

Cedric winced, giving Harry an apologetic glance. “I told you, Dad, there were dementors, it wasn’t a fair match.”

“Oh, you Hufflepuffs!” Amos dismissed, clapping his son on the shoulder. “It doesn’t take a genius to see who’s the better flier when one man falls off his broom and the other stays on! Eh, Harry?”

“I mean, if you’d like to try playing quidditch while listening to your mother’s screams as she’s murdered in front of you,” Harry retorted evenly, “by all means, be my guest.”

That took the wind out of Amos’ sails, and there were several long, awkward seconds of silence before Mr Weasley coughed. “Do you know if we’re waiting for any more, Amos? Must be nearly time.”

“No, no, it’s just us,” Amos replied, somewhat stilted.

“We’d best get ready, then. Gather round, everyone.”

The portkey turned out to be an old boot, and it took them a minute to get situated so that all nine of them were stood in a tight circle, each with a hand on the boot. They waited as the sun slowly began to rise, Mr Weasley offering a countdown until—

Harry felt like a hook was jerking him from the navel, and suddenly his feet left the ground, Ron and Hermione slamming into his shoulders on either side as they sped upwards in a swirl of colour and wind. It all ended abruptly, his feet slamming into the earth, and he almost kept his balance until Ron staggered into him, knocking him to the ground.

Cedric offered him a hand up, grinning sheepishly. “Easy there, Harry.” He brushed some dirt off Harry’s arm. “Look, I’m sorry about my dad,” he said under his breath. “I’ve tried talking to him, but he’s just—“

“It’s fine,” Harry insisted. “Really. He’s proud of you, it’s nice.” Cedric gave a half-grimace.

“We still on for that rematch?” he checked. Harry nodded keenly.

“Absolutely. See you later, yeah?” he added once he realised they were parting ways. “Enjoy the match.”

He waved Cedric off, and as soon as they turned away he found himself accosted on either side by a Weasley twin. “You’re getting awfully cosy with Diggory there, Harry,” Fred muttered. It took Harry a second to realise what he was implying, and he blushed bright red.

“We’re friends! He’s a nice guy. He feels really bad about the match still, you should let up on him.”

George eyed him doubtfully. “Hmm. Still. Bill’s better looking.”

Harry spluttered. They had noticed that! He covered his face with his hands, mortified. “Don’t worry about it, Harry!” Fred said, nudging him in the ribs with a grin. “Our big