

“Legilimens.”

At first it was like being plunged into a pool of icy water, not knowing which way was up. Sensations and sounds were bombarding him from all angles, so overwhelming he could hardly breathe. *Focus*, he reminded himself. He had to try and find his way around. Find a memory, intentionally.

Immediately, his mind went in one specific direction. *Show me Lily*, he thought, yearning with his whole heart to see his mother through this man’s eyes.

The sensations faded a little, and Harry wondered if Snape was kicking him out, if he’d asked to see something off-limits. Then everything blurred around him — and he was stood on grass.

It was like being in a pensieve memory but... sharper. *More*. He could smell the grass, feel the wind in his hair.

He could see the sunlight glinting off the vibrant red hair of the little girl in front of him.

It was not the kind of memory Harry had anticipated; they were in a park — a rather run-down one, by the looks of it, with a swing seat hanging from only one chain and a climbing frame that looked like an absolute death trap. But all he could feel was joy, excitement, and the warm glow of receiving this girl’s wide smile. There was a boy with the girl; twig-thin and knobbly-kneed, with a curtain of dark hair falling in front of a pale face.

“It came! Sev, you were right — it really came!”

“Of course it came,” Harry heard the boy say — Severus Snape’s voice to be sure, but pre-pubescent.

And *northern*.

Lily Evans, too, had a thick Birmingham accent, crying out to “Show me yours, show me yours!” She thrust a piece of parchment in Snape’s direction.

*Dear Miss Evans, we are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.*

In Snape’s hand was an almost identical letter, crumpled at the edges from being held so tight; proof that he was worth something, that he could be *more* than this silly little mining town.

“Mum and Dad thought it was mental, but I told them it weren’t a joke,” Lily continued. “They wanna talk to your mum, though.”

“I don’t know if that’s a good idea, Lils.”

“Oh, come on, Sev!” A small hand on the boy’s skinny arm, a bright smile directed his way. Nothing could possibly be bad when Lily was smiling like that. “They’ve met your mum, they know what she’s like. As long as your dad’s not around it’ll be easy.”