Lunch complications

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Lunch complications

by FallLover

Summary

Nakamura just wants to have lunch at school with his friend and crush, Hirose, and he brought along the new manga of himself and Hirose that Kawamura drew for him, for emotional support. Will he finally get lucky? Or will his bad luck lead down another trail of despair?

Notes

This was first published on Archive of Our Own, before the anime released.

See the end of the work for more notes

Sharing lunch. It seemed so easy for anyone who wasn't Nakamura Okuto, a gay high schooler who had a relentless crush on his classmate and friend, Hirose Aiki.

Even though they were friends, Nakamura found it hard to manage, as he was so unused to the concept. He was something of a loner, too quiet, and too weird for other people, and had limited patience for the antics of many of his classmates. In his attempts to be more outgoing and bond for his beloved Hirose, he often fell into ridiculous situations due to his inexperience and bad luck… but they remained friends all the same.

But one goal he had… was to have lunch with Hirose. They'd eaten together before, of course, but eating together at school was *different*. Just the two of them would be nice, but even just being able to sit with Hirose for lunch every now and then would be good, too. As it was, Nakamura froze up every time lunch period started, and so he hadn't yet overcome the important friendship hurdle.

He reviewed the manga of himself and Hirose that Kawamura Hifumi had made for him to give himself courage. She'd given him new ones after he'd gone crying to her after the incident at the bookstore, and he only got a peek of them.

A full look would be his reward. If he survived.

He'd planned it out in his head of course: he'd walk up to Hirose, poised and confident, and say, "Hey Hirose, wanna eat together?" This would be better than his previous attempts, which were too weak and small.

And Hirose would grin adorably and say, "Sure, Nakamura!" And the sun would shine down on them as they enjoyed their food together.

So of course what happened was lunch arrived and Hirose was called out of the classroom by another student before Nakamura even stood up.

He stared where the other boy had disappeared, crushed, wondering if the universe really *was* out to get him.

There's always tomorrow, he supposed, cursing the bad timing. *If* he could get up the courage again. It wasn't like it was the first time he'd asked, it was just… the first time he'd *really* tried! Or at least *prepared*…

Hirose's friends also went elsewhere to eat, and at least Nakamura could be morose on his own as he slowly ate his food in the quiet classroom. The sunshine illuminated his loneliness, likely presaging how his life would be forever after.

I can't think that! Nakamura thought with a glare at his lunch. *If I gave up, Hirose and I would never have become friends!*

Though he realized that part of that was because Hirose was just a decent guy.

Thoughts of how wonderful Hirose was kept him distracted from his own misery better than any pep talk.

He was nearly done with his lunch when Hirose came back, looking bright and happy as ever.

“Ahh that took forever,” Hirose muttered in annoyance as Nakamura stared at him in surprise. He grinned at Nakamura. “I barely have time to eat!”

Nakamura’s face heated at the attention. “Ah, you should hurry then!”

Hirose grinned and went back to his desk. He looked around for a moment, clearly searching for his usual crowd.

Of course he wants them, Nakamura thought glumly. *They’ve been his friends longer. He’s comfortable with them.* He wondered what it would be like to have Hirose look for *him* like that…

“Hey Nakamura,” Hirose said, making Nakamura do a double take. “Wanna sit with me?” He was grinning.

Nakamura shoved his desk over to Hirose’s before he had even thought about it. He only had a moment where he realized Hirose probably just meant to move his chair or something.

Hirose grinned, taking it in stride. “Well okay. Sorry, I might be eating a bit quickly. Anything happen while I was gone?”

Nakamura blinked, surprised to be asked, but his mind was entirely blank. His mind went back to the bookstore and he said, awkwardly, “Uh… no, not really. What did you end up doing outside the class?”

Hirose got through some of his food before he replied, unbothered, and they actually had a nice back and forth.

It was the happiest lunch Nakamura had ever had, and he barely touched what was left of his own food.

