

A Day at the Bookstore: The Afternoon

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Aya continues her day with handsome Daniel, dealing with accidents and jealous ex's

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Continued from "A Day At The Bookstore: The Morning" Disclaimer: None of the characters in this story are based on real life people. Let me remind you: my name is Aya, I'm 19, and I work at a large bookstore downtown. I had a huge crush on my coworker Daniel, a silent, confident 21-year-old, and throughout the events of a particular morning, we arranged to have lunch together, after an unexpected passionate kiss. So here we were, walking out of JC Penney's, hand in hand. My embarrassment was fading and the warmth of Daniel's strong hand was making me elated with the knowledge that he, probably, almost certainly, liked me. It was 12 o'clock, and another hour before our next shift at the bookstore began. "Where shall we eat?" Daniel asked me, "There's a Chinese restaurant one block over, a sushi bar right across the street from it, and I think a new Italian restaurant opened up south of us." I was immediately attracted to the proposition of Italian food, but I wasn't sure what Daniel preferred. "Hmm, has there been any rumor about if the Italian restaurant is good or not?" "Oh definitely," said Daniel brightly, and I relaxed. "My friend and I often try out different restaurants and he went yesterday, I couldn't go because of work, but he said it was great. Not so expensive, and good quality. But keep in mind I am paying for this lunch, so we can go to a really expensive place if you like." He gave me a special small smile, like he was saying he would spoil me to no end. I wagged a finger in front of his face. "Bad! Remember, you promised we'd go Dutch. We split the bill half-half. And I don't want either of us spending a ton of money on lunch, so let's go Italian." He laughed. "And here I was thinking you might let it slip. Well fine by me." He let go of my hand and smoothed his hair back self-consciously, then dropped his hand back to his side, right next to mine. Our fingers touched and I knew this was his way of giving me a choice about holding his hand or not. I hadn't really realized it before, but Daniel must've been a huge romantic. Well I grabbed his hand, my decision made. He was mine. I dragged him along to the restaurant, starving. It took us about 5 minutes walking to get to the restaurant, and Daniel opened the door for me (like he had to prove he was any more amazing than he already was). A smart looking lady in a short black skirt and a tight form fitting black shirt that stood behind the counter and snapped at us, "For two?" more as an exclamation than a question, and hurriedly directed us to a small table in the on the side. It was very crowded, and I felt a bit intimidated by the waitress' attitude and the noise of so much chatter from every other table. But once Daniel had ordered us both some ginger ale, and I sipped the spicy

