

“Nothing.”

“You’re a shit liar, Potter,” came Draco’s immediate retort. “To me, anyway. What’s wrong with your hand?” He lit the tip of his wand, holding Harry’s hand up to his face. “Why’s it all red?”

Reluctantly, Harry told him about the Blood Quill. By the end of the explanation, Draco was flushed with anger. “No wonder my father likes her so much,” he muttered. Carefully, he turned Harry’s hand over in his, bringing it up to his lips and pressing the most gentle, tender kiss to the inflamed flesh. Harry’s heart skipped a beat at the gesture, ears going pink.

“It’s fine, really,” he insisted. Draco gave his hand another butterfly-soft kiss.

“Go to Uncle Severus, after your detention,” he urged.

“If I heal it up, Umbridge will just make me do more lines.” She wanted her message to leave a *permanent* mark. Draco fixed him with a level stare.

“That’s what glamours are for, idiot,” he pointed out lightly. “Go to Severus, see what he can do. Blood Quills are dark magic, you don’t want to mess with over-exposure to one.”

The worry in his voice niggled at Harry’s heart, until he sighed, leaning into Draco’s embrace. “Fine,” he relented. “I’ll go tonight.” He was hoping to avoid the Potions professor ever finding out — Snape knowing meant Remus knowing, which meant Sirius knowing, which meant explosions.

“Good boy.” Draco kissed him in satisfaction. “I have to go to class, and so do you.”

Harry let out a quiet whine at the thought of leaving the darkened alcove, but after one more long kiss and the promise of meeting up properly once Harry was done with detention, they parted ways, one at a time to make sure nobody saw them.

The rendezvous, however brief, was exactly what Harry needed to help him get through the day, right up until his second detention.

If Umbridge was expecting some kind of reaction or pain response this time, she was sorely disappointed — the words bloomed on Harry’s flesh just as easily as they had the night before, though the pain was already worse. Once again, he didn’t even twitch; his mind was on his Divination homework this time, thinking up a dream he could put in his diary that was in no way related to the graveyard or that mysterious corridor.

There was thinly-veiled fury in Umbridge’s eyes when, at the end of the detention, Harry was perfectly content to let her study his hand, pressing down on the still-healing cut.

She had nothing on Vernon Dursley.

Harry bid her goodnight, gathered up his bloodied parchment, and left the office. As soon as he was out of sight, he slung the invisibility cloak over his shoulders and set off towards Snape’s personal chambers.