

“Hey, set it up over here,” Cassius urged, making room on his side of the table for Harry to join him. No one seemed to object, so Harry did, tuning the Wireless to the right station and pulling out his DADA homework. It was just the kind of mindless drivel he could complete while listening to quidditch.

*“It’s Puddlemere United versus the Ballycastle Bats, and the snitch is off!”*

The quiet commentary was soothing as he worked; much nicer than the chaos of Gryffindor Tower. Puddlemere were playing well, too. At least to start, they were.

*“Perkins shoots, and — oh, that’s a nasty hit! Puddlemere keeper Nicholas Hornby takes a bludger to the side right as Perkins scores another for the Bats. Puddlemere’s captain has called for a time out; Hornby is not a pretty sight, ladies and gents, and — yes, that’s it, with a round of quite spectacular projectile vomiting, Hornby is escorted from the pitch by the medics. On flies Oliver Wood, heading to goals, and play is resumed.”*

Harry straightened up, essay abandoned in favour of the quidditch. Beside him, Cassius’ quill had gone still, the Slytherin’s head cocked intently towards the Wireless.

*“Bats are in fine form tonight, but Puddlemere are not taking it lying down. Puddlemere chasers have possession, heading it up the pitch — and Perkins steals the quaffle! She’s headed for another goal, tearing down the pitch, passes to Gladwell, back to Perkins — what a spectacular block from reserve keeper Oliver Wood! Puddlemere back in possession.”*

“Yes, Ollie!” Cassius hissed quietly, the faintest grin tugging at his lips. Harry eyed him strangely.

“You and Oliver kept in touch?” he asked, keeping his voice pitched low so as not to disturb the others. Cassius’ eyes widened, and the faintest blush touched his olive cheeks.

“Some,” he dismissed evasively. “But I was a Puddlemere fan before he signed with them.”

That didn’t quite excuse Cassius’ excitement at Oliver specifically — nor the tiny, pleased smile he got when the commentators talked about how well Oliver was performing for his first game of the season.

Harry continued to watch him, suspicion growing.

Interesting.

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His evenings blessedly free of detention, and less-blessedly free of quidditch practice, Harry decided to undertake a little adventure that had been lingering in the back of his mind since before he’d discovered the Room of Requirement.

Invisibility cloak and Marauder’s Map in use, Harry left the Tower after curfew, and headed for the second floor.