

to try. He'd missed quidditch so much, when Umbridge had banned him last year. He was determined to make up for everything he'd missed.

And equally determined to win against his boyfriend, both of them eager for another locker room tryst regardless of which team's showers they ended up in.

"Did you hear the latest?" Ginny asked by way of greeting when she arrived for practice that evening, broom slung over her shoulder. Harry raised a curious eyebrow. "Apparently Hermione asked Ron to Slughorn's party. Or, well — whether she *asked* is unclear, they might have just bickered their way into it, but I think they're going together."

"Really?" Harry asked, mildly impressed. "Blimey. Didn't think they'd ever get their heads out of their arses."

"Right?" Ginny agreed, snorting. "It's weird — they've been mad about each other for ages, anyone can see that, but I can't *actually* imagine them dating. They just fight so constantly now they don't have you as a buffer."

Harry knew what she meant; every third conversation between the pair seemed to end in some kind of argument. He wasn't one to judge bickering as foreplay — not when he was dating Draco — but even so... "I guess we'll have to see how it goes."

If it crashed and burned, well, at least it was something else for people to talk about that had nothing to do with Harry. There was such scarce relationship drama these days, with half their year either happily paired off or having no intention of sticking with one person any time soon.

The rest of the team began to arrive, and Harry turned his focus to more important things. He could get the Gryffindor gossip from Parvati and Lavender later.

.-.-.-.

At last, the time had come — the Gryffindor/Slytherin quidditch match was upon them.

For once, the Gryffindor table was a solid block of red and gold when Harry arrived at breakfast, Ginny and Neville at his sides. They cheered at the sight of him, Katie shuffling up so they could sit with the rest of the team.

"How you feeling, Harry?" she asked, bright-eyed, and Harry grinned.

"Brilliant. The weather's looking perfect, too." Not too bright, not too windy, nice and crisp; excellent quidditch conditions.

"That's not the only thing. One of the Slytherin chasers — Vaisey, the fourth year kid — he's got a concussion from a bludger to the head in yesterday's practice, so Pomfrey's said he can't play. *And* Malfoy's called off sick, too, so they've got Harper as seeker." Katie paused, wide-eyed, suddenly realising that Harry might not see that as good news. "Malfoy's fine," she hastened to add, "as far as I know. Just got a sudden flu or something."