

# Major League System

## Chapter 121 - 121: Meeting the Parents (1)

"Thank you so much for breakfast Mrs. Takagi." Ai said sweetly.

"Oh it's no bother, and please call me Yuki next time you visit~"

Ken's mother was all smiles as she saw off Ai at the front door of her house. It was clear from how she acted that she quite liked this female friend of her son's.

"W-Well we're off now." Ken said, all but dashing out the door.

He grabbed the pink bicycle on the ground and carried it over his shoulder once again. Ai came out not long after and caught up to him with an amused expression on her face.

"Wow your mom is so lovely." She said, stretching slightly in the sunshine.

Ken let out a grunt, "Yeah, to you."

"Pfft hahaha"

Once again, Ai began to giggle to her hearts content. It seemed as if she took some pleasure in his misery this morning, especially the embarrassing talks over breakfast. She felt as if she got to know a lot more about Ken.

Hearing her laugh brightened his mood, allowing him to forget a little of the pain he had gone through.

Once the laughter died down, Ken spoke. "She's not usually on a mission to embarrass me. I kind of woke her up last night by accident." He admitted.

"Ohhh, I see. It all makes sense now."

"You must never wake a woman up during their beauty sleep, unless you're prepared to face the consequences that is." Ai said matter-of-factly. Yet she still held an amused expression.

Ken nodded, committing this to memory. It was helpful to know that it wasn't just his mother that suffered from such an affliction.

"Do you also get cranky without enough sleep?" He asked.

Ai was thoughtful for a moment, but responded truthfully. "Oh definitely, I might even be worse than your mom." She sent a wink his way.

"Haha, well remind me never to wake you up early then." Ken blurted out.

Silence.

Both Ken and Ai stopped in place and stared at each other with wide eyes.

'What the hell did I just say?'

'When would I ever get the chance to wake her up to begin with?'

'Argh you idiot!'

Ken's mind raced as he quickly averted his gaze from Ai's, feeling stupid for saying something so outlandish.

Ai blushed, not expecting such words. However she was able to quickly recover, since it was probably just a slip of the tongue. Ken's words never felt intrusive or sleazy and he was always respectful.

Out of consideration for Ken she quickly changed the subject, allowing the conversation to return to normal.

Around 30 minutes later, the duo arrived outside Ai's house. The place was a cozy two story building with the bakery on the ground floor, of which the delicious smell of baked goods would make any passerby stop.

Ken who had only had a few bowls of rice this morning suddenly felt his appetite rouse from the delicious smells.

A man in his early forties wearing an apron and sporting a black and gray goatee walked out of the doors and onto the street, stopping when he spotted the duo of Ken and Ai.

He was average height, but his shoulders were wide and he had muscular arms. If it weren't for the bakers apron, one might think that he was a construction worker or something.

"Ai, did ya deliver those pastries? What took ya so long?"

His voice was gruff and he talked with an accent, however one could hear the care within his tone.

"Yes dad, I delivered them but Mrs. Masuda gave me money even though I told her you said it was free." Ai replied, not yet introducing Ken for whatever reason.

"Argh that damn woman, she's more stubborn than a mule."

It was only now that he seemed to notice the tall Ken who was conspicuously still holding the pink bicycle over his shoulder.

"Who the hell are you? And why are ya carrying a pink bike man?" He looked at Ken in confusion.

"Dad!" Ai was shocked with how rude her father was being. This was the reason why her mother was the one who dealt with customers while her dad was stuck baking all day.

"What? Isn't it weird for a grown man to be carrying a pink bike over his shoulder?"

'Oh sh\*t! Can he see my real age?'

Ken panicked, seeing the eagle eyes of the gruff man in front of him seemingly penetrating through his very being.

Ai frowned, moving in front of Ken and puffing her cheeks in annoyance.

"Dad! This is my classmate Ken. He's helping me bring back my bike after I crashed."

Ken suddenly felt warm inside noticing how Ai had stuck up for him, even twisting the story so as not to place any blame on himself.

"Classmate!?"

Ai's father's face morphed into one of shock, at least for a few moments before a look of understanding crept onto his features.

'Ah, he must have had to repeat the first year of High School a few times.'

"Nice. To. Meet. Ya. My name is Tetsu Koyama." Ai's father extended his hand for a handshake.

