

Eventually, he shook his head, deciding to let the matter slide. If it was something important, Luna would tell them when they needed to know. She usually did.

.-.-.-.

Snape was distracted.

Harry didn't know *why*, but whatever the cause, the man was seriously off his game. Harry was practicing his Legilimency, and he kept finding his way into memories he *knew* Snape couldn't possibly want him to see. An incident with his father; his first kiss with Remus... Harry tried not to snoop, but considering Snape had instructed him to look for the things he was trying to hide, he couldn't help himself.

"Are you alright, sir?" he asked tentatively, once he was pushed out of a memory involving fish and chips on some run-down pier and a nineteen year-old Remus Lupin wearing leather trousers, Snape's whole heart filled with love for the man. It warmed Harry's own heart, to feel the way this man felt about a person Harry cared so much about, but... it wasn't like him.

"I am fine," Snape bit out, clearly lying. His dark eyes met Harry's. "Again."

Harry did as instructed, murmuring the spell to enter Snape's mind, trying to split his own focus. He was supposed to be writing about antidotes while he searched the man's mindscape, to practice managing Legilimency undetected. Eye contact was only needed for the initial spell, after all.

He appeared in the now-familiar haze of Snape's mental defences — currently at a fairly low level, while Harry was still learning — and narrowed his focus for something that would surely get Snape back to his usual self.

*Show me why you hate my father.*

Immediately there was a swarm of memories, but one shone brighter than any other, and Harry dove into it.

Four boys, confronting a skinnier boy after an exam. A girl, redheaded and blazing with anger, coming in to defend the skinny boy. A fight, and the skinny boy was hanging in the air all of a sudden, his robes over his head showing he was full Wizing Traditional beneath them. Jeering laughter, the redhead offering to help, *that word, that awful word, the word that ruined it all*. The four boys, faces turning cruel, led by the one with dark hair and bronze skin and vindictive brown eyes. "*Who wants to see me take off Snivelly's pants?*"

At last, Harry was forced away, returning to his own mind with a gasp. At first he wasn't sure if the ejection had come from Snape or from his own disgust at the sight — then he looked up, and saw the utter fury in the Slytherin's eyes.

"I suppose you found them funny, did you?" he drawled icily. Harry gaped at him.