

love me....

Von abgemeldet

Kapitel 42: 42.

42.

"Sit down, Draco, darling," said a voice all too familiar to Draco; one that sent chills down his spine.

Although Johnson – his sadistic and abusive ex-boyfriend – was right behind him, Draco held himself together pretty well given the circumstances. Three against one was anything but fair. But his years of experience as an Auror had taught him how to look at things objectively, and then find a way out from there. He allowed his wand to be taken away from him and didn't react when he was pushed to the couch. He stared into his ex-boyfriend's eyes with loathing.

"Haven't I told you to sit down?" asked Johnson coldly.

"I didn't realise it was an order," answered Draco with the same icy tone.

Johnson got near him with a smirk, and he stroked Draco's face with the tip of his wand. Draco winced involuntarily. He wondered what had made him fall for Johnson so many years ago. He was handsome with his long black hair and blue eyes. But on the inside he was rotten and ugly.

"Everything I say is an order," said his ex-boyfriend softly. "Should I remind you what it was like when you disobeyed me? Should I punish you the way I used to?"

Draco clenched his fists and didn't flinch this time when he said with a snarl, "Why don't you try it? I'm not the same pathetic boy from before!"

"Oh, you bite now!" Johnson felt a thrilled of desire running through his body. He rather liked when his prey tried to resist him. "How interesting! Your whining could barely make me hard in the past. But the look of fear mixed with hatred that I spotted in your beautiful blue eyes back then used to turn me on right away. I'd like to see that look again. Give me a motive, Draco. That's all I need to rape your guts out."

Draco gulped, but he didn't look away. "Like I said, you can try. But I'll fucking kill you this time!"

Johnson gave him his maniac laughter, the one that used to be the presage of the

terrible things to come. Draco was filled with bad memories of his days living with Johnson. Days where he was a mere slave of that bastard's sick sexual fantasies and abusive behaviour. When he had finally gathered the courage to flee from Johnson's house, he had hoped to never see that man again. He should have known that his father would hire Johnson to do his dirty work again. Clearly, Lucius still didn't have the nerve to finish his son off with his own bare hands.

"Why did he send you?" Draco asked. "I haven't sent him my message yet."

"Whom are you talking about?"

"My father. Why did he send you here so soon? He doesn't even know what I have decided yet."

"I haven't spoken to your father in a long time, Draco," Johnson said, taking Draco by surprise. "I'm not here because of him."

"Then who? Who hired you?" Draco asked.

"Your sweet Aunt Bellatrix," answered Johnson with a smirk.

Draco's blood ran cold. That news was like a blow to his stomach. It wasn't his father, but his aunt Bellatrix who wanted him dead. So Bellatrix was alive. Rumours were that she had died together with her husband in a fight against three Aurors four years ago, but her body had never been found. Draco had always had trouble believing that fact, and he and a few colleges had tried to track her down for a long time without any success, finally giving up last year. If only he knew... He should have tried harder to locate her.

"It seems that she took possession of a very interesting photograph of yours while she was throwing away a few items that belonged to her dead husband. She doesn't know how he got it, or why he never used it... But now that she knows, she's very displeased with you, who used to be her favourite nephew. She had that picture published as a warning, Draco. A warning that someone knew what a bloody traitor you were. Saving Harry Potter wasn't the smartest of your moves."

"This is ridiculous!" Draco exclaimed. "She knew I was a traitor long before that. Why hasn't she come after me sooner? Why just now?"

"You're wrong. Your parents were able to successfully protect your secret until recently. Nobody knew that you had betrayed the Dark Lord. They all thought you had chickened out. Bellatrix hated you for it, but not enough to hunt you down and kill you. Besides, she was on the run herself. As for the others... Why would they risk everything coming after you? After all, you are an Auror. They know better. But if they'd known that you'd worked for the Order, then the story would have been very different."

Draco trembled at the news. He was utterly shocked to know that his parents had protected him instead of selling him out. Had he judged Lucius and Narcissa wrong?

He shook his head. No, he hadn't. Lucius had paid Johnson to destroy him once. His parents weren't nice people. But still... Draco was feeling terribly lost and confused.

"Where is Bellatrix? She isn't the type of woman who sends minions to do her job," Draco pointed out.

"I'm not here to kill you, just take you to her. Of course, she did give me full liberty to screw you as many times as I want," Johnson smiled evilly. "But the pleasure of killing you will be totally hers."

