

was only sheer stubbornness that kept him upright, his refusal to show any sort of weakness in front of those people.

Even his lessons in the summer couldn't have prepared him for duelling with Voldemort, surrounded by Death Eaters. Voldemort was toying with him, making a mockery of his enemy, and Harry was torn between wanting the man to just kill him and get it over with, and desperately looking for a way out.

When it came, it was in a way that Harry never would have imagined. The golden cage of light; the shades of Cedric, of his parents, of Bertha Jorkins and the muggle man. *We're so proud of you, son*. His mother's sad smile. Cedric begging him to return his body to his father, pleading for Harry not to feel guilty.

And then he was running, dodging spells left and right, his eyes focused on Cedric's body and the faint glow of the Triwizard Cup. As soon as his hand clenched around Cedric's cool wrist, a wandless Summoning charm had the cup flying into his hand, and the world spun again.

Harry returned to Hogwarts, slamming into the ground just at the edge of the maze. He let the cup fall to the side, his grip still tight on Cedric. The Hufflepuff's face was pale, and Harry choked back a sob.

All around him, the crowd had burst into deafening applause, cheering and whooping at what they saw to be a combined Hogwarts victory. Suddenly, fingers gripped Harry's shoulder, and he was wrenched up to meet Dumbledore's gaze. "Harry," the headmaster said, looking down at Cedric. "What happened?"

"Voldemort," Harry gasped out. "He's back."

He just managed to see a flare of what looked like *triumph* in Dumbledore's eyes before his vision was blocked by a lime green bowler hat. "What's going on? What happened? Oh my word!" Fudge's eyes went wide. "The Diggory boy! He's—"

Dumbledore tried to pull Harry away, but he clung tighter. "No, he told me," he muttered. "He wanted me to bring him back. He shouldn't have been there." If he hadn't told Cedric to take the Cup with him, if he'd just accepted the victory and gone alone, Cedric would still be alive. *Kill the spare*. Harry was the only one supposed to be in the graveyard. It was his fault.

"Harry, there's nothing you can do for him now." Dumbledore's voice stood out amongst all the others, but Harry refused to let go of Cedric. Everything around him was a haze of screams and whispers and shadows, people sobbing, the word *dead* being passed around over and over, Fudge's voice getting progressively higher as he grew more and more panicked. Dumbledore released him, but a different set of hands gripped him by the shoulder, wrenching him off of Cedric and away from the huddle. Harry tried to fight it, but after multiple rounds of Cruciatus, he couldn't have fought off a kitten.

"No," he murmured, feeling the stranger usher him across the grass, stumbling as they hit the castle steps. "No, I can't leave Cedric."