



CHAPTER ELEVEN



ful chatter of everyone looking forward to a good Quidditch match.

“You’ve got to eat some breakfast.”

“I don’t want anything.”

“Just a bit of toast,” wheedled Hermione.

“I’m not hungry.”

Harry felt terrible. In an hour’s time he’d be walking onto the field.

“Harry, you need your strength,” said Seamus Finnigan. “Seekers are always the ones who get clobbered by the other team.”

“Thanks, Seamus,” said Harry, watching Seamus pile ketchup on his sausages.

By eleven o’clock the whole school seemed to be out in the stands around the Quidditch pitch. Many students had binoculars. The seats might be raised high in the air, but it was still difficult to see what was going on sometimes.

Ron and Hermione joined Neville, Seamus, and Dean the West Ham fan up in the top row. As a surprise for Harry, they had painted a large banner on one of the sheets Scabbers had ruined. It said *Potter for President*, and Dean, who was good at drawing, had done a large Gryffindor lion underneath. Then Hermione had performed a tricky little charm so that the paint flashed different colors.

Meanwhile, in the locker room, Harry and the rest of the team were changing into their scarlet Quidditch robes (Slytherin would be playing in green).

Wood cleared his throat for silence.



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“Okay, men,” he said.

“And women,” said Chaser Angelina Johnson.

“And women,” Wood agreed. “This is it.”

“The big one,” said Fred Weasley.

“The one we’ve all been waiting for,” said George.

“We know Oliver’s speech by heart,” Fred told Harry, “we were on the team last year.”

“Shut up, you two,” said Wood. “This is the best team Gryffindor’s had in years. We’re going to win. I know it.”

He glared at them all as if to say, “Or else.”

“Right. It’s time. Good luck, all of you.”

Harry followed Fred and George out of the locker room and, hoping his knees weren’t going to give way, walked onto the field to loud cheers.

Madam Hooch was refereeing. She stood in the middle of the field waiting for the two teams, her broom in her hand.

“Now, I want a nice fair game, all of you,” she said, once they were all gathered around her. Harry noticed that she seemed to be speaking particularly to the Slytherin Captain, Marcus Flint, a fifth year. Harry thought Flint looked as if he had some troll blood in him. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the fluttering banner high above, flashing *Potter for President* over the crowd. His heart skipped. He felt braver.

“Mount your brooms, please.”

Harry clambered onto his Nimbus Two Thousand.

Madam Hooch gave a loud blast on her silver whistle.

Fifteen brooms rose up, high, high into the air. They were off.

“And the Quaffle is taken immediately by Angelina Johnson of



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Gryffindor — what an excellent Chaser that girl is, and rather attractive, too —”

“JORDAN!”

“Sorry, Professor.”

The Weasley twins’ friend, Lee Jordan, was doing the commentary for the match, closely watched by Professor McGonagall.

“And she’s really belting along up there, a neat pass to Alicia Spinnet, a good find of Oliver Wood’s, last year only a reserve — back to Johnson and — no, the Slytherins have taken the Quaffle, Slytherin Captain Marcus Flint gains the Quaffle and off he goes — Flint flying like an eagle up there — he’s going to sc- no, stopped by an excellent move by Gryffindor Keeper Wood and the Gryffindors take the Quaffle — that’s Chaser Katie Bell of Gryffindor there, nice dive around Flint, off up the field and — OUCH — that must have hurt, hit in the back of the head by a Bludger — Quaffle taken by the Slytherins — that’s Adrian Pucey speeding off toward the goal posts, but he’s blocked by a second Bludger — sent his way by Fred or George Weasley, can’t tell which — nice play by the Gryffindor Beater, anyway, and Johnson back in possession of the Quaffle, a clear field ahead and off she goes — she’s really flying — dodges a speeding Bludger — the goal posts are ahead — come on, now, Angelina — Keeper Bletchley dives — misses — GRYFFINDORS SCORE!”

Gryffindor cheers filled the cold air, with howls and moans from the Slytherins.

“Budge up there, move along.”

“Hagrid!”

Ron and Hermione squeezed together to give Hagrid enough space to join them.



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“Bin watchin’ from me hut,” said Hagrid, patting a large pair of binoculars around his neck, “But it isn’t the same as bein’ in the crowd. No sign of the Snitch yet, eh?”

“Nope,” said Ron. “Harry hasn’t had much to do yet.”

“Kept outta trouble, though, that’s somethin’,” said Hagrid, raising his binoculars and peering skyward at the speck that was Harry.

Way up above them, Harry was gliding over the game, squinting about for some sign of the Snitch. This was part of his and Wood’s game plan.

“Keep out of the way until you catch sight of the Snitch,” Wood had said. “We don’t want you attacked before you have to be.”

When Angelina had scored, Harry had done a couple of loop-the-loops to let off his feelings. Now he was back to staring around for the Snitch. Once he caught sight of a flash of gold, but it was just a reflection from one of the Weasleys’ wristwatches, and once a Bludger decided to come pelting his way, more like a cannonball than anything, but Harry dodged it and Fred Weasley came chasing after it.

“All right there, Harry?” he had time to yell, as he beat the Bludger furiously toward Marcus Flint.

“Slytherin in possession,” Lee Jordan was saying, “Chaser Pucey ducks two Bludgers, two Weasleys, and Chaser Bell, and speeds toward the — wait a moment — was that the Snitch?”

A murmur ran through the crowd as Adrian Pucey dropped the Quaffle, too busy looking over his shoulder at the flash of gold that had passed his left ear.

Harry saw it. In a great rush of excitement he dived downward after the streak of gold. Slytherin Seeker Terence Higgs had seen it, too. Neck and neck they hurtled toward the Snitch — all the



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Chasers seemed to have forgotten what they were supposed to be doing as they hung in midair to watch.

Harry was faster than Higgs — he could see the little round ball, wings fluttering, darting up ahead — he put on an extra spurt of speed —

WHAM! A roar of rage echoed from the Gryffindors below — Marcus Flint had blocked Harry on purpose, and Harry's broom spun off course, Harry holding on for dear life.

"Foul!" screamed the Gryffindors.

Madam Hooch spoke angrily to Flint and then ordered a free shot at the goal posts for Gryffindor. But in all the confusion, of course, the Golden Snitch had disappeared from sight again.

Down in the stands, Dean Thomas was yelling, "Send him off, ref! Red card!"

"What are you talking about, Dean?" said Ron.

"Red card!" said Dean furiously. "In soccer you get shown the red card and you're out of the game!"

"But this isn't soccer, Dean," Ron reminded him.

Hagrid, however, was on Dean's side.

"They oughta change the rules. Flint coulda knocked Harry outta the air."

Lee Jordan was finding it difficult not to take sides.

"So — after that obvious and disgusting bit of cheating —"

"Jordan!" growled Professor McGonagall.

"I mean, after that open and revolting foul —"

"Jordan, I'm warning you —"

"All right, all right. Flint nearly kills the Gryffindor Seeker, which could happen to anyone, I'm sure, so a penalty to Gryffindor,