A few more moments

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A few more moments

by FallLover

Summary

Hirose invites Nakamura back to his place to hang out. It's rather nice. And when it's time to say goodbye, an accident leads to more realizations.

Notes

This was first published on Archive of Our Own.

See the end of the work for more notes

Hirose didn’t like talking to Takeuchi about girls. That didn’t mean he didn’t like talking about things at all. Or thinking about them.

Takeuchi naturally took over the conversation whenever he was around. And it was easy to just go with the flow rather than start a fuss over things. Hirose liked having fun, not arguing with his friends.

But that meant, more and more often, he resented being around Takeuchi.

His other friends were supportive, but he didn’t like gossiping. They generally all ran in the same circles anyway, except for Matsumara, who didn’t like talking about Hirose’s school friends. And Ohmori was fun, but nervous around that sort of thing.

Enter Nakamura, the quiet guy in class who had few friends and wasn’t close with anyone Hirose knew. But who was happy to listen to all of Hirose’s troubles. At least Hirose was certain Nakamura wouldn’t blab.

Hirose was a funny guy, too, and really interesting when he opened up, which only happened rarely, unfortunately. Hirose had managed to walk home with him sometimes, and usually that got Nakamura to be more open, but it was a slow process. Hirose realized shortly enough that Nakamura was just deeply shy.

It made Hirose think about how excited about the aquarium Nakamura had been, but how he was nervous to share it until Hirose secretly followed him inside. The way the other boy had been crouching in front of the octopus display looking miserable… and all because other kids had been cruel to him about a totally normal interest!

No wonder he was shy.

Based on how Nakamura had bravely walked through the school late at night, Hirose thought Nakamura had come through it all pretty brave.

One day, Hirose picked up some marine biology books from the library, and went through them out of curiosity. He wanted to learn more about octopuses and other sea animals. It was pretty fascinating stuff, and when he brought it up the next time he and Nakamura went walking home together, Nakamura had been so shocked, especially when Hirose explained, “You were so into it at the aquarium, I figured I should brush up my knowledge.” There was plenty online, too, but the library gave him an excuse to be around Takeuchi less, especially when the guy wanted to impress Yuuka.

Nakamura got this shocked expression on his face, and Hirose remembered when Nakamura been so desperate to ask to be friends. Nakamura seemed to genuinely think Hirose would never take notice of him.

And that was absurd… but not entirely untrue, Hirose supposed. They were classmates, but only got to know each other relatively recently. It was largely random chance that led to them bumping into each other so much. But what was Hirose supposed to do? Ignore the quiet boy

whose face lit up when he saw octopus? That was way cooler than Takeuchi going off about boobs. Not to mention, Nakamura wasn't afraid of horror movies! Which Hirose wanted to see to believe, even if he'd be scared…

"You already seemed to know a bit," Nakamura pointed out as they kept walking. "You talked about crabs, and you knew some of the fish on sight…"

Hirose's grin widened. He really liked when Nakamura got more talkative, especially because of his earnestness. It made Hirose think that maybe being alone wasn't always what he wanted, if he had the right company.

Hana was sort of a test: could Hirose find more people he'd feel comfortable with? Maybe he should give it a shot. But that didn't go well. He didn't dislike her, but he didn't like her intruding on his regular life, either. It felt too much like Takeuchi, even in a well-meaning way.

The way it was again easier to talk to Nakamura had been startling. Hirose felt more relaxed once he didn't have to worry so much, and staying by Nakamura had helped when they'd been alone at school at night. It probably helped that Nakamura, unlike Hana, was in his class. But it felt like more. After all, they hadn't been in class when Nakamura had run into Hirose getting dumped.

As they walked home together, Hirose thought, *If dating were like this, I think I'd like it more.*

He looked at Nakamura, who was smiling softly as he talked about class.

"Have you ever dated anyone, Nakamura?" Hirose asked.

Nakamura made a full body flinch, before shakily looking at him. "Huh?" He looked almost like he'd been punched.

"You know…" Hirose said with a shrug. "Have you ever dated anyone?" It didn't seem like it had happened during the school year, but it wasn't like Hirose knew Nakamura before then. Maybe Nakamura had someone he never talked about, or had dated before they'd shared a class? "I know you didn't have any crushes before, but…"

"N-No," Nakamura said as he looked away nervously. "I never… No." He was pretty emphatic about it.