Not understanding what possible conclusion Ai's father had come to, nor why he was speaking so slowly to him, Ken grasped the hand and shook it. The first thing he noticed was how soft and delicate the mans hands were, the next was the vice-grip like strength behind it.

'What is this disparity!?'

Even with his A- strength, Ken had a hard time not succumbing to the crushing of his hand. However, since Ai was standing near him, he did not want to look weak in front of her.

Donning his best pokerface, he locked eyes with Tetsu the entire time.

Fortunately for him, a beautiful woman walked out of the bakery and cleared her throat gently, getting the attention of the man in the apron.

Tetsu stiffened, feeling his body turn cold. He quickly took back his hand and bowed towards Ken a few times before running back into the bakery without a word.

Ken blinked a few times, unsure of what he had just witnessed.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 122 - 122: Meeting the Parents (2)

"I'm terribly sorry for my husbands rudeness. I'm Naomi, Ai's mother."

If Ai was a budding young woman, then the woman in front of him was in full bloom. She was charming and beautiful, yet there was an elegant air surrounding her, making one feel comfortable.

"I'm Ken Takagi, Ai's classmate." He responded simply, unable to say anything more since his mind was preoccupied.

'Is this what Ai is going to look like when she grows up? So pretty...'

He gulped.

"Um Ken?" Ai's voice sounded, breaking him out of his stupor.

"Y-Yes?"

"You can put my bike down now." She said softly.

"A-AH, yep no worries."

He had just been praising himself for not being embarrassing, yet here he was still carrying a pink bike over his shoulder. His cheeks reddened, bringing a full color to his face.

"Pfft... Hahaha"

This time both Ai and her mother began to giggle, filling the atmosphere with lightheartedness.

It was only after a few moments that the two finally calmed down.

"Thank you for helping out our daughter Ken. Wait here a moment while I get you some baked goods to take home."

Before Ken could answer, Naomi went back inside leaving Ai and Ken out the front.

"I can see who you take after." Ken said, breaking the silence.

"Hehe, are ya sure about that?" Ai joked, sending a playful look his way.

Hearing her perfectly use her fathers accent, Ken blinked a few times before chuckling nervously. However, he could tell she was just messing around.

Not long later, Naomi arrived with a bag of baked goods and a sweet smile on her face. After handing it over, she quickly and gracefully retreated back into the bakery, leaving the two alone once more.

Ken was about to continue his conversation with Ai, but out of the corner of his eye he could see the blinds part slightly like someone was watching them intently.

Ai too seemed to see this, so she could only let out a sigh.

"Thanks for your help this morning Ken, I'll see you at school later." She said, sending a smile his way.

"Y-Yeah see you then." He replied, feeling his heart skip a little.

Before he could embarrass himself once again, Ken turn around and began his journey home. It had taken them around 30 minutes to walk here from his house, but it would only take 10 minutes if he ran back.

He quickly got into rhythm and was out of sight in a few moments.

"Wow he's cute. I can see why you like him."

Ai who was staring at Ken's retreating figure, suddenly heard her mother's voice from behind her, giving her a fright.

"W-What makes you think I like him?" She answered, spinning around quickly.

A knowing smile appeared on Naomi's face as she placed her hand on her daughter's shoulder.

"Honey, mom's just know these things okay."

"Just don't tell your father for now. If he finds out his little girl has a crush, he'll probably cause a scene." Naomi added.

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After arriving home, Ken mentally prepared himself for interacting with his mother who was likely still in a mood.

"I'm home."

"Welcome home Kenny."

However, unexpectedly he had received a positive response.

'Hmm? That's weird.'

He walked into the house to see his mother sitting at the dining table with what would likely be her fourth coffee of the day.

"Ai's mom told me to bring these home." He said, placing the bag of baked goods onto the table. Ken didn't want to push his luck, so he was going to quickly make an exit and get ready for school.

Yuki cleared her throat, not even looking at the bag on the table, keeping her gaze trained on Ken. "So, when were you going to tell me you had a girlfriend?"

"It's not like that! We're just friends."

Throwing his hands up quickly, Ken vehemently denied their relationship.

However, his mother was having none of it. A knowing smile appeared on her face as she pushed even further.

"You're around that age now Kenny that you'll start to get feelings for the opposite sex."

