

*them.*

“Deal,” he agreed, pushing his leg between Draco’s thigh. “Let’s just call this a practice run.”

.-..

The next school year was going to be *terrible*.

Severus could feel it in his bones already. Having to deal with all the damn students who had seen Remus kiss him in the middle of the Great Hall. Listening to the whispers of his *star-crossed love* and his *tortured soul* as a spy for the Light. Somehow, between Harry and Remus, the public had gotten it into their heads that Severus’ entire personality was also part of the ruse to keep Voldemort oblivious of his true loyalties.

They were trying to be *nice* to him. Expecting him to be nice in return! The world had truly gone mad.

He stalked into his quarters, pausing at the sight of Remus sprawled out on his sofa, dozing. Guilt wormed through him when the werewolf startled awake. “Oh, Severus. You’re back. What time is it?”

“Not long past four.”

“Why do you look like someone cracked your favourite cauldron?”

Severus scowled, but didn’t hesitate to sit beside the man when Remus lifted his legs up pointedly. He settled them back in the Slytherin’s lap, one knee bent over Severus’. “I just had to deal with a staff meeting in which no less than six of my colleagues tried to *thank* me for my contribution to the war, apologising for thinking I was *truly so cruel* all these years.” A slow smile crept onto Remus’ face, and Severus glared at him. “Pomona tried to hug me, Remus!”

Remus outright burst into laughter at that, which was not helping Severus’ ire any. “I’m sorry,” he said, though his eyes were still dancing. “Really, I am!”

“You don’t look it, you damned wolf,” Severus grouched, propping his own feet up on the coffee table. Remus smiled wider, reaching for Severus’ hand. He played with the fingers, massaging the digits, often so tense from hours holding a knife or a stirring rod.

“I just— it absolutely baffles me that these people seem to think it was a lie. Pomona taught you! She knows you’ve been your own personal storm cloud since the day you left the damned womb!”

“Yes, well, she seems to think that the love of a good man has *softened* me, but I’ve been hiding it all this time to allay suspicion,” Severus explained, rolling his eyes, and Remus scoffed.

“I’m not nearly a good enough man for that,” he remarked ruefully. “If it makes you feel better, Sev, I’m sure they’ll soon stop thinking you’ve in any way changed since the war ended. Once they see you terrify all the students into submission once more.”