

He shot a somewhat wistful look at the showers as he stripped off his quidditch robe — there would be no post-match romp with Draco, unfortunately. That was another thing that would have to wait a year.

As with any Gryffindor win, there was a party in the common room to follow. Harry had already put Dobby on snack duty, and it was the work of only a few moments to sneak out to Hogsmeade for the usual delivery from the Three Broomsticks; he had promised the twins he'd keep up the tradition, after all.

Rosmerta gave him a scolding look, even as she brought out the crate of butterbeer. "You shouldn't be sneaking around, Potter, with things the way they are. The target on your back is big enough."

"They won't get me in the village," he assured confidently. The woman didn't look convinced, and chided him to hurry back to school.

"Next time just send a bloody owl-order in advance," she told him, rolling her eyes, "it's not like your team ever loses, is it?"

Harry laughed, offering a wave and ducking out of the pub, butterbeer securely in his pocket.

The party was in full swing when he arrived, cheers exploding through the packed common room. He set up the butterbeer and swiped an armful of bottles, then turned to try and find his teammates.

In his search, he was briefly accosted by an enthusiastic pair of Creevey brothers, keen to show him the pictures they'd taken during the match. There were some great ones in the mix, and Harry made them promise to get copies for him — there was one of Ginny scoring an amazing goal that he knew Charlie would love to have.

Eventually, he did make it over to the team gathered by the window. He handed out the butterbeers he'd brought over for them, making sure there was an extra for Neville, who had Ginny quite happily perched in his lap. Katie shuffled over to make room for Harry between her and Vicky on the sofa, with Jimmy and Ritchie sat on the arms of the armchair Demelza had claimed.

"Not a bad start to the season, then!" Katie declared happily, clinking the neck of her bottle against Harry's. "Even if Slytherin weren't playing their best team, they still gave us a run for our money."

"We play like that against Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw, and the cup is in the bag," Harry assured, beaming at his team. "You were all fantastic, honestly."

There would be time for criticisms and improvements at the next practice; right now, Harry wanted them all to enjoy a match well played. Especially the new members, who had improved so quickly since the start of the year.

Harry stayed and chatted for the time it took him to drink one butterbeer, accepting congratulations from all the Gryffindors who came up to pat him on the back and talk to the