

# Unexpected Affection Chapter 11-15

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Commissioned by Dissidia

## Chapter 11

"You don't have to go if you don't want to," April said, cuddling with you on the bed. "At least for a while. The assistant they assigned me said they'd come around 9 AM."

"I wish I could stay," you said. You were propped up on the plush pillows, both of your waists and lower under the sheets. April had cleaned herself up a little, and you'd slipped into the bathroom as well to at least wipe the sweat off of yourself before she'd summoned you to the bed. Now she was resting her head against your shoulder much like Hannah often did, except that April's glorious tits were bare.

And the two of you had done it.

*Sex, the final frontier.*

"You work tomorrow though," April guessed, and you nodded.

The two of you held each other for a long moment of comfortable silence.

"What now?" you asked.

"You mean what happens after you leave this bed?"

"I mean, do you want to keep seeing me? Because - and maybe I'm breaking the rules of dating or something by night waiting three days - but I want to see you again. I want to keep seeing you. Dating. And... this."

April chuckled. "You want to fuck me? Over and over?"

"God, yes," you laughed.

"I want to keep seeing you too," April said. Then she sat up and turned, sitting with her legs crossed under her as she looked at you intently and held your hand in both of hers. "I wasn't teasing you earlier, or just trying to get at your mammoth cock, baby. You really did sweep me off my feet with our date. I'm ready to see what a relationship with you would be like."

“But how would that work?” you asked. “Long distance?”

April quirked an eyebrow. “Where do you think I live?”

You blinked and then sighed. “I guess I just assumed you lived in Los Angeles, or near it, since you do all of your voice-over work.”

April smiled. “Sometimes I’m there for up to a few weeks at a time,” she said. “But I grew up here, and when I’m not off doing a voice-over gig I crash at my parent’s place out in the suburbs. So sometimes I’m in LA, or Montreal, or Vancouver, or New York. But at least half the time I’m here, curled up at home.”

“Please tell me your room isn’t in the basement,” you chuckled.

“No, I’m not a basement-dwelling nerd,” she giggled, then changed her voice to a lower, raspy one. “*How do you kill that which has no life?*”

You snorted at the South Park reference. “God, you’re the perfect woman.”

“And you’re the perfect man,” she said, then she bit her lip and grinned. “And I want to prove to you that I’m for real about wanting to be your girlfriend because I know when you get home you’ll be pinching yourself and asking if this is real because you don’t think you deserve it.” She scrambled out from under the covers and walked, naked, out to the little sitting area of the suite and returned with her phone. She crawled up the bed and pulled the sheets down from your waist, revealing your cock. She gave it a little kiss and smirked up at you, then rolled over onto her back between your legs and laid her head down on your hip. She moved your flaccid cock so that it was resting over her shoulder and lifted her phone, taking a picture of herself with your cock. Then she rolled back onto her stomach and sucked the head into her mouth, and took another picture of herself like that.

“There,” she said, giving your cock another kiss before crawling back up the bed. She had you give her your number, and you heard your phone go off in your pocket somewhere else in the room. “Now you have nudes of me, with your cock. I trust you, Ollie. And I want you.”

For some reason that made your heart hurt, and you leaned forward and pulled her into a hug so that she wouldn’t see you tearing up.

Eventually, you really did need to leave, and the two of you separated and you got dressed quickly, still not comfortable with yourself even if April was happy with you. In the back of your mind you were swearing that now, finally, you were going to do something real about your weight loss.

April delighted in following you to the door of her hotel room in the buff, and there you pulled her into a kiss that made her moan against your lips as you grasped one of her breasts with one hand and her ass with the other.

“You’re amazing,” you said.

“So are you,” she grinned back, then kissed my chin. “Be safe, and text me when you get home?”

“I will,” you promised

She wasn’t daring enough to reveal herself in the open doorway, but she peeked around the corner of the door with a big smile on her face as you stepped into the hallway.

“Goodbye for now, Ollie,” she said.

