

hand triumphantly, Harry turned to offer Draco a quip about following him — and his vision went white as a bludger hit him hard in the side.

He fell off his broom, luckily only about five feet off the ground anyway, and managed to keep one hand wrapped around the Firebolt on his way down. He landed sort-of on his feet, knees buckling immediately as pain throbbed through his side. “Harry!”

“Are you alright?”

He raised a placating hand to the girls as they surrounded him, looking past them to see Crabbe in the air with his beater’s bat, looking smug and unrepentant — and the twins looking like they might kill him for it.

“I’m fine, I’m fine,” he insisted, and he wasn’t even lying. It would bruise, but it didn’t feel like there was any major damage. His body armour had caught the worst of it.

“He hit the bludger after the whistle went,” Angelina accused, glaring at Crabbe, who was already receiving a stern talking to by Madam Hooch.

Harry looked back at Draco, who was white-faced with fury — not, Harry suspected, about losing the game, but about Crabbe’s unsportsmanlike conduct. “I’m fine,” Harry said again, directing his words at his teammates while his eyes were still on his boyfriend.

The Slytherins in the crowd were heckling and booing, but it didn’t matter — Gryffindor had won. The rest of the team landed, Fred and George immediately crowding Vicky with praise, tweaking her ponytail and thumping her on the back proudly.

“That’s the hardest match done,” Katie declared happily. “We’ve got the cup in the *bag* this year!” They all whooped, and Harry did to, heading towards the changing room. He glanced over his shoulder, unsurprised to see Draco’s eyes still on him — no longer angry, but hot and intent.

A shiver ran down Harry’s spine, and he kept walking.

Angelina wasn’t satisfied until Harry pulled off his shirt and armour to prove there was nothing more than a light bruise. “It’ll be fine in a couple of days,” he insisted. “I don’t need to see Pomfrey.” He had bruise balm in his room, courtesy of Snape, and that would clear it right up.

“Leave the man alone, love,” Fred called jovially, “or I’ll start worrying about how desperate you are to keep his top off.”

Angelina rolled her eyes, throwing her wrist-guard at her boyfriend.

The twins, bless their devious hearts, seemed to notice that Harry was dragging his feet. They were in fine form, chattering away about the victory party, herding the girls out of the changing room and telling Harry not to take too long. George threw a salacious wink at him on his way out, and Harry felt himself go red.