

“They didn’t really tell me, I was just sent to get you. They want all the champions — I think it’s for the *Daily Prophet*?” That made the boy beam even wider.

“Great. Fantastic.” Harry ran a hand through his hair. “Just what I need.” A thought occurred to him, and he reached into the pocket of his robes, pulling out the badge Malfoy had given him. He fixed it proudly to his chest, ignoring Colin’s look of confusion.

When they arrived at the right room, Colin waved a cheerful goodbye, and Harry entered in trepidation. It was a small unused classroom; he and Draco had used it to play cards in a couple of times. Almost all the desks had been pushed against the wall, except three that had been stood end-to-end and draped in velvet, with five chairs behind them. Ludo Bagman was there, talking to a blonde witch Harry had never seen before, and he grinned at Harry’s entrance. In the corner was a man with a big wizarding camera. All the other champions were there too, looking like they’d rather be anywhere else. At least Harry wasn’t the only one.

“There he is! Champion number four!” Bagman’s gaze dropped down to Harry’s badge, and he faltered. “Ha! Funny joke, there, Harry, very clever. In you come, in you come, it’s nothing to worry about. Just the Wand Weighing ceremony — got to check everything is in working order before the first task. Then just a quick little interview with Ms Skeeter here, and you’ll be on your way. Have you met before, Harry? This is Rita Skeeter, she’s doing a little piece on the tournament for the *Prophet*.”

Harry eyed the woman, disgust rising. This was Rita Skeeter, was it? The woman who had caused so much trouble after the cup with her articles. She was wearing lurid magenta robes, her hair done in elaborate curls and her claw-like nails painted vivid crimson, clutching a crocodile-skin purse. She was looking at Harry like she wanted to eat him alive. “Might I have a quick word with Harry before we start?” Skeeter asked, already pulling an acid green quill from her purse. “The youngest champion, you know, to add a bit of colour?”

“Certainly!” Bagman agreed, but Harry shook his head.

“No, thank you.” He didn’t want to give Rita Skeeter anything she might be able to use against him. Both adults blinked.

“Come now, Harry, it’s just a quick interview,” Bagman encouraged. Harry held his ground.

“I don’t want to. I’d rather my name and picture not be in the paper at all, but with the tournament, that can’t be helped. But if you want an interview, you interview all of us. Not just me.”

“Really, lad, I don’t know why you’re making such a fuss.” Bagman was sending nervous looks back at Skeeter, who seemed incredibly unimpressed.

“E said non, Monsieur Bagman.” It was Fleur Delacour, stepping in front of Harry with her arms folded over her chest.

“Harry’s underage, you can’t interview him without consent of a guardian anyway,” Cedric added, standing by Fleur’s side. Bagman chuckled awkwardly.