Draco shivered slightly as Johnson got closer. He spat on his ex-boyfriend's face and received a violent punch in return. He felt his left cheek swell. Johnson pinned Draco's hands on the couch and pushed himself hard against him. Draco struggled like mad to break free, but the more he tried, the more he seemed to set Johnson on fire. His shirt was torn to pieces, and the cold tip of Johnson's wand touched his chin.

"Keep fighting me, Draco. It's making me hard and ready to fuck you," Johnson whispered in Draco's ear, licking it afterwards. Draco felt like throwing up. He moaned with disgust, which only made Johnson laugh harder and thrust against him faster.

"You'll do me in front of them?" Draco asked, looking at Johnson's thugs.

"Of course! It will be like old times. You remember, don't you? The orgies I used to set just for my sweet blonde princess." Johnson smiled horribly, and Draco felt sick at the reminder. "When I'm finally through with you, I'll let them have some fun, too," said Johnson with a smirk.

Draco breathed hard. He needed to act fast, or else he was doomed. Unfortunately, his old memories wouldn't let him think straight. He kept visualising all the abuse he had suffered while living with Johnson, the constant beating and raping, and then how he had found himself forced to sleep with men he had never met before for money. All the humiliation and self-hatred were back again, paralysing him with fear.

He screamed as Johnson made a deep cut in his belly. Strangely, the pain was what made him focus again. He bit his lower lip hard and shut his eyes tightly. Even though he was very disturbed, he would try doing wandless magic. It was the only way to escape from that hell.

"EXPELLIARMUS PER VIM!" Draco shouted.

Johnson was thrown in the direction of his thugs, and they all fell to the floor. Their wands didn't fly toward Draco as he had previously intended to, but at least they flew away from their owners. That gave him time to jump behind his couch and summon his spare wand. He got down with his hands behind his head when a flash of light hit his couch and opened a big hole in it.

"Draco, Draco, sweet, beautiful, Draco," said the voice of Johnson with a fake softness. "You really haven't learned anything. When I put my hands on you, I'll make you wish you were dead!"

Panting, Draco raised up his head quickly to cast a spell on them. Another flash of light blew up one of his bookshelves, and Draco prevented it from falling on top of him with a freezing charm. But he wasn't fast enough, and a few books fell on him. One of them hit his head hard and cut one of his eyebrows. The blood began to run copiously down his cheek. He cursed aloud. He shot another spell at them blindly, and then another one until both of Johnson's thugs fell to the floor unconscious.

"It's just you and me now, Draco!" shouted Johnson, not so happy at the moment. "Come out, come out! Let me rip you apart!"

Draco sneered. "I thought only Aunt Bella would have that pleasure!"

"Screw that woman! This is personal! I have more rights on you than her! You were my property after all! Besides, I won't finish you off. I'll just break you a little."

"STUPEFY!" Draco sent a stunning spell on his ex-boyfriend's direction. Johnson was quick to deflect it and hide. They kept throwing curses and spells at each other until one of the flashes of light was so strong that it made everything around them blow up. Draco didn't know how he found himself alive as he watched the flames engulfing his furniture. He could barely breathe. He coughed as the smoke made its way into his lungs, and he dragged himself towards the front door. Once there, he tried as hard as he could to pick himself up from the floor and run to the emergency stairs.

When he pushed the front door of the building open, he took a deep breath to clear his head. Then he took one step forward and stumbled on the few steps ahead. Strangely, there were no Muggles around. He was the only one on an empty street. He heard steps behind him, and he quickly stood up and gripped his wand in his hand firmly. Johnson appeared and shouted, "Give it up, Draco! You're finished anyway!"

"Never! I'll never give up!" snarled Draco. "You can go to hell, Johnson!"

"Then we're going together, my dear," hissed Johnson. "AVADA KEDRAV—"

"STUPEFY!" shouted someone, hitting Johnson hard. The spell was so strong that it lifted Johnson from the ground and made him hit the wall behind him. When he fell, he was unconscious.

Draco looked around and saw Hermione with five other Aurors just a few feet away from him. He smiled at her, and then collapsed. She ran towards him and prevented him from falling with difficulty.

"Stupid! I told you to be careful!" she shouted with tears in her eyes. "An ambulance from St. Mungo's will arrive any second."

He just smiled. "I knew you'd come for me, partner. That's why I wasn't worried."

"Idiot!" she hugged him tightly. "Don't you ever do that again!"

