

She dropped the privacy ward, hurrying away just as a crowd of students spilled into the corridor. Harry set off towards Divination at a half-jog, his brain feeling full to bursting with all the information and secrets he was trying to keep straight. After his detention, if he managed to get his homework done in a reasonable time, he decided he would sit up with his password-protected notebook and try and straighten out his thoughts. With Umbridge looming over his shoulder and Voldemort biding his time, Harry needed to have a plan.

.-.-.

He had Herbology first thing after lunch — which, of course, meant Neville went down to the greenhouses as soon as he'd eaten, to spend some time talking with Professor Sprout before class started. Harry wasn't too keen on joining him, so he finished his lunch alone and then sat in a quiet corridor working on his Potions essay, knowing it was the most difficult piece of homework on his list.

When he finally started heading towards Herbology, a pale hand reached out from behind a tapestry and yanked him into a hidden alcove, and Harry almost went boneless from sheer relief. He immediately pulled Draco close, leaning back against the wall and tugging the blond into a long, slow kiss. Draco pressed him against the stone, fingers cupping Harry's jaw. When they parted, Harry took what felt like the first proper breath he'd had in *weeks*. "Hi," he greeted, smiling softly.

"I've got a bone to pick with you," Draco murmured, though there was no heat to his voice. "What do you think you're doing getting a week's worth of detention?"

"You were there," Harry pointed out, absently playing with the knot of Draco's Slytherin tie. "I couldn't help myself."

"I saw that." Draco was smirking, and Harry's chest filled with an odd sort of pride. "You were certainly entertaining, knocking her down a few pegs like that. But I do question your intelligence in making enemies so early in the year."

"She had it out for me before I even stepped in her classroom," Harry pointed out, stroking up Draco's pale neck, fingers trailing up into the soft, short hair behind his ear. "We both know why she's here. Bet she'd give me detention for *breathing* at this rate. I might as well earn it."

"Don't push it," Draco warned, even as he arched into the touch. "It's going to be difficult enough to find time with you with her around, let alone with you in detention every bloody evening. I swear, if this level of homework keeps up all year, my brain will have melted out of my ears before I even get to my exams."

"It's the worst, isn't it?" Harry agreed. "We'll find some time to sneak away this weekend, promise. Then we can compare schedules and make plans." They probably wouldn't get to see each other in private as much as they had the year before, but Harry would take any scraps of Draco's time he could manage.

"Sounds good," Draco agreed. He took Harry's hand in his — and Harry wasn't quick enough to hide his flinch. "What's the matter?"