

“You signed, then?”

“You, Mr Potter, are looking at the brand new starting keeper for the Scottish national team,” Oliver confirmed proudly. Harry had to hug him again for that.

“Ollie, that’s amazing!” Oliver blushed a little, but slung an arm around Harry’s shoulder, leading him down a carpeted corridor.

“The rest of the team might give me some lip for supporting the enemy, but I thought a friendly face might ease the way a bit,” he said. Harry felt a rush of affection for his ex-captain; he was still incredibly nervous, but having Oliver there definitely helped.

When they emerged through a wide tunnel out onto the pitch, Harry was in awe — the stands were set up to look like castle battlements, flags flying from every turret. Even the tunnel on the other side of the pitch had a portcullis.

“Mr Potter!” He whipped around, seeing a tall man who looked to be in his mid-fifties or so, salt and pepper hair and a beard to match. He was broad-shouldered — a beater, most likely, by the looks of him. “I’m Andrew Morris, call me Andy. I’m the team manager. Over there is Claudia Harper, she’s our coach, and up in the stands are a few of our investors. Don’t worry about them.”

Harry swallowed, desperately wishing Andy had not pointed them out — now all Harry would do *was* worry about them.

“We’ve kept this pretty hushed up, for obvious reasons,” Andy continued, “so I haven’t mentioned anything to the rest of the team yet. As a seeker, there’s less of a need to test your cohesion with the team as a whole — if today goes well, we can introduce you, see how you all fly together.” He smiled, relaxed and friendly. “But, of course, no seeker can properly show off their stuff without having another seeker to face off against, so someone will be coming by soon to give you a bit of a challenge. Until then we’re just going to send you up with Claudia, run some drills, see how you fly. Sound good?”

Harry nodded — that sounded much easier than he’d anticipated. Before now, he’d been fearing that these tryouts would be like school tryouts; dozens of other hopefuls, all having to fly in front of each other.

Claudia shook his hand, grinning cheerfully. She reminded him of Tonks, a bit, with bright dyed-red hair in a pixie cut and several piercings in her ears. “Hiya, Harry. Really great to meet you, we’ve heard loads about you. Oliver hasn’t shut up about you since I told him this had been set up,” she said, shooting a look at the Scotsman who just gave Harry a thumbs up. “And since he’s turned traitor and gone to the Scots even though *legally* he’s half and half and could’ve gone either way,” this was said with a pointed glare, “hopefully having you join us will make up for it. You ready to fly?”

Harry resized his broom, put on his goggles and guards, and then they were off.

He knew, of course, that professional quidditch was much faster than school quidditch. He’d seen the world cup final; the quaffle had been little more than a blur. But he hadn’t realised