"Trust me, I won't," he panted. "Hermione, my father isn't the one to blame for this."

Her eyes widen. "Then who?"

"Bellatrix. She's alive," he managed to say between gasps.

"Oh, my God!" was all Draco registered before passing out.

--

"You look great all wrapped up in bandages, Draco," said Hermione, coming through the door of Draco's room in St. Mungo's.

Draco, who was resting on the hospital's bed, made a face. He knew very well he didn't look good. A few bruises had already disappeared thanks to the wonderful and quick process of healing magic, but some wounds would take a few more hours to heal completely. At least none of them would leave a mark.

He considered himself lucky for coming out of that mess with all of his bones intact. The best thing of all was that no Muggles had been hurt in the process. Hermione said that she and the Aurors had cast a spell as soon as they had arrived on Draco's street to avoid as much damage as possible. But the Muggles from his building had heard the explosion. That would bring a lot of headache for the Obliviators.

He looked at her ready to make a joke à la Draco Malfoy, but he noticed that something was wrong. Hermione couldn't keep still; her face was all red and her eyes were fuming.

"I have some bad news for you," Hermione said, making him sigh. Of course there was bad news.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Well, apart from the fact that the Obliviator Quarter is pissed off for having to work until dawn, and that the rest of the staff is trying really hard to convince the Muggle news to blame it all on your heater... There's also the fact that Johnson didn't say a word about Bellatrix. He said you two have a history together, and that you ran away from his house taking a lot of his money with you. He was just in your apartment to collect said money. While he was there you reacted badly, hence he had to defend himself and create all that mess," she narrated with a scowl. "Given the fact that Jonah likes you so much," she continued with a sneer, "he seems to believe in your ex-boyfriend's tale."

Draco sneered. "Let me guess. Jonah now has the excuse he was looking for to expel me from the Force."

"He told us to investigate the case, which is totally understandable. But he asked us to open a file against you, not Johnson Smear." She looked absolutely furious. "I can't believe they'll just let Smear go, Draco. I tried to talk to Boss, but he said Jonah

wouldn't listen to him and--"

"It's perfect. Let Smear go," interrupted Draco with a throaty voice.

Hermione stared at him as if he had gone insane. "What? Why? Are you nuts? Has anyone taken a look at your head yet, because I think you have a screw loose!"

"Let him go. He'll wait around a few days before going to Bellatrix. Send someone after him. The only way to get to Bellatrix is through Smear," Draco said calmly. Hermione seemed to ponder about it. "He isn't that smart, you know? He'll lead us right to where she is, but we'll have to be a little patient. I'm not worried about Smear. I'm worried about Bellatrix. She's a crazy bitch. Merlin knows what she'll do next."

"It's kind of a risky plan. Smear is dangerous. He might come after you again," she pointed out.

"Probably. But like I said, I'm not worried. I was before, but not now. Now I know I can keep my cool around him."

She scowled at him. "How can you say that? You almost died!"

He made a face and almost pulled a muscle. His face still hurt. "Look, Hermione, I'm thinking of asking my mother about Bellatrix, but I doubt that she'll tell me anything unless I sign a paper giving her my soul in return. So the best plan we've got so far is to let Smear free and pray that he'll lead us to her."

"But... You told me your parents didn't have anything to do with this. So maybe... Maybe they'll help you."

"No. Don't raise your hopes too high. I do admit, though, that I was surprised at what Smear said about them. He said they protected me while Voldemort was still alive." Draco's eyes flickered. "I've never really thought about this. I've never thought the Death Eaters saw me as coward. A traitor in a way. But they didn't know I'd helped the Order."

"Then perhaps you should raise your hopes, Draco," she said softly. "They are your parents after all."

Draco shook his head. "Lucius and Narcissa hate me, Hermione. I don't see how this can change unless I go back to be their heir and marry a pureblood woman. Besides, Smear might be lying about the whole thing. Maybe Bellatrix has nothing to do with this. Maybe my father is to blame after all."

"Maybe." She sighed tiredly. "Well... I'll keep someone following Smear 24/7. But I still can't believe Jonah is letting a personal grudge against you interfere with his judgement. He knows Smear is no good. I'm just so... frustrated and... pissed off!"

"I think Jonah loves me, that's why he's such a bastard to me," Draco mocked. "Since he can't admit that he wants me, he'd rather make my life a living hell. It's pretty much

what I used to do with Harry."

