Something New

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by Cactus

Summary

“Your new haircut...” She cleared her throat. “I really like your new haircut.”

“Anaru.”

Naruko jumped when she heard her name. She blinked several times before she finally noticed Chiriko staring at her and frowning. She also noticed how close to her the other girl was and she wondered if she could hear her heart with how loud it was beating.

“Are you listening to me?”

She wasn't. But she wasn't going to tell her that, otherwise she knew Chiriko would never want to tutor her ever again.

“Of course.” She said. “I think I understand the problem now.”

“Then why is your answer wrong?”

Well. She hadn't thought about that.

She looked down at her math problem only to see that she still couldn't understand a thing. Next to her, Chiriko sighed and closed her own notebook.

“It's useless if you don't want to study, I can't help you unless you try.”

“No, wait, Tsuruko!”

She grabbed the sleeve of her shirt, trying to hold her back. Chiriko raised an eyebrow and Naruko felt her cheeks burn. What now? She didn't have any excuse to see her other than her studies. After everything that had happened with Jinta and Meiko, they had become friends again, but they could never be as close as they used to be. She wanted to spend more time with Chiriko, just between girls, but she didn't know how to talk to her. What was she supposed to say, after all those years spent ignoring each other? She couldn't just pretend it was nothing and they were still best friends.

She just needed to find something to talk about. Something insignificant that wouldn't lead to another fight.

“Your new haircut...” She cleared her throat. “I really like your new haircut.”

Chiriko stared at her for a few seconds, dumbfounded. Then her cheeks flushed slightly.

“Oh, I... Thank you, I guess.”

Naruko tried to smile, hoping it didn't look too much like she was grimacing.

Chiriko nervously pushed her glasses up, trying to hide her embarrassment, but Naruko could still see the tip of her ears. It was beet red and she suddenly felt a gush of affection for the other girl. Ever since they had entered high school Chiriko had always been the kind of girl who was in control of herself and never let her guard down around others, but when she was

with Naruko, with someone who had known her since childhood, she became once again the cute little girl who couldn't hide anything. Naruko smiled softly.

They still had a long way before their friendship went back to what it used to be, and a longer one before it reached what Naruko hoped for, but she hoped that afternoon was the start of something new.

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