

himself into it. “Cheers,” he said, both for the saved seat and for distracting everyone from wondering what was taking Harry so long. Fred merely winked at him, grinning.

“Where’d you get that t-shirt, Harry?” Ron asked, eyeing the green Harpies shirt over. Harry shrugged.

“Birthday present.” Let them think it was from Sirius.

“I’m glad *someone* here has taste,” Ginny teased, offering Harry a fist-bump. “The Harpies are way better than the Cannons.”

That set Ron off on a long rant about how the Cannons were trying their best with poor management, and Harry rolled his eyes, turning instead to the older students. “Welcome to Gryffindor,” he said to the assorted non-Gryffindors, grinning up at Cho as she returned with several bottles of butterbeer in hand, clambering over the back of the sofa to perch in Cedric’s lap. She handed a bottle to Harry, smiling.

“Oh, I’ve been up here before,” Cassius said offhandedly. “The Christmas decorations are a nice touch, though. Very festive.”

“When have you been up here?” Harry asked with raised eyebrows. The Slytherin’s olive cheeks flushed.

“None of your business, Potter,” he retorted. Harry smirked at him, wondering if it had to do with his mysterious someone. Was Cassius dating a Gryffindor?

“That was some brilliant flying, Harry!” Cho enthused, tapping the neck of her bottle against Harry’s own. “Really impressive!”

“Yeah, I didn’t know you had it in you, Potter!” Patrick, one of Cedric’s roommates, added with a grin. “Bet Krum’ll think twice about challenging people in future.”

Despite definitely being more Cedric’s friends than Harry’s, none of them seemed upset that Harry had so firmly beaten Cedric. Even Cedric himself was grinning, insisting he was proud of himself for even catching the snitch twice. “I was playing well out of my league,” he said, running a hand through his hair. “Both in brooms and in skill. But it was loads of fun!”

“I’ll let you try out my Firebolt sometime,” Harry promised. “You too, Cho, if you want.” The Ravenclaw seeker lit up at that.

While Harry was still getting random people coming up to congratulate him, the party seemed to have changed from a celebration of his victory to an informal Christmas gathering, everyone just enjoying being able to hang out. It made Harry wonder why the school didn’t have some sort of inter-house common room — again, nobody encouraged the houses to mix. It was ridiculous!

The happy atmosphere was abruptly broken when the portrait hole swung open, and McGonagall stepped into the room. She blinked, doing a double-take at the crowd inside. With a wave of her wand, the music cut off, and everyone turned to her with wide eyes. “I