

“She’s awfully pretty. I partnered with her a few times in the HA and she has a very nice smile. So I asked her to Hogsmeade.”

Harry wasn’t sure which side of that pairing was the more difficult to believe, but it absolutely was not his place to judge, so he just offered a smile that he hoped hid his utter bewilderment. “Well, have fun with that.”

“Thank you, Harry. I’m sure we will.”

That would certainly be an interesting combination.

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Harry had to turn down quite a few invites to Hogsmeade himself, for the upcoming Valentine’s Day weekend. From both male and female students.

“Don’t know why they’re bothering,” he grumbled to himself after attempting to politely reject Romilda Vane for the fourth time. “They know I’m gay.”

Harry heard a snort behind him, and turned. Ron was there, walking a few feet behind him with Dean and Seamus. They were all on their way to the Great Hall for dinner, and as they’d come from Herbology Harry had left Neville behind talking with Professor Sprout.

“Something to say?” he asked sharply, and the redhead scowled at him.

“Just wondering how long you’re going to keep that up.”

“Keep what up?” Harry was confused.

“The whole *gay* thing. We all know you’re just faking,” Ron spat.

“...I’m sorry, *what?*” Where the hell had he got that idea?

Far from being embarrassed, Ron continued. “Come on, don’t pretend like we haven’t all seen you. I heard you and Loony Lovegood were locked in a quiet classroom for hours the other day. And the way you’ve cosied yourself up to Lavender and Parvati in Divination, acting like you’re just the *gay best friend*, like you’re *safe*, when we can see them all over you. Susan Bones, too. Just how many girls have you got on the go, Potter?”

Harry stared incredulously, then looked at Dean and Seamus, who were pointedly not meeting his gaze. “You’re not serious,” he spluttered. They had onlookers, now; people on their way to dinner, wondering why the pair of them had stopped in the entrance hall. “It’s called having *friends*, Ron.”

“Friends you’re always sneaking off in secret with?” Ron retorted.

“If you consider that suspect, I’ve got a lot of questions about you and Hermione,” Harry shot back, seeing a few people go wide-eyed. Ron’s face went as red as his hair.