

one of his. Was she really so desperate to see him fail, that she was stalking him around his lessons?

She was starting to replace Fake-Moody as ‘creepiest DADA professor’ in Harry’s mental ranking.

“As you can see, we have a guest this morning,” Snape drawled, and Harry was sure only he and Draco saw the well-hidden contempt in the man’s gaze as he looked at Umbridge.

It was going to be one hell of a lesson.

Despite straining his ears to try and hear Umbridge questioning Snape, Harry did his best to try and brew his Strengthening Solution properly, as well as keep an eye on Neville. Admittedly, the other Gryffindor was getting better in Potions with Harry’s quiet encouragement, but the nerves of having both Snape and Umbridge observing the lesson were clearly throwing him off.

Harry just hoped Snape wasn’t feeling extra vindictive towards him. A few times, the Slytherin had vanished Harry’s perfectly good potion for some perceived flaw, giving him a zero for the class — and, in private, offering a proper criticism and grade. It was necessary to keep up the public animosity, and as it wouldn’t mess with Harry’s OWL grade he didn’t really care, but— he really hoped Snape didn’t do that in front of Umbridge. If the man could offer no other support, he could at least do that.

Umbridge seemed very interested in what Snape did *before* teaching, as if he were going to respond to her prying with a blow-by-blow recount of his Death Eater days. All it did was give him the chance to quietly brag about being the youngest Potions Master in a century, sneer at her for questioning his curriculum, and offer for her to direct her complaints at the ICW if she wished to change what appeared on the OWL exam syllabus. Through it all, Harry was trying his best to hold in his laughter. Snape was having *far* too much fun tearing Umbridge to pieces.

Perhaps a pensieve memory of the class could be his Christmas present to Remus.

“Despite applying for the Defence Against the Dark Arts position every year, you have been refused the appointment repeatedly. Do you care to suggest why Professor Dumbledore will not allow you the position?”

Someone from the Slytherin side of the room sucked in a sharp breath; Harry wasn’t the only one eavesdropping.

“I suggest you ask him yourself,” Snape drawled, unperturbed. “Though I would imagine it has something to do with the lack of suitably qualified Potions Masters in Britain. Defence Against the Dark Arts is a much more... *forgiving* subject to teach.”

Umbridge smiled, a little confused, like she wasn’t sure if she’d just been complimented or insulted. Harry couldn’t *breathe*, he was so close to laughing.