delicious drink a few times, I started to relax. We settled into a nice easy conversation about the college classes we would be taking next year, then moved on to the topic of our future careers. Daniel, surprisingly, wanted to become a communications specialist, or public relations specialist. He had realized when he had been a part of a friend's business venture, that what he was really good at was presenting information to potential customers and convincing them to use his friend's service. He said he had shocked his parents, who had been so keen on him becoming a doctor due to his high grades in science courses. I, on the other hand, was interested in becoming an athletic trainer. Not many people apart from close friends and family knew this, and the fact I was taking so many diverse general education classes for my first year was pretty misleading. My family had not been the sporting type at all, but in school I had quickly become involved in tennis, track, volley ball, softball for a short while, and football (soccer). Daniel commented how different our future careers would be, and I felt a pang of pain. Did he think we were a bad match? So I had to prod at this feeling, "but opposites attract, right?" And with a quick smile, he replied, "Yes, they most certainly do." By then I had finished my meal of fettuccini alfredo, which however simple, was definitely delicious, and Daniel his meal of thin crust four cheese pizza. In his quiet manner, he said that it was the best he had ever tasted to the waitress, who promptly handed us the bill, a forced smile, and two pieces of candy. "Great food but can't say much about the service," Daniel whispered to me, smiling like we were sharing a secret. A different waitress came rushing by with a pitcher, and not realizing we were getting ready to go, stopped to pour some water in our glasses. And (what was with all these accidents today?) as she straightened up, her elbow knocked my glass down, water spilling all over the table and onto the floor. Luckily it didn't get on Daniel or me, or so I thought, but of course the waitress had to trip on the slippery floor, so as she fell, out of her hands flew the pitcher, the water and ice spotting their target and rushing down onto me. The waitress, a tall obviously clumsy brunette girl, began to apologize profusely, while trying not to giggle because we were both sopping wet and wearing such ridiculous expressions of surprise. Daniel was laughing outright, while I was thinking, 'Damn, my shirt!' because my shirt was very thin and did little now to hide the outline of my bra. I was worried too, because the waitress was wearing a white shirt that was stretched over a pair of D sized breasts, ten times larger than mine. What if Daniel never looked at me again after looking at her? But Daniel didn't look at her twice! Was there something wrong with him? He helped me up, putting an arm around me. He paid the bill with no tip and accepted two free lunch coupons from our very surly original waitress. She looked as if she might kill everyone in the restaurant. We wasted no time in getting out, Daniel grinning like a half-wit and reassuring me that if we stayed outside in the sun, I would be dry in no time. However, it was about five minutes to one, and we really had to get back to the bookstore for our afternoon shift. I had no clothes to change into, no time to buy new clothes, and my house was a half hour away walking. We rushed back to the bookstore, and stopping at Daniel's locker, he handed me his spare t-shirt. I just stared at it for a moment, then gaped at him. "I can't wear this, it's huge!" "Are you calling me fat?" he asked, raising an eyebrow. I shook my head, but really, "the customers will think I'm so weird wearing a guy's shirt. Plus, my shorts are still wet... wouldn't it be better for me to keep with the whole wet outfit?" "No," said Daniel firmly. "All the

customers' eyes will be straying to the wrong place, and I won't allow anyone else to look there." He grinned mischievously. I blushed a deep red. So he had been looking at my breasts. "So at least change the shirt, the shorts will dry in time. Tuck in the shirt though, or bind it at the back or something, those shorts are short enough to be hidden by the shirt." He left to start his shift and let the manager know I'd be there in a moment. I went into the single-person-bathroom and made a face at my reflection in the mirror. My dark brown hair was messed up, the tips wet and curling when they should be straight. I tore off my poor red shirt and attempted to dry my hair and bra with some paper towels. It had little effect, and when I donned Daniel's white shirt, water seeped through, neatly outlining my breasts. "This is ridiculous," I grumbled to myself, walking out of the bathroom. "What's ridiculous?" asked a soft, melodic voice. I turned in surprise to face the beautiful boy who kept appearing. Why was he here? This corridor was for staff only. I felt irritated, however attractive he was, and glared at him. Daniel was better in so many ways. "We meet again," he said, smiling, and the smile reached right to his eyes, in fact his eyes seemed to close completely, before blinking back open to release the gaze of flickering blue gems. "I should introduce myself. I am Jon. I have an interview with your manager in an hour and I have just been wandering about getting used to the surroundings. I'm new to town, see." "Hi Jon. Well I gotta go." I told him, shortly. Oh my god! I should hurry and get Daniel to start dating me, I thought, else this guy might keep bothering me, although I didn't mind him being in the bookstore as eye candy. I left a bit flustered, knowing Jon must've seen the water outlines on my shirt, and realized the shirt was a guy's shirt too, how awkward! I settled at my counter, clipping on my nametag and smiling at the 3-year-old child sucking on his thumb while his Hispanic mother tried to decide between two types of Arizona shot glasses. George waved at me from the books counter, and I waved back, happier, although I couldn't see Daniel anywhere. George wandered over and grinned at me. "Hey you stand under a storm somewhere? And god, is that Daniel's shirt?" "You sound like a girl fetching for gossip," I told him. "But yeah, it's Daniel's shirt, isn't he sweet?" George just shrugged. "Pshh, Daniel's a weird kid. You know I'd be pretty sweet to you too." "Shut up, you have a girlfriend. From what I've heard from you, she's the controlling, jealous type. You should be careful," I cautioned him. I was kidding of course, because he had the perfect girlfriend: the kindest, cutest girl ever, who'd never hurt a soul except her own, as she had a habit of keeping her troubles to herself. I had met her only a few times, and it made you wonder if angels didn't sometimes come down to earth disguised as people. George took on a more serious expression, and said, "Well talking about jealous girls, Daniel's ex was a definite jealous type, and considering he broke up with her a month ago, you should be careful." I looked at him a bit surprised. I guess I should've realized from Daniel's reserved nature that if he had a girlfriend, he wouldn't talk about her a lot. He was the type of guy that would try to pay attention to the girl he was talking to instead. George was called away by a customer, and instead that annoying but beautiful Jon appeared. I saw several girls and even a gay guy start to drift over to souvenirs just because of his presence. 'Ugh,' I thought. At least the business would improve. "Hey, so what does duties your job consist of?" Jon asked. "If I get accepted for the job offer, I'll be working along side you." He smiled in his weird way again, and rubbed his chin. 'A nervous gesture?' I wondered. "Well I greet and help the

