help her up.

She didn't reply or take the hand in front of her and continued staring at him as if she were seeing a ghost. Considering a winged man had saved her from being hit by a van she might have.

And well, he was dead – at least technically. So much he had gathered.

"Fine," he sneered, letting his hand fall down to his side when she didn't make any indication she perceived anything that happened around her. He wasn't doing this out of his free will anyway.

"Malfoy," she said, her voice barely audible, when he turned to leave.

He stopped, looking over his shoulder at her, waiting, not sure what to expect.

So far, she hadn't done much but stare at him, frozen as if someone had stopped time, and barely breathing.

For a split second he had hoped she would believe that she had imagined him saving her the same way he hoped all the bystanders would think the wings they had seen were a product of their imagination thanks to some shock induced mass-hallucination. Or that they hadn't seen them at all because the van obscured the view as he had landed directly between it and her.

But Granger never ceased to surprise him.

"You are alive." She was shaking even more as tears started falling from her eyes.

"You are alive."

It was enough for Draco to turn back hastily and crouch in front of her, believing that eye contact might prompt her to speak more.

"Do you know what happened to me?" he whispered with a mix of urgency and what one could call despair in his voice. He knew he didn't have much time as there were people around them who would interfere shortly – it was a rather busy street after all.

"Do you?"

She nodded and then shook her head abruptly after a brief pause. Before Draco could continue his questioning the bystanders finally woke up from their shock and a few rushed to them and to the driver of the van.

"I am fine," Draco glared at a woman too loud and too pushy for his taste. "Let me leave," he demanded, attempting to break free from the crowd that had gathered and was trying to force him to stay and wait for the ambulance. He was in shock, they said. That it was impossible for the two of them to not get hurt. He would have laughed had he not been so annoyed.

Draco sneered at them all and had almost managed to break free when a hand clasped around his wrist and he turned around to yell at the person who dared to touch him. When he saw that it was Hermione Granger, who he had saved, and was doomed to save again and again, and who was looking at him with those big brown eyes of hers, and who seemed to hold the answers to his questions, he stopped.

"What?" he asked, the tone less biting than he would have liked. Being surrounded by such a huge mass of people after being almost alone for so long made him nervous. He had to physically stop himself from lashing out at everyone, with Hermione, the only person he knew, being an exception for some obscure reason he didn't want to dwell on.

When she didn't respond, Draco huffed. "If you want to come with me, Granger, get up. If you don't, let go!"

Hermione didn't let go and Draco started walking, pushing away all the people who tried to convince them both to stop as it was clear that Hermione was still in shock with how unresponsive she was but he didn't care and they made their way through the mass.

Draco didn't stop until they reached an empty side-street and turned to Hermione, who still hadn't said anything.

"Tell me what you know about me," he said as soon as he yanked his hand free from her grasp, stepping closer. "Everything."

"You have wings," Hermione said, ignoring his words completely and Draco had to close his eyes and count to ten silently to stop himself from screaming or punching something.

"Fine. This won't work. I get it. Forget it. Go back and get help. I'm leaving."

He summoned his wings even before he finished speaking and closed his eyes again in an attempt to concentrate so he could return to heaven or hell or whatever that lousy afterlife was. He spread his wings and pushed up, hoping to become one with the light just like he had when he had come back to the world of the living – not that he knew how exactly he had managed that. Nothing happened.

Well, that wasn't entirely true. He was hovering several feet over the ground but that was all. He certainly wasn't going to manage to get back this way.

Draco wasn't too disappointed about that if he was honest with himself, considering the afterlife was indeed quite lousy, but staying had a big catch: he had no place in the world of the living, having lost his the second he had died.

As he didn't know what else to do, Draco sank back to the ground in front of Hermione who was watching him with interest and awe.

"How is this possible?" she asked, pulled back to reality by the sight of the wings, bizarre as it was.

Draco would have contemplated if they had some kind of healing holy power if there weren't more pressing matters at hand.

"I am a guardian angel. Your guardian angel, to be precise," he said, gritting his teeth. Having known Hermione Granger his whole school life he knew that it would be easier to offer her some information if he wanted something back. It would be no use if she ran away, so he bit his tongue for once in his life – or death – and tried to be civil to her.

"Are you dead? I mean, people say the dead can turn into angels – so that would make angels dead, wouldn't it?" she asked with a frown, her eyes scanning his form as if she was looking at a rare, dangerous creature.

"You assumed I would be, judging by your reaction when you first saw me," Draco said, willing himself to speak calmly even though he would have loved to shake the answers out of her. Her usual Grangeriness wasn't certainly making it any easier.

"Why?"

Hermione bit her lip and looked away. "What do you know? I mean you know my name so you must know something." she said finally. "I need to know where to start."

Because seriously, this has been a hell of a day so far and I want to go home and sleep because everything hurts and I am just so tired but I am talking to an actual angel with actual wings – unless this is some kind of crazy technology which wouldn't be surprising considering your wealth but then again you have been missing for years and there had been nothing in the news about you turning up and -"

Draco had to put a hand over Hermione's mouth to stop the rant and her eyes widened in surprise.

He stepped back immediately, cleaning his hand on his trousers.

"I can't tell you if you don't shut up," he muttered, but Hermione didn't seem fazed by it and simply continued staring at him, waiting for him to start talking.

"Look, I kind of woke up like this," he made a vague gesture at himself, "what I believe to be several years ago. It's hard to keep track of time up there. The only memories I have are of how I tormented you. I know my name, your name and that we were classmates and that I hated you. I don't even know why exactly. That means, you are the only person I know of who has any connection to me."

Hermione held up her hands to stop him. "Wait. Are you telling me you don't know who you are? You don't know your parents, your friends, my friends? Nothing?"

At Draco's sour expression she began to laugh.

He crossed his arms and glared at her. "That's really not funny, Granger. Believe me, if I could, I would be standing here with somebody else. But I can't, considering the only person I know is you. It's some kind of divine punishment or other crap like that."

Hermione stopped laughing. Draco could almost hear the snap of her neck when her head turned into his direction abruptly so she could look him into the eyes, fixating him with her stare. "Oh really? Is that what you want? How about I dump you on one of your former friends then?"

Draco didn't know what to feel or say. He hadn't considered the possibility that there were people who had cared about him still out there and he would be able to meet them. "You could do that?"

