

Percy was, according to Amelia Bones, the most valuable asset the entire Ministry had. Something that made him turn beet red every time she said it within his earshot. In the days since Dumbledore's death, the pair of them had been working with Mrs Frobisher and a reporter at the *Prophet* to systematically point out all of the Ministry's corruption, as well as Dumbledore's crimes, and the involvement of those connected to him. Cornelius Fudge was getting a reputation as the worst Minister they'd ever had, making Harry wonder if the man would ever dare show his face in public again.

He couldn't say he minded if he didn't.

But Percy was absolutely thriving in his position as Amelia's Senior Undersecretary, handling all her organisational needs with relish and not once faltering at the sight of an enormous and extremely boring pile of parchment to read through in detail. And he had all his siblings back, too, which Harry knew he must appreciate.

They stopped to chat to Lee and Alicia too, though the pair were at the till and didn't have much time to talk. And Blaise popped up only briefly, kissing George, declaring he was going out for a bit, and telling Harry that he and Draco had made plans to gather the Slytherin cohort before school went back and Harry was very much expected to be there.

But at last, they had to let everyone get back to work, and after hugs and promises to catch up somewhere quieter soon, Harry and Sirius left the shop.

And bumped right into three people they did not want to see.

Ron, Hermione and Mrs Weasley were stood looking through the window of the twins' shop with conflicted expressions, and the blood drained from their faces at the pair that exited.

"Harry," Hermione gasped, brown eyes widening.

"Hermione," he returned evenly, inclining his head. "Good to see you're fully healed."

"I— yeah. Thanks."

An awkward silence fell between the group, and Harry was just about to start walking when Mrs Weasley reached out. "Harry, dear, we wanted to apologise," she started, eyes welling with tears. "I feel so awful about everything — Albus convinced me it was all for the best, and like the fool I was, I believed him!"

"We're really sorry, Harry," Hermione added sadly.

"Yeah, mate. We shouldn't have treated you like that," Ron said gruffly, looking distinctly uncomfortable at the show of emotion.

Harry folded his arms over his chest, trying to ignore the way his heart was racing. "I accept your apologies," he said, watching them all deflate with relief, "but I can't forgive you."

The trio tensed. Hermione bit her lip. "Harry, I—"