She smiled. "That might be true. I heard rumours, you know?"

He raised an eyebrow. "Really? Tell me everything!"

She chuckled. "I'm glad to know you're ok enough to make jokes, Draco."

"I have to be. I still need to go after my dear aunt if she really is guilty. I won't stop until she's arrested. I can't let her... hurt Harry."

Hermione crossed her arms. "Harry is totally capable of dealing with Bellatrix. In fact, I'll bet he'd love to finish her off for what she did with Sirius. And actually... Sirius would have the time of his life if he knew she's alive."

"But we won't tell them," Draco stated with an intense gaze. "This is my fight, Hermione. Don't forget that."

"It's you I'm worried about, not Harry! Draco... there's something else..." She looked down, and her hands trembled a little. Draco didn't like that at all.

"You mean there's more?" He tensed all over.

She nodded slowly. "It's something that Smear said about you... That was what put Jonah in alert..."

Now Draco was absolutely petrified. "What did he say?"

"That you used to sell yourself for money," she said in a feeble voice. "And that was how he met you..."

Draco's fingers gripped the sheet under him. He closed his eyes, and his mouth curled up in a bitter smile. "Isn't he adorable? And such a big fat liar!"

"Smear said he has hard evidence against you, and if this is true... You might be expelled from the Force for good," she finished. "But I couldn't believe him, of course! You'd never..."

That particular piece of news gave rise to varying emotions such as shame, despair, fury and total humiliation. He felt tears threat to fall, and he gulped.

"Hermione... The truth is that he made me sell myself for money," he said with difficulty, almost choking with tears. She gasped as he went on, "I was desperate when I met him. I had nowhere to go. No one would accept me because of my past. So I shamelessly clung to him believing he could save me, and for a while I actually thought he was the most perfect man on earth. But after a month he changed completely. He began to be violent and moody. And then he started to bring his friends home. I was stupid and weak. I was terrified of him. So he took advantage of that and... he used me for his own sick purposes." Draco's tears ran freely now. "I

didn't want to. I just went along with it because I didn't know what to do."

Hermione, who was also crying, ran towards him and enlaced his trembling body carefully.

"I'm so sorry, Draco..." she whispered, stroking his back gently. "We had no idea..."

"I endured it all, but it came to a point where everything was unbearable. That was when I finally ran away and asked for the Weasleys' help. I had to swallow my pride. It was very difficult. But I just couldn't take all that abuse anymore. You have to understand that I never did those things willingly. I didn't sleep with all those men because I wanted to. He made me. I was too scared to fight back."

"I understand. I'm not judging you," she said softly.

"And that's why I told you that I can handle him now. I'm not afraid of him anymore. If he crosses my way again, I'll kill him." Draco's eyes burned with hate.

She kissed his forehead, and then looked straight into his eyes. "You won't turn yourself into a killer just because of him. I won't let you. And I'll make sure he pays for his crimes," she said firmly. "We'll..." The ring of her mobile phone interrupted her. She checked the ID caller, wiped her tears away, cleared her throat, and then answered it. "Yes, honey. Is there something wrong? Yes, other than me working at such late hours..." She rolled her eyes, and Draco smiled behind his tears. "Don't pressure me, Ron... You know how it is... Yes... Yes... WHAT? Shit! No. Ok. Of course not! Yes. I know! Bye!" She hung up rather abruptly.

"What's wrong?" Draco asked.

She shot him a desperate look. "Ok. Don't panic. This is actually good! I'm sure you'll see it that way." She smiled nervously. "Just wipe away your tears, take a deep breath and—" Her mobile rang again. She answered it quickly, almost dropping it on the floor. "Hello? Harry!" she exclaimed, making Draco's heart stop.

He could barely hear what she was saying. All he registered was Harry's name, and from then on his mind went blank. When Hermione shoved the little phone on his face, Draco almost panicked. Why was Harry calling now? Why have he chosen the worst moment to call? Draco was broken and exhausted. It was true that the first person to cross his mind when Johnson pointed his wand at him and almost killed him was Harry. But at the same time, he didn't want to talk to his lover. He was angry with him for not bothering to get in touch with him for so long. And he was also angry with himself for wanting to grab the phone desperately, just to hear Harry's voice again and ask him to come back because he needed him. He didn't need Harry. He could take care of himself alone. He had done that forever.

But then he wondered if Harry was calling to tell him that something bad had happened to him, so he snatched the phone from Hermione and answered it quickly, "Hi! Are you ok? Has something happened?"