He hated himself for how hopeful he sounded, how weak, but it was better than anything he had ever imagined, not that he had thought it possible to enter the world of the living before he had tried to save Hermione and ended up there accidentally.

"Obviously." Her voice was cold and Draco felt the fine hair on his neck stand up. The thing was, that it wasn't from fear. Draco knew for a fact that he had never been scared of Hermione Granger before, not when she had slapped him back in the day, and certainly not now, and yet something unsettled him. It irked him, that he couldn't put a finger on what exactly that was.

"That would be great," he said with a forced smile, ignoring his sudden discomfort.

"Follow me." Hermione turned around and started walking in the direction of the main street, not checking once if he was following her.

Draco needed a second before he realized that she had moved and he hurried to catch up with her.

"You could tell me what you know while we walk," he said, pushing his hands into his empty pockets. It felt wrong to not have anything in them, even though he couldn't remember a time when he did.

"How about no."

Draco stopped in his tracks, not having expected the answer. "And why the hell not?"

"You tell me." Hermione hadn't bothered to stop or turn around and continued her way as if it didn't matter to her if he followed or not.

Even though it was certainly possible that it really didn't matter to her, years of

watching her and over her told Draco that she was bothered by something judging by her tense shoulders and overly straight back.

"What have I done now?" He jogged after her, scared that he would lose her on the busy street. Damn London and its huge population.

"I am aware that I was never your favourite person, Malfoy, but you could at least try to be nice to me if you want my help." She finally stopped and was glaring daggers into him, her head held high, but her arms crossed in front of her.

She was clearly going on the defensive, trying to hide how hurt and overwhelmed she was, but Draco had caught the faint glimmer of tears before she turned around again and continued her walk.

"Look," he fell into step next to her, "I haven't been around people for ages."

He knew that it wasn't much of an apology, but he had never been good at those and she was overreacting quite a bit in his opinion.

"Well, then I suggest you talk less and watch more. That way, you might even learn those social norms you have missed when you were a kid."

Draco caught her arm, using centrifugal force to spin her around so she was facing him.

"Do you think I am any happier with this situation than you are?" he hissed, tightening his grip when she struggled to get away. "I am fucking dependant on you here, Granger, and I hate it. But I would hate it no matter who I was stuck with so get over yourself and tell me what I want to know."

Draco hadn't expected the kick to his shin and yelped, but didn't let go. Disappointment flashed over Hermione's face but was instantly replaced with anger.

"Stop manhandling me!"

"Stop being a bitch!" Draco caught her other arm, holding her in place. He was glad that they hadn't reached the busy street yet, having the argument just around the corner, and weren't therefore attracting much attention.

"Let go or I'll scream for help!" Hermione said with a dangerous glint in her eyes.

"Only if you promise to not run away."

"I won't run away."

Draco let go reluctantly and Hermione started massaging her arm immediately. He looked away, putting his hands into his pockets again, waiting for her to speak. He was making her angrier and angrier with every word he said so staying silent for a while seemed the best course of action if he ever wanted to reach that supposed friend of his.

"I assume you don't have any kind of ticket for public transport or money."

Draco looked at her in confusion. "Excuse me?"

Hermione rolled her eyes. "What have I expected? A Malfoy and to use public transport? It was probably such an insignificant part of your life that you have forgotten all about it."

"I know what public transport is! But why would we need it?"

Hermione laughed at his question and ran a hand through her hair. "You are serious, aren't you? To get to your friend, obviously."

"But can't we just, like, walk?" Draco asked hopefully, remembering how nervous he had been earlier when they were surrounded by people. "Or I don't know, call a cab?"

"I want to get rid of you as soon as I can, so no, walking the two hours to his place isn't an option. And as I don't have money to spare, a cab isn't either. So you either take the tube with me or I can give you the address and you find your way on your own. Your choice," she stuck out her chin, clearly challenging him.

Draco gulped as fear gripped his stomach and didn't want to let go. He wasn't sure if it was the thought of being surrounded by so many people or being in such a tight space underground, but his head began to spin.

It must have showed, because Hermione's expression softened and she stepped closer.

"Is something wrong?"

Draco gripped his head with both hands as pain struck him, clutching it as he collapsed. The smell of fresh earth filled his nostrils and he gasped in a desperate attempt to fill his lungs with air. "I don't know. I don't know."

Hermione crouched down next to him, her eyes wide and her hands shaking as she reached forward to turn him to his side in a confused attempt to stabilize him.

The pain was gone as suddenly as it had come and Draco let his hands fall down, his breathing rigged.

"Should I call an ambulance?" Hermione asked, her voice a pitch higher than it normal, as she searched her bag for her phone.

"Hell no," Draco sat up slowly, "Let's just not take the tube."

Hermione nodded, but continued watching him with concern, her hands still shaking slightly.

"I think bus might be fine," Draco added after a while and she scrambled to her feet to help him up as well.

They made their way to the nearest bus stop a few streets away in silence, even though Hermione glanced in Draco's direction every few seconds which annoyed him immensely.

"What?" he snapped when she didn't cease to do it even after they arrived at the stop.

"Do you really have no idea what happened to you?"

Draco pinched the back of his nose, counting to ten in his mind once again in an attempt to calm himself down.

She must have taken his silence as a no as she continued talking. "You know, you disappeared. Somebody demanded money for your return after it became public, but it's not clear if they really were responsible for it, as they were never caught and you weren't found. You are listed as missing till today."

The words startled Draco into looking at her, but the bus arrived before he could ask more questions.

Hermione paid for his ticket, using her own regular card, and Draco followed her to the back of the bus where they found two empty seats.

"Is that all?" he asked as soon as they sat down.

"Yes. I would have thought that you were alive and had a kind of selective amnesia, weren't it for..." she trailed off, staring out of the window.

"Weren't it for the wings." Draco finished the sentence for her.

They didn't speak for the remainder of the ride, Draco opting to stare at the seat in front of him. He felt numb and couldn't form a coherent thought and certainly didn't feel like speaking. Hermione's words had caught him by surprise. He didn't know what he had expected, but certainly not that.

When she told him that they needed to get off the bus he followed her instructions obediently.

Only when they entered a huge apartment complex and she led them towards the elevator did he protest again.

