

He wasn't sure why. He wasn't sad about Titus' death, or the fates of his uncle and Corvus. They deserved everything they got and more, as far as he was concerned. They weren't tears of sadness — they were tears of relief.

As soon as they were sentenced, that would be it. All political standing, all titles and boons, everything would be stripped away, including Uncle Thaddeus' position as Lord Warrington. Cassius could walk into the Wizengamot and claim his rightful seat, and *no one* would be able to stop him. The Dark Lord could come after him, could try and get him to accept the Mark, but Cassius no longer had to risk being disinherited — there was only his brother and his Uncle Atticus left, and neither of them had the Warrington family magic in them; there was nothing they could do. He might have to run, yes — he had not technically pledged to the Dark Lord, but he had been to enough meetings that he wouldn't be allowed to just *leave* — but Harry had offered sanctuary, and even if he ran he would still have access to his family magics and vaults.

He was free.

"I've got you, love," Oliver murmured, shuffling them over to the bed, still rumpled from their earlier activities — it felt like a lifetime ago, now. "Let it out, there you go. I've got you. You're alright. They can't hurt you any more, my love. Not now."

The Scotsman's words were a balm to Cassius' soul, his heart swelling with love. For the first time in his life, Cassius could look ahead, could imagine a future that didn't make him want to slit his own wrists in despair. A future where he and Oliver could stay together, could go public, could be *happy*.

"Marry me," he rasped, red-rimmed eyes meeting bewildered green. "Marry me, Oliver Wood."

A heartbeat, then a grin crept across Ollie's face, blinding in its intensity. Merlin, Cassius wanted to see him smile like that *forever*. "You're on, Warrington," the Gryffindor agreed, knocking him flat to the mattress in a bear hug. "Yes, I'll fucking marry you. I've only been asking for months!"

Cassius laughed, heart soaring. "But you never gave me a ring," he teased, and Oliver narrowed his gaze.

"Neither have you."

"Give me a second." Cassius unholstered his wand, and summoned the little box from where he'd hidden it far under the bed. It zoomed into his hand, and Cassius flicked it open, revealing the gold Celtic knot band nestled on a little velvet cushion. Oliver's jaw dropped.

"Oh, you crafty wee bastard," he breathed, and Cassius laughed as he slipped the ring onto Oliver's finger with trembling hands. Oliver kissed him hard, smiling against Cassius' mouth. "I love you."

Cassius' chest hurt from the force of his joy, his love for the man in front of him, and he kissed him again, fingers tingling from how fucking *happy* he was right at that moment.