“Goodbye for now, April,” you replied. Then you went back into the doorway and kissed her again as she smiled against your lips. It took you a long moment to step away, and her a moment to shut the door.

You were grinning like a fool. Grinning more than you could ever remember grinning in your *life*. Halfway down the hallway, on complete instinct because it wasn’t something you’d done since you were a kid, you kicked into a skip down the corridor to the elevator.

You had sex. You had a girlfriend. She was amazing.

Wow.

It wasn’t until you reached the lobby that you realized that you’d left your car back at the restaurant, and you were going to be competing with the Bar crowd for an Uber back to it.

*Ah, fuck it, you shrugged as you ordered it up. I just had sex.*

## Chapter 12

Hikaru sat on the couch, still staring at Ollie's bedroom door. She'd spent the evening with Margot, their neighbour from down the hall, and had been waiting for him to get home from his Big Date. She, Margot and Hannah had been prepping him all week so that he'd feel confident and have a good time meeting one of his nerdy heroes, but as the night had gone on she'd gotten a little worried.

Then Ollie had come home with a big smile on his face, and he'd told her and Margot about the dinner, and how cool and fun April was, and how they'd ditched the movie portion of the date and gone to his favourite nerd store. Then Margot had left since it was late, and Hikaru had asked a few more questions but Ollie dodged them and said he was tired and needed to get to bed.

Hikaru was happy for her cousin-in-law. Well, technically they weren't even that anymore since her father and step-mother had broken up, but she'd grown up looking up to Ollie and his kind, welcoming presence. The thing was... she'd never seen Ollie like he was coming in the door. It made her wonder what exactly had gone on with this date. The fact that he was so specific about some things, but vague about others, was also weird.

Part of her wondered if it was just down to the fact that he'd met a celebrity that he really liked. April had voiced characters in animes that they'd watched together, and a couple of video games they had both played. It was cool that he got to meet her and have a meal with her and stuff. Hikaru would have been thrilled to go on the 'date' too.

But something was burning at the back of her mind. Ollie said they had *so much* in common, and she worried that maybe April had just been being nice and Ollie was infatuated.

The other side of that though was that maybe she *was* into all the stuff he was. And why would she humour him and go to the nerd store if she wasn't? And on that note, if they just had dinner and went to the store, why was he home so late? That should have taken less time than going to a movie, shouldn't it?

Hikaru stood up from the couch and quickly cleaned up the dishes and things that she and Margot had been using as they watched a movie and waited for Ollie to get back. It took until she was getting ready for bed, brushing her teeth and looking at herself in the mirror, that she started to piece together what she might have been feeling.

Hikaru had moved in a few weeks ago, thrilled to spend time with Ollie and at his offer to help her set herself up in the city. She loved him so much, and spending time with him after getting here had felt more comfortable than all four years of college. And she knew Hannah well, and had quickly bonded with Margot, and didn't mind one bit when they came over.

But Ollie was hers, at least for now. They ate breakfast and dinner together. They watched shows together.

If April was real, and everything he said was true... What did that mean for Hikaru and Ollie? Was she going to lose him, just when she finally felt like things were going well?

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He had sex.

Of course, Ollie didn't say anything about it. He was a gentleman, and a gentle man, after all. But Margot knew that was what it had to be.

Helping him prep for his date had been fun. Ever since he'd run into her while she was moving in and had offered to help move boxes up to her apartment from her Uhaul, he'd become a staple in her life. An excellent friend, and sounding board. Hell, more than that. He'd helped her get settled in the city. She'd grown up on a ranch down in Texas, and she'd been to plenty of different cities after high school when she hit the road as a rodeo barrel racer, but she'd never *lived* in one before. Even her community college degree had been in a moderate-sized town instead of a city.

Ollie was her best friend, even if she knew she wasn't his. She couldn't exactly compete with Hannah on that, and she didn't hold a grudge about it.