Hermione gave him a weird look, but turned towards the stairs anyway, for which he was really grateful.

Luckily, the person they were seeking out lived on the third floor and they didn't have to walk too long. It was still enough for them to be out of breath when they finally reached their destination.

Hermione gave him a weak smile before walking towards a door and pounding against it.

"The bell doesn't work," she looked over her shoulder at Draco and he shrugged. She seemed to know this supposed friend of his quite well and it didn't sit right with him. For all the interactions he remembered with her, there wasn't a single one that suggested they had even one mutual friend.

"Who's there?" a deep voice came from behind the door, pulling Draco back into the reality.

"Hermione Granger," she said with an anxious glance over at Draco before turning back to the door.

For a moment only rustling of chains could be heard but then the door opened, revealing a tall dark-skinned man.

"What do you want, Gra-" he started but froze when his eyes landed on Draco.

"Malfoy?"

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.

"Narcissa, 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 unison, 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?"

Kapitel 3:

3

Narcissa's nails dug into Draco's hand painfully, but he didn't pay it any attention, his eyes not leaving the woman she had addressed as Bellatrix.

"I can't believe you of all people are so easily influenced by feelings, Lucius! Your son is gone for eight years now! They had already declared him dead! Do you know how low the chances are that he would be still alive, not to mention suddenly turn up?!" Bellatrix glared at his father, who returned the glare with an icy stare.

"I know exactly how low they are, but I am not blind," he spoke, his voice piercing the air. Long gone was the loving father at the verge of tears, replaced by the ruthless businessman managing the family fortunes. "He looks like Draco - like me."

Bellatrix snorted. "Never heard of plastic surgery?"

Draco felt his mother tense next to him.

"We will run DNA tests. While I am sure they will turn out positive, it will clear all doubts any of us," she looked pointedly at Bellatrix, "might have. We will not notify the authorities until we have the results. Lucius, would you please call Severus? I think it best to get this over with as soon as possible."

Bellatrix recognized the dismissal for what it was and turned on her heel, not even bothering to say goodbye.

Narcissa looked at Lucius, who was still glaring daggers at the spot where Bellatrix stood seconds ago, expectantly. "What are you waiting for? I was serious."

"Oh really?" Lucius drawled and Draco suspected he rolled his eyes, but he left, the clicking of his cane on the marble floor echoing through the manor.

"Who was that?" Draco asked when Narcissa didn't speak or move, obviously lost in thought. He couldn't blame her. The whole encounter with Bellatrix had been strange at least. She had marched in without being announced, accused him of various crimes and then left again. He was sure that there weren't many people who could allow themselves to act like that towards the Malfoys and get away with it.

"Oh, of course," Narcissa shifted in her seat so she could look at Draco and finally released his hand, leaving angry red marks where her nails had been. "Bellatrix is my older sister - your aunt. I am sorry about her behaviour. She can be a little, let's call it harsh, at times. I am sure she'll come around when there's proof of your identity."

Draco nodded, not trusting his voice. For some reason his throat was tight and he felt dizzy. He concentrated on rubbing his hand, hoping that Narcissa wouldn't notice his discomfort. But he had underestimated her motherly instincts.

"Draco? What's wrong?" she put a hand on his shoulder.

"It's a lot to take in," he said, not sure if he was trying to reassure her or himself.

"Who's Severus anyway? Lu-. No, fa-," Draco closed his eyes and took a deep breath. This was harder than he had expected. He could call Granger Granger and his friends by their respective names, but he had not stopped for a moment to think about how he would address his parents. While it had been easy to call them mother and father in his mind to label them it felt weird to call these people he didn't know something like that openly.

"I am sorry," he whispered.

"It's not your fault," Narcissa said gently, starting to rub soothing circles on his back.

"You went through a lot and losing your memory must be a terrible experience. While

it hurts me to hear that you don't remember us, I can understand that you need time to adjust to some things."

Draco shot her a grateful smile, unable to convey his feelings into words.

"But aren't you hungry?" she asked suddenly.

The question startled Draco. He hadn't thought about being hungry, thirsty or even tired for a long time, but he realized that he was all of these things. "Yes, I am," he said eagerly. The sensations were new, they were weird, but to hell with him if they weren't welcome.

"I can show you the manor!"

Narcissa led him through the house and towards the kitchen, stopping repeatedly to tell him about something they passed. Draco wasn't really listening, concentrating on getting some sense of direction in the large manor, but failing miserably. By the time they reached the kitchen, he was utterly lost. The house was just too big.

"Mrs Malfoy," the butler Draco had seen when they arrived stood up from the table where he was having tea with a maid of sorts when they entered. "Is there anything you need?"

"A sandwich for Draco would be wonderful," Narcissa said and Draco rose an eyebrow at her cold tone. Granger used 'please' and 'thank you' in almost every interaction, being almost too polite. The lack of those words from his mother together with the order itself had surprised him. He wondered if this was normal in his circles, but bit his tongue and watched the maid hurry around the kitchen until he felt his mother's gaze on him.

"We should go back," she said. "Your father is surely waiting for us. Dobby will bring you the food."

Draco glanced back at Dobby and the maid, who seemed completely unfazed by Narcissa's behaviour, and followed his mother wordlessly.

Lucius was indeed waiting for them, staring out of the window of the drawing room, when they entered. "Severus is on his way," he said without turning around. "He should be here in less than an hour."

"Wonderful," Narcissa sat down on the sofa once again and run her hands over her skirt to smoothe it out. "That leaves us enough time to talk about how we proceed concerning Miss Granger."

Draco bit his cheek. He wanted to ask what they were talking about but he knew that he had acted as if he cared about her before already. If he did that too often, it would seem suspicious, considering how bad their past relationship had been.

"She will have to give a police testimony one way or another. We will get the person responsible for this!" Lucius turned around, his eyes gleaming dangerously.

"It seems we agree that she is innocent," Narcissa sipped from her now lukewarm tea and put it down with a disgusted expression.

Draco looked at her in horror. "You suspected her?" he asked, his blood suddenly boiling. His fingernails were digging into his palms, and his jaw was almost painfully tense as he waited for the response.

"Of course we did," Lucius said in a tone that suggested he thought the question was ridiculous. "We investigated everyone who would have had a motive and even people who really wouldn't and she certainly had one. She hated you."

