

Unplumbed Motives

by Owlbait

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Harry and Hermione looked about Diagon Alley in confusion, having found themselves confronted by owls for sale where they had expected ice cream. Ollivanders was in Eeylops' former location, and Madam Malkin was selling dress robes in the previous wand shop. Finally locating Florean's shop in Madam Malkin's old premises, they placed their orders and asked about the change.

Reaching into the tub of pumpkin ice cream, he told them, "One day I just started feeling really ... unsettled. I felt like I couldn't stay in the same place a minute longer.

"I never did see the old place the same way after I reopened, you know," he said quietly. "I jumped every time the bell rang. I'm really more comfortable here in my new place."

Ollivander said much the same, which Harry and Hermione thought perfectly understandable. Scribbulus had also been raided, but it was odd that Eeylop, Madam Malkin, and the owner of Quality Quidditch Supplies should all have the same urge as well.

Looking around, it appeared as if Gringotts and the Wheezes were the only businesses still in their traditional locations.

"It was odd, everyone moving like that. I really don't understand it," Verity told them. "Have you seen our new display by the way? Hogwarts lists are due out tomorrow, so the back-to-school jokes are up front."

Hermione didn't approve of jokes for school, but Harry, wearing a nostalgic grin, dragged her over by the arm. Verity followed to tell them about their latest products.

"I'm sure this will be hugely popular when school starts up," she said, pointing to a package of Hotseat Powder. "You sprinkle a little bit on the benches, and nobody can stay seated. George says you can really wind up a teacher if you nip in a bit early and dose the whole room. Can't you just see McGonagall with a whole class wandering around? She'd have kittens," Verity said, laughing merrily.

Harry grinned. "I'd have given a body part to have this in Snape's class."

"That's not funny, Harry," Hermione told him sharply.

"It's really harmless, Hermione," Verity assured her. "It doesn't last long, less than a whole class period.

"It's been thoroughly tested, I promise you. We did have a bad batch when we were developing the recipe," she admitted at Hermione's skeptical look. "It was much too strong; our test subjects couldn't settle on anything. A couple of them broke up with their girlfriends, and one quit their summer job. We ended up dumping that batch, but George figured out what was wrong, and the recipe is perfect now."

Harry just laughed again, but Hermione looked at Verity oddly. "Dumped ... how?"

"Down the drain in the back."

"Diagon Alley has plumbing? Isn't that kind of, well, Muggle?" Hermione asked.

"Oh, we don't have pipes and things, the drain just empties into the gutter and the rain washes everything away. It's been like that for centuries," Verity told her. "Works like a charm."

A/N: ~blows kisses to a secret beta reader~

Prompt: An unseen presence unsettles the denizens of Diagon Alley.