So after spending the evening with Hikaru, who was a sweet girl even if she was a little lost at the moment with what to do with her life, Margot knew something had changed with Ollie as soon as he walked in the door.

A big part of her was happy for him, especially in the moment as he rambled about how his date went. But now, walking down the hall to her place and entering the warmth of her home, it didn't seem so... homey. It felt lonely.

She was lucky she was in the position she was in, living alone. But Ollie had been a bulwark against feeling *lonely* as she started a new job and part-time classes at the State University. Now, knowing that he'd had such a blast with April, and that she'd fucked him...

Margot had to admit it to herself. She was jealous.

She felt like April was stealing her boyfriend.

And while she and Ollie hadn't been in a relationship, Margot realized she'd been treating him that way. He was her rock, and her support network. She relied on his care and compassion and tried to give that back to him as much as she could. She'd been treating him like a boyfriend, just without the romance or the sex.

“Fuck,” Margot groaned, her back pressed to her apartment door as she slid down to her butt, not making it any further into her apartment. She bumped her head back against the door and sighed. Why was she so slow to realize this kind of thing before it was too late?

Margot *wanted* romance with Ollie. Sure, he wasn't her usual type physically, but how much did that matter compared to his heart? Compared to his mind? His humour?

But now Ollie had April. A celebrity voice actor. And, apparently, into all his nerdy hobbies. How could Margot compete with that? She'd gotten into a couple of the shows he'd shown her, but after riding in the rodeo, video games didn't do much for her. Neither did the cute little miniatures he collected and painted.

She couldn't compete. Not on even ground, at least. Not head-to-head. But maybe it didn't even *need* to be a competition.

She'd done it before. Sure, things had ended not great for her, but they hadn't known what they were doing coming out of high school and Poly relationships were still very new to almost everyone. It hadn't even really been poly - it had been more like her friends Eve and Garret were dating, and Margot had slept with them both on a frequent basis. She'd always known she was the third wheel.

Margot slipped into bed and powered on her tablet, opening up her Google app. *April Villanova*. She needed to do some more research.

## Chapter 13

Hannah put down her phone, pursing her lips into a self-satisfied grin. She was always a morning person, and even though she hadn't needed to go to work that morning she'd still been up at 5:30 AM for a run on her treadmill, followed by some light yoga. Getting a call from Ollie before he had to head to work himself wasn't unheard of, but usually he was a lot more groggy.

This morning, when she answered the phone, he'd had a pep in his voice that didn't usually show itself until at least after 10, and that had answered her first question - how had the date gone?

Apparently, really well.

He'd dropped the real bomb on her then - they were going to go on another date. Ollie, her Oliver, her best friend who hadn't dated anyone ever, was going on a *second date*. With a celebrity crush of his!

She was shocked, and thrilled, and really hoped the thrilled part was what she'd let get through the phone to him. She was always careful not to ever insult him, even if she could sometimes be a bit of a bitch to other people at work. Ollie was her *person*, and she never wanted him to feel like he was less than that in her eyes.

Once the phone call had ended, Hannah had flopped down onto her couch and looked out the window of her apartment at the surrounding buildings, grinning to herself. "Ho-ly shit," she said, shaking her head. She'd finally gotten Ollie to start dating.

The fact that Ollie had been cagey, especially about the end of the date, told her that he'd even gotten a little intimate with April. Maybe some making out in the car? Some heavy petting? She could only imagine his face when he touched her boobs, and she'd done plenty of Googling leading up to the date - April had some pretty big tits. Not massive, but way more than Hannah had herself.

There was a part of her that wondered *how* intimate they could have gotten. Heavy petting at most, and kissing, right? It was a first date after all, and Ollie couldn't have been too confident since it was his *first* real date. That made Hannah picture Ollie happily dating someone, and them being able to go on double dates together. And what if it went really, really well in the long term and he married April? He would be so fucking cute as a husband with whoever he ended up with. Just imagining him doting on a loving wife gave Hannah a warm-and-fuzzy feeling, knowing how much he and her had helped mold each other. He'd raised her expectations of boys since they'd met in middle school, and while that meant her dating life was cratered with failed relationships, none of those craters were very deep or painful.