There was what it seemed like an endless period of silence at the other side of the receiver. Then Harry's voice said hesitantly, "Erm... No. There's nothing wrong here. Actually... I was going to ask you the same thing. I've called home, but no one answered..."

"I went back to my apartment." Or what's left of it, he thought bitterly.

"Oh." Another pause. "I've tried your apartment, too. And your cell phone." Harry fidgeted the curly line of the phone between his fingers. Now that he had finally reached Draco, he was feeling embarrassed. He feared he had overreacted about the nightmare. He sighed deeply, thinking that he was probably making a fool of himself. When he called Ron after a series of frustrating calls to his house, Draco's flat and cell phone, he was positive that something terrible had happened to Draco.

But then Ron had calmed down his heart a little by telling that, even though Hermione and Draco had been on a mission, they were ok. They had just gone to St. Mungo's because a few people had gotten hurt, but nothing was serious. There were no additional details. Ron seemed angry with Hermione for spending so much time working instead of spending more time with him.

When Harry had turned off the connection with Ron, he still pondered if he should call Hermione or not. In the end, his anxiety had won over his fear of acting pathetic. He just needed to make sure that everything was ok.

"Draco..." he called softly.

Draco almost melted. He had missed Harry's hoarse voice so much. "What?"

"Are you all right? Why haven't you answered your cell phone?" Harry asked. More than the fear of behaving stupidly, he was deeply worried about Draco. Ron had eased his preoccupation a little, but not enough to relieve his heart.

"The battery's dead," Draco lied, resting his head on the fluffy pillow and sighing.

"Oh. What happened? Ron told me that you and Hermione were on a mission that went bad, but that you two are ok."

Draco gulped. "Yeah, it's true."

"What kind of mission was it?"

"Didn't Ron say anything?" Draco asked back carefully.

"He doesn't know. He seems pissed off with Hermione for not telling him anything."

"Well... It was just a silly mission," Draco said, swallowing hard. Hermione looked at him sympathetically. "You know... just a few drunken wizards making a fuss in a Muggle pub. It was a mess. The Obliviator Headquarters are still trying to fix it. Somebody threw a bottle at me and I've cut my eyebrow... But I'm ok now! As good as

new thanks to the wonderful Healer Elisabeth Pulp," he added quickly and nervously.

"Really?" Harry didn't seem to believe in him. "It was just a pub fight?"

"Yes."

"And you've only cut your eyebrow," Harry stated as if to make sure of it.

"Yes. No need to worry." Draco sighed heavily.

"What?"

"What what?" Draco asked with a frown, and then winced from the pain.

"You sighed... You seemed to be in pain."

"I'm tired. Actually, I'm exhausted," said Draco. "Why did you call, Harry? It's almost midnight here. Isn't it... what... five A.M. out there? Why now?"

"Are you mad at me?" Harry asked softly.

Draco melted once again. He couldn't stay angry with Harry for much longer. He wanted to, but now that he was finally talking to Harry, all of his anger seemed to be vanishing away. Besides, he had just been through a lot of stress. He was feeling fragile and needy.

"Of course I'm mad, Harry," he said, trying not to sound too pathetic. "You haven't even tried to contact me since you left!" His complaint should have sounded manlier, but instead it came out as a wife nagging his husband.

"I'm sorry. I... You know, I guess Tei Pei wouldn't have forbidden me to call you..."

"Tei Pei?"

"Yes, my Master Yoda. He's a Buddhist monk and a wizard. He's quite an interesting fellow! Just looking at him makes one feel so peaceful. Anyway, Sirius told me to forget about the outside world and just focus on my task here, which meant no contact with you or anyone else. So... I'm sorry if I took his words so literally. But..."

"It's ok," Draco said against his better judgement. He wanted to tell Harry to go to hell, but he just shrugged. "I understand. You're there to heal yourself."

"I am. But... I... I really miss you. More than I thought I would. More than you can even imagine," Harry said in a whisper.

Draco's heart skipped a beat. He stared at Hermione and silently asked her to leave him alone for a while. She seemed to get the clue as she saw how flushed Draco seemed to be all of a sudden. She giggled as she exited the room, and Draco rolled his eyes.

"Are we being sappy now, Potter?" Draco said with a sneer. But if Harry had been there, he would see that his sneer didn't reach his eyes.

"Don't turn this into a joke, Malfoy. You know how hard it is for me to say these kinds of things," said Harry a little annoyed.