customers. I cash in and out the register everyday and check people out if they want, or if the other counter is really busy. I restock the shelves and keep everything neat and tidy.” To reinforce this and to stop talking to him, I started walking around the souvenirs department asking people if they were finding everything ok, or needed any help. I was grateful to the little kid who asked sweetly “Momma would like to know, do you have a pint glass,” while his mother encouraged him. I just hoped the kid wouldn’t be alcoholic by the time he was ten, and I directed them to the Arizona pint glasses. I returned to the counter and Jon continued to talk to me. “Well that doesn’t sound too hard. Hey so I was wondering, maybe you’d like to go out to dinner with me sometime? Get to know each other?” I looked at him with disdain. “Are you asking me out on a date?” He shifted his weight from one foot to another. “Well, yeah.” “No,” I said curtly. I started making my way over to the books counter. Daniel needed to save me, or George even, where the heck was Daniel anyway? “Wow,” said the pretty boy, “I’ve never been rejected right from the start before.” “Get used to it,” I retorted, “Uh, hello, didn’t you see me and Daniel? You know where my interests lie.” Jon gave me a weird look. “Yeah but I thought he must’ve told you after the kiss or something, I’m pretty sure he has a girlfriend. Look.” He pointed to the bookstore entrance. Walking in was Daniel, a tired, despairing look on his face, and a beautiful blond girl a half step behind him. ‘My day is starting to go bad’, I thought, as I watched them. The girl was chattering like mad. “So we’re over that fight right? Look I know we haven’t gone out much in the last month, and I’m really sorry about that, I mean like, being a cheerleader for the local team is really time-consuming! But yeah some stupid people have got the impression we’re no longer dating – how stupid right – and I heard you’ve been eyeing some girl at work? But I bet that’s a lie, like even IF we have an argument you’re such a loyal, sweet guy...” “We’re not dating.” Daniel cut through her words like a knife. The expression on her face was hilarious, turning from shock, to fear, to conceit. I turned to Jon with a slight smile, but was drawn back as Daniel’s ex responded. “Oh come on Danny, you’re really stupid sometimes, you know? You’re really gonna give up me because of one fight–” “One fight? I caught you fucking two guys. Not just one, two.” “Yeah, it was a threesome, I asked you if you were interested, but no, so I had to go find another guy. That has nothing to do with our relationship.” ‘This is messed up,’ I thought, anger flaring up towards this stupid bitch. Daniel had reached the books counter, and George was frowning at them. Their argument was loud enough for us in souvenirs to here, which basically meant the entire store was listening. “Not just one, two. And apparently sucking one guy’s dick while fucking another guy is more acceptable than fucking just one other guy!” Daniel’s normally quiet voice rose and George put a hand on his shoulder. “Yeah well ok, look, if you dislike it that much, I won’t do it again, k? Or you could actually be a good sport and join in...” “It’s over Rea.” I wanted to reach out to Daniel, comfort him, and punch that stupid whore. But Rea just smirked. “Oh yeah? Dude, you’re not going to find a better girl than me. In fact, really, what decent girl will go for you? Plus, you’re in love with me, you’ll always come crawling back.” Daniel’s face contorted with rage. He took a deep breath, calming himself. “Actually, I’m already dating a girl.” A bit of fear crossed over Rea’s face, which should’ve been rewarding to me, but that was a blow to me as well. “Oh really. So who are you “dating?”” Daniel pointed at me. “I’m dating her. Aya.” What. The. Fuck. I looked at him with my face saying exactly that. Of all my fantasies about Daniel asking