"Oh," Hirose said. He wondered if he'd touched on an uncomfortable topic.

There was an awkward silence for a while. Hirose wondered if he should apologize.

"I'd like to, though," Nakamura said, a bit quietly. "I think it'd be… nice."

Hirose grinned, glad he hadn't completely screwed up. "Is there someone you like now?"

"…Yeah," Nakamura said as he stared at the ground. He was sweating. "A lot."

Hirose's eyes widened in surprise. "Really? Who is it?" Things *had* changed since they'd been locked in the gym closet together. He was happy, and really curious about who the lucky person was.

"Uh…" Nakamura seemed to shrink a little.

"You don't have to tell me if you don't want to," Hirose said with a grin. "But I hope they realize how lucky they are." He hoped Nakamura's crush saw how fun the guy could be. And liked octopus.

Nakamura's face grew redder.

They walked for a bit in silence, while Hirose tried to recall Nakamura looking at any of the girls in class. He usually hung out on his own, and barely talked to anyone. Though…

"It's not Kawamura, is it?" Hirose asked, recalling how often Nakamura talked to her.

"What? No!" Nakamura shrank down even more. "I mean, she's nice, but no!"

Hirose grinned at him. "You sure you're not just trying to deny the truth?" This had happened with the boys love manga, too, and Hirose was still *pretty* sure Nakamura read them…

Nakamura shook his head. "I mean it. I don't have a crush on her! She's a good… friend. That's all."

Hirose thought the answer was still a bit odd, but he supposed he'd let it go. It wasn't like Nakamura had a reason to lie about that. It wasn't like Hirose had any reason to abuse the knowledge. He didn't tease people that way.

"I get it," Hirose said. "Sorry for putting you on the spot, I was just curious."

"It's fine…" Nakamura said, quietly.

"If you ever want to talk about it, though," Hirose said, "I'll listen." Nakamura had listened to *him* plenty, after all.

"S-Sure…" Nakamura said.

Hirose knew he'd startled the other boy, and he wanted to make up for it. He frowned, then had a fun idea. "Hey, wanna get a snack back at my place? My mother baked some cookies and they're pretty nice."

"Y-Your place?!" Nakamura said, sounding alarmed.

"Yeah!" Hirose said with a grin. "I haven't had anyone over in a while, and you've never been there! It'd be fun!" It wasn't like they had a ton of homework anyway.

"Sure!" Nakamura said, brightly. "I'd love to!"

Hirose grinned at him, glad. If they could just go back to normal, that'd be good.

Nakamura seemed awed by Hirose's home, and sat neatly on the floor of Hirose's room while Hirose got them cups of tea and a plate of cookies from the kitchen. It really *had* been a while since he'd had anyone over: usually he was out and about with other people, or just alone in his room, studying. Ohmori preferred walking around or studying at school, Matsumara preferred to go around town in their free time, and Takeuchi and the rest really only hung out at school. And while Hirose had walked Hana home a number of times, inviting her over felt a bit too far.

He wondered if that was part of why Hana had dumped him. But he also wasn't sure what coming over to his house would have changed, other than maybe running into his sister or parents, which would have led to weird conversations.

His sister wasn't around, at least, and his parents were busy, so no one said anything about Hirose and Nakamura hanging out in Hirose's room.

When Hirose got back to the bedroom, he almost breathed a sigh of relief. Sure, hosting someone at your home wasn't easy, but it was easier than most everything else.

Nakamura moved to get up as Hirose came back in, and Hirose said, "Sit, sit, I'll put this down." He had everything on a tray and set it between them before joining Nakamura on the floor.

"Thank you," Nakamura said as Hirose gestured for him to start eating. His eyes occasionally flicked around the room and then back to his food.

Hirose breathed in and drank some of his tea. He glanced at the books sitting in his bag. He wondered if they should talk about them more, or maybe watch a movie.

Nakamura still seemed kind of on edge.

"Is something wrong?" Hirose asked, wondering if he was forgetting something. He smiled. "You seemed more relaxed in the school at night than here." At least it was still light out! And they weren't in a creepy classroom with bones!