Hannah tried to picture April and Ollie, married and living together out in the suburbs somewhere. And for some reason that... put a pit in her stomach. Ollie out in the suburbs meant

he'd be living farther away from her than they ever had before. He wouldn't be just a quick walk away. Hell, she'd picked her apartment building primarily because he was 5 minutes down the street.

If Ollie got married, there wouldn't be as much Hannah and Ollie time for themselves.

Suddenly, Hannah felt like she needed to go to the gym and get a proper pump on. She needed to burn off the negative energy she was feeling to try and stay positive. Ollie dating was *good*. She just needed to make sure that April wasn't going to go and steal him away from her.

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Zara couldn't believe it. She set her phone down and stretched, wincing a little as the Vegas sun leaked around her big glasses. Stretching out by the pool was supposed to be relaxing, but after the week she'd had it wasn't helping. First, that bitch Heather Gardner had started horning into some of the jobs that Zara had already booked. Just because the cunt had won Miss Mississippi or whatever didn't mean she should be considered a hot commodity. Then Eric had been so cold with her during her last shoot.

His words were still ringing in her ear. *You need to figure out what sexy is, because I'm getting tired of photographing standoffish.* He'd said more, but that was the main thrust. Apparently, Zara had a 'resting bitch stance.' Her smile was beautiful, as was her simmering pout, but was it her fault that she just found people... ugh?

Especially other models.

She'd known that April was going on that date thing and had answered the phone ready to hear the whole story and giggle along with whatever story had of the fans bumbling. What she *hadn't* been prepared for was April gushing over this man. So *kind*, so *smart*, so *lovely*. It almost made her puke.

How could April, of all people, fall for some schlub from her hometown? Hell, how could she hook up with him when he'd won their first date in a glorified raffle?

*That* was really the problem. April had hooked up with a guy, and Zara was being accused of being frigid. She wasn't a *virgin*, she just hadn't ever been satisfied with any of her previous attempts at sex. She'd sort of given up on dating because what was the point? They were either boys, or they were men cheating on their wives, or they were douchebags. Zara very much held that all the good men were already married, or were hiding out in the woods somewhere.

Zara's phone pinged, and she picked it up and her jaw dropped as she lifted her sunglasses from her eyes to get a better look at the screen.



“Holy fuck,” she said, and a woman a few spaces down the pool scoffed and shushed her. “Oh, fuck off,” Zara said, flipping her the bird.

April had sent her a photo for proof. It was her best friend, tits out and grinning, with a goddamn elephant trunk resting on her shoulder. And it was that big *soft*.

*Jesus Christ*, Zara texted back. *Did you fuck a donkey or something?*

April sent her back a crying laughing emoji and a shrugging emoji.

Zara blew out a breath and went back up to the picture. April looked hot and had great tits, but that cock... The model found herself daydreaming, imagining it was her in that picture with a big cock just waiting to be sucked hard and rammed down her throat.

Shaking her head to try and clear the image, and the tactile imagining of a cock in her mouth, Zara sighed and set her phone down for a minute before quickly standing up and gathering her things. She needed to head up to her hotel room - she wasn't used to this feeling.

She was horny for the first time in a long while, and while she didn't have a vibrator or dildo with her, she was pretty sure the shower head in her room was detachable and could get the job done. As she left, Zara shook her head at herself. April had found herself a donkey dick, and somehow *that* was what got her motor running. What the hell was wrong with her?

## Chapter 14

You loved walking into the cafe in the morning; the smell of freshly brewed coffee always perked you up before you needed to make your pilgrimage into the office. And you'd gotten up extra early so that you could call Hannah to tell her about your date, so the coffee was extra needed now.