me out, this scenario was one that had not crossed my mind, and it was so rude, and embarrassing too, that I really couldn't believe Daniel, my Daniel had done it. He trotted over to me, his expression pleading I at least play along, but I was pissed. I glanced at Jon and he was looking at me, one eyebrow raised, going 'I think you would like to date me better.' The ex-gf got to me before Daniel did. "So, you dating my Danny?" "No," I told her, hating her, but feeling very conflicted about Daniel. Well, I would never call him Danny, for one thing. Rea laughed at Daniel. "See, you can't even get a friend to pretend she's dating you." Daniel came up and looked at me like a heart-broken puppy. "But Aya..." And I slapped him. How dare he? When he hadn't asked me out? To use me to get rid of his ex, not solve his problems on his own, hell, he hadn't even told his ex he didn't love her anymore, in fact he probably still did! Fuck this, I was done. I abandoned my station and returned to the faculty corridor of the bookstore, Rea's girlish laughter haunting me, Jon following close behind me. I'm such a girl you know? That kind of event really, really gets to me. I sunk down against a wall, hugged my knees to my chest, and started to cry. Jon sat next to me, and put an arm around my shoulders. I leaned against him, glad he was there to comfort me. Maybe he wasn't so bad. Then I felt his hand reaching, groping at my breasts, "UGH!" I pushed him away, and got up and ran, he was shouting after me, "What! You didn't seem to mind when it was that Danny guy!" What an asshole. I ran out the side door of the bookstore, and paused to look around. Life was going on as usual, and I caught sight of some young woman running on the pavement. Of course, I could go run at the nearby park and calm down. But it was the other direction from the bookstore so I walked quickly passed the bookstore entrance. Of course, I had the luck at that moment for Rea to come storming out the doors. Her face was flushed red, her grayish-blue eyes tearing up. Upon seeing me, she was consumed by rage. "YOU BITCH!" She screamed, "I don't know what you've done to my Danny, but he thinks he is fucking IN LOVE with you, and not me! HE IS MINE, UNDERSTOOD? If you lay one fucking hand on him I'll fucking strangle you!" Hearing these words, my first thought was 'what lack of imagination with swear words! All she uses is the F-bomb.' Then my mind went on to connect that as 'Ah, so when she is mad, she replaces "like" in her sentences with "fucking."' Which was kinda funny so I smiled. Rea burst into tears and ran off. I guess my smile came across as arrogant and really cruel. But honestly, did I care? With that in mind, I abandoned my plan to go running in the park. Pulling a tissue from my pocket, which I hadn't known I had, I dabbed old tears from my eyes. All that was going on in my mind was "he is fucking IN LOVE with you and not me" repeatedly, and I had come to the conclusion that maybe there was a happy ending to this all. Because that was what had really bothered me, the fact he wanted to be dating me just to tell his ex girlfriend. How was I to know if he gave a damn about me, or was still in love with his ex or not? So I wasn't going to forgive Daniel easily, but it could be done. I walked into the bookstore and immediately hurried to my counter. My manager, a strict older lady with fading brown hair was shouting her head off at Daniel and George for creating a scene, and neither of them had the guts to tell her she was making one herself. The customers were all looking rather shaken and leaving one by one. About 10 minutes later she came over to me and I stiffened, but her expression was kind. "Are you ok?" she asked. "Jon said the last he saw of you was you running out crying. I really can't believe Daniel would cause such a mess,

