

“No, not all of them. Half of them aren’t even Gryffindors, look,” she said, gesturing to a cluster of Hufflepuff third years. “Pretty sure they’re just here to ogle you. Mr Chosen One,” she teased, winking. Harry groaned.

“Really?” he whined. “I thought I was back to being an evil head case again?”

“You were for a while,” Katie told him, shrugging, “but then you came back after the summer and everyone remembered how hot you are, so I guess they’re back to fawning over you again.”

Harry felt his cheeks turn as red as his quidditch uniform, and Katie laughed, shoving his shoulder gently. “Get used to it, Harry. Now come on, let’s see what they’re made of.”

Despite practically being his co-captain, and having been on the team for longer than Harry had, Katie insisted on trying out with the other chasers.

And, despite Katie’s insistence that most of the crowd were just there to drool over Harry, most of them were also there to at least *pretend* to be interested in quidditch.

It was clear Harry was going to have to revise his plans a little bit. “Okay,” he called, his voice magically louder. “Here’s how this is going to go!”

Splitting the crowd into groups of ten helped; seeing whether they could actually fly before he got into anything complicated. Seeing whether they were even in Gryffindor House to begin with. He could hardly believe how many people were willing to pretend they wanted to play quidditch, just to flirt with him!

At last, Harry could start chaser trials. While he had agreed to give everyone a fair shot, it was obvious to him that Katie and Ginny were in a class of their own — along with them he chose a fourth year girl, Demelza Robbins, who had a lot of potential.

There were plenty of complaints from the rejected fliers, insisting he was just picking his friends for the team, but quite frankly he had little patience for them. “I’m starting the beater trials, and if you’re still in the way, I’m not responsible for how many bludgers hit you,” he declared bluntly, which served to clear the pitch fairly well.

To Harry’s sheer relief, there were more options to choose from than just Kirke and Sloper. Not near as good as Fred and George, but Jimmy Peakes and Ritchie Coote were certainly better than the two boys who had played in the Ravenclaw match last year, and anyone else on the pitch. A glance to Katie saw her nodding as well, so Harry was confident with his choice.

At last — once all protesting beater rejects had been cleared from the pitch — it was time for keeper trials. Much to Harry’s dismay, Ron was giving it another go. Cormac McLaggen was there too, as promised, looking far too confident in himself. Vicky stood further down the line from both boys, jaw clenched in determination, and Harry forced himself not to grin at her. He had to look like he was being fair.