

Since eating meals together had become rather a larger affair than they'd intended, the four champions had to find other ways to get together and discuss progress on the eggs. One afternoon a week or so before term was due to end, they sat out by the lake on a large blanket Fleur had conjured, surrounded by Warming charms courtesy of Harry and Viktor. Harry had gotten pretty good at them over the summer — Sirius still couldn't stand being cold.

"I vote we put the eggs away until after Christmas," Cedric said, lying back on the blanket, his hair mussed and sticking out at funny angles. "All the screaming is doing my head in."

"I put a Silencing charm on mine," Fleur volunteered. Harry snorted.

"Pretty sure that defeats the purpose."

She shrugged. "Eet stops eet from screaming every time eet falls off my dresser."

"How often is that?" Cedric asked with raised eyebrows, which looked a little odd from Harry's perspective as the Hufflepuff was upside down.

"Often enough," Fleur said evasively.

"The rest of the Durmstrang students haff banned me from opening mine when they are around," Viktor sighed. "I agree, leaving them until after the Yule Ball is best."

"I'm fine with that," Harry said, nodding. He leaned back on his hands, glancing out across the lake. "Oh look, it's snowing." Just a little bit, fine flakes beginning to dust the surface of the lake. Viktor scoffed.

"That is barely even snow," he dismissed. "In Bulgaria, there is four feet already."

"And I bet it's bloody freezing," Cedric grimaced. "No wonder you're so good at Warming charms."

"It is necessary," Viktor agreed. "Especially for flying."

That reminded Harry of the conversation he and Viktor had had weeks ago, before the first task. "Hey, Fleur; do you play quidditch? Do you even have quidditch at Beauxbatons?"

"Of course we 'ave quidditch," Fleur said, mock-offended. "I am seeker for my 'ouse team."

Harry looked at Viktor, and they both burst out laughing. "I told you!" he crowed. "Must be something about seekers. Reckless idiots, the lot of us."

"You play seeker also, 'arry?" Fleur checked, wanting to make sure they weren't laughing at her. Harry nodded.

"Cedric, too. Viktor and I were talking about it the other day, I wondered if the Goblet was looking for seekers. Gotta be something a bit wrong in the head with all of us, flying around at top speeds looking for a tiny golden ball while the other team tries to knock us off our brooms." There was something a little bit mad about every quidditch player, but seekers were probably the most bizarre.