

He had beaten *Viktor Krum* at *quidditch*.

Blood was rushing in his ears as he slowed to a halt and stumbled off his broom, almost falling as his knees buckled slightly. Sixteen rounds of hard seeking was finally starting to get to him, and he couldn't *wait* to go sit down somewhere. He grinned, holding the snitch up triumphantly, barely hearing the cheers of the crowd as his racing pulse echoed in his skull.

"We have a winner, folks!" Boris was saying, striding over to Harry's side. He grabbed the hand holding the snitch, thrusting it into the air. "Harry Potter of Hogwarts takes it all! Are you all as surprised as I am?"

The official confirmation seemed to be all it took for the dam to break, and the next thing Harry knew he was being hoisted onto the shoulders of the Weasley twins, the crowd swarming around him excitedly.

"He's only bloody done it!" one of the twins crowed, their arms wrapped around his legs to keep him steady. He could see Cedric beaming in the crowd, Cho by his side applauding wildly. Over by the crestfallen Durmstrang crowd was Draco, pretending to be annoyed, but Harry could see the awe in his eyes.

Eventually the twins set him down, slapping him on the back and beaming at him. "Come up to the common room when you're done here," Fred told him. "We're *definitely* celebrating this. Mate, you just beat Viktor bloody Krum!"

It sounded bizarre when it was said aloud like that. Harry nodded, grateful when the twins herded the crowd back towards the castle, and turned to find Boris and give him the snitch back. The Durmstrang boy was stood beside Viktor, patting him on the shoulder. "That was a tough match," Harry said when he approached, smiling hesitantly at Viktor. He hoped the older boy wasn't too mad about it — he had a reputation to uphold, after all. "You almost had me with that feint there."

"Almost, but not enough," Viktor replied, and he was smiling. "I knew it when I saw you fly against the dragon, but I will say again — you fly very well." He reached out, clapping Harry on the shoulder. "If you are not on your country's team by the time you are my age, it will be a travesty. But when you are, I look forward to flying against you once more."

Harry gaped at him. Was Viktor seriously saying Harry could go pro? Not just pro, but *international*? "I... yeah," he said breathlessly, unsure what else to say to that. "Anytime you want a rematch, I'm there."

Boris plucked the snitch from Harry's fingers, grinning. "That was fun," he declared, tucking it away safely in its box. "And now the team will get off your back about training, Viktor."

"I don't know," Viktor said ruefully, "perhaps now they will be even more on my back, if I can be beaten by a fourteen year-old." He smiled at Harry to show he was teasing. Then he looked down at himself. "I need a shower."

Harry looked at the state of his own robes, and grimaced. Yeah, a shower and new clothes sounded good. How could he get so sweaty in *December*?