"She told me somebody had demanded money in exchange for me. You thought - what was she? 15? 16? You thought a 16 year old would do that?" Draco shook his head slightly in disbelief. The notion that Granger could have killed anybody was a joke. He had watched her for years and just the idea of the girl, who spend most of

her weekends alternating between crying over romance novels and yelling at them, and fighting over socks with her ridiculously ugly cat, shooting or strangling somebody made him want to laugh. No wonder he hadn't been found when the people investigating his disappearance had believed Granger was capable of something like that. They were clearly idiots who sucked at their job.

"Inspector Crouch believed that two parties were involved. One that abducted or killed you and one that demanded money for you," Narcissa put a hand on Draco's fist.

"We had to take every possibility into account."

"Of course we paid the money just in case," Lucius continued bitterly before Draco could say anything. "Obviously in vain as you can see. The police didn't even manage to catch any of the culprits. If I ever get my hands on them, I—"

Draco didn't get to hear what his father would do to his killers, as a loud ring echoed through the manor.

"That must be Severus," Narcissa stated the obvious into the silence that had fallen over the room.

"You must understand our precautions," she turned to Draco. "While I am very willing to believe you have returned to us, we can't risk anything."

Draco nodded, just as the butler Dobby arrived carrying a tablet with a sandwich and fresh tea. He was followed by a man clad all in black, who Draco assumed to be Severus.

"Good afternoon," Severus said, his eyes fixed on Draco, who had to suppress a shudder at the piercing look. He felt as if the man was looking straight through him and could determine all of his darkest secrets with one glance.

"I am glad you could make it on such a short notice," Lucius shook Severus' hand and they joined Draco and Narcissa on the sofas and armchairs while Dobby prepared their tea.

Draco was eyeing his sandwich but didn't dare to eat as the adults discussed the further proceedings. He knew it was ridiculous to call them adults as he was technically an adult himself, but he certainly didn't feel like it. He felt lost even though he was sitting next to his parents in what was supposed to be his home.

"Each of you needs to take this," Severus gave each of the Malfoy's an unusual longish kind of cotton swab, "and move it around the inside of your cheeks for about a minute."

"When will you be able to provide the results?" Lucius asked and his hand twitched as if he had to stop himself from clicking his fingers on the table.

"I'll come by the day after tomorrow. Technically, I would be able to provide you with answers tomorrow morning, but as you have demanded to run several tests, it will take slightly more time."

Draco put the cotton swab into his mouth, following Severus' instruction to hide the fact that he was making a face. He was really looking forward to a full day of awkwardness. His parents were obviously more than ready to welcome him back, but reminded themselves that they couldn't be sure once in awhile and pulled back. It was exhausting.

It didn't take long and Severus excused himself again, explaining that he had a long ride ahead of him and had to get up early if he wanted to drop by in the lab first thing in the morning.

Draco who was getting hungrier by the moment couldn't say he was disappointed. When his mother announced that she was going to retreat to her quarters and take dinner there, he almost cheered.

"I would like to retreat for the night as well," Draco said when she suggested that he and Lucius take dinner together.

Narcissa rose an eyebrow but didn't protest. "I'll show you your old room," she said instead and Draco grabbed his plate and followed her.

"Dobby prepared a set of guest sleepwear for you. As you've grown since your disappearance, we don't have anything that would fit you. Usually, Lucius' tailor comes here if he needs a new suit, but as you need a completely new wardrobe, we will go to London tomorrow to take care of it."

Draco nodded at the appropriate places during Narcissa's following monologue about where she would take him and what he would need as they walked to his room.

"We will have to keep a low profile to keep you out of the media for the time being," Narcissa stopped in front of a room. "I hope you understand that. I would wait for after everything is made public, but then we won't be able to get anywhere without paparazzi."

Draco's jaw dropped. He certainly hadn't expected paparazzi. Just how rich and famous was his family?

"I- Thank you for everything," he said, running his free hand through his hair.

"I am your mother. You don't have to thank me. This is your home too."

Draco nodded and mumbled a quiet goodnight before retreating into his room.

The amount of green caught him by surprise. He almost dropped his sandwich at the sight. Everything was green. He didn't know why, but he was sure he would find out.

Draco wolfed down his food in record time. He was eager to explore, and set to look through his old things.

He went through old books and trophies, drawings and notes, toys and clothes, not noticing how the time went by.

Only a knock on his door brought him back to reality. Draco suppressed a yawn and stood up, cursing when he realized that one of his legs had fallen asleep. He hated the tingling feeling.

"I'm coming," he shouted when there was a second knock. He opened the door to find Dobby there, fresh clothes in his hands.

"Mr and Mrs Malfoy await you in the dining room for breakfast," Dobby said.

Draco took the clothes from him and disappeared into the bathroom adjourning his room.

He spent the whole way to the dining room yawning, cursing himself for not getting any sleep with every step.

Draco managed to get lost two times before he finally found the dining room, where his parents and an excessive amount of food were already waiting.

The breakfast passed mostly in silence with his father reading the newspaper and his mother casting worried glances towards him every two seconds, but Draco didn't care. He was tired and had no appetite, even though he was starving. He forced down several pieces of toast with bacon and egg, which threatened to come up again when his mother announced that they were leaving for London immediately after breakfast, destroying his hopes of getting some rest.

Draco felt terrible the whole time his mother dragged him from one shop to another. She was obviously greatly enjoying the fact that she could dress him up and create a new wardrobe.

His skin tingled, his stomach rebelled and worst of all, he felt incredibly restless. Draco wanted to shout and jump and claw his eyes out all at the same time while sitting on the floor, rocking forth and back. He didn't know if it were the effects of

severe sleep deprivation - like the past eight years - or if it was something entirely different. It was hard to tell as it could be anything from anxiety over getting sick to a punishment for him for joining the world of the living again.

Worst of all was the old beanie his mother had forced him to wear to hide his hair so they wouldn't be recognized. She hid behind a huge pair of sunglasses and a rather stylish hat.

Draco was about to tear the damned beanie into pieces when his mother finally declared that they had everything after she paid for his sixth pair of shoes.

"Thank god," he muttered and followed her to their car.

As soon as they arrived back at the manor, Draco disappeared back into his room and fell straight into his bed, not even bothering to change into his new pyjamas.