considering he's such a nice young man." I nodded and told her I was fine, and distracted her with questions about new orders and the arrangement of postcards. A good half-hour later, she retired to the back of the store where her office was. Jon, thankfully, was nowhere to be seen. It was 3 o'clock, and I kept glancing towards Daniel. Every time I looked over, he was looking at me. George would then lean towards him and mutter in his ear, advice or encouragement I wasn't sure. Well, I wasn't going to talk to him first. Customers settled back down and came and went. I was kept pretty busy with this one old lady that couldn't seem to find anything even when it was right in front of her, and then still wanted to know if we had different types, or some old items that she had seen in the bookstore last year. An hour passed, and George came over to talk once, just casually asking how I was, and if I had work tomorrow, etc. He seemed about to mention Daniel at the end, and then thought better of it and just left. Because the bookstore closed at 5:30, there were fewer and fewer customers, even in the books section. At 4:30, Daniel finally ventured over to me. "Hey, Aya." His voice was quiet and apologetic, and he looked straight at me, but I looked away. "Look, about earlier, I'm really sorry. I was shocked that Rea came to see me. I thought she was over me too. What Rea said really got to me, and I just really wanted to get back at her, and I tried to grab the easy way out, and pull you into our mess. I didn't think about what it would be like for you, or how saying I was dating you probably was really hurtful, considering we're not dating and I was lying to save my own skin." "So this is why he wants to be a communications specialist," I thought. "But I really like you, Aya. I told Rea straightforwardly what I feel towards her, which is near to nothing now, and so we're done. I hope you'll forgive me for saying we were dating when we weren't." He reached a warm hand out and laid it upon mine on the counter. I turned to look at him then, and god, his eyes were so pretty, so sad, and even showed a glitter of liquid. He was near tears? That shocked me, because I think there is little that is more touching than a strong young man ready to cry because of you. (If you are not touched, you are the devil, and it is no wonder he is crying.) My heart started to race the way it had this morning, my hand just itching to turn and hold his. So I quickly told him I forgave him, that I totally understood why he had acted as such when he had an ex-girlfriend like that, and that he was so brave to have been able to deal with her! He gave me a relieved smile that I melted in. Even if he had a fault or two he was the most amazing guy in the entire universe and I was in love with him. "So, as an apology, I'd like to take you out to a movie tonight..." said Daniel, trailing off. My mind started to run ahead, envisioning what could happen at a movie; even some naughty thoughts entered my head. "I'd love to go to a movie," I told him, smiling. "But I can't go dressed in your spare t-shirt! I'll have to go home first and change." Daniel nodded. "Ok, then I will walk home and get my car and pick you up at 6:30? What movie would you like to see?" We spent the rest of our shift at the bookstore talking about what films were showing. The manager didn't really mind since George was there, and there weren't many customers anyway. At 5:30 I cashed out the register and we turned out the lights, shooing one or two stubborn customers out the door. George and Daniel went to their lockers to get their stuff, but I had my bag under the counter so I walked straight out the bookstore with a quick "Have a good evening!" to our manager. I trudged the two miles back to my house at an easy pace. The air was dry and much cooler than midday, and the cars were already turning on their

headlights. When I opened my door my wonderful little tabby cat greeted me, purring and rubbing up against me. I fell back onto my bed; my arms sprawled out, the energy drained from me. I looked at my watch. It was 6 o' clock, and I had the evening to prepare for! *** If you like this story so far, check back for the remaining part: "A Day at the Bookstore: Good Night". Find out if Daniel is "the one" for Aya, and if they will get any further than just a movie! In case you haven't already, I hope you will go and read the first part to this story: " A Day At the Bookstore: The Morning ."