

Definitely Not a Bookstore Meet-Cute

written by

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INT. A LARGE BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

QUINCY, an employee in their early 20s, stands at the register, counting the extra change. The store has just closed. They look bored, but keep glancing at the door.

Their manager, RYAN, comes up to the register. Quincy's facial expression does not change.

RYAN

Hey, Quincy, I'm gonna have to head out early, so you're in charge of taking inventory.

Quincy's face finally changes into one of anger and confusion.

QUINCY

Wait, why? I've taken inventory for the past week. You said you would do it today, Ryan.

RYAN

Yeah, well, I can't stay, and Will hasn't been here long enough to do inventory by himself.

QUINCY

(under their breath)

Yeah, because he hasn't even tried to learn.

RYAN

What was that? Do you have a problem with this?

Ryan frowns at Quincy, daring them to challenge him. Quincy glares back, then smiles widely.

QUINCY

Nope, not one. I'll stay and do inventory with Will.

Ryan grins.

RYAN

Fantastic! Well, have a good night, Quincy. See you tomorrow.

Quincy pointedly doesn't respond. Ryan exits.

Quincy finishes counting up the money and locks up the register. They take one last look at the door before sighing and heading towards the back of the store.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BACKROOM OF THE BOOKSTORE - MOMENTS LATER

Quincy stares up at the long shelves of books. They tilt their head back and stare at the ceiling for a beat, then begin to walk farther into the room.

Suddenly, a loud crash is heard from off-screen.

WILL (O.S.)

Everything's fine!

Quincy rolls their eyes. They jog farther to the source of the crash. There we see WILL, a frizzy-haired young man and Quincy's co-worker. He lies in pile of books, a step-stool next to him.

QUINCY

What the he- What are you doing?
Didn't Ryan tell you to wait for
me?

Will frowns up at Quincy. He looks disappointed.

WILL

I was just trying to get a book
down, but the stool slipped. I was
waiting for you.

QUINCY

Well, you're just gonna have to get
the book from the shelves out
there. Now c'mon, we've got a lot
to do.

Quincy holds out a hand to help Will up. He peers at it, confused. Quincy sighs and gestures to Will's hand. Will realizes what they're doing, blushes, and puts his hand in theirs. Quincy hauls him up.

They stand there for a beat, holding hands, until Quincy drops Will's hand and turns away.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Pick up the books. I'll meet you
back up front.

Will smiles and gives a two-finger salute.

3.

WILL

Will do, captain.

Quincy rolls their eyes but smiles slightly. They walk
away, leaving Will behind them happily picking up the
books.

CUT TO:

INT. A LARGE BOOKSTORE - MOMENTS LATER

Will has returned from the backroom and has started
helping Quincy take inventory. They do not talk, but Will
is humming softly. Quincy seems frustrated by the noise.

They continue their work, while Will's humming grows
louder. Quincy looks more and more annoyed, until they
snap.

QUINCY

(almost shouting)

Could you please stop humming? I'm
going to get a headache.

Will's head snaps up to look at them.

WILL

Oh, yeah, of course. I'm sorry, I
hum to help me focus, but if it's
causing your head to hurt I'll
stop. Sorry.

Will looks down at his feet guiltily.

QUINCY

No, wait, I'm sorry, I shouldn't
have snapped. It wasn't that
annoying. I just haven't eaten in
five hours and I'm really tired.
You're fine.

WILL
(concerned)
You haven't eaten in five hours?
What about your break?

QUINCY
I didn't bother to bring anything
because I figured I was going to
leave right after closing, and
clearly that didn't happen. So.

Will's face lights up and a grin begins to form.

4.

WILL
Well, we're gonna have to do
something about that! C'mon, I'll
make you something.

Will starts to walk in the direction of the cafe. Quincy
understands what he intends to do, and a look of panic
passes over their face.

QUINCY
We can't just take something from
the cafe! They'll notice!

WILL
Nah, they won't. Trust me.

Will shoots them another salute and walks away. Quincy
looks apprehensive, but follows him. They weave through the
shelves and stop at the small bookstore cafe.

INT. THE BOOKSTORE CAFE - CONTINUOUS

As soon as they reach the cafe, Will goes into the back
room. Quincy stands in the middle, still clearly uneasy.

WILL (O.S.)
What do you want, Quincy? There's
not much overstock, but there are a
couple stale croissants that could
be good.

QUINCY
Are you completely sure we can
just... take these? I mean, I'm all

for taking stock from Ryan, but I
can't loose this job.

Will's head pops back out from the doorway.

WILL

Yeah, I'm sure. I only take the
extra stuff that didn't sell from
the day before, and I leave some
money in the tip jar. I'm pretty
sure someone notices it's gone, but
no one's said anything, so.