Despite his exhaustion, he didn't manage to fall asleep immediately. Draco turned from one side to another, the feeling he had had the whole day intensifying until it suddenly disappeared.

Draco pulled a pillow over his head with a groan and closed his eyes.

He shot up from his bed in the middle of the night, covered in sweat. Draco looked around, trying to orientate himself. When he didn't see any immediate threat, he fell back into bed, but the feeling of dread didn't leave him.

He didn't know what woke him up - if it had been a dream he didn't remember it.

Draco closed his eyes again, not really expecting to fall asleep again.

He mulled over everything that had happened the past two days. He got up and back into the bed several times until sleep claimed him again around five in the morning.

Kapitel 4:

Severus was already there when Draco stepped into the dining room, tapping his foot impatiently.

"We were waiting for you," he informed him tartly and Draco gulped, the man's tone making goosebumps appear all over his body.

He nodded swiftly and Lucius cocked his head, indicating to Severus that he should finally speak.

"There's no mistake that he really is your son, Draco," he said and Narcissa, who had been clutching the table-cloth in the most unladylike fashion jumped up, almost pulling the breakfast arrangement to the ground as she hurried to pull Draco into an embrace.

"That's not all," Severus said and Narcissa stopped a few steps short of him.

"What else?" She glared at Snape over her shoulder, clearly not liking the way he was presenting the information.

Draco held his breath as a heavy weight settled in his stomach in fear of what was to come. He had no idea what the tests could have uncovered, but judging by Severus' expression it was nothing good.

"The results are like nothing I have ever seen," Severus said, his dark eyes piercing Draco, who forced himself to hold his gaze despite wishing for nothing more than to run away and hide in his overly green room with the too soft bed.

"What do you mean?" Lucius asked. His voice was strained - Draco could see the tension in his shoulders, a scowl not unlike his own on his face.

"Too many chromosomes, weird sequences and more. I'm going to spare you the details. Let's just say that's not what human DNA looks like."

Draco shifted uneasily not knowing where he should put his hands, aware that he got the undivided attention of everyone in the room as they studied him, probably looking for something that wasn't entirely human about him.

"You must have gotten something wrong," Narcissa said finally into the silence and Draco bit the inside of his cheek.

He didn't know what to do, the feeling of helplessness overwhelming him.

"I don't know how this is possible. But I can assure you there were no mistakes made. I rerun the test three times," Severus explained, sticking out his chin in defiance.

Lucius started to yell at him, telling him that there had to be a mistake because Draco was his son and clearly human, but stopped when a single white feather glided on the marble floor in front of him.

As three pairs of eyes turned back to look at him, Draco realized that he must have spread his wings as some kind of comfort mechanism and rose his arms in weak defence. "I can explain."

He hurried through the explanation, his eyes firmly on the floor, not daring to look up and to face the adults. He feared that he would start crying again if he looked at Narcissa and maybe even Lucius.

The explanation was rather short-lived as Draco himself didn't know that much about what was really going on, and yet someone clinked with glassware in the mid of it. Draco ignored it and only when he finished talking did he dare to look up.

Narcissa was staring at him in horror, her hand clasped over her mouth while Severus' face had darkened considerably. Lucius looked positively murderous, his eyes glinting

dangerously and his knuckles white around his glass with what Draco suspected was some strong alcohol.

"So you died and became Miss Granger's guardian angel?" Lucius asked, as if saying it out loud would make it more believable, and Draco reassured him that it was true.

He asked several other questions, all going into the same direction and Draco answered them patiently. He was doing his best to make sense of the story that seemed totally unbelievable even to him. The wings were the main reason he himself believed it over the version Granger had spun for Blaise to cover it up.

Lucius emptied his fourth glass, of what Draco learned to be whiskey when he saw the bottle, in roughly fifteen minutes after Draco answered another question. But when he reached for the bottle to refill it, Narcissa smacked his hand away.

He shot her a dirty look but turned back to Draco.

"I am going to kill the bastard who did this," Lucius announced.

"Instead of going in circles we should focus on how to proceed," Severus said at that, obviously deciding that the situation needed some rationality. Lucius was overly emotional and drunk, not a common occurrence Draco guessed when he saw the looks Severus exchanged with Narcissa.

"You have to destroy those documents and make fake ones," Narcissa, who had been silent during the whole questioning said and Severus nodded. "And we have to hide Draco - I am not going to risk whoever killed him the first time doing it again."

"Wouldn't it be smarter to keep him here and strengthen the security?" Lucius crossed his arms. "We could hire bodyguards."

"He's an easy target if people know where he is!" Narcissa protested.

Draco tried to catch Severus' eyes, trying to get him to do something, as he feared his parents would get into a lengthy discussion about what to do, ignoring his presence. Unfortunately Severus avoided all eye contact, seemingly studying a nearby vase and ignoring Lucius and Narcissa completely. Draco wondered what exactly the man's relationship with his parents was but decided to not dwell on it. He could always find out later.

"I am present," Draco said when he couldn't take the arguing anymore and his parents turned to him.

Draco was sure that a small smile appeared on Severus' face before disappearing as fast as it had come.

"Of course!" Narcissa gave him what was probably supposed to be a smile but was more of a grimace. "We are just thinking about what is best for you! Of course we wouldn't decide without you but we need to discuss the options!"

Draco listened with a sour expression, not believing a word of it. While he understood that it was a huge change for them to have an adult son instead of a teenager, especially as he had been missing, it didn't mean that this was okay. Especially since he firmly believed that one should start to involve their children in decision making when they were still teenagers - Granger's parents always did that and they had a good relationship.

Draco shook his head slightly when he realized who he was thinking about, cursing himself. He was finally rid of her and had more pressing matters to think about and yet his thoughts wandered back to her.

"I don't want to be caged like an animal," he said, interrupting Narcissa's endless monologue. "I don't care if I stay here or go somewhere else, but I want to go out. I missed so much and I want to live now that I got a second chance. I don't know how much time I have and I want to make use of every second of it."

Narcissa's mouth fell shut and Draco looked at Lucius, hoping that he would say something. To his surprise, it was Severus who spoke up.

"Maybe we should ask Mister Zabini and Miss Parkinson if you could stay with them while we sort out the legal issues. That way you get a glimpse of a normal life before the media will be all over you when it comes out that you came back from the dead. Of course they can't know it happened literally."

