

Annamaria Part 5 – Love Takes Work

Tags: Multi-Arm, Multi-Leg, Conjoined Tail, Multi-Head, Romance, Date

Summary: Annamaria and Laura decide to give their relationship another shot, and find that dating is a lot more work than it originally seems.

You know, all the love stories you hear only talk about the good parts of romance. It's all about how two star crossed lovers were meant for each other. They meet, kiss, and then it's happily ever after.

These days I'm learning that's as much of a fantasy as anything else. Relationships take work, lots of work. Love is a weird and complex emotion and, honestly, I don't think anyone understands it. We all just follow our hearts, even when they make us do dumb things.

Me and Laura decided we wanted to try and make it work out. It would have been easy for either of us to just say, "thanks for the dates" and move on to the next person. We had only barely started to get to know each other, and she really, really doesn't like my new job at DuBois fashion.

But we talked about it and it did seem a little silly to let a relationship go just as it started blossoming simply because of a new career. I asked her if she wanted to get to know me, or if she only liked the person she thought I was, the "hero" figure she had in her mind that saved her from being publicly nude right after she mutated.

Maybe I was a little harsh, but I needed to know. I didn't want her attaching herself to me just because I helped her pick out a pair of panties. I get how mutating can be traumatic and how deep emotions can get when you are just starting to get your mutant life under control. But I didn't want her to see me as some sort of fashion-based savior figure. I just wanted her to see me as me.

We agreed it might be better to start from scratch. That it might be better to get to know each other from square one.

Of course, that just made me nervous that maybe, when the mutant fashion savior image she had of me faded she wouldn't find anything else of worth about me, anything worth continuing the relationship for.

This was going to be difficult for both of us.

Our first date started where our last one left off, the cafe. It was at the very least a neutral place we felt comfortable in. I sipped a mocha milkshake with my right head while I leaned my left on my hand, gazing out the window and waiting for Laura to arrive.

I guess I wasn't really on the same wavelength as her. I was wearing a t-shirt and jeans, but she came in a semi-formal dress. Even seeing her step off the bus and start walking toward the café made me blush. It made me feel like I had screwed this up before it even began.

A bell rung as she opened the door and saw me sitting at the usual table.

"Hey, Laura..." I said meekly. "I... I'm glad you could make it."

Laura was already blushing fiercely. "Hey Annamaria. It's nice to see you again."

She pulled over a bench seat, one that fit her taur body, pulled up her dress to get it out of the way and sat down.

"So..." she said.

"So..." I said.

Silence...

"So..." my other head said just to fill the void.

"Well, this is awkward," Laura said with a small laugh. She was mindlessly rifling through her purse to keep her hands busy. Unfortunately, she had shoved way more hands than could fit in it, so I could tell it was just nervous movement, and she wasn't going to end up pulling anything important out.

"Yeah... Look, I'm sorry how our last... uh... date... if it could be called that, ended."

"Me too," Laura said with a small frown. "I guess I just, reacted kind of... harshly to the new job. I thought you were always gonna be at the store ya know. Waiting there to help out new mutants that don't know where else to go, you know... like me?"

"I stop by every so often to say hi. They are doing OK without me." My left head took another sip of my mocha. "They are training a new girl. Raptor mutant. She has a body that doesn't quite fit the stock clothes, but she has good eyes."

"Well, that's good to hear. I guess, I hadn't stopped in again ever since you quit."

That caused a lot of silence. I guess I didn't know how much me having a job at the mall meant to her.

Laura flagged down a waitress to put in an order for herself, just an Amaretto Steamer.

"You know," my right head said while my left still looked away blushing. I guess that's a bonus of having two heads, you can compartmentalize your feelings. "They still have me on speed dial."

"Oh?" Laura said, swirling a stirrer in her steamer and taking a sip, giving her a small milk moustache.

“Yeah. I still help out. I mean, now the store gets to advertise that their former employee works at DuBois fashion. Really helps drum up business.” I laughed to myself. I didn’t even completely believe that. No way I could be that important.

“So, what? You give advice over the phone?” she asked.

“And like I said, I pop in every so often. Usually not on weekdays but weekends ya know. Just to give pointers here and there, and to catch lunch at the food court.”

Laura laughed a bit, but I could tell she still felt awkward. She was drumming four of her arms on the table and her hind legs were bopping up and down anxiously. My left hand took a deep breath to try and calm my own heartrate.

“Well, what about you?” I said.

“Me?” Laura asked confused.

“Yeah. I mean it feels like everything we have talked about since we started getting to know about each other was me, me, me. My job. My future. To be honest I don’t know much about you.”

“To be honest there’s not much to say,” she said with a weak smile.

Now that was something I could identify with.

“Well, what about your job?”

“What about it?”

“Is it your dream job? Was it always office life for you?”

She stopped to think taking another sip of her steamer. “No, I suppose it wasn’t always... When I was young, I wanted to be, gah, it’s stupid.”

“No, go ahead. Tell me.”