Will disappears back into the room and comes out moments
later with two croissants and two cups of water in his
hands.

He pops the croissants in the small oven on the counter
and turns back to Quincy.

5.

WILL (CONT'D)

Also, it helps that I work in the
cafe most days.

QUINCY

Wait, you work in the cafe?

Will laughs at the expression of confusion on their face.

WILL

Yeah, I'm on cafe duty every other
day. I used to work in a coffee
shop, so it's easier for me than
working the floor.

QUINCY

That explains why I don't see you
half the time. You're hiding out
back here.

WILL

(with a smirk)
You look for me?

QUINCY

(flustered)
No! Well.. not intentionally.
You're just hard to miss.

WILL

I get told that a lot. Apparently I have a "very expressive personality".

QUINCY

That's one way to describe it.

The oven dings, and Will turns back around to get out the croissants. Quincy takes a seat at one of the tables.

WILL

(facing the wall)

I've also been told I'm "annoying" and "hard to work with".

Will says this in a light tone, but it's clear there's history there. Will puts the croissants in bags and brings them over to the table.

He sits down across from Quincy and slides them one of the bags. Quincy takes a small bite and chews, thinking.

QUINCY

When did you start working here?

6.

Will looks up, surprised at this simple question.

WILL

Two months ago, why?

QUINCY

Two months. Two months and I never bothered to actually get to know you after we first met.

WILL

Oh, that doesn't really matter to me. I mean, you're talking to me now

QUINCY

(interrupting)

Yes, but I should've at least been nicer. I just... I was... I've been so *rude* to you.

WILL

(not unkindly)

Yeah, you have. But hey, we're here now! And we're talking! So, ask me anything. We'll start over.

WILL

Really?

QUINCY

Really. Now ask me something. Pretend it's my first day and we just met.

QUINCY

OK, first day. Well...

Quincy sticks out their hand. Will stares.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Hi. I'm Quincy Faulkner. I work here. What's your name?

Will raises an eyebrow but takes their hand.

WILL

I'm Will Ross. I just started here. Nice to meet you, Quincy.

They shake.

7.

QUINCY

Nice to meet you too, Will. Now, what brings you to this hellhole?

Will laughs, and Quincy smiles.

WILL

Well, it's kind of a funny story...

Will begins talking, but the dialogue is inaudible. Time seems to speed up, and clouds roll in outside as they talk and eat. The scene slowly fades on them talking expressively.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PARKING LOT OF THE BOOKSTORE - LATER

Quincy is locking up the bookstore's doors while Will talks inaudibly next to them. Quincy finishes and says something back. They are interrupted by roll of thunder, and rain begins to pour down.

Quincy and Will look at each other and laugh.

QUINCY

I'm assuming you don't have an umbrella.

WILL

It was sunny this morning! How was I supposed to know that this

He gestures at the storm.

WILL (CONT'D)

-was going to happen?

QUINCY

You're supposed to just *know*. You seem like the person who always knows the weather, anyway.

WILL

What's that supposed to mean?

QUINCY

Man, I have no clue. I'm very tired.

Will nods in agreement. They both stare out into the rain for a beat. Quincy casually checks their watch, but their eyes widen at the time.

8.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Crap! I needed to be home an hour ago!

WILL

(worriedly)

Dang it, was it me who kept you here longer? If I knew you needed to be home I could've locked up

QUINCY

No, no, it's not your fault. I was just having such a good time talking to you I forgot to check the time.

Will's face breaks out into a grin.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

What's that for? What did I say?

WILL

You like talking to me?

Quincy blinks.

QUINCY

Yeah, dumbass. You're really cool. I'm still mad I didn't try to talk to you sooner. This was the most fun I've ever had doing inventory.

Will suddenly lurches forward and wraps his arms around Quincy.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Um, what's this?

WILL

(muffled)

It's a hug. To say thank you.

A beat. Then Quincy wraps their arms around Will, too.

QUINCY

What are you thanking me for?

WILL

Just- thank you.

They hug for a second more, until Will pulls back. Their faces are very close. Will's eyes dart down to Quincy's lips.

9.

Then he seems to shake out of a daze and steps back. He doesn't meet Quincy's eyes.

WILL (CONT'D)

OK, so, yeah, um. You said you
needed to go so um. Yeah. I'll see
you tomorrow probably. Cool. Great.

Quincy stares at the top of his head. They pause for a
beat, thinking, before stepping closer and tilting up
Will's chin. Quincy stares at him, then kisses Will softly
on the cheek.

QUINCY

Yeah, uh, see you tomorrow.

Quincy turns swiftly on their heel and runs into the
rain. Will watches them leave, face bright red. He
smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.



Browsing Through an Old Bookstore by Romesa Syed