

Maybe the *wooing* part of the plan had ended up a little shorter than anticipated. George was only human, after all.

.-.-.

One Valentine's date in Hogwarts was not a date at all. Rather, an avoidance of dates — an avoidance of everyone. Pansy and Millie sat together in their dorm room, an obscenely large plate of brownies between them, while Pansy watched Millie write a letter.

"Do you think you'll get to see him this summer?" she asked, somewhat hesitant. Millie sighed.

"I don't know. Depends what Potter's up to, doesn't it?" she pointed out with a derisive snort. "If it's all over 'round his birthday, like he says it will be..."

The two of them pretty much only saw Harry at heirs' meetings, these days. Everyone still believed them to be loyal Death Eaters in training, and that meant no socialising with Gryffindors. Or with other Slytherins who had turned their backs on the cause.

No socialising with any of their true friends, really. Not where anyone might see them.

At least they still had each other. Pansy wouldn't have survived half as long without Millie by her side.

"Harry's usually right about these sorts of things," Pansy said, reaching for another brownie. "If he says he'll be done by the end of summer, I believe him." She could hardly believe they were talking so casually about the defeat of the Dark Lord.

Being friends with Harry Potter made one do crazy things like that.

"Then maybe I'll get to see Otto at the end of summer. Or even Christmas." A dreamy, hopeful sort of smile took over Millie's face. Once upon a time, Pansy would have been eaten alive with envy, with a desperate need to find someone who made her feel the way Millie looked. Before she understood how much that was never going to happen, how much she didn't even *want* it to happen.

"Oh, you should invite him over for Yule!" Pansy urged excitedly. "He can meet everyone!" Sure, most of their Slytherin cohort had met Millicent's German fiancé at least once, but that had been a number of years ago now. And their friend group had expanded enormously since then.

Millie looked doubtful. "I'm not really sure I want to inflict *everyone* on him." Pansy snorted. Sure, they were friends with an astonishing number of Weasleys these days, but it wasn't that bad. "But having him around for the holidays would be nice." She sighed again. "I just want to *see* him."

Pansy knew that Millie hadn't seen Otto since the summer before their fifth year, when her mother had taken her over to stay with his family in Berlin — to avoid everything going on