

“It wasn’t your fault,” Harry assured him, grimacing. Stupid, noble Hufflepuffs. “It’s fine, you won. It’s just a quidditch match.”

“Don’t let Wood hear you say that,” Diggory retorted, making Harry snort. “Are you okay? You fell so quickly. For a minute, we all thought...” He trailed off, glancing away. Harry knew what he’d been about to say. They all thought he was dead, at first.

“I’m fine. Barely even hurt.” He was tired and sore, and still a little shaky, but he’d had worse injuries from quidditch before. “Wish I could say the same about my broom.” He glanced over at the pile of splintered twigs, and Cedric winced.

“I heard about that. Merlin, I’m sorry. It was a great broom, that. Hopefully you can get something good to replace it.”

Harry couldn’t even think about replacing his broom right now, though he knew he’d need to before the match against Ravenclaw.

“Well, anyway, I’m glad you’re alright. And I’m still really sorry about the match. I tried to get a rematch, but Hooch wasn’t having it. I just... I wanted to beat you fairly, y’know? Not because the dementors made you faint.”

The reminder made Harry scowl. “You won fair enough. You were already on your way to the snitch when I fell.”

“That doesn’t count! I’ve seen you fly, Potter, you could’ve easily beaten me to it.” Diggory ran a hand through his hair, a frown on his handsome face. “Whatever; I’ve clearly lost the argument anyway, so it doesn’t matter. I just... I didn’t want you to think I was happy about the way things turned out.”

“I wouldn’t blame you if you were,” Harry replied. “But thanks. And there’s always next year, right?” That made Cedric grin.

“Next year, you’re on,” he agreed, shaking Harry’s hand. “I’ll leave you to your evening. Hope you get all patched up soon, Potter. See you around.”

“Yeah, see you, Diggory.”

“Cedric,” the older Hufflepuff corrected, a faint flush to his cheeks. “It’s Cedric.” It took a beat too long for the two of them to stop shaking hands.

“Then call me Harry.”

Cedric grinned, and Harry could see why all the girls got so flustered over him. Something in his gut flip-flopped. “Later, Harry.”

The Hufflepuff turned away, and Harry sunk back against the pillows, shaking his head as he processed the bizarre interaction. At least something good had come from the whole disaster; he’d sort-of, maybe, made a new friend?

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