Nakamura flinched again, which was a bit alarming, and then laughed awkwardly. "Yeah, I uh… I've never been to a friend's house… before…" His face was red again, clearly in embarrassment.

"Oh," Hirose said. That sounded sad. "Well… I'm honored to be your first!" He imagined if you got bullied for something you cared about so much, there weren't a lot of chances to hang out with people like this.

It made Hirose upset: his friendships were so important to him. *Did he have any of that growing up?*

Nakamura smiled warmly at him. "Yeah, I'm glad, too…"

"I got a new video game recently," Hirose said, glad at least that Nakamura wasn't entirely uncomfortable and even seemed to be relaxing. "We could try it together, if you want?" He

hadn’t tried co-op mode before, but he was open to the idea.

“Oh, sure,” Nakamura said. “What is it?”

They moved to the living room, which was thankfully empty, and played some of the racing game Hirose was talking about. Although Nakamura wasn’t particularly good, neither was Hirose, and crashing and being bad got them both laughing and crying out to each other.

It was easy, between the two of them, to relax like this. Far easier than it had ever felt with Hana or Hirose’s other friends. And Nakamura didn’t mock Hirose when he didn’t do well or when he was annoyed, nor did he act bored. He just focused on getting better, and sometimes even encouraged Hirose. It reminded Hirose of when they’d been walking the school halls at night: Nakamura had clearly been teasing Hirose a bit, but he hadn’t gone too far. Not as far as Takeuchi or a few other guys might in Nakamura’s situation.

The whole thing ended up being really fun.

As it grew later, Hirose knew he’d been keeping Nakamura too long, and sadly said, “Oh, you should probably head home.”

Nakamura seemed surprised, and Hirose wondered if he’d forgotten the time. When Nakamura checked his phone, his face grew pale. “Oh, yeah, I need to check on Icchan…”

“What’s that?”

“My pet octopus,” Nakamura said. He hesitated for a bit, and then said, “My sister hates Icchan, and I need to be the one to feed him.”

Hirose nodded and then grinned. “It’s cool you have a pet octopus, though! How old is he?” He started shutting down the console while Nakamura chatted back with him. Afterward, Hirose walked Nakamura to the door.

“I had a lot of fun,” Nakamura said after he put his shoes on. He gazed up at Hirose with a bright expression, kind of like when they’d been by the water.

“Me too,” Hirose said with a grin. “We should do this more often.”

Nakamura’s eyes widened, and then he nodded enthusiastically. “Yes! Yes, I’d like that a lot!”

“Maybe I could come over to your place and meet Icchan sometime?” Hirose asked. “I’ve never seen a pet octopus before…”

Nakamura’s expression brightened even more. “Anytime! I’d be… I’d be happy to have you over.” He blinked a bit and then said, “Actually I have some pictures on my phone…”

Hirose stepped closer to see, and Nakamura moved closer to show him. Hirose made appreciative sounds about the octopus in the photos. Based on the photos, it was clear Nakamura liked his pet.

“This is so cool,” Hirose said.

“Yeah,” Nakamura said with a fond smile. Then he turned his head and drew in his breath in alarm. He even seemed to freeze.

Hirose looked at him and asked, “Something wrong?”

“N-No… You uh…”

After a bit, Hirose realized he *was* really close. They’d sat somewhat close while playing the game and eating, but not *this* close. He wondered if Nakamura didn’t like it?

“Sorry,” Hirose said, pulling back.

“Oh, it’s okay!” Nakamura said as he reached out. But his foot must have caught on something, because Hirose saw him start to fall.

Hirose reached out to catch him, but Nakamura’s weight dragged him down.

Together they landed on the step before the entryway, tangled together.

Nakamura sat up, his arms on either side of Hirose’s chest. “I’m so sorry! I’m… I’m so sorry!” He sounded panicky.

“It’s okay,” Hirose said, smiling up at Nakamura. “Are you hurt?” From this angle, he got that look of how Nakamura had been by the water. Really handsome.