“I wanted to be a dancer. You know, professionally. I dreamt of being up on stage and making people smile. Of course, that was way before I mutated. Now I’m six left feet.”

“Hah! You can’t possibly be a worse dancer than I am. I went to a wedding once and they almost called an ambulance for me. Thought I was having a seizure on the dance floor.”

We shared a polite laugh at that one.

“I even have video look!” I pulled out my phone and happily showed her the most embarrassing video of me “dancing” at a friend of a friend’s wedding. My hands were flailing. My feet were kicking. It kind of looked like I was fighting off ghosts. It was one of my more embarrassing moments, but I kept it on my phone just as a reminder to remain humble. Because sometimes your most embarrassing moments are also your most fun.

Laura couldn't contain herself. "I don't think you'll be getting up on any stages with moves like that."

"What, you don't think I have the moves for the big time?" I said, swirling my two heads in circle and accidentally clunking them together in the middle. We shared another soft laugh.

"OK, OK, maybe we can go dancing sometime... but only after we take some lessons."

"We?" I questioned.

"Well, I need to get used to this body and you... you just need... I don't know... a dance exorcist?"

"A boogie priest?"

"A disco bishop!"

"A samba saint!"

Another round of laughter. It felt good. It felt lighter. It felt like, well it felt like I wasn't trying to prove myself to her anymore.

"So, if we are gonna take lessons together, does that mean you wouldn't mind seeing me for another date?" I asked, blinking in a cute manner with all four of my eyes.

"Not so fast," she said with a smirk. "Dance lessons for you wouldn't be a date, it would be rehab for the chronically under rhythmed."

"Is there any reason why it couldn't be both?" I said finally finishing up my mocha.

"No, no I suppose not," she said placing one of her hands on the table.

I gently reached another hand over and held hers.

This wasn't so bad.

This was SO BAD! Dancing lessons sounded like a good way to pass the time with Laura, but how does ANYONE find this fun. My feet were killing me, and I was sweating through my clothes.

"Annamaria!" one of our teachers said in a voice that practically triggered a PTSD flashback from my middle school days. "Pay attention to where your feet are!"

We had signed up for lessons at the local mutant community center, the one that Laura originally wanted to get me a job at. Our instructors were two merged mutants, but not like you would normally expect. They were two women, fused by one long tail. They were each other's natural dance partner, always knowing what the other one was thinking.

And right now, they were thinking that I couldn't dance.

"Annamaria!" the same instructor said. She had brunette hair tied up in a bun and was wearing a white frilly blouse and black leggings. "It's right, left, right, slide, back, dip, I've said it a million times!"

"Yes, yes, Ms. Connor!" I said, like a child afraid she was in trouble. Littered among the floor were decals showing the steps for several different dances. The decals were all numbered differently for mutants with two legs, three legs, four legs, and even nontraditional legs like animal feet. I only had the standard two legs, and I still was screwing up.

Laura, on the other hand, was having the time of her life. She was dressed in sweats and had her hair pulled up, and despite being drenched in sweat, she had the largest grin on her face. She was dancing with the other half of our joined teacher duo, a blonde woman in a light blue leotard.

"Like that Ms. Conrad?" she asked as she glided along the floor, six four legs working in perfect harmony.

"Very good Laura!" our teacher said. "But try not to make your legs so stiff. You are moving your six legs as if you had two, your right and left together. Try to stagger them to make your movements flow more."

"ANNAMARIA!" Ms. Connor said. I had zoned out and began watching Laura and totally ignored my own progress. "Pay attention and follow my lead!"

Through some grace of god, I managed to survive the lesson, but it felt like my legs were turned into knots. The hair on both of my heads was ratted and tangled and every pore of my body was oozing sweat.

Laura was much the same, but she was happy. "Wasn't that wonderful?" she said. "I've never moved my body like that, not even before I mutated!"

"Y-yeah, wonderful!" I said forcing a smile.

Laura laughed toweling herself off. "I know this isn't quite your thing," she said apologetically.

"What? Me!? No no I loved it. I absolutely loved it. What's not to love about hours and hours of dance drills while being yelled at by Ms. Twintails."

Laura laughed again. "Well, you know. It meant a lot to me."

"What did?" I said, still delirious from exhaustion.

"That'd you come to the lesson with me. I mean, I wouldn't have had the confidence to come alone. I guess, taking an interest in my love of dance just felt very... I don't know... validating... so thanks."

I smiled back softly. "You're welcome."

"Tell you what," she said, using her eight hands to open a locker and take out a towel. "How about you choose the next date? Is there anything that you really want to do?"

“Honestly, I think I’ve had enough new experiences for a while. How about something simple, like a movie?”

“A movie sounds great,” she said as she started to take off her sweats. Before I knew it, she was naked in front of me. I couldn’t help but stop and stare. “Well?” she asked. “Are you going to join me in the showers or not?”

“Oh yes, yes, yes, right, coming!” I said and scrambled to take off my clothes.

