

He answered the door so quickly, Harry wondered if Draco had mentioned something. “What are you doing out this late?” the man asked, once they were safely inside with the door shut. Harry dropped the cloak, offering an apologetic smile.

“Only just finished detention.” One of Snape’s eyebrows ticked up in disapproval.

“So long past curfew? Tut, tut, Dolores.”

“Yeah, so, uh, don’t expect my Moonstone essay to be amazing. I wrote it over lunch break today.”

A brief smirk crossed Snape’s lips. “I’m sure I will delight in finding the flaws,” he drawled, before eyeing Harry over once more. “You didn’t come here just to apologise for the state of your homework.”

Harry dropped his gaze, suddenly reluctant. But he’d made a promise. “I... I told Draco I’d come show you.” Snape looked at him, expectant. “Umbridge is making me write lines with a Blood Quill.” He thrust out his hand, where the faintest outline of ‘*I must not tell lies*’ was still valiantly attempting to heal over.

A low curse escaped the Slytherin’s lips. “Your detentions start at what time?”

“Five,” Harry reported, wincing at the thunderous look on the man’s face. “The pain doesn’t bother me, but she’s going to keep going with it until the message *sinks in*, she says. And, well, I don’t really want to walk around dripping blood all the time, if I can help it.”

“Even I never forced you through a bloody *seven hour detention*, let alone forcing you to mutilate yourself! The *nerve* of that woman. This is not a legal use of Blood Quills.”

“What can we do, report her to the Ministry?” Harry’s tone was wry, and Snape’s thin lips twisted. Between Fudge and Dumbledore, there was no safe *authority* to alert, and attempting would bring far more attention to the castle than Harry was willing to deal with right now.

“It’s fine, really,” he insisted. “I’ve had loads worse, and it’s funny watching how angry she gets that I’m not visibly in pain. I’m only telling you because Draco made me.”

“As he should,” Snape agreed firmly. “Stay there.” He disappeared into his private lab, returning a minute later with a bottle of something yellow and a pad of white gauze. “This is essence of dittany. It’ll speed up the healing.” He reached for Harry’s hand, but Harry pulled back.

“Shouldn’t I wait, until all the detentions are over?” The worse it looked at the end of the week, the more likely Umbridge was to let him go. Snape scowled at him.

“I thought you didn’t want to bleed everywhere?”

“Yeah, I was hoping you might have a charm that would, y’know, heal it just enough to scab over. At the end of the week I’ll put that dittany stuff over it and put a glamour on so Umbridge thinks it scarred.” It wasn’t a big deal. Still, Snape’s lips pursed.