

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

A/N: Amelia and Penny learn more about Harry Hallows~

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Amelia Bones and Penelope Clearwater. Its always interesting to meet new people with familiar faces. Over the timespan that he's been wandering the multiverse; Harry has had to get used to the... differences. In his experience, while different versions of the same person might be quite similar, they're never fully the same.

And these two... well, they're the first time he's come upon an Amelia Bones who is Minister of Magic and a Penelope Clearwater who is Senior Undersecretary. Normally, the former is all too happy to stay Director of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement until her death, while Penelope Clearwater doesn't ever climb so far within the Ministry.

But then, this was a very different set of circumstances they all found themselves in, wasn't it? Amelia and Penelope hadn't so much climbed to their current positions as they'd wound up falling upwards into them as the power vacuum created by so many dead wizards sucked them into place.

Still, how has being Minister of Magic tempered Amelia Bones? How has being Senior Undersecretary enriched Penelope Clearwater? Harry can't wait to find out.

"... Let's start with Ms. Delacour's circumstances, since you so thoughtfully brought it up. As you can imagine, I am very invested in her future."

Fleur tenses at that, even as Harry raises an eyebrow at Amelia's opening salvo. Just based off of that, he can guess that the woman has taken quite a bit of her approach as a lifelong Auror into her work as Minister. Chuckling, he takes a sip of his drink before nodding happily.

“Of course. Well, from the sound of things, I can tell you already know Fleur’s story before I showed up. Enslaved by goblins through a loophole in a faulty contract brought about by the tragic demise of her fiancé. And nobody able to help her all these years.”

Penelope shifts in her seat, bristling a bit and looking like she wants to say something. But she holds her tongue and leaves it in the hands of her superior. A wise move because Amelia doesn’t rise to the bait.

“... Until you came along.”

Harry smirks.

“Yes. Until I came along. Truthfully, I did not go to Gringotts yesterday with any intentions of freeing Ms. Delacour from her predicament. I did not even know about her predicament until partway through my time at the bank. Securing her freedom after that was a trivial matter.”

Like a bloodhound, Amelia immediately leaps upon that last part.

“Free, you say? Ms. Delacour, would you concur with Lord Hallows? Are you free, completely and utterly.”

Fleur, at being addressed, straightens up and shoots him a quick glance, Harry just smiles and inclines his head while shooting off a single message, just as he’d done earlier when she was first meeting with Penelope.

Tell them whatever you like.

Her eyes widen slightly in disbelief before she looks back to Amelia, seemingly entirely relaxed.

“I watched my Lord destroy my Gringotts Contract right in front of me. The goblins have no sway over my life or magic at this point, and they never will again.”

That gets quite the reaction from both Amelia and Penelope. Fleur doesn't mention the Fiendfyre (though Harry wouldn't have minded if she had) but even just the act of saying he destroyed a magical goblin contract is enough to turn the heads of their guests. After all, just managing to wrest the contract from Gringotts by itself would have been an impressive feat.

Looking at him with a newfound wariness and caution, Amelia's lips purse together for a moment before she looks back to Fleur.

"... I see. And what of your new contract with Lord Hallows, Ms. Delacour."

Here, Fleur hesitates which of course makes both Amelia and Penny tense up in response. Harry doubts either of them are expecting her actual response though.

"There isn't one. Yet."

Penny rears back as if struck, looking utterly befuddled. Even Amelia seems surprised, though she manages to contain herself much better than her underling. Indeed, Fleur's words shock Penelope so much that the muggleborn witch can't even hold her tongue anymore.

"Not even a life debt?!"

Immediately following her outburst, Amelia shoots Penelope a look that sees the younger witch flushing in embarrassment and ducking her head shamefully.

"A-Apologies, I spoke out of turn. Please forgive and disregard my poorly chosen words."

Fleur though, smirks and shakes her head, leaning further into his permission to say whatever she wants.