Paula spotted you from behind the counter as you walked in and broke into a big smile even though she was busy with some other customers. She motioned you around to the side counter, handing off the till to one of her baristas, and you followed her.

"Good morning, Ollie," she said, that grin not slipping as she came around the counter entirely and gestured for a hug, which you gave her happily. Paula was a tall, almost willowy woman with a cute awkwardness to her that made you think of the 'manic pixie dream girl' trope for some reason, even though she wasn't manic at all. It was mostly in her smile that looked a little too big for her face. Maybe if she dyed her hair a wild colour or something she would fit it better.

"Morning, Paula," you said, squeezing her tightly in the hug for a moment before stepping back. She slid around the counter again, immediately starting on your regular morning order. "How's business?"

"Bustling," she said. "Part of me wishes we could have a slow day once in a while, but that would be bad in the long run. How about you?"

"Same old, same old," you said. "For work, at least."

"Oh?" Paula asked, looking up from pouring his coffee. "Something new on the personal front?"

"I... might have gone on a date that went well," you grinned.

Paula raised her eyebrows and a moment later she smiled. "That's great for you, Ollie," she said. She swept some of her messy bangs out of her face and reached over to snag a pastry from inside the display. Paula, outside of work, had a bit of a grungey style and kept her brunette hair in a sort of messy, loose look that suited the awkward combo of her round face with her tall, thin stature. Since the Cafe wasn't a franchise, she and her parents allowed the staff to dress casually as long as they wore the branded aprons. In the summer that often meant Paula wore a cute pair of jean shorts that exposed her long, slender legs and some sort of baggy t-shirt - she'd complained once that to keep shirts that fit her long torso she needed to buy larger sizes. "Did you hear the latest about the break-ins?"

"No," you frowned. "Was there another one?"

"Mhmm," Paula hummed as she slid his order across the counter to you. "The pawn shop over on 3rd. Honestly, Ollie, I can't thank you enough for helping install the cameras and the alarms."

“It was nothing,” you said. “Just an afternoon hanging out in my favourite cafe.”

“Well, I’m going to keep pumping you with as much free coffee and pastry as you want, so don’t you dare think of taking out that wallet,” she said.

“Fine,” you sighed. You’d had this argument with her already. You’d put a fiver in the barista tip jar when she wasn’t looking. “How are your parents?”

“On vacation for a month,” Paula said. “They are touring Canada, of all places. Rented an RV and everything. First time they’ve taken a real vacation in twenty years, I think, and I’m in charge here. I think it’s my Dad’s way of testing whether I can take over the Cafe permanently and let him go down to as few hours as possible.”

“That’s great, for you and them!” You said. “Congratulations.”

“Thanks,” she said, then looked over your shoulder. “Looks like your friend is here. Have a good day at work, OK?”

“You too,” you said, smiling back at her for a moment before turning to find a table.

Margot eventually joined you after Paula got her order done separately, though Margot paid. The two of them were talking, and you couldn’t help but feel a little bit of pride that Margot and Paula had hit it off - you’d introduced them, and seeing your two friends getting along like that was nice. You were just taking your first bite of the cherry tart that Paula had given you when you noticed a weird look pass between them, though neither seemed to react to it, and then they were smiling again and Margot was coming over and planting herself across from you at the table.

“So, now I want the real details,” she said without even a ‘good morning.’ Her Texan accent stood out, not quite as thick as it had been when she moved to the city but still a musical twang compared to most people you met.

“I don’t know what you mean,” you said, flushing a little and trying to keep a straight face. “I told you and Hikaru everything last night.”

“Not a shot, buster,” Margot said, taking a sip of her coffee. “You dodged out when talking about the end of the date. Where did you end it?”

You worked your jaw for a moment, trying to think of a logical answer and coming up short.

“Did you kiss her?” Margot asked, reaching across the table and putting her hand on your arm.

“I don’t kiss and tell,” you said a little lamely.