Ken's face fell.

'Are we about to have THAT talk?'

He was mortified. Even in his previous life he was not subjected to such a talk from his mother. Yet now that he thought of it, he'd never brought a girl back home before.

But he decided to quickly change pace, "I don't have time for relationships. I need to win at Nationals..."

His face turned resolute, his brown eyes full of determination.

These words caused his mother to falter, remembering the conversation they had almost a month ago. Inwardly she knew what her son was trying to do for them, for her in particular seeing how lonely she was.

Yuki felt her eyes begin to sting from emotion, feeling bittersweet.

She was happy that her son was doing his best, yet she felt like a failure at the same time. What kind of kid should have to worry about their household's finances and the relationship of their parents?

His mother swallowed down her feelings and spoke up, her tone serious.

"Ken, you don't need to worry about your father and I. You should be able to enjoy your youth, your High School days to your hearts content. Let us worry about everything else."

Ken was taken aback. He didn't realize that his actions would cause his mother to make such an expression. Despite the sorrow evident on her face, he could feel an undertone of warmth from her.

He felt his heart soften in response.

"Don't worry mom, I'll make it so Dad has no choice but to believe me."

Yuki looked upon her son who seemed like an adult in this moment and couldn't help but feel emotional.

"I'm gonna go get ready for school." He said, placing a hand on his mother's shoulder on his way past.

"Mmm" Yuki nodded, trying to hold back her tears which threatened to escape.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 123 - 123: Potential (1)

After an eventful morning, Ken finally made it to school on time. He saw Ai in the classroom who flashed a small smile in his direction to which he responded in kind.

He had decided to remain friends with Ai, since he actually enjoyed her company. Just remembering her infectious giggles made him feel warm inside.

Slowly but surely, Ken got through the day. Thankfully his mother had not skimped on his lunch today which meant she had forgiven him somewhat for waking her up last night.

When it was time to head to baseball practice, Ken decided to bring up his new Training Plan function once again. This time he used it on Shiro, only for a new window to appear in front of him.

NAME: Shiro Masuda

AGE: 15

TALENT ASSESSMENT: B

POTENTIAL: S+

PLEASE SELECT A TRAINING PLAN FOR TARGET:

>Pitching Regime: Useful for increasing pitching speed and consistency. Will increase from 1-2 grades. [10 Major points] (not recommended)

>Catching Regime: Increase ball coordination and core strength. Will increase from 1-2 grades. [50 Major points] (recommended)

>Strength & Conditioning: Improve strength and stamina. Will increase from 1-3 grades. [100 Major points] (recommended)

Ken's eyes widened. This window was much different than his own which allowed him to target specific skills. Not only this...

'It's so cheap'



Shiro looked over at Ken who was staring at him intently and suddenly felt uncomfortable. He felt as if his friend had bad intentions, one that would involve him in pain.

"K-Ken, why are you looking at me like that?" He asked nervously.

"Shiiiiiro~"

Ken called out Shiro's name sweetly, trying to butter him up. However, this only had the opposite effect, causing him to jump out of his chair and back up as if he had seen a ghost.

Thankfully it was lunch time and there were no teachers present, yet this still caused the students remaining in the classroom to look over confusedly.

"Don't be silly Shiro, come here." Seeing how his sucking up tactics weren't working, he tried a different approach, calling him over with a serious expression.

The short and stocky freshman looked around the classroom, hoping that someone would save him. Unfortunately for him, everyone did not want to be involved. Only after a few moments did he finally accept his fate and walk with his head down back to his seat.

A grin crept onto Ken's face as he pulled out a sheet of paper and wrote down what the system had in store for the poor boy.

After a few moments, Ken was finished.

"Rejoice, for I have made you a training plan to help you level up." He said, passing the sheet of paper to his friend.

"Level up? What is this a game?" Shiro mumbled, pouring his eyes over the contents.

The longer he read what was on the paper, the paler his face got. His body had seized, seemingly losing all cognitive function as he stared in disbelief.

'He wants me to do all this? Will I even survive?'

"That's your daily plan for this week. Next week we'll increase the reps to make use of progressive overloading." Ken said matter-of-factly.

Tears began to form on the corner of Shiro's eyes as he mourned his own impending death.

"Impossible..." he muttered.

