

“When did you lose your accent?” he blurted, eyes going wide at the faintest blush on Snape’s pallid cheeks.

“Summer after my first year, for the most part,” he confessed. “Speaking in such a way, to the other Slytherins, was... uncouth. I didn’t need even more for people to bully me over, so I trained myself out of it. I... slipped, on occasion. Remus found it particularly amusing to make me revert to my childhood accent.” He blushed deeper, and Harry started blushing, too.

“I never knew. Aunt Petunia hasn’t a trace of it.”

“Oh, Tunie was speaking like a toff before she hit sixth form,” Snape told him, and there it was, just a *tiny hint* of a Brummie twang. “Though it took her far longer than it did me to learn proper elocution, and it certainly didn’t endear me to her any further.” A small twitch of Snape’s lips. “Lily, on the other hand, made a point of getting even more northern the longer we spent away from Cokeworth. Said she wasn’t ashamed of where she came from and there was nothing wrong with a good regional accent. It was quite entertaining, watching her yell at your father — he was as posh as anything, and when she really got going I think he only understood a quarter of the words from her mouth.”

Harry laughed, imagining that tiny red-haired girl yelling at a tiny Indian boy, her accent ever-thickening. “Would— would you show me, sometime?” he asked before he could help himself. “Not in your head, if you don’t want.” Experiencing things with the full weight of young Snape’s emotions was a little alarming. “But... in the pensieve, maybe?” While they had it, it couldn’t hurt to take advantage, surely?

“Perhaps,” Snape drawled, and he — thankfully — didn’t look offended. “If it will incentivise you to learn Legilimency faster.”

Harry straightened up in his seat. “Deal.”

To watch memories of his mother, he would do just about anything.

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Harry was starting to feel like he was going insane.

Between the *Prophet* still denying the truth of the breakout — running a series of increasingly ridiculous articles about the criminal mastermind Sirius Black and what he could possibly be gathering Death Eater accomplices for — and Umbridge cracking down on any *hint* of independent thought within the walls of Hogwarts, the school began to move on from it all, and Harry often felt like he was the only one who realised how close to impending disaster they actually were.

Well, not the *only* one. His friends were right there with him. But just when he started to think they might be gaining a majority on the side of truth, he was knocked right back down again — like right now, in the Great Hall, overhearing a group of Ravenclaws in his own year laugh about how much of an attention-seeking crazy person he was, to be full of such anti-Ministry conspiracy theories. This, naturally, was the result of yet another detention with