At the end of the day, Hirose shot up out of his chair.

When Nakamura looked at him in surprise, Hirose winced and said, “I have errands to run!”

“O-Oh! Good luck!” Nakamura said with a soft smile.

Hirose grinned and ran off, bag in hand.

Nakamura gazed fondly after him, while wishing he’d been smart enough to offer to help or something. He’d never even been to Hirose’s home before, and wasn’t visiting your friend’s home something friends did?

“Oh, did Hirose leave his bag?” someone asked.

Nakamura looked back towards Hirose's desk, and saw one of their classmates holding up what indeed seemed to be Hirose's schoolbag.

"But he left here with a bag," someone else said, confused. "I think, anyway."

Maybe their memory is bad, Nakamura thought as he watched the schoolmates chat about what to do, and who should stop by his place to drop the bag off. Nakamura would have volunteered, but he was too nervous to step forward before other people volunteered.

Instead, he went to pick up his bag… and realized it was gone.

He looked around, confused, wondering if he'd knocked it aside.

And then he remembered lunch. When he'd dragged his desk carelessly to Hirose's. He realized he must have knocked his bag over, and forgotten it amidst everything. Hirose likely just picked it up, thinking it was his.

It ordinarily wouldn't have been an issue, and perhaps even exciting to know Hirose had *his bag*… except today the bag had Kawamura's manga inside it!

Nakamura was frozen in fear at the idea of Hirose reading the manga. All the scenes of fantasy Nakamura and Hirose together. It was incredibly obvious what the comics were, and Nakamura couldn't come up with any lies to explain them, and he certainly couldn't betray Kawamura's kindness by revealing her identity.

"I drew it for fun!" Would be almost as bad as the truth.

"I drew it in my sleep!" Well then Hirose would think he was still *really* weird.

"I took them from someone else at school!" That would be nearly as bad as betraying Kawamura directly. Hirose would want to find out who it was.

"I drew it on a dare!" That would make Hirose demand to know who made the dare. And why Nakamura agreed.

"It's just a coincidence that they look like us!" He imagined casting aspersions on Hirose's intelligence wouldn't get him far, either.

…*Maybe he won't open the bag?* Nakamura thought, desperately, not sure what else to do. He imagined that Hirose would notice the issue quickly, and just return it.

Or he'll see them and want my guts, Nakamura thought, wanting to sink into the floor. *I'll have to flee the city… no, maybe Japan!* Finding out a male classmate made boys love manga of you together? Nakamura would be a dead man.

He imagined himself walking in rags on a street in some far-off place, with some strange name he didn't know well, begging for money somewhere, memories of his life here entirely forgotten, and everyone here hopefully having forgotten the creepy boy who liked octopuses and who had manga of himself and his classmate.

But Hirose didn't return to school, and Nakamura eventually made his way home, trembling all the while. He held his pet octopus reverently and said, through his tears, "Goodbye, Icchan. This may be the last time I see you…"

"Dinner's ready, Okuto!" Kana called through the door, oblivious to his woes, as usual.

Do I need to say bye to Kana? Nakamura thought as he put the octopus back in the tank. *Maybe she'll be happy I'm gone…* He admitted the experience would be somewhat mutual.

Perhaps exile isn't as bad as it sounds, he thought glumly.

"Sorry for taking your bag!"

Nakamura stood by his bike waiting for the light to change and stared at Hirose, who was bowing while holding out the bag.

"I must have confused them yesterday," Hirose said as he stood up and grinned when Nakamura finally, awkwardly took the bag. "I saw your name on it and realized. Sorry."

"…It's okay," Nakamura said, clutching the satchel, and watching Hirose for any signs of something… unusual. "That sucks, though. Are you behind on your homework?"

"Naw," Hirose said with a grin, not letting anything on. "Someone brought me my bag. I just didn't know where you lived to give you yours."

"Oh…" Nakamura said, as if that was the end of it all.

Hirose smiled at him, looking like nothing was wrong.

