

She soared off into the horizon, and Harry sighed to himself, officially out of excuses for avoiding Ron and Hermione. He had other letters to write, but they could wait until Hedwig was back.

He thought about going to the library, pretending to do homework until Hermione eventually found him, but it was no use; halfway down the main staircase, he heard a call of his name. “There you are!” The pair hurried towards him. “Mate, you missed it — Fred and George tried to put their names in, but the age line wasn’t fooled by the potion. They got these massive beards, it was brilliant!” Ron enthused. “Where were you?”

“Owlery.” Let them think he was writing to Sirius.

“Oh. Well, we thought we’d go visit Hagrid, we haven’t been to see him yet this term.”

While Harry didn’t really want to spend that much time with Ron and Hermione today, he couldn’t think of a good excuse — and he did owe Hagrid a visit. So he found himself outside once more, this time heading towards the hut. The Beauxbatons carriage was parked close by, no doubt so Hagrid could keep a close eye on the enormous horses.

Visiting with Hagrid was just like old times — if a little bizarre, what with Hagrid wearing his interesting-looking suit. All became clear when they went to head up to the castle for the feast, and the headmistress of Beauxbatons stepped out of her carriage.

“We’ve lost him,” Harry declared when Hagrid started walking alongside the large woman, oblivious to his student companions. Hermione giggled.

The three of them headed up to the castle, which was abuzz with excitement. They found a seat by the twins, who looked no worse for wear after their experience with the age line.

“I hope it’s Angelina!” Fred enthused. “But any Gryffindor will do.”

“As long as it’s not Pretty-Boy Diggory,” Ron muttered under his breath. Harry rolled his eyes.

It was the fastest a Hogwarts feast had ever been eaten. Everyone was wolfing down their food, desperate for the champions to be announced, but up at the head table Dumbledore seemed to be savouring every bite.

After what felt like an age, the plates cleared, and he stood.

Harry’s pulse ticked up, but he couldn’t tell if it was in exhilaration or dread. He still had that bad feeling, he’d been carrying it around all day, and now the champions were about to be announced his stomach was bubbling with something that wasn’t entirely excitement.

Viktor Krum, the first champion. A strong choice — if Krum was as good at magic as he was at flying, he’d be a real contender. He’d already proven he could think on the move.

Fleur Delacour — the girl who looked like a veela. Harry knew literally nothing about her, but her schoolmates seemed disappointed. Though perhaps that was just because they hadn’t been chosen.