"In the meantime we can prepare the Manor without the workers getting wind of what is going on," Lucius nodded along in approval. "After the big reveal you'll have to stay here as the Media and surely some fans will try to corner you of course. Crowds are dangerous, especially as we know that there is a maniac out there who won't hesitate to kill."

Draco didn't know what to say at the expectant look he got from Lucius, opting to simply nod. If he was honest with himself he didn't really want to go to Blaise and Pansy but the alternative of staying with his parents was even less thrilling. Either way, he had to expect a few very awkward and uncomfortable weeks and maybe months and wasn't looking forward to them.

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It took them two days in which Draco grew increasingly antsy to get everything sorted out, including getting Pansy and Blaise to agree and finally, everything was ready for him to move.

Blaise had agreed to go get him, Pansy's doing Draco guessed, and they drove to London in silence. Only when they arrived in the city did Blaise speak.

"The main reason why I agreed to this is because I hope for entertainment. We are not friends. Don't expect me to treat you like one."

Draco didn't know why but he started to laugh. While Blaise clearly didn't like him, he liked Blaise and wondered why they hadn't been friends back in school. For lack of better things to say, he asked exactly that.

"You got on my nerves," Blaise replied flatly, not even looking at Draco and parked the car. "Now get out."

Draco was sure that there was more to the story but obliged, deciding to ask Pansy instead, hoping that she would be more forthcoming with information.

Of course he didn't get to ask immediately after they arrived as she started fussing over him, asking too many questions and telling him gossip about people he didn't know as she helped him unpack his new things in the guest room.

"I am sorry, but I don't know who Goyle is," Draco said as he put the last jacket into the closet. Pansy shrieked, clapping her hands over her mouth, the scarf she had been holding falling to the floor.

"I am so sorry! I didn't think about that! I must have bored you to death!" she said as she leaned down to pick it up.

"It's fine," Draco sat down on the edge of the bed. "It's better than awkward silence." Pansy smiled sadly and sat down next to him, putting her hand on his. "It will get better."

Draco shook his head, pulling his lower lip between his teeth, and concentrated on a spot on the carpet that looked as if someone had put out a cigarette on it. His eyes burned.

His own over-emotionality annoyed Draco to no extent, making him feel weak and idiotic, but he suspected that it was an effect of kind of coming back to life. It seemed hormones had returned together with his heart-beat, hunger, tiredness and, to his annoyance, hair-growth. The realization that he had to shave if he didn't want to get a

beard had let him contemplate if he shouldn't try to leave the world of the living again.

"I don't know what to say to that," Pansy said, swinging her feet in the air. "I can't understand what you are going through and probably never will. And let's be honest - I've always been really bad with feelings. You used to tease me about it all the time."

"Now that I know, I can start doing it again," Draco nudged her with his shoulder. He hated that everyone was sad because of him, one of the main reasons why he chose Pansy and Blaise over his parents, and hoped he would learn to change that. He knew he wasn't a good person but they were the people he had cared about and that had to mean something.

Pansy snorted and Draco counted it as success.

"I am sure your charming personality will return soon and I will ask myself why I missed it so much," she said, nudging him too. "Even though I fear it will be arsehole overload with you and Blaise sharing such small space."

Draco grinned and let himself fall on his back. "I am really looking forward to it."

"I bet you are," Pansy said. "You always sought out people who challenged you. It was Potter this and Potter that and how did Granger do that and really Zabini?"

Draco lifted his head so he could see her properly. "Who's Potter?" he asked. If he had talked about that person so much, they must have been important to him.

"The person I will keep you away from at all costs, just to spare my poor ears," Pansy said and stood up, but there was a smile on her face. "But I should be going now. I've promised Daphne to help her with choosing a dress for her cousin's wedding. Blaise will be home if you need anything."

Draco nodded and watched her leave silently. On one hand, he was glad that he finally had some time for himself because dealing with all those people was emotionally exhausting, but on the other hand he didn't know what to do with himself.

He stared at the ceiling for several minutes but couldn't take it for too long and sat up, deciding to go and annoy Blaise. That they hadn't been friends didn't mean they couldn't be in the future - and even if Blaise really didn't want that, annoying him was still better than doing nothing.

Draco walked out of the guest room and to the living room where Blaise was watching Tv. "What's up?" he asked, sitting down next to him.

"I'm watching a film," Blaise replied without looking at him. "People are supposed to be silent during it if you don't remember."

Draco frowned. While Blaise hadn't been exactly nice to him before, he hadn't been hostile either. "What's your problem?" he asked, turning to him so he could watch him properly. Unfortunately, Blaise was just as unreadable as he had been when Draco had first met him.

"None of your fucking business. I would greatly appreciate it if you left me alone," Blaise glanced at him out of the corner of his eye, "I am not going to pour out my poor little heart out to you or something equally stupid, if that's what you are hoping for." Draco stood up. "I just wanted to talk to you and get to know you. But I see I'm overstepping my welcome. If you didn't want me around, you shouldn't have agreed." With that, he went to get his shoes, beanie and wallet and left, making a point of slamming the door after himself.

He pulled the beanie over his hair as he jogged down the stairs - avoiding the elevator like pest - and contemplated where to go. While he had wanted to make a point in walking out on Blaise, he knew that it hadn't been his smartest move as Pansy hadn't had time to show him around yet.

He stepped out onto the street and started to walk down the street. He turned into random streets when he felt like it, studying the various window displays and people he passed with more or less interest. He didn't know where he was going and didn't particularly care, just hoping that he would find a way to kill some time. He didn't know when Pansy was coming home, but he expected it to be much later and he didn't want to go back to be with Blaise alone when the other didn't want to talk to him.

Draco didn't understand why but he was feeling restless again, wanting to do something, wanting to speak to somebody, wanting to live. It had been something he had experienced several times since he had come back and it always drove him crazy. It was like something else, something more was hiding in him and wanted to burst out of his chest like that weird Alien in the movie he had seen.

In his musings if the film was really called Alien or something else - he had marathoned a few of them over the last few days - Draco didn't see her at first.

Only when he heard her shout, did Draco realize that he had run into Granger yet again.

He jogged towards her and the two young, burly men who were standing in front of her, laughing. "What's going on?" he asked, pulling himself up to his full height.