"Huh? What was that?" Ken tilted his head, a dangerous look appearing on his face as he looked at his friend intently.

"Eek!"

'I'm gonna die.'

Not long after, the bell for class rang, saving Shiro from Ken's intimidation tactics.

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At the practice field, Ken was leading the way for the end of practice run. Since his stamina was S grade, he never struggled when it came to running whatever distance.

He passed by Shiro who was panting loudly, after having overlapped half of the team already.

'Maybe I could use the training plan for Shiro on all the other students who are lacking in that area?'

However, Ken shook his head in the next moment. It was the Coach who organized the drills and training regime for the club, he didn't feel entirely comfortable in taking over.

Plus there was also the issue of disparity between players. Since Shiro was rated as C+ in his overall Physical stats, it meant the training plan was tailored to him only. It would likely not have the same effect on anyone else.

It was only now that he felt like he understood how the Training Plan function worked.

Right behind him was Hiroki who seemed in great shape even after a full practice.

Since he'd been focusing on reaching the Ace position, he hadn't had the time to think about his teammates too much. Which meant even after a full month, he had yet to use Identify on any of the first team members.

Now was the perfect time to do so, as long as he was careful not to crash into anyone whilst running again like this morning.

NAME: Hiroki Kondo

AGE: 17

TALENT ASSESSMENT: A+

POTENTIAL: A+

## USER STATS:

>Physical Fitness: A+

>Pitching: C+

>Fielding: A+

>Game Intelligence: A+

>Mental: A+

Additional information: Player has reached their potential. No further improvements will be made due to reaching their potential cap.

Ken frowned deeply.

At first glance, Hiroki was the perfect player. Even if he didn't know Hiroki from beforehand, just looking at his well balanced stats was an indication of how hardworking this guy was.

'So why is his potential only an A+?'

Ken didn't understand how potential was graded. Before getting the system, he knew that there were geniuses like Daichi, and others who got to the professionals by sheer grit and hard work.

But now, he found out that there was a thing called potential. A seemingly unassailable wall that could crush someone's dreams for no apparent reason.

To see such a simple thing preventing one of his friends from improving left a sour taste in his mouth.

The whistle from the coach sounded, however Ken's mind was still preoccupied. He slowed down and began to make his way to the center of the field, glancing in the direction of Hiroki whose breath was still rather even.

'Is there a way that I can improve his potential?'

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 124 - 124: Potential (2)

Hiroki was essentially the best all-round player on the team and he was only in his second year of high school. Just imagining what kind of monster would be unleashed if his potential was unlocked gave him goosebumps.

Now that he thought about it, Hiroki never made it to the professional league in his previous life either.

Ken's thoughts were broken by the coach who looked like he was about to speak.

"We've been training hard for the past month, and now is the time to test out how far we've come." Coach Hanada said, looking over all his players.

"In the 3 month lead up to Koshien we'll be playing other schools almost every weekend."

He continued, "We'll talk about our opponents later, but I wanted to announce the first team for the friendly matches."

A wave of excitement fell upon the players, or at least those who were not already in the first squad. Shiro subconsciously gravitated towards Ken, gripping onto his arm and showing his anxiety.

"If I call your name, step forward..."

"Catcher: Yuta Saito. Infield: Naoki Itō, Hiroki Kondo, Yasushi Tsuchida, Makoto Watanabe. Outfield: Tatsuya Aoyama, Jun Aoyama, Yuki Yamada."

Ken nodded, these were the standard first squad members. He wasn't surprised that the coach was keeping the same line up in this situation.

"Pitcher... Akira Matsui. Relief pitchers: Ken Takagi, Shogo Morikawa."

The coach's next words caused every player on the field to look around with confusion. There were even some players such as Makoto who audibly let out their shock.

However, Akira was the most shocked out of everyone. He knew that Ken was better than him, which was why he had been working so hard to improve himself in the last month.

'So the coach hasn't given up on me just yet.'

Tears began to form at the corner of his eyes as he was filled with gratitude. He inwardly vowed to change his ways, thanking the coach for his belief in him.

Coach Hanada's gaze fell on Ken who seemed to have no reaction. His expression was unflappable, as if nothing could effect him.

"Coach, I thought Ken was already announced as the Ace?"

Hiroki voiced his concerns aloud, taking it upon himself to address the issue.

