

“Well, you can just come with me, problem solved.” Ron continued as if she hadn’t spoken to him. Hermione huffed.

“Just because you didn’t realise I’m a girl, doesn’t mean no one else did. I already have a date.” She was smiling the tiniest amount through her anger, and Harry eyed her in consideration. He had a sneaking suspicion who that might be; a suspicion that was all but confirmed when Hermione refused to tell Ron who it was.

“I need to find *someone*,” Ron moaned desperately. Harry thought about it for a moment. Just about everyone he knew already had someone; Ron had left it a bit last-minute. If everyone in their year truly did have a date, that didn’t leave many options.

“Hey, Ginny,” he said eventually. “Did Luna stay for Christmas?” The blonde third year wasn’t able to go unless one of the older students asked her. Harry hadn’t spent much time with the Ravenclaw girl, but she seemed nice, if a little odd. Ginny liked her, which was enough for Harry.

Ginny pursed her lips. “She did, yeah. Said her dad’s off in Hungary looking for... some sort of creature.” She glanced down at her brother, then back up at Harry, starting to catch on. “Really?” She made a face. Harry shrugged.

“It’ll get her to the ball.” She didn’t have to actually stay by Ron’s side the whole time. Ron would get a date, Luna would get to come to the ball and hang out with Ginny, it was a win for everybody. Especially Harry, who wouldn’t have to listen to Ron’s griping about not being able to find anyone to go with for the rest of the holidays.

“I’ll ask her,” Ginny agreed with a sigh. “Only so that Luna gets to come too.” Ginny looked like she’d be perfectly happy to see her brother go alone to the Yule Ball. Harry was honestly right there with her — especially with Ron’s awful dress robes. But it would be nice for Luna to have fun.

“There you go, Ron,” Hermione said, tone still a little cold. “Problem solved.”

Ron didn’t look thrilled about potentially taking Luna Lovegood to the Yule Ball, but he kept his mouth shut. It was the smartest decision he’d made all day.

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Luckily, Luna was happy to go with Ron to the ball, promising to owl her father to send her some dress robes before he left on his creature hunt. Ron was still sulking about it — Harry couldn’t figure out if his problem was going with a third year, going with Luna specifically, or having had to be set up by his little sister just to get a date — but despite their tentative truce, Harry still didn’t spend much time with the redheaded boy, so he didn’t care.

The weekend before the ball was a Hogsmeade weekend, and Harry took the opportunity to go down and finish off his Christmas shopping. That was his hope, at least; he’d owl-ordered for most of his presents, but there were still a few people he hadn’t found the perfect gift for yet. Draco being one of them.