"What the-" Hermione turned to him, her brows furrowed and eyes wide but Draco hold up his hand to silence her.

"What is going on?" he asked the two strangers again, glaring at them.

"What do you care?" one of them asked, looking Draco up and down with disdain.

"She's a crazy bitch and everybody knows it. Spew my arse - never heard of anything as stupid as that."

"You've never had to listen to yourself then," Draco said but stopped when Hermione put a hand on his arm.

"Let it be," she said and Draco's eyebrows shot up almost to his hairline.

"Excuse me, Granger?" he snapped at her, barely believing his ears. Where was the girl that had fought him all this time? Where was the woman he had watched all those years?

"Just shut up, okay?" she said, glancing anxiously at the retreating backs of the two men who had bothered her.

"But why?" Draco looked at her in confusion. Something was clearly not right.

"Those were your former friends! Gregory Goyle and Vincent Crabbe! As I haven't seen anything about you on the news, I assume you try to keep a low profile for now and don't want to be recognized. You are lucky they are as stupid as they come and are without their new leader today."

Kapitel 5:

"You ran out on Zabini?" Hermione shook her head in disbelief, putting down her cup of tea. "You need to go back! Only god knows if there already is a search party looking for you. I wouldn't be surprised.":

Draco grimaced. "I doubt it. Blaise can't stand me, so nobody probably knows I left. Besides, I am not a small child who needs constant babysitting."

Hermione sighed and pulled out her phone, typing in something quickly. "He cares more than he lets on."

"What are you doing?" Draco motioned to her phone. He wasn't feeling very happy about Hermione liking Blaise so much - she did like him, right? And he didn't know why. More importantly he was really not liking the way she treated him like a child.

"I am making sure there is no search party for you out there," she said without looking up.

Draco rolled his eyes, but when she didn't continue he realized she wasn't joking. Were his parents and friends that bad? Considering that he had disappeared before for years it was more like they were that worried.

"Anyway, what were you doing here?" he asked, wanting to change the topic. He was feeling calm and he wanted to savor it, even if it meant smalltalk with Granger.

"Nothing special," she shrugged.

"Nothing special! I don't believe you!" Draco crossed his arms, trying to stare her down so she would elaborate.

Hermione picked up her cup and took a long gulp. "If you know me as good as you say you do, you should know that me being engaged in some sort of social project is nothing special," she said sharply, not looking at him.

"What?" Draco couldn't believe his ears. She was sassing him! "I know that you had this spew thing going on and several volunteer jobs over the years but I don't know what the hell you were doing today... I've never seen that yellow logo before. By the way, yellow really isn't your colour."

Hermione sniffed, looking him down over the brim of her cup. "I am not surprised you don't give a fuck about political education. The less the masses know, the better families like yours can fool them."

"Families like mine? Newsflash. I have no idea what that could mean," Draco leaned forward, his jaw clenched, as he tried to control his breathing. He was furious with her and he wanted her to know that but Hermione didn't seem fazed by his glare.

"You'll find out soon enough," she said instead and put her cup down. "Maybe ask your father. He will know exactly what I am talking about."

"I am sure he will," Draco muttered, trying to suppress the bitterness. He wasn't even sure why he wanted to behave, he simply did, and it was driving him nuts even more than Hermione's behavior and rudeness did.

"I have to go now," She said after a short glance on her watch. "Blaise should be here to pick you up soon. Just don't move, okay?"

Draco wanted to tell her off but somehow no word came out of his mouth and he had no choice but to watch her leave in silence. He stared at her empty seat until Blaise finally arrived, taking it.

Draco tried not to think about anything. He had had his head buzzing most of the days since he arrived on the earth and quite enjoyed the calm and silence now.

"What the hell do you think you are doing?" Blaise asked him in a calm voice as to not rise attention. Unfortunately, that was enough to destroy the calm and peace Draco had wanted to enjoy.

"You didn't want me there," Draco replied crankily, his eyes firmly on the table and definitely not on Blaise. He really didn't feel like another staring contest with him - especially not if Pansy or Daphne or anybody else, really, weren't there to interrupt them if it got really out of hand.

"You can't just leave like that," Blaise said and shifted in his seat. "Pansy would kill me if anything happened to you if. Not to mention your parents."

Draco snorted. Blaise was scared of his parents - made sense, but of Pansy? That was weird and ridiculous and somehow, he really wanted to know why. "Nothing would have happened to me. Relax."

"You could have gotten lost and would not find the way back were it not for Granger," Blaise said. "It's kinda weird that you keep running into her, though."

"I can't help it."

"Try," Blaise said in a voice that made goosebumps appear on Draco's arms. Something was clearly going on with Blaise and Granger. Just what?

"What's your problem with her? Or me running into her?" Draco asked, tilting his head to give the other an all-over.

"You are fucking nosy. That's my problem with you." Blaise was studying his nails and Draco's blood boiled at the obvious attempt to avoid his questions.

"You are a prick," he said and Blaise frowned at that.

"But I am willing to start anew with you if you stop being so hostile half the time and talk to me. I don't even know what I did to deserve that," Draco continued. He was getting sick of not knowing what was going on and Blaise's attitude made everything even worse. With Hermione he at least knew why she didn't like him and even then she was still friendlier to him than Blaise.

"You aren't going to let it go, are you?" Blaise pinched the back of his nose. "I don't remember you as somebody who cared so much about others. But then, this is about you as well."

"Fine," Draco said and stood up, hoping that he would be able to coax something out of Blaise if he tried to walk away again. He knew Blaise didn't want for him to go around unsupervised so this was his best bet.

"Sit down," Blaise said immediately and Draco bit the inside of his cheek to suppress the smile that threatened to spill over his face.

He sat down and crossed his arms, looking at Blaise expectantly.

But to Draco's annoyance, Blaise didn't say anything and stood up instead and walked over to the counter to get something.

Draco was pretty sure he was doing it just to get on his nerves the same way he had played that stupid staring game with him. The worst thing about it was that it actually got to him and made him antsy. The question was if Blaise was just guessing or if he knew Draco way better than he tried to make everyone believe.

Blaise sat down again, a cup of coffee in his hand. "Do you want a chronological or an alphabetical list of the reasons I don't like you?"

"How about from most important to least?" Draco asked and the corner of Blaise's mouth quirked upwards.