However, the coach shook his head. "I said this is the starting line up for the friendly matches. I won't be accepting any feedback."

A small smile crept onto Ken's face as he was able to read between the lines.

'The coach wants to keep me a secret by the looks of it. But I should probably get some play time against the teams in the other prefectures.'

Since they would only see the champions of the other prefectures at Koshien, it would be inconsequential if Ken played against those teams who had no chance. It seemed that the coach had this planned from the beginning.

The less data the teams in his prefecture had of Ken pitching, the better their chances of advancing to Nationals in the first place.

Of course he wanted to play, but he would do anything in order for the team to win at this point.

After shutting down Hiroki curtly, the coach continued.

"Bench players: Yasuki Hattori, Hideaki Takubo, Shiro Masuda. That is all."

Ken felt the grip on his arm tighten. When he turned around he saw Shiro's ugly crying face, causing him to recoil subconsciously.

"I-I'm so happy" He said, tears and snot covering his face.

Since he was still kind of out of breath, Shiro looked like a sick patient in the hospital who was afflicted with some kind of disease.

"D-Dude stay back." Ken said as he saw Shiro inching closer to him.

Ai, Yuko and Kaori who were off to the side watched on with mixed emotions as the coach gave the announcement.

The youngest of them looked worriedly at Ken who was currently backing away from Shiro. She had watched him since the coach said he'd be a relief pitcher, yet his expression was as stoic as ever.

She expected to see some pain or disappointment on his features, especially since he had been working so hard over the past month. However, he was like a machine instead, showing no emotions.

For some reason this made her feel sorrow on his behalf.

Ai thought back to their meeting this morning where he seemed to be more genuine in front of her and felt an ache in her heart.

"Don't worry Ai, I'm sure the coach has his reasons for making Ken the backup pitcher." Yuko said, placing her hand on the girl's shoulder.

"Y-Yeah. See even Ken doesn't appear to be upset about it." Kaori pointed out, trying to cheer her up.

"Yeah..." Ai said after a while, letting out a sigh.

"Let's go get the towels and waters and cheer everyone up." She said a moment later, leaving the scene.

Unaware of the concern being shown his way, Ken had managed to finally avoid the snot demon Shiro and was about to head over and begin his batting training.

"Ken, do you have a moment?"

"Hmm?" Ken spun around, hearing the coaches voice.

He quickly followed the coach, having an inkling about what he wanted to talk about.

Once they were far enough away from prying ears, Coach Hanada turned to Ken and spoke. "I know I said that I would make you the Ace of the team, but you need to trust me okay?"

Hearing this, Ken could only smile in response. Despite his outward appearance, the coach always looked out for his players, even going so far as to pull Ken aside after such an announcement.

"Don't worry coach, I would have done the same thing." He said confidently.

"Oh? And why is that?" Taken aback, the coach asked.

With a smirk, Ken replied. "It makes sense to keep your best weapon hidden until the prefectural tournaments start right?"

Seiji Hanada blinked a few times before scoffing.

"Bah, just make sure you're in form when I need you." He said, waving off the cocky teenager. However a small smile crept onto his face the moment he turned his back.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 125 - 125: Lead up to the Game (1)

Ken watched as the coach walked off, letting a smile creep onto the corner of his lips.

He enjoyed seeing the expressions of his coach, especially when he did something that was unexpected or shocking. In his previous life, Coach Hanada was known for his brilliant poker face, rarely showing much emotion.

However since regressing, Ken had seen more expressions in this past month than he had in the almost 2 years he knew him beforehand.

Of course, there was an expression that he didn't want to see again...

Just remembering the look of sorrow on his coach's face after he was injured in the summer of his second year was enough to turn his mood sour.

Ken shook his head, thankfully history would not repeat itself.

"Time to go swing the bat."

Since the conversation with the coach hadn't lasted long, the players were still making their way to the locker room to go get changed. Ken's eyes surveyed the troops, looking for a certain shorty.

His eyes narrowed as he caught a figure crouching within the crowd, trying to go by unnoticed.

"You think you can escape from me?" Ken almost laughed aloud, seeing the actions of Shiro.

He moved towards the group and plucked out the rat who had been trying to escape.

"O-Oh hi Ken. I was just looking for you." He said, although his facial expression did not match his words.

