

They said their goodbyes and left Harry alone once more. He ran a hand through his hair, biting his lip against a fresh wave of grief, and rolled over to bury his face in his pillow.

.-.-.-.

Meeting with Cedric's parents had been nothing short of awful, but Harry had made it through. He'd explained to them what happened — the truth, in case Dumbledore had seen fit to lie to them — and apologised over and over. Amos Diggory was quiet, but Caroline Diggory held him tight and insisted it wasn't his fault, that he'd done everything he could.

It certainly didn't feel like it.

He tried to offer them the Triwizard winnings, but they refused to take it. Harry was left staring at the sack full of galleons, wondering what the hell he was supposed to do with it. Send it to Gringotts and throw it in with the rest of his money? That seemed a waste. Were there charities, in the wizarding world?

Twenty minutes before dinner, Madam Pomfrey checked him over and declared him fit to leave. "Only if you want to, Mr Potter," she added with concern in her eyes. "It's no trouble to me if you want to stay another night."

As much as Harry was dreading having to face the rest of the school, the prospect of spending a night alone in the Hospital Wing was worse. Dumbledore had come by to visit not long after the Diggorys, and being alone with the headmaster had set him on edge. The night before had been fine, as Remus and Sirius had stood guard, but he didn't have that now. He'd much rather be in his dormitory.

He thought about skipping dinner, but his rumbling stomach decided that for him. He shook off the brief thought of going to the kitchens instead; he'd have to face everybody eventually. Might as well get it over with

As he walked from the Hospital Wing to the Great Hall, dressed in a fresh school uniform the house elves had fetched for him, several people stopped and stared at him walking past. He ignored them, keeping his head down as he entered the hall, whispers echoing in his wake.

"Harry!" He looked up at the call that came louder than all the other murmurs of his name, seeing Cho waving at him from the Ravenclaw table. She wasn't alone; Viktor and Fleur were with her, and the twins, and Ginny and Luna, and Neville and Susan and Hannah, and a dozen other people who had become a regular presence in their hodge-podge social group over the last few months, including several of Cedric's Hufflepuff friends. Between Cho and Viktor was an empty seat, and Harry walked towards it, dropping down onto the bench. Cho leaned into his shoulder for a brief moment, squeezing his arm. "How are you holding up?"

"I should be asking you that," Harry retorted quietly. He looked around the group, all of whom were giving him encouraging smiles. "You guys didn't have to do this."

"Yeah we do," Cho insisted. "So let us do it. You're our friend, and you were Cedric's friend, and he'd come back and haunt all of us if we just left you to the wolves."