“I’m fine!” Nakamura insisted. “Are you okay?” His expression was worried, as if he’d somehow badly injured Hirose when they hadn’t fallen far.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” Hirose said. He didn’t feel hurt. He reached out touched Nakamura’s long bangs again. “I’m glad you didn’t cut these.” It had been kind of mean, what he’d said. He didn’t want Nakamura to feel like he had to change how he looked.

Nakamura’s face was still close, and Hirose could see the way color filled his cheeks. “Oh…”

They stared at each other for a bit. And Hirose realized he didn’t want to get up. He wasn’t uncomfortable, exactly, and he liked looking at Nakamura. And he didn’t want the peace he’d found in their hang out to go away.

“Ah,” Nakamura said after a while. “I should uh…” He moved to get up, and half fell over again, his face bumping up against Hirose’s.

There was the slightest soft pressure as Nakamura’s lips brushed over Hirose’s cheek.

“Ah!” Nakamura said as he froze. “I’m s-sorry!” He seemed to be shaking, too.

“It’s okay,” Hirose said. He reached out and took hold of Nakamura’s face, pulling it up so they could look at each other.

Nakamura looked horrified. “Are you okay, really?”

Hirose grinned and said, “Course I am. You?”

“I…” Nakamura swallowed. Hirose could feel it through their touch. “I uh…” He wasn’t pulling away though. Either out of fear of falling again, or because he wasn’t *really* bothered by the closeness.

“Maybe…” Hirose said. “If being with Hana had been this easy, we wouldn’t have broken up.”

Nakamura looked surprised. “Hirose…” He sounded sad.

“You’re fun, Nakamura,” Hirose said. “Dating you would probably be fun, too.”

Nakamura’s face went red again. “Do…? Do you want to?”

Hirose’s eyebrows rose in surprise. He hadn’t expected *that*.

“I mean, obviously it’s a joke or…” Nakamura was floundering. But he kept checking Hirose’s face, as if he was afraid.

And he hadn’t pulled back at all.

And a lot made sense in the moment.

Hirose leaned in and lightly pressed his lips to Nakamura’s.

Nakamura froze then.

When Hirose pulled away, Nakamura just stared at him, seemingly horrified.

Hirose laughed awkwardly and said, “Sorry, maybe that was too much?” He’d never kissed Hana, just held her hand. Maybe he was again not being as fun as someone else wanted him to be.

“No!” Nakamura said, vehemently. “That was amazing! That—! I—!” He seemed conflicted about something.

Hirose leaned forward again and pressed his lips to Nakamura’s once more.

Nakamura pushed back this time. It was awkward and not precisely sexy, but something kind of like nice.

They pulled apart for breath, both staring at each other in shock.

Nakamura’s eyes seemed to glitter.

Hirose winced as the ground dug uncomfortably into his back.

“Ah, we should get up,” Nakamura said. He finally sat back on a crouch, and then stood, before reaching up to help Hirose up. They stood there, then, holding hands.

When Nakamura didn’t say anything, Hirose said, “I… liked that.” He looked up at Nakamura, who seemed deeply afraid. “Did you?”

Nakamura blinked and quickly nodded his head. “Yes! Yes, I liked it a lot!”

Hirose grinned. “We should do it more, then, sometime.” They needed practice. For that and figuring out dating, apparently.

Hirose found he was excited about the idea. It’d mean they hung out more, after all.

Nakamura swallowed and stepped closer. “May I…?”

Hirose blinked and then nodded.

Nakamura leaned in and kissed Hirose this time. Again, it was awkward and not the greatest. But it was definitely intentional. Not a joke. Not an accident.

When they parted for air again, they were still holding hands.

“Text me when you get home,” Hirose said. He squeezed Nakamura’s hands. “Send me a new picture of Icchan.” He couldn’t keep Nakamura here all night, much as he was considering it. He hadn’t asked his parents if he could have a friend over, after all. Or… whatever they were now.

He wondered what school would be like after this, but it didn’t really matter. Because now… well.

Nakamura blinked, and then nodded emphatically. “I will!” He smiled at Hirose. “Thank you so much for today. For…” He clearly didn’t know what to say.

“We’ll try and outlast my record with Hana,” Hirose said with a grin.

Nakamura seemed surprised by that, but then grinned right back. He squeezed Hirose’s hands. “We will.”

End Notes

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