

He didn't tell them the details. He didn't feel the need to go into the specifics of the ritual, or the Death Eaters, or the strange *Priori Incantatem* as Dumbledore had called it. They weren't there for that. They were there for Cedric. "If I'd taken the Cup by myself, Cedric would still be alive. If I'd listened to him—"

"Yeah, and if he'd listened to you, You-Know-Who wouldn't be alive right now, but Cedric would still be d-dead," Cho pointed out, faltering on the last word. "If he'd stopped being so bloody *Hufflepuff* for *five minutes*." She choked out a laugh that was more of a sob, shaking her head. "Everything about that maze was designed to make you get there first. You said Crouch was rigging the whole thing. Cedric shouldn't have even been there, but he was, because both of you cared more about each other than some stupid competition. There was no way you could've known what would happen, and Cedric would hit you if he were here to listen to you blaming yourself."

"How can you say that?" Harry asked plaintively. "How can you sit here and comfort me and hold my hand when *I'm the reason your boyfriend is dead*?"

"Voldemort is the reason my boyfriend is dead!" Cho's dark eyes were burning, and she seemed to have surprised even herself by saying the name. "Don't cheapen his death by making it your own burden, Harry. It's not fair to either of you."

Harry wished he could believe Cho's words, but it didn't stop the guilt constricting his heart, so he kept his mouth shut. "What did Dumbledore tell the rest of the school?"

Fleur and Viktor shared a glance. "He said that Cedric's death was the first casualty of a new war," Viktor relayed. "He said he would explain more when time had passed, and allow a period of mourning."

That was appropriately vague and dramatic for Dumbledore. "And... Cedric's parents? What were they told?"

"The truth, mostly," Cho piped up. "That their son was killed by You-Know-Who's followers, because he got in the way of them resurrecting their master. They... they'd like to come see you before they leave, if you're okay with that?"

Harry couldn't think of many things worse than having to look the Diggorys in the eye and apologise for being alive when their son was not. But he didn't think he had the right to turn them away, under the circumstances, so he said yes.

"When do you all head home?" He directed his question to Viktor and Fleur.

"After the leaving feast," Fleur told him. "Madame Maxime wanted us to leave sooner, but... she spoke to Professor Dumbledore and he persuaded her to stay." Harry remembered Dumbledore saying something about speaking to Hagrid and Maxime about a job, and he wondered if it was due to that.

"We have no headmaster," Viktor added with a shrug. "But we are the ones who steer the boat anyway. We will go home when the term is finished." At Harry's look of confusion, he explained