"Well I guess…" Nakamura said as they kept standing around. He wondered if he should ask, *Did you see anything weird?* But then Hirose, if he *didn't* look, might *ask* to. And then well…

So instead he went with, "We should get to school?"

Hirose grinned at that.

The day was otherwise normal, and Nakamura *did* check the bag: all his stuff was in there. He tried to act normal, and not like he'd barely escaped the worst, but he wasn't sure how well he did. He was jumpy and sweaty and felt like everyone could see through him. But later in the day he started to relax. Nothing had happened, after all. Hirose even chatted with him a bit and things were going pretty well.

At the end of the day, Hirose asked to walk home with him again, and Nakamura wondered if this was the universe finally being kind to him. If it had decided, *Okuto has gone through enough. He gets one for once.*

He walked beside his bike as they went, chatting about school and their peers.

But when they got to a quiet part of the walk, in a high-walled corner away from houses, Hirose stopped, gazed ahead, and said, “I didn’t tell you everything earlier.”

Nakamura blinked at him in surprise, wondering what he was referring to. “What do you mean?”

“Your bag,” Hirose said, gazing ahead still. Then he looked at Nakamura with an unreadable expression. “When I got home, I realized it was yours, panicked, and dropped it. It fell open and… your notebook fell out.”

Notebook… fell out.… It was like a distant thunder was sounding in Nakamura’s mind. But he wasn’t sure what it presaged.

“And,” Hirose continued, “I saw some drawings of what looked like you and…” He frowned.

Drawings of me and.… Nakamura felt every part of him begin to dissolve.

“I couldn’t help my curiosity,” Hirose said, sounding uncomfortable. “I opened it and looked through it. And I saw them all. And realized it was me because my name was in some of them.” He had a complicated look on his face now.

All the ideas Nakamura had to explain the manga were barely even dust in his mind. Hirose knew. That was the end of it. And now, he was appropriately uncomfortable and disgusted.

Nakamura had hurt him. That was the worst.

He dropped into the deepest bow he could and said, “I’m sorry! I’ll burn them! I’ll burn them as soon as I can! I’ll go to the store and… and get a lighter or something and burn them!” He’d have go somewhere it was safe to burn such things. “And I’ll dump the ashes somewhere no one will find them! And then I’ll transfer schools and you won’t ever have to hear from me again! I prom—!”

“Nakamura!” A warm set of hands were holding his shoulders.

Nakamura blinked, unsure if he was hallucinating. Why would Hirose be touching him? After he’d been so terrible?

“Calm down!” Hirose ordered, shaking him a little. “I liked the drawings!”

Liked…? Nakamura thought dumbly. *The drawings…? He liked them?*

“I mean I was weirded out at first, I admit it,” Hirose said with an awkward laugh. “It was a surprise. And then I thought it was *kind* of weird. But they were all pretty lowkey. And it’s not like it was photographs or anything. Whoever drew it made me a little cartoony, so… it wasn’t *that* weird.”

Nakamura was glad he left the more… compromising ones at home.

“I was also surprised because I saw you with that uh… that book the other day.”

Nakamura momentarily had no idea what Hirose was talking about.

“You know the uh… the porn one…?” Hirose looked uncomfortable.

Nakamura’s face burned. *That stupid siscon book!* “That was an accident! I just uh… I didn’t mean to grab it!” *Now I look like even more of an idiot.*

“Yeah, I kind of wondered,” Hirose said with a laugh. “You’re a bit jumpy, so it seemed like something you might do by accident.” When Nakamura didn’t reply, Hirose asked, “Hey, can you stand up?”

Nakamura swallowed and slowly forced himself up, and met Hirose’s gaze.

Hirose smiled kindly at him, and then reached into his pocket and grabbed his handkerchief, before holding it out to Nakamura. “Here, you should wipe your face.”

Nakamura realized he’d been crying, and was embarrassed because of how gross he probably looked, but he was grateful for Hirose’s kindness, and obediently wiped his face.

