

for the snitch in companionship rather than rivalry — Harry couldn't stop smiling, even when Draco asked him why he was grinning like a loon.

They flew until lunchtime, first trying to beat each other to the snitch and then getting the quaffle out, passing back and forth as they talked about their summers. Harry told Draco about the concert he'd gone to the week before, while Draco bragged about all the interesting places he'd been in Europe. "I brought my cards with me," the Slytherin said, tossing the quaffle in Harry's direction. The dark-haired boy had to stretch to catch it, letting the movement carry him into a sloth roll. "I can teach you that French game. It's ever so simple. Mirielle said it's quite popular at Beauxbatons."

"Mirielle? She's one of the girls you saw in France?" Harry asked, wondering why the name seemed to stick funny in his throat. Draco nodded.

"She and her cousin, Adalene. Their home isn't far from our summer house, we spent most of the week together."

"Oh." Harry's next throw was so hard it almost knocked Draco off his broom. The blond shot him a glare.

"So, been having fun with Granger and Weasley all summer?" he returned. "Since you're not with the muggles and all."

"They don't actually know I'm here," Harry admitted. "We didn't think it was safe. I've barely even heard from them — Hermione's written more than Ron, but... anyway, you're the first visitor I've had all summer."

"Oh."

Draco was saved having to think up another response by Sirius calling for them from the back patio. "Lunch is ready, boys!"

They landed swiftly, carrying their brooms with them and hurrying towards the house. Halfway there, Draco skidded to a halt, eyes wide. "Is that— the hippogriff! Buckbeak!"

Harry looked over towards the tree line, where Buckbeak was trotting out of the woods, tossing his head back and swallowing a dead rabbit. "Oh, yeah, did I not tell you that bit? Sirius escaped on his back. He lives here now."

Draco looked at him incredulously, then back to the hippogriff. "You're definitely telling me the full story after lunch," he declared, then grabbed Harry's arm and pulled him towards the house. Harry flushed; for a second there, he'd thought Draco was going to take him by the hand.

Ceri had made an excellent spread, and in the middle of the table was an enormous chocolate cake with the words 'Happy Birthday Harry' in swirling silver icing, delicately iced snitches all around the edges. A pang of fondness rose in Harry's chest as he remembered the cake Hagrid had brought him, three years ago. His first birthday cake.