

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Harry investigates his own murder.

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As much as the mystery surrounding Lady Slytherin was quite gripping, Harry needed to know what had bypassed his defenses first and foremost... and how as well. It wasn't just about him after all. Anything that could bypass his magical defenses and manage to kill him could do the same to those close to him, such as Fleur. It was the same reason he'd spent so much time putting up protections on the mansion and his office, after all.

And so, making his way home, Harry settles in and begins the process of figuring out what happened. He casts several spells, some of which are quite esoteric in looking back on his timeline to see what had befallen him, while others are much simpler in terms of running diagnostics on his body to see if there were any lingering effects from his most recent murder.

Unfortunately, he can't do his favored trick that he did for Pansy at the Parkinson Estate or back at the Forbidden Forest to check Filch's story. That would require him to be given unrestricted access to the Wizengamot and more so, he would prefer to be alone while doing it... so as not to raise any alarm.

Instead, Harry is forced to rely on taking his memories of the entire Wizengamot Meeting out and putting them in a pensieve so he can watch them back from an outside perspective and see what, if anything, he might have been missing.

Now obviously, given her title and his suspicions, Harry spends his first past through the pensieve memories checking out what Lady Slytherin was doing for the entire Wizengamot Meeting. If she'd surreptitiously had the tip of her wand poking out of her robes or something, he'd know it from this.

But... no. As far as he could tell, she was perfectly poised, her hands kept in her lap the entire time and never actually moving from that position. Even when she

speaks up in his 'defense' to shut down Narcissa's efforts to get his motion to fail, she barely moves a muscle.

Narcissa Malfoy is the next woman he checks for subtle wand use pointed in his direction, but she doesn't do anything untoward in that manner either. She DOES shoot him a number of dirty looks of course throughout the meeting, and if looks could kill Harry would be dead more than just the once, he'd be dead a dozen times over.

But in this case, he doesn't think Lady Malfoy has the capabilities of a Basilisk. No, his sudden death hadn't come from her.

As the pensieve memories go dark with Harry falling asleep listening to the other members of the Wizengamot bickering about this or that, he frowns and watches carefully to see what's happening when he comes back to life. As Chief Warlock Longbottom wakes him up from his 'nap', Harry carefully observes the rest of the chamber, looking for anyone who is downright surprised that he's somehow still alive.

Nobody wears that look, hidden or otherwise, unfortunately. Lady Slytherin is the only witch he can't outright check for that expression and she IS staring directly at him as he remembers her doing, but still there's no visible wand and her hands remain folded in her lap.

Likewise, Narcissa Malfoy just looks irritated and insulted. Probably by the fact that she'd lost her political battle to him and then he'd had the audacity to fall asleep on her and the rest of the Wizengamot a little while later.

Frowning, Harry rewinds the pensieve memory and watches it again from start to finish, this time paying more attention to his conversations outside of the Wizengamot Chambers. Had someone cast some sort of timed release spell on him that had only gone off later and he'd missed it? It seemed highly unlikely, but he needed to check everything.

He doesn't see anything amidst in those earlier conversations though, nor does he see anything throughout the beginning of the Wizengamot Session itself

either. Finally getting to the end of the pensieve memories for a second time, Harry finally turns his attention to the simple diagnostic spells he's run on himself to see if they have anything to say.

To his surprise... they have a lot to say. There are traces of something utterly impossible in his blood stream, something that leaves Harry leaning back in shock and furrowing his brow as he casts the spells again. They return the same result... albeit a bit more degraded as time goes on.

It doesn't make sense though... unless... Harry turns his attention back to the pensieve memories and goes through them with a fine toothed comb. This time around, he pays attention to his surroundings a bit more... specifically, his blind spots once he's sat down.

There, back behind his chair... there's a grating in the wall. Rather small and obtuse, it's clearly meant to help with airflow. Harry sees it when he first enters the Wizengamot Chambers, but he doesn't really pay it any mind, just as he doesn't pay any mind to many of the details of the chamber, at least in the moment.

Unfortunately, once he's stood behind his two chairs... and then eventually sitting down once they've been properly collapsed into just a single seat, Harry never once looks in the direction of that grating ever again. In the pensieve, this means it remains completely untouched and the exact same, with the pensieve simply filling in the blanks for his memories wherever his line of sight doesn't land. His mind expects it to still be there and unmoved, so there it remains.

However, if Harry's suspicions are correct... watching the pensieve memory closely again from the moment he sits down, he thinks he barely catches a glimpse of it. It's so faint to be very nearly invisible to the naked eye, but then that would explain it.

Someone has, after he sat down... effectively trapped him in an invisible box. Far enough away that his own magical defenses didn't detect it and of course, because of how empty the chamber was, nobody else is sitting close enough to him to notice either.

That magical box would have eventually caused him to asphyxiate from lack of air of course, seeing as it was completely sealed. However... asphyxiating from a lack of oxygen would have been obvious. TOO obvious. He would have noticed and done something about it... hell, the rest of the Wizengamot probably would have noticed if he started choking and going purple in the face.

Instead... instead, his killer had done something truly ingenious. The diagnostic spells tell a story of how they'd managed it. First they'd trapped him in a box. And then... they'd filled that box with carbon monoxide.

Not to be confused with carbon dioxide, which was the natural byproduct of a human being breathing out... carbon monoxide was a highly toxic, invisible and odorless gas normally formed by the process of incomplete combustion. It was highly flammable as well, but in this case it had been used as a very unorthodox, very subtle poison.