"Mhmm sure you were. It's time to start your new training regime."

Unbenknownst to Ken, a wicked grin formed on his face, scaring the already anxious rodent in his hand.

Shiro felt warm tears fall down his face for the second time that day, however unfortunately for him it wouldn't be the last time today.

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Ken arrived home a couple of hours later, feeling some tightness in his upper body. He had never swung a bat that many times consecutively, which meant his muscles would be feeling it for the first few days.

Thankfully, due to his fatigue management skill there wouldn't be too many issues recovering from the strenuous activity.

"I'm home."

"Welcome home Kenny."

Ken breathed out a sigh of relief. His mother was back to her old self, despite this mornings antics.

Since he had stayed late at practice this afternoon, he told his mother of the new arrangement so she wouldn't worry in the future.

"That's fine. Just go have a shower quickly so we can eat some dinner." Yuki said, shooing her smelly son away from the food.

Ken obliged, heading straight for the bathroom. He would need to start taking deodorant with him to practices, since even he had trouble smelling his own sweat.

'I hope he got home alright.'

As Ken got under the shower, his thoughts moved to Shiro who had completed the training plan under his watchful eye. He had needed to bark out orders while swinging his bat at the same time.

Now that he thought about it, he probably looked pretty intimidating swinging a metal bat with all of his strength and bossing the poor Shiro around.



Remembering the sight of his friend almost passed out on the ground after the training, a smile couldn't help but form on his face. As long as he kept up with it, he could see that Shiro would have tangible improvements by the end of the 3 week training regime.

'Maybe I can try use the Training Plan function on Hiroki?' Ken mused.

However, he didn't have much hopes in that regard. The system had already told him that no further improvements could be made to his stats.

They also had a game coming up in two days time against Shuei High School at their field. Of course since Shuei was also Kanagawa prefecture it meant that he would likely not get a chance to pitch.

While Ken was in the shower, Yuki picked up the phone which was ringing in the kitchen.

"Hello, Takagi residence." She answered.

"Hi Mom it's me."

"Daichi honey! I'm so glad to hear from you."

Yuki's face lit up as she heard the voice of her other son. She quickly chastised him for not calling ever since he moved to the Osaka Toin dorms, however she wasn't that upset since she knew he was busy.

They'd also received a call from Naoki to let them now how Daichi was doing a month earlier.

After some apologies, the two caught up.

"Ah Kenny is just in the shower, I'll go get him for you." Yuki said, getting up from her chair.

"No it's fine. I just called to talk to you." Daichi replied, his tone clearly more flat than before.

"Oh... Okay then."

"I've gotta go get some dinner and head to bed mom. We've got an early training session tomorrow."

Yuki frowned, feeling as if something was off. However, she still said her goodbyes and urged him to call more often so she didn't get lonely.

Almost the same moment Daichi hung up, Ken waltzed out of the bathroom feeling refreshed. The first thing he saw was a worried expression on his mothers face as she looked at him.

"What is it?" He asked, feeling a little uncomfortable.

"Daichi called, but he said he didn't want to talk to you."

As a mother, it was painful to hear that her sons didn't want to talk to each other. Especially since she didn't know the reason.

Ken frowned for a moment, trying to figure out why. A few moments later his face changed to one of understanding, a smile forming on the corner of his lips.

"Heh. Don't worry mom, since we're in different schools now we have become fated rivals."

Ken's tone was dramatic as he whisked away his wet and messy fringe from his face with dramatic flair.

His mother merely stood there, staring at him unblinkingly.

'Oh god why is he so much like his father...!' Her hand instinctively crept up to her face as she performed a facepalm.

The silence between them was broken by the sound of Ken's grumbling stomach, pulling him back to reality.

"Umm, is dinner ready?"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 126 - 126: Lead up to the Game (2)

Not even wanting to speak, Yuki pointed at the food on the table.

After eating, Ken caught up on some much needed study. The increase in his mental grade had been a tremendous boon, allowing him to remember things a lot clearer.

Unfortunately for him, it wasn't to the point where he could remember the exam answers from his previous life.

Once it hit 9pm he packed everything away and hopped into bed before entering the Image Training and selecting the batting training.

Since there was not a free for all option, he had to face the pitcher version of himself on the mound. However this was not a bad thing, especially since the pitcher never needed to take a break or even recover the ball.