“So that’s a yes,” Margot said, smiling sweetly and rubbing your arm. “Good for you, Ollie! What else happened?”

You scowled a little, though you couldn’t really hold it. “I’d rather not say,” you said.

“You know you can talk to me about anything, right?” Margot said. “If you want.”

“I know,” you said, feeling a little guilty about hiding something from her, along with Hannah. Margot knew almost everything about you, and Hannah definitely did, but you weren’t ready to talk about losing your virginity yet.

You changed the subject, and Margot let you, and the two of you slipped into your usual banter as you took your twenty minutes before you both had to head to work. She was deep into her classes now and you liked hearing about her ups and downs at the University, missing your own time there even though you were much happier now that you were established. You admired Margot for chasing what she wanted, even if it hadn’t been the usual path.

The weird thing was, as you talked, you realized that there had been a *physical* change between the two of you. Neither of you had been overly shy about telling each other things before, but now Margot seemed to be more comfortable with physical contact a lot like Hannah was. You weren’t sure *why* that would be, but you’d always been a hugger and Hannah was sure that one of your love languages was touch.

You also, for the first time, realized how gorgeous Margot was. Like, you’d known it before, but as she sat across the table from you, leaning on one elbow as she laughed at something you’d said, her bright blue eyes twinkling... She was hot. Like, really hot. She had grown up on a ranch down south and had the fit build of someone who had done real, hard manual labour as a teen and then kept herself up as an adult. She had the sort of pretty, open face that every TV show depicted cheerleaders as, with apple cheeks and a bright smile. She kept her blonde, wavy hair long and loose but styled, and did her makeup every day without fail. The fact that she dressed in short-sleeved button-downs in the summer didn’t detract from her casual airs at all, and on a morning like this when she was heading to work at the University library she wore a tight pair of jeans that hugged her hips and a pair of cowboy boots that she said she liked the sound of as she walked across the tile floors of the building.

You wondered what kissing her would feel like.

*That* was weird, and you had to shake it out of your head. Margot was your friend, she wasn’t April. You didn’t want to think of her that way because it felt like a betrayal of the trust you two had built up.

As you ran out of time, the two of you drained the last of your coffee and stood up. As usual, you hugged, but you were surprised when Margot kissed you on the cheek as well. "Have a good day, Ollie," she chirped happily before winking and walking out of the cafe.

"Bye," you said, smiling as you watched her go. It wasn't the first time she'd kissed you on the cheek, but usually she reserved that for when she was thanking you for something you'd helped her with. This had just been a 'See You Later' kiss though.

She was happy for you. Happy you've found someone. Comfortable with you being friends. That was definitely all it was.

## Chapter 15

Work, coding, was not going smoothly. It was hard to blame yourself for that though considering how much you had on your mind. Usually, you were able to ignore distractions, or at least shift them to the back of your mind when you sat down to start the problem-solving that was managing the latest developments your team had been working on for the startup. You hadn't even been this distracted when you were in the days leading up to your date with April.

Now, though, you had sex on the brain. It made sense that you would, but it was still frustrating whenever you caught yourself daydreaming about kissing her, or licking her nipples, or wedging your cock into the cleft of her pussy and slowly pushing in. And there you went again.

No one else at the office knew about your date - you had always felt weird when your coworkers were talking about their dating lives at work, so you'd kept your mouth shut because you tried not to be a hypocrite. Now, though, you *wanted* to talk to someone about it. Not about the sex, obviously, but about the date itself and how you were feeling. You wanted more perspective so you could feel sure about how it ended.

Just after lunch, when you couldn't stand it anymore, you decided that if ignoring the problem wasn't working then maybe engaging with it would make it go away fast. Pulling out your phone, you opened up your texts and found April.

You'd forgotten that the only things that had been sent between the two of you were the nudes. In a panic you dropped your phone, looking around - your area of the office was semi-open and your coworkers and team members were around, but thankfully no one seemed to have been looking over you or over your shoulder. You picked up your phone and quickly sent a series of texts, one word at a time.

