

“Potter!” It was Snape, his features set in a harsh glare, though there was a gleam of triumph in his eyes. Harry was well aware of his sweaty face and messy hair. “Come with me.”

“Where are we going, sir?” Harry asked, playing innocent as he fell into stride beside the long-legged Slytherin, having to practically jog to keep up. Naturally, they ended up in Snape’s office.

“Sit.” Harry did so, trying not to stare too closely at the gross things in jars lining the shelves. “Mr Malfoy and his friends came to me with a rather interesting story.”

“Sir?”

“Apparently, Potter, they came across Weasley in Hogsmeade. And he wasn’t alone.”

“Was Hermione with him, sir? I’m glad they’re talking again.” Snape’s glare could’ve melted a cauldron.

“Mr Malfoy states that someone invisible was throwing mud at him and his two friends, while they were stood talking to Mr Weasley. And then, Mr Crabbe saw a very *curious* apparition. Do you know what that might be?”

“Can’t say I do, sir.”

“Your *head*, Potter. Floating in the middle of Hogsmeade.”

“Perhaps he should go to Madam Pomfrey, sir, if he’s seeing things,” Harry replied neutrally. He thought Snape might explode with rage.

“Your head does not have permission to go to Hogsmeade. No part of your body has permission to go to Hogsmeade.”

“I know, sir. I’ve been in Gryffindor tower all day, like you told me.”

“Can anyone confirm that, Potter?” For a moment, Harry almost threw Neville’s name out there. But as good as the boy claimed to be at Occlumency, he couldn’t lie for shit, especially to Snape. Instead, he stayed quiet. Snape smirked. “I thought so. How very like your father you are. Believing yourself to be above the rules. Everyone from the Minister for Magic downwards is trying to keep you safe from Sirius Black, and you’re just gallivanting off about Hogsmeade, because of course, Famous Harry Potter goes where he wants, with no thought to the consequences. Do you have anything to say for yourself, boy?”

Harry flinched. “Don’t call me that, sir,” he begged, his shoulders curling in to protect his ribs on instinct.

“I’ll call you what I like, you arrogant little brat. Really, the resemblance is uncanny — James Potter also strutted about the castle with his friends, his head so swollen—“

“Shut up!” Harry yelled before he could stop himself. “Shut up about my father!” Lupin had told him Snape and his father didn’t get along, and that James had been a bit of a prick in school, but to hear Snape talk about him like that...