Plus, the point of mental training was to imagine facing a pitcher and trying to hit their pitches.

After about an hour and a half, Ken was done with his 500 swings. Since it was amateur difficulty, the pitches were around 140km/h and were a mix of fastballs, sliders and curveballs.

Thankfully the system counted what his stats were and displayed it on the window in front of him.

STRIKES: 140

SINGLES: 83

DOUBLES: 63

TRIPLES: 18

OUTS: 94

FOULS: 67

HOME RUNS: 35

"Not too bad."

Ken looked at the counter and was pleased. Since he was swinging at every single pitch, it was hard to gauge just how well he had performed throughout the practice.

Most of his fouls and outs were done so off balls, which made him feel slightly better. Of course he also received strikes for swinging and missing at breaking balls, but it was all experience that he could take with him.

He brought up the batting mission while he was at it, wanting to see how much progress he had made.

## #BATTING MISSIONS:

- > Hit 1000 bunts successfully - 250 Major points + Silver Lottery ticket [Claimed]
- > Hit 1000 balls into outfield [397/1000] - 250 Major points + B-grade Stamina Elixir
- > Hit 3000 foul balls [453/1000] - 250 Major points + Silver Lottery ticket
- > Hit 1000 sliders [182/1000] - 250 Major points
- > Hit 1000 curve balls [199/1000] - 250 Major points
- > Hit 1000 fastballs [579/1000] - 250 Major points
- > Hit 1000 home runs [49/1000] - 2000 Major points + A-grade Strength Elixir + Gold Lottery ticket

A wry smile climbed onto his lips as he saw the missions. The rewards seemed to be a little outdated now since a lot of his stats had been upgraded to the A and S grades.

However, at least he knew that the system offered Major points in exchange for Elixirs that he could no longer use.

He was also rather far away from completing a lot of the missions thanks to focusing on his pitching for the last month. But he had faith that by the time he finished the second Ascend to the Peak mission that they would all be done.

"I'll just have to be consistent."

Ken's thoughts drifted to the idiom that Rome wasn't built in a day, feeling it resonate with him deeply. As long as he continued to work hard, he would be able to forge the path towards his goals.

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Ai woke up to the familiar sound of muffled old school rap music downstairs, causing her to stir awake. She looked over at her clock and saw it was 5am which she had expected.

Every morning her father would be up from the early hours, preparing dough for all of the pastries he would make for the bakery that day. This had been the case ever since she was little, therefore she didn't have much of a reaction.

She never needed an alarm clock since her dad would only start his music at 5, otherwise he would face his mothers wrath.

Ai headed downstairs, sending a muffled greeting to her father who was too busy rapping along to his music to hear her.

"Hayaku shiro, hayaku shiro kono baka yarou" Tetsu sang along, wielding his rolling pin enthusiastically.

If anyone else was to see the burly man rapping whilst wearing an apron and covered in flour they might laugh, however Ai was used to this scene and able to ignore it.

Today was just like any other day yet she was feeling a hint of excitement, despite just waking up. It was going to be the first baseball game of the new school year for their club, a momentous occasion, even if it was just a friendly match.

"Morning mom."

Ai greeted her mother who was currently immersed in the ledgers, armed with a steaming cup of coffee. Despite her husband being a morning person, Naomi was the opposite.

Even though they had been in the baking business for almost 15 years, she still needed a few shots of coffee to function in the morning.

"Mmm"

Receiving the usual grunt in response, Ai headed to the bathroom and washed up.

'He'll only be a relief pitcher today, so maybe I'll be able to spend some time with him while he's on the bench.'

With these thoughts in mind she began to get ready, wanting to look cute for the day.

By the time she left the bathroom it was already 5:30, just in time for the bakery to open to customers.

"Ai! Can you help your father bring in the pastries?"

"Coming."

She entered her father's den where the old school rap music was still playing. Usually her father would see her come in and point to which of the baked goods to bring out, however this time he completely stopped what he was doing to stare at her.

His jaw dropped slightly, looking as if he had just seen a ghost.

"W-Why the hell are ya wearing makeup? Are ya off ta' see a boy?"

His thick accent seemed to get even deeper as he uttered those words.

Ai instantly felt her face redden, however she puffed out her cheeks and quickly took the tray of pastries