*Need. To. Push. Pictures. Up. Feed. OK. Almost. There.*

As you started typing out your actual message, April responded with a crying laughing emoji and a kissing lips emoji. That made you grin a little, but you still typed and erased your message six times as you second-guessed what you were trying to say.

*Ollie, baby, I can see you typing and stopping over and over. Just send the message, April sent.*

You felt yourself flushing again and pressed send.

*Hello, beautiful. I was thinking about you.*

*Aww, my heart! She sent back. I was thinking about you too. I had a lot of fun last night, even before the FUN.*

*I did too, you responded. I can't wait to see you again. Do you need to leave the city any time soon?*

*In a couple of weeks, but only for a few days, April texted. NDA job, so I can't tell you for what.*

"Hey, Ollie," your coworker Tim called over to you. "You OK over there?"

"Pardon?" you asked, looking up from your phone.

"You're grinning like you might break your face, buddy," he chuckled. "What's up?"

"Just some good news," you said. "Not mine to share though."

Tim smirked and shook his head before going back to his work, and you noticed several other coworkers glancing over at you questioningly.

You went back to your phone but saw that April had sent you a voice note. You had to dig your earbuds out of your desk drawer and plug them in, and then were *very* happy that you did.

"Hey, my big dick stud," April said, putting on a low, sexy voice as she spoke. "I woke up this morning alone in the hotel bed and wishing you were there with me. I can't wait for us to get together again. And this time I'm going to plan the date myself, so will you go out with me, Ollie?"

You gulped, and then listened to it again, delighting in her voice. Then you texted her back.

*Good thing I put in earbuds to listen to that. Yes, I would love to, April.*

She sent back an apology and more crying laughing emoji faces, followed by a picture of her making a kissy face at the camera of her phone.

You had to put your phone away before you really did break your face from smiling.

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"Hikaru, just sit down," you sighed, pulling out the chair for her at the little kitchen table.

She sat, or more appropriately collapsed, into the chair. You could tell that something was going on with her almost as soon as you walked in the door after getting home from work, but for the first fifteen minutes, she'd just acted weird.

"What's wrong?" you asked as you sat across from her. "Did something happen on the job hunt today?"

“No,” she grunted and flushed a little as she looked away from you. “I took the day off. I had a bad morning and I tried to find a way to turn it around, so I didn’t get much of anything done.” She looked up at him, her brow furrowed into a crease. “Please don’t be mad at me, I just needed to take the day. I know I need to find something.”

“Why would I be mad?” you asked. “Hikaru, you spend *every day* trying to find something that makes sense for you. It’s been weeks and you keep hitting walls. I totally understand you being frustrated by that and needing a day off.”

She frowned, and that frown developed into a soft cry as she slowly lowered her head to the table. You shushed her softly, coming around the table and rubbing her back through her shirt. She’d been pushing hard, which was understandable, but maybe you should have stepped in sooner to make her take a Saturday off at least.

“It’ll be OK,” you assured her. “Just sit here and breathe a bit. I’ll go make dinner and-”

“No!” she said, sitting upright and then standing. “No. Ollie, *I’m* making dinner. You just got home from work, and I’ve been here all day. I need to do it.”

“No you don’t,” you said. “You said you’re having a bad day. It’s-”

She gave you a look that was petulant and demanding at the same time and pushed past you headed for the kitchen. “I don’t want to hear it, Oliver. I’m making you dinner, and that’s final.”

She got to work, and you retreated to your room to change from your work clothes. What the heck was that? You’d never seen Hikaru so forceful, usually when the two of you argued over who would cook it was playful banter, but this time she’d *demand*ed that she do it. That, coupled with her acting weird, had you wondering if maybe it wasn’t the job hunt after all.

You ended up texting Hannah while still in your room, asking if you could meet up later at her place so you could talk to her about something.

*Sure*, she replied almost instantly. *Come on over whenever. I’ll be home.*