

Harry was jammed into the opposite corner, plastered against Draco's front, but he didn't need to look to know Sirius was grinning smugly. He groaned, head falling forward on Draco's shoulder. "More information than we needed, Padfoot."

"Just trying to ease the tension!" Sirius defended. "Honestly, you'd think we were all headed into another battle! This is the easy part."

They were saved having to try and find a response to that by the lift slamming uncomfortably to a halt, practically spitting them all out when the doors opened. Sirius was still grinning, winking at Harry when he caught his godson's eye. Harry had to admit, it was a good distraction from the way they turned past the door to the Department of Mysteries and towards the Wizengamot meeting room.

"This is where we leave you, then," Amelia declared softly, pausing at the door. "You all know what to do."

She pressed a kiss to Susan's brow, then she and the others who had already claimed their seats entered the hall. The Wizengamot would need to be in session before any further claims could be acknowledged.

The wait was excruciating. Harry tried not to fidget, but Draco had to grab his hands to stop him picking at his fingernails. He kissed Harry's palms, one at a time, then threaded their fingers together.

Even *Snape* looked nervous, if you knew what to look for. Harry sidled over to the man, leaning ever so slightly against him. "Think of how furious all those Death Eaters going to Azkaban will be when they learn that they've lost everything and you're now a sitting Lord," he murmured under his breath. Dark eyes slanted in his direction, and thin lips curled in a smirk.

Then at last, it was time.

The door handle glowed a bright green, indicating it was acceptable for them to enter. Somehow, Harry ended up pushed to the front, urged to open the door. Honestly, all his friends were so *dramatic*.

He squared his shoulders, and stepped over the threshold.

The magic of the Wizengamot meeting room felt... ancient. As ancient as Hogwarts, but different, more austere. This was not a magic that had grown off the blossoming power of children, but off the restrained power of adults trying their best to keep it to themselves. This magic had fed off the souls of criminals, and judged countless people worthy of their family names.

This was not a magic you wanted to mess with.

None of them spoke. When Harry looked up at the gathered Wizengamot, he ignored all the startled faces and looked straight at Sirius' smiling eyes, wrinkled at the corners.