"I can do that," Blaise replied and took a sip from his coffee and grimaced immediately. "God, do they really call this coffee? What a joke," he said and put down the cup. "Anyway, the main reason why I can't stand your guts is because of what an

ungrateful little shit you are. Not just back then, but now too. You take everything for granted and don't even think twice about it." Blaise's voice was calm but his eyes flashed dangerously.

Draco gulped. He had expected a lot but that certainly wasn't it. He wasn't even entirely sure about what Blaise was talking about.

"Could... Could you please elaborate on that?" he asked and pulled his lower lip between his teeth. He knew that he probably wasn't going to like what Blaise had to say but he knew that he had to hear it to learn something about himself he wouldn't from anyone else.

Blaise crossed his legs, not bothering to apologize even though he kicked Draco in the process, and reached for his cup again. "What is there to elaborate?"

"Hm, maybe what exactly you are talking about and how are you any different," Draco said in the most biting tone. He wasn't in the mood for Blaise's games and the time when they were funny passed a long time ago. But then, he couldn't back out again. He was already showing weakness by asking those questions and if he gave in and showed any more weakness, he would definitely lose his face.

If he had any knowledge about himself or Blaise at all, Draco doubted if would have come to this but with the major disadvantage on his part, the blows to his pride had been inevitable.

Blaise snorted and leaned closer. "Fine. But listen closely as I will only tell you this one time. You were, are, a privileged kid who always had everything and didn't deserve any of it. A loving family, money, friends, girls, Pansy, and you didn't appreciate any of it. You treated Pansy, the girls and those goons you called friends like literal trash, as if they were disposable and yet they always came back to you. The money and the family? You took it for granted. Sure, your parents spoiled you rotten but the extent of your selfishness you displayed towards both them and everybody else? Honestly, I can't blame anybody they killed you. Honestly, I will always be grateful to Granger for one thing: taking absolute academic success from you through her hard work."

Blaise talked himself into a quiet rage, the whole speech coming out in rushed whispers that were delivered with such force that he could have been shouting on the top of his lungs and it would not have shown his rage as clearly. "And now you do exactly the same thing. Family, friends, money, Granger's help? Even coming back? You act as if it was the most natural thing for everyone to be there for you whenever you need it."

Draco didn't know what to say to that. Had he really been like that? Was he still like that? "How are you any different?" he asked in an attempt to get some time to process what he had just heard.

"Well, I for one, never had a real family like you have," Blaise said with absolute detachment and Draco shivered involuntarily.

"My mother is a special kind of person and let's just say that she is on husband number eight right now. Living with so many different men who all liked children to very different degrees has taught me a lot."

"Please tell me you didn't suggest what I think you did," Draco whispered with utmost horror and Blaise leaned back.

"I didn't suggest anything," he said flatly, his expression not giving away a thing.

Draco grit his teeth. Blaise was right that he would never understand what he had been through, his own father not seeming the type to lie his hand on him or his mother and if he had, he didn't understand it.

"I hope they got what they deserved," he said instead of all that with the most neutral

tone.

"The previous seven are all dead."

Draco nodded. One look at Blaise told him that not all of them, if any, had died from natural causes and he considered it better to not dwell on it. He doubted Blaise would tell him more and he didn't want to pry too much, deciding to keep his guard up around him at all times instead. After all, he had both the motive and probably the means too.

"When will Pansy get back?" Draco looked at the clock on the wall. It was half past five and it was pouring outside. He hadn't been able to hear the rain over the voices in the cafe, had been too distracted by Blaise too, so he didn't know when the rain had started.

"Hard to tell with Daphne," Blaise said, adjusting to Draco's sudden change of topic smoothly. "I doubt they will go somewhere in the rain though so I suggest we wait it out too."

While Draco really didn't like the idea of spending even more time in the cafe, especially as he didn't know what to talk about now, he didn't have much of a choice. The young man around their age who had just come in was dripping and Draco knew he hated the feeling of wet clothes on himself.

He didn't have time to dwell on that thought and how he knew it as the dripping man approached their table after scanning the room for a short moment.

"I didn't expect to meet you here, Blaise," he said, not paying any attention to Draco.

"This is definitely not the kind of place you usually frequent."

"It seems we both decided to deviate from our routine today," Blaise answered with a pointed look at the stranger's wet clothes.

The other laughed. "Do you mind if I join you? The storm is getting worse and I want to warm up a bit while I wait for my friend."

"I didn't know you had any friends," Blaise replied while giving Draco a long look before turning back to the stranger. "But of course we don't mind, suit yourself."

The stranger pulled out a chair, luckily plastic or he would have ruined it, not that he looked like he cared. "My name's Theodore Nott by the way," he said as he sat down and looked at Draco for the first time. He looked and looked, his brows furrowed in confusion, studying Draco as if he was trying to piece together a puzzle or figure out a complicated riddle. He was probably trying to figure out where he had seen Draco before.

Draco considered removing his beanie to show Theodore his hair to make himself more distinct when Blaise spoke up.

"Your first instinct was correct. Do you need a moment or can we pretend everything is as always and you tell us who are you meeting?"

Theodore's head snapped towards Blaise. "Are you fucking kidding me?" he hissed, gesturing wildly towards Draco. "What kind of joke is this?"

Draco pinched the back of his nose. Every reaction he had gotten since his reappearance was getting worse and worse, even though he really couldn't blame Theodore for not believing what he was seeing.

"Considering I have no idea who you are and couldn't therefore have expected you to join us today, I couldn't have planned this," Draco said, "And as it is my fault that we are here, neither could have Blaise."

Theo looked between Blaise and Draco. "Is this true? How is it even possible?"

"It is. Nobody knows what happened. Granger found him without any memories," Blaise said. "And I am slowly getting sick of having to say that. How the hell do you

deal with it?" he glanced at Draco, who shrugged.

"I-I need to process this," Theo stood up, his whole body shaking slightly.

Draco wasn't sure if it was from the cold or the shock.

"I'll bring him to your party," Blaise replied and Theo nodded, his eyes still darting between the two others, before he turned around and practically ran out of the cafe.

"What now?" Draco asked, watching after him. Luckily, the rain creased.

"Now we go home. I am in no mood to run into more people I know," Blaise replied and stood up.