“When bodies writhe?” Laura said confused, looking over the poster for the movie I chose. At the very least we were both in casual clothes this time, but she obviously was feeling a little out of place, nonetheless.

“Yeah! It’s a classic horror movie remade for a modern audience. It’s about this girl who gets infected by a space parasite, who then has the ability to change her body whenever it wants. It starts mindless, but as it changes her more and more it begins to attain sentience.”

“I er... I mean it sounds... interesting... but I really thought maybe we would go see, I don’t know, a romantic comedy?” Laura said, sweating nervously.

“But this would be so cool! There is romance! There’s this neat sexual tension between the parasite and its own host as the movie goes on. It yearns for its own identity, but it’s trapped within its own flesh prison! The practical effects are amazing, and they did lots of the transformation sequences using mutant body doubles! Real old-school stuff.”

“I... I see...” Laura looked down a bit. She seemed a little disappointed.

“We... don’t have to see it if you don’t want?” I said, gently laying a hand on her shoulder.

“No, it’s just. Well... I’m kind of a wimp...” she said.

“A wimp? What’s that have to do with- “

“I get scared easily!” she blurted out. “I never do well with horror movies.”

“Laura, you don’t have to do this for me...” I said. I mean... I was lying. I was very excited to see this movie, but Laura was more important.

“No. No you danced with me. The least I can do is watch this with you... just promise me one thing?”

“What’s that?” I said.

“Hold me?” she pleaded with puppy dog eyes.

“I promise,” I said, holding out two of my hands to grab two of hers.

“THAT WAS AWESOME! THE SCENE WHERE THE GUYS HEAD EXPLODED! MASTERPIECE!” a moviegoer shouted at the top of her lungs coming out of the very theater we were supposed to go into.

Laura whimpered and clinged to me like a frightened animal.

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I’d be lying if I said I didn’t like it.

“That was AMAZING!” Laura said, prancing around on her six legs as she came out of the theater! “Why didn’t anyone tell me that horror movies were this good!?”

“Haha, I know right! I mean, they aren’t all this good. Some are just gore fests, but this one is a real classic. True art.”

“The way the parasite felt like she never had a body of her own. She kept changing her hosts body trying to feel like something fit and it never did. Do you think that was supposed to be an allegory for mutant or gender dysphoria?”

“Possibly,” I said. It filled my heart with joy to see Laura getting so into this. “The original was made during a time when mutants in cinema were just starting to become more common. The same applied for mutant writers. So mutant stories were just starting to get told. But they could only be casted as freaks in monster movies so even their personal stories were told in the horror genre.”

“That’s so fascinating! I never knew that!” Laura said.

“Yeah well, I told you before. I’m a bit of a mutant fan. Haha. Being born this way makes you look into your history a bit. Though, you know, kink comes into it as well.”

“I noticed,” Laura said with a wide grin. “For a horror movie it was a bit... mmmmm.... I don’t know. Sexual?”

I gulped hard. “W-well yeah, most mutant movies are just a little bit sexual. I mean mutants are a bit more at home with sexual content and...”

“Haha, you really know your mutant culture and history,” she said, nudging me in the shoulder.

We walked out into the parking lot. I was still munching on the leftover greasy bits of popcorn left in my bucket.

“So...” I said. “I guess uh... this is it until next time?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” Laura said. “I was hoping the night didn’t have to end.”

“Meaning?” I said, shoving popcorn into both of my cheeks like a squirrel planning for the winter.

“Meaning, when you call a car maybe... we can both get in and... go to your place? Maybe I could stay the night?”

I instantly gasped and choked on the popcorn out of sheer shock. I must have looked like such a doofus. Laura immediately started patting my back with two hands.

“Oh my god!” she gasped. “Annamaria are you OK?”

“Never...” my right head wheezed out “better...” my left finished.

“Did you ever think we would end up here?” Laura said. She was stripped down to just her panties and laying in my bed. My queen size mattress was a bit of a tight squeeze for her taur body, but we made it work.

“Honestly?” I said rolling onto my side, one head buried into a pillow, the other looking into her eyes. “Not really... I kind of figured you didn’t want to have anything to do with me after, you know... the whole job thing.”

“I’ll be honest...” she said, reaching up to twirl the hair of one of my heads with her fingers. “I didn’t think so either.”

“Then what made you change your mind?”

“Well...” she said inching her body closer and wrapping a pair of arms around me. “I guess I got to know you... the real you... not just the you I thought you were.”

“Heh, and who is the real me?” I said wrapping my arms around her as well.

“A dork,” she said with a giggle, “But a loveable dork. A dork that really cares about other people. And a dork that, I don’t know, is easy to like.”

I blushed really red and tried to come up with some suave line but couldn’t. All I could say was “th-thanks.”

“No,” Laura said. “Thank you.”

She gently pulled me closer, and softly pressed her lips to my right head as my left nuzzled against her neck.

Love is a lot of work sometimes.

But it’s worth it.