There was just one issue that made it all so unbelievable to Harry. Carbon monoxide tended to be a byproduct of *muggle inventions*. Faulty muggle heaters, muggle motor vehicles left running in sealed garages... carbon monoxide was a silent and effective killer, but it was usually an accident when it happened to muggles. Or, in rare cases, it was used to commit suicide.

The magical world, however, shouldn't have had any concept of carbon monoxide. Or at least, not any concept of how good at killing it was. The toxic gas displaced the oxygen on the way to blood cells, preventing breathable air from reaching the organs and causing death if left untreated and in high enough concentrations.

For someone to kill him with carbon monoxide... it meant the killer was probably muggleborn, weren't they? Or at the very least a half-blood. Someone who had one foot in the muggle world. Someone who knew enough about muggle technology to know the dangers of such a toxic gas.

It worries him that his first instinct is to go right back to suspecting Hermione. As much as Hermione was his friend in so many universes, she was also exactly the sort of which clever enough to pull something like this off.

More than that, this would explain why so much of the Magical World thought that it was some random curse just killing off all the wizards. If a good number of the deaths had happened thanks to CO poisoning, then Harry didn't know if the experts at St. Mungo's would be equipped to realize what had killed them. It might well and truly look like they'd been struck down by nothing at all, the lack of any magical residue making it all a true mystery.

Hell, thanks to the subtlety of the murder weapon, nobody in the Wizengamot had even realized he'd died. Unless Lady Slytherin saw it but just didn't comment. She HAD been staring at him weirdly, hadn't she? Only, Harry didn't think Lady Slytherin was a muggleborn or half-blood... probably. She could be, he supposed.

Still, only his own innate ability to self-resurrection again and again as the Master of Death had kept them all from discovering his cooling corpse in their midst. It would have probably made quite the statement, Harry imagined. Here was this upstart Wizard Lord who had barged into the Wizengamot and browbeat them all into submission... only to die mere minutes later to the 'curse' plaguing the British Isles.

But that hadn't happened. Instead, Harry had woken up when called upon and most of the chamber definitely didn't know he'd died. Whoever was behind the killings had to be frustrated by that fact.

Knowing how he'd died a second time just leaves Harry with even more questions at this point. On the one hand, he could at least protect against this happening again. A simple expansion of his personal protective and detection spells would tell him if anyone tried to trap him in a big invisible box again, as well as if he was breathing in anything less than acceptable amounts of oxygen.

On the other hand... who the fuck was behind it all? Now that he knew this had to be a muggleborn... was Lady Slytherin a red herring of sorts, something for

him to chase after but in the end turning out to not be involved whatsoever? Or was she still exactly who he needed to hunt down and get answers from?

“My Lord.”

Pulled from his introspection, Harry turns to regard Fleur... only to blink at the veritable *stack* of letters she’s holding in her hands.

“I didn’t want to disturb you since you seemed busy, but every single one of these have arrived in the last half hour...”

Of course they-

“And this is only the first collection.”

... Huh. Harry blinks as he steps forward, taking the stack of letters from Fleur with a nod.

“Thank you Fleur. Go and get the rest for me. Don’t open any of them, please.”

His beautiful part veela assistant nods and quickly departs. Harry, meanwhile, casts numerous spells on the letters he’s received so far to make sure none contain anything untoward. While his wards will protect him from magical maladies and wouldn’t have let anything cursed through in the first place, he now knows that his hidden enemy is a lot more versatile than he initially gave them credit for.

If they could give him carbon monoxide poisoning on the floor of the Wizengamot, he definitely wouldn’t put it past them to put anthrax or some sort of muggle explosive device in a sealed letter to him.

Fortunately, he detects nothing like that. Unfortunately, it’s obvious at this point that the Kneazle is out of the bag. This many letters... Harry’s adventure with the Wizengamot had definitely made it out into the public eye at this point. Loose lips sink ships, but obviously most of the women in those chambers didn’t

care too much about sinking any ships at this point... not when they knew they were already on one.

Of course, many of the letters are actually from members of the Wizengamot. Most of them, Harry doesn't recognize by name or care to. There are some though that he finds himself sighing over. Letters from the likes of Lady Zabini and Lady Greengrass, and even another letter from Lady Malfoy. Even Augusta Longbottom has sent him a letter, the Chief Warlock probably backing up her verbal invitation with a more official one.

Then there are the letters from non-Wizengamot Members. Most of those are also strangers Harry doesn't really recognize by name, nor does he care to. However, a couple of them are people he recognizes.

For instance, Lavender Brown has sent him a letter, no doubt hoping to set up that interview he owes her so she can get his story for the Daily Prophet. Luna's latest edition of the Quibbler has come out by now, and while his interview with her would have read as nonsensical to most witches, it still meant he'd given her an interview before Lavender.

And then there's Padma Patil, the beautiful Indian Witch he'd promised a date to. Curiosity piqued, Harry opens her letter and finds a respectful and hopeful invitation... to go to a Quidditch Match with her. Huh, that was surprising. He wouldn't have expected Padma to be interested in such a thing, but maybe she'd correctly deduced that such a date would win points with him?

Either way, he certainly has a full schedule in front of him, even if he only bothers answering a small fraction of these letters. He COULD ignore all of them... but that would probably be a mistake in the long run. This was still supposed to be a vacation of sorts after all. He didn't *need* to rush to the finish line or anything like that...

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A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!