"I know." Draco gave another sigh. "I miss you, too. More than you can imagine. How did you call me? I thought you have gone to an isolated area, far away from civilisation."

"I am. There are no phone lines here. But Tei Pei is a hell of a brilliant wizard. He owns an enchanted phone! It stays disconnected most of the time, though. He let me use it now because I told him it was an emergency."

Draco froze. "Really? Harry... Why have you suddenly decided to call me?"

"I had a dream... Actually, a horrible nightmare... about you," Harry said with difficulty.

"What did you dream about exactly?" Draco asked in a whisper. He had trouble holding the phone because his hands had begun to tremble.

Harry sighed. "I dreamt that your apartment had blown up and that you were hurt pretty bad. You were covered in blood, and there was this man casting Avada Kedrava on you. I panicked. I couldn't do anything to help you. Then I woke up and got all stressed out." Harry gave a little laugh. "I feel silly now. Sirius warned me that I was probably overreacting... But I just had to call you and assure myself that you were all right. I was really worried."

Draco's eyes filled with tears again. Harry had dreamed about what had just happened to him and had been so worried that he hadn't rested until he could finally talk to Draco. The blond was touched. It was more than that. His love was overflowing him.

"Thank you, Harry," he said after regaining his voice.

"Are you crying?" asked Harry surprised.

"No! Of course not!" exclaimed Draco, wiping his tears away and trying not to sound so girly.

"Are you really ok? Are you telling me the truth about the pub fight? Was that all that happened?" Harry insisted. There was an alarm whistling in his head non-stop. Somehow he knew Draco was hiding something from him.

"I'm ok, Harry," Draco assured him with a feeble voice.

"You know... If you want me to... I can leave this place right now," Harry said, making Draco tremble even more. "If there's something wrong... just tell me. I'll be there in

two or three days."

Draco cursed Harry in silence for tempting him like that. It was obvious that Draco wanted him back as soon as possible. His needy and selfish part wanted to tell Harry that he needed cuddling, that everything was terrible and that he needed Harry by his side more than at any other time. If he had told Harry what had really happened, he was sure that Harry would have left Tibet in a matter of seconds.

But Draco couldn't do that. Firstly, because Harry had gone to Tibet not on vacation, but to heal himself. Secondly, because Draco didn't want to play the damsel in distress. He was capable of facing things alone, or so he was trying to convince himself. He couldn't just rely on Harry all the time.

"I'm fine," he told Harry. Inside, his heart was screaming at him for being so stupidly altruistic. "What about you? Making any progress?"

"Yes, a little. Not as much as I'd like to," Harry answered rather melancholically. "But Tei Pei says I'm doing fine. He's worse than Dumbledore, you know? It's impossible to get anything from him. He's quite mysterious. But I'm enjoying my stay here. It's beautiful. I wish you were here."

"I wish I was there with you, too. Do you have any idea when are you coming back?" Draco asked hopefully.

"No..." said Harry dejectedly. "Sirius told me it might take a year to--"

"A year?" Draco almost jumped from the bed.

"Yes. But I'm trying as hard as I can to figure out what's going on with me. I hope I won't take that long. Are you going to wait for me?"

"I don't know..." Draco answered with a pout.

"Oh, really?" Harry didn't like the sound of that. "Have you broken up with Bill properly?"

Draco smiled. "No. And now that I know you won't be back for a year..."

"Haha!" Harry gripped the curly line of the phone. "Don't even joke about it."

"Oh, but it's fun! I like to irritate you. It's my revenge for you not calling me until now." Draco chuckled, and after a few seconds he heard Harry chuckling as well.

"I'm sorry about that. I'll try to invent an emergency every week so Tei Pei will allow me to use his phone."

Draco chuckled even more. "And I promise to break up with Bill once you do that."

"Seriously. Have you ended things with him?" Harry sounded anxious.

"Yes," said Draco slightly flushed, as he remembered the way he had almost let Bill ravish him. "I'm single now."

"No, you aren't! You have me now, even though I'm miles away at the moment..."

"So you're my boyfriend, Mr. Straight Guy?"

Harry laughed. "I guess I am." There was a pause, and then Harry said shyly, "Draco, I love you. I'm pretty sure of this now. Being away from you is really hard."

Draco felt his heart ballooning with happiness. "I love you, too."

Harry's words had just given him the strength he needed to keep on fighting his battle.