

He could cry from the joy of it all.

Letting go of those long, slender fingers, Remus dropped his hand to the grey denim of Severus' jeans, immediately seeking the soft spot that had *almost* but not quite worn through to a hole in the knee. "Stop picking at it," Severus scolded half-heartedly, batting his hand away. Remus grinned into Severus' leather jacket.

"Never," he murmured, sliding his hand up to squeeze Severus' thigh. Then he exhaled a long, slow breath. "Fuck, I needed this, Sev."

Severus' arm curled around his shoulders, propped on the back of the bench. "So did I. More than I realised, I think."

"I feel like we're nineteen again." Waiting impatiently for Severus to finish work. Spending an afternoon at Palace Pier, playing the arcade and eating ice cream even though it was February, pestering Severus to go on the rides with him. Drinking cider and eating fish and chips on the beach as the sun set. "We should go dancing."

"If you like," Severus agreed. "Though I will remind you we are *not* nineteen again, and may be a little past the mark for some of our old haunts."

Remus scoffed. "Please; our old haunts were full of ageing queers back when we were teenagers, I doubt they've changed much now." The clubs around here were more forgiving of that, more understanding that not everyone had been able to go out and be themselves when they were the age for it, and some had to grab their happiness a little later.

"We'll soon see," Severus said wryly. Leaning back, looking at him in the low light, Remus could almost see that rail-thin, angsty teenager with the chip on his shoulder the size of a small country; the boy Remus had been so desperately in love with, so determined to pull from the dark and fumble a life together with.

He wondered what their teenage selves would say if they could see them now. They would be proud, he hoped.

"I'm going to spend the rest of my life with you, Severus Snape," he declared, a vow as much as a statement. Severus glanced down at him, raising one of his dark eyebrows.

"I should hope so," he drawled. "I've grown rather accustomed to you by now."

Remus laughed, cupping that angular jaw and pulling him in for a kiss — this was something they'd done as teenagers, too. Necked on the pier until someone yelled or threw something at them, far less tolerant of such things than they were now. Hardly anyone was around, and those who were didn't seem to care, and Severus certainly didn't seem to mind reliving this particular part of their youth. Back then it had been a rebellion, a defiant attempt to prove that they could be together despite their differences, that they didn't care what anybody thought of them, not in the muggle world. An attempt to prove to each other that things could work, even when they thought they might crumble.

Now, it felt like a promise. Like hope.