“You didn’t draw those, right?” Hirose asked. “They don’t really look like your art.”

When Nakamura gazed at him in confusion, Hirose explained, “I’ve seen the stuff you’ve turned in for class. It doesn’t look like that.”

Nakamura was amazed at Hirose’s memory. But he still couldn’t give up Kawamura. He owed her. “It was a friend.” And he hoped Hirose didn’t press.

Hirose grinned. “You got a friend to draw us together?”

It sounded so stupid and desperate like that. And it was. *I’m stupid and desperate,* Nakamura thought.

“That’s cool,” Hirose said.

Nakamura simply stared dumbly back at him.

Hirose laughed and said, “I’ve had a few people confess to me before, but no one’s ever *drawn* me. And there were so many drawings… You *do* like me though, right? Like… as more than a friend?”

Nakamura’s face felt so hot it was burning. He had imagined confessing so many times, but they were all just daydreams. Stupid fantasies.

But… Hirose liked the drawings?

“…Yes,” Nakamura said, quietly, wondering if his shaking would tear Hirose’s precious handkerchief apart. “I d-do…” He imagined Hirose’s rejections. They’d been in his nightmares before. Even if he had admitted to himself he didn’t think Hirose would ever return his feelings, almost worse was the *rejection*. "I've liked you for a long time... You're... cute and charismatic and fun and..." He swallowed. "I just... I like you..."

“Okay,” Hirose said when Nakamura had been quiet for a while, his voice gentle. “Wanna be my boyfriend, then?”

Nakamura was unsure if he’d died and not noticed, because there was no way Hirose had just said what he’d said. “Huh?”

“I like hanging out with you,” Hirose explained. “You make me feel at ease, even if you’re kind of really anxious a lot of the time. You're smart and thoughtful, too. And knowing you actually *like* me and not just like… the *idea* of me, or how useful I am, is pretty awesome.”

Nakamura just stared, confused about what was happening.

“We’ve been friends for a while,” Hirose said. “And you’re cute and interesting.” He tilted his head. “Or are you not up for it?”

“You… want to date me?” Nakamura asked, his voice strangled as he kept repeating, *He thinks I'm cute?!?!?* in his head. He remembered Hirose saying he was more comfortable around guys, and the way he seemed to have a crush on Otogiri-sensei, but that he would like *Nakamura?!*

Hirose grinned. “Why not? If it doesn’t work, we don’t have to stick with it. But it’s better than just drawings, right?”

So much better, Nakamura thought. “Y-yeah…”

“Great!” Hirose said. “Then that’s settled.”

Just like that?! Nakamura thought, still not sure he wasn’t hallucinating. He wasn’t sure what to do now. He was Hirose’s boyfriend? His non-platonic boyfriend? What did that mean?!?!?!

“Though I haven’t gone dating much so I’m kind of inexperienced,” Hirose said with a laugh. “You remember I got dumped the last time, right? But a lot of it is just hanging out like we usually do, and being physically close if we want, I guess?”

Nakamura supposed that was true. “I won’t ever dump you!” He’d *never* hurt Hirose like that! Not ever!

Hirose grinned and said, “That’s what I like about you, Nakamura. You’re really earnest when you open up.”

Nakamura’s face burned with embarrassment.

“I know!” Hirose said. “How about we hold hands on the walk? And maybe… you could come over to my place? You’ve never visited!”

Nakamura was just nodding along, unsure if he’d survive this encounter. He *wanted* to survive. He’d have to buy Kawamura the biggest gift ever.

Hirose grabbed Nakamura’s left hand. “Great then!” He pulled Nakamura along, heading in a different direction than Nakamura was used to. Presumably, *his* house.

I can die happy, Nakamura thought as he let himself be pulled along, making sure to keep a hold on his bike. *Dreams really do come true.*

He still had Hirose promise to message him before school, to remind him it was real. He didn’t trust himself.

End Notes

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