

Bulstrode and Theodore Nott along with them. For a brief moment, Harry was hopeful Draco might join them, but he pushed the thought away; whatever strides they'd been making towards house unity, there was no way Draco could be seen fraternising with Gryffindors and Hufflepuffs. His father would kill him. Harry was even surprised Nott was there — from what he knew, the boy's father was pretty strict about blood purity, and had been one of Voldemort's most devoted followers.

Sure enough, Draco and Pansy were across the room with a group of older Slytherins and Durmstrang students. Harry spotted Adrian Pucey getting rather cosy with a boy from Beauxbatons; clearly not *too* upset about George turning him down.

A hand tugged on his arm, and Cho nudged him into a dance hold that was *very* different from the waltz, laughing at the look on his face. "Loosen up, Harry!" she teased, placing her hands on his hips and forcing them to move to the beat. Harry's cheeks were burning, especially when Cedric wolf-whistled.

"Your girlfriend is manhandling me, Diggory!" Harry called. "Aren't you going to do something about it?"

"I could always manhandle you instead?" Cedric offered, laughing when Harry's face went even redder.

After a couple of minutes Cho seemed satisfied with his dancing and retreated back to Cedric's side, holding him in a much more comfortable — and more inappropriate — way than she'd been holding Harry.

Fred sidled up to Harry, dancing all the while, and opened his robes to reveal a plain silver flask in the inside pocket. "Firewhisky?" he offered with a smirk. Harry glanced around, then shrugged; fuck it, he was fourteen and probably going to die by the end of the year if this bloody tournament had its way. He reached into Fred's robes, flipping the lid on the flask and taking a swig, coughing as it burned his throat on the way down. Fred pat him on the back, chuckling. "That's my boy! Let me know if you want more, I've got plenty."

Fred moved off to go dance between Angelina and Lee, and Harry wondered how many other people had been drinking from the flask that night. Then he decided he didn't care, and kept on dancing.

.-.-.

Harry's limbs were aching and his head was pounding along with the bass of the music, but he didn't care one bit as he danced, spinning Hermione around with a grin. She was an entirely different person tonight, and it made Harry's heart ache at the cracks in his friendship — cracks he was starting to think were irreparable. Dancing with her, laughing with her and Viktor, it felt... disjointed. Like they were once friends, and they were slipping back into what they used to be, but it didn't quite match up with the people they were now. He suspected Hermione could feel it too; every now and then he caught her looking at him with something sad and knowing in her gaze.