

It looked like she had just arrived — back-up, perhaps? Or had she come late simply to gloat at their success? She must be disappointed, if that were the case.

As she sauntered down the cobblestone streets, two masked Death Eaters stayed close behind her. Harry wondered if it was the other two Lestranges; the brothers, Rodolphus and Rabastan.

He stepped up to face them. There was no way he was going to let the three of them loose on Hogsmeade. The HA could handle the rest — these three were all his.

“I’m only saying the truth,” Harry drawled, keeping his wand raised as he stood merely feet away from Bellatrix. “Hardly seems like a fair fight. Does he even care that some of those third years might be his followers’ kids? Or is he finally admitting that the whole pureblood supremacy stuff is just bullshit, and all he really wants is destruction.” He ducked a jet of bright green magic, smirking. “Ooh, naughty Bella! Your boss won’t like that; he wants to kill me himself, you can’t take that from him.”

Bellatrix scowled, and the next spell headed his way was a Cruciatus. Harry dodged that, too. “You don’t understand the Dark Lord’s master plans, you stupid half-blood!”

“Neither do you, by the looks of it,” Harry retorted. “Killing magical kids just to make a point? So much for *preserving the bloodlines*.”

The woman screeched, firing another spell, which Harry deflected. It left a huge gouge in the cobblestones when it hit the ground. “We don’t *care* about the ickle babies,” Bellatrix spat. “We’re here to make sure you and your blood-traitor *boyfriend* get what you deserve.”

Harry’s instinct was to look for Draco, but he didn’t dare turn away from the Lestranges. Draco would be fine. He could handle himself.

“Leave the others alone, then,” he challenged. “I’m right here. Leave them, and come get me.”

Not all of the Death Eaters took up the challenge. Some were clearly having too much fun terrorising the village — those ones didn’t last long against the HA.

But within moments, Harry found himself utterly surrounded. Bellatrix’s smirk was sharp as a knife, her wand drawing close to her face.

And the fight began.

All of Harry’s training could not have prepared him for this — there were more people after him than he could count, spells coming from every direction. He shielded and dodged and deflected, trying to send their spells back at them where he could, sending his own spells out when he got the chance. He wasn’t creative; Cutting curses, Bone-Breakers, Disarming charms. Anything quick, easy, and not likely to have him called a Dark Lord when the dust settled.