"No, I'm happy to answer you. As a matter of fact, I did consider the thought of swearing a life debt, given all that Lord Hallows has done for me. However, my Lord himself finds such things abhorrent. He has made my employ conditional

on me never actually swearing one, despite the heavy magical weight that lies between us.”

Heh, she really did seem to love talking him up, didn't she? Both Amelia and Penelope are looking at Harry in a new light now, Penny most of all seeming to consider him differently than she did before. Fleur, meanwhile, makes sure to put a cap on her part of this conversation.

“As I said, a contract between Lord Hallows and I does not exist just yet. It has been less than twenty four hours since he freed me from Gringotts' clutches after all... and we found ourselves interrupted before we could properly finalize the details of my employment. Our current verbal agreement will be etched in ink in the coming days.”

She's not even bothering to hide her iciness towards Amelia and Penny, both of whom shift minutely in their seats as they register that Fleur is annoyed with them. Harry, meanwhile, holds back the urge to snort in wry amusement, especially given that he knows the real reason Fleur is upset isn't because of the contract. No, she's annoyed that she still hasn't gotten laid, the lustful woman that she is.

Clearing her throat, Amelia turns back to him, clearly considering the conversation about Fleur's circumstances to be done. However, as she gazes upon him, her breath catches for a moment and she blinks before letting out a light huff.

“... Apologies, but you remind me greatly of the last Potter Heir, Lord Hallows. James Potter... you are his spitting image.”

Harry tilts his head to the side, humming noncommittally.

“Oh? Did you know James Potter well, Minister?”

But Amelia shakes her head.

“No, I’m afraid I can’t say I did. I was in my Fourth Year by the time he started at Hogwarts, and a Hufflepuff besides. After graduation I went straight into the Auror Academy. There was rumor that he was going to do the same when he graduated, but alas... it never came to pass.”

No, it hadn’t. Between the family fortune making Harry’s father independently wealthy and the Order of the Phoenix being at its peak, James had gone straight from Hogwarts to serving with the Order full time. Then, four years later, he would have died at the age of twenty-one right alongside Harry’s mother.

The same, it would seem, held true in this timeline, but then Harry had already known that.

“... What is your connection to the Potter and Black Families, Lord Hallows?”

Harry chuckles at Amelia’s bluntness. Yes, she is very much an Auror at heart regardless of her meteoric rise through the ranks of the Ministry. Direct and to the point. No time for faffing about. Unfortunately for her, Harry sees no reason to give her a straight answer. Mostly because she would never believe him anyways.

“My connection? I imagine I’m connected to those two Houses by way of blood, Minister Bones.”

He simply smiles as Amelia’s eyes narrow at the flippant response. Penelope chokes on her Pumpkin Juice and even Fleur makes a small noise of surprise. But Harry just remains where he is, continuing to sip from his cup.

“I see. And where have you been all this time? Clearly you were raised on the mainland... but neither House Potter nor House Black had any remaining branches there as far as I was aware.”

Harry just hums, letting her believe what she wants to believe and come to her own conclusions.

"I honestly couldn't tell you how it all works, Minister Bones. But work it did. Gringotts itself was forced to acknowledge my right to the Potter and Black Vaults. But those families are dead all the same. Now I've sought to start something new entirely."

Amelia slowly nods.

"Yes... House Hallows. You realize you will have to file the relevant paperwork with the Ministry of Magic if you wish to combine the Potter and Black Seats in the Wizengamot into one 'Hallows Seat', yes?"

Smiling, Harry nods.

"Yes, I'm aware."

Silence stretches on for a moment as Amelia stares at him, clearly hoping he'll say outright whether he's actually planning to do that or not. Harry remains silent as things get awkward and strained. Finally... Amelia just huffs.

"Lord Hallows. Ms. Clearwater and I have come here tonight for one reason and one reason only. To ensure your safety and continued survival. As I'm sure you are well aware, there has been a curse upon the British Isles for almost a decade now. It has slain nearly every last wizard of note within our community. No amount of wards, nor magical prowess, no blood purity, has managed to keep a single one of them safe."

He appreciates her sincerity. It's clear to him that Amelia hasn't even decided whether she likes him or not yet. But that isn't stopping her from trying to help him all the same. Because that's simply the kind of woman she is.

Harry approves, really he does. It's nice to see that becoming Minister of Magic hasn't changed her. Rather, it seems likely that she's changed the position more than anything else. He almost feels bad having to rain on her parade. And yet...

"I do not fear Death, Minister Bones. If it should come knocking... well, I am more than ready to meet it for the old friend it is."

She would be giving him shit later for calling her an 'it' rather than a 'she', but beyond that Harry doesn't speak a single untrue word. And indeed, he can tell his statement resonates with Amelia and Penny more than either of them are expecting. The Minister in particular rocks back in her seat, clearly needing a moment.

Before she can actually respond, Harry decides to move their timetable up a bit and a bell suddenly rings through the house.

"Ah. Dinner is ready early. Come, let us eat."

All three women follow him to the dining room, where Fleur tries to take up position behind him, only to pout a little bit when he gestures wordlessly for her to take a seat as well. Nobody speaks at first as they all find their places at the table. Upon seeing him starting to take food from the massive feast arrayed before them and put it on his plate, Amelia and Penny follow suit, as does Fleur after a moment more.

Silence fills the room, Harry's last words having a lasting impact on the thoughts of the Ministry Officials. They eat quietly, the sound of inoffensive chewing and the scraping of metal utensils against plates filling the air.

Finally though, Amelia cuts in again. The Minister of Magic finds her voice... and to her credit, she does not try to push the issue of his impending death. Instead, she tries a different tack.

"I presume you have come here to the British Isles, and specifically to the British Wizarding World, for a reason Lord Hallows. Would you be willing to share your intentions with the Ministry at this time, if nothing else?"

Harry hums, pretending to think it over for a long moment before leaning back in his chair.

"I suppose I must, all things considered. My intentions... are to start a business, Minister Bones."

Amelia's brow furrows in consternation.

"A business, you say. What sort of business?"

Harry smirks.

"It's something entirely new to the British Magical World, actually. But the muggles call the vocation a 'private investigator'."

Now even Fleur and Penny are staring at him as Amelia mouths the words slowly for a moment.

"I see. And what would a 'private investigator' do exactly?"

Heh, he can tell she's already feeling some small amount of distaste towards the idea.

"All sorts of things, really. But mostly, a Private Investigator, or a 'PI' for short, tends to do much the same things as one of your Aurors."

Amelia's eyes narrow at that, his words confirming her suspicions and solidifying her distaste for the profession.

"... Why not just become an Auror then, Lord Hallows?"

Grinning now, Harry shakes his head.

"You've answered your own question, Minister. How often have Lords or Ladies joined the Auror Force? But truth be told, it's less about my title and more about my personality."

"Your personality."

She sounds so unimpressed, it takes everything Harry has not to laugh.

“Yes. I’m afraid I’m not much of a team player, Minister Bones. But I do love myself a mystery, big and small. My intentions are to sell my services as a private investigator to the denizens of Magical Britain in the hopes of... alleviating the stress your Aurors must be under in these trying times.”

Before she can respond, he continues on with a faux contrite look.

“To be clear, I’m not intending to step on any toes, Minister. In fact, I’m telling you my intentions now because I fully expect to register my business with the Ministry in the coming days. And of course, if the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, or indeed any part of the Ministry sees fit to hire me on as a... consultant, then I will be happy to charge VERY affordable rates.”

The temperature in the dining room has dropped. Amelia Bones looks decidedly unimpressed. But then, to her he probably looks like quite the fool. Here he is, an endangered species coming into the prime hunting grounds for his kind... and he’s talking about spending his days solving mysteries and investigating inexplicable occurrences.

She’s here to save his life and Harry probably seems like he’s laughing at her with every word that falls out of his mouth. He’s not though. At least, not exclusively. Everything he’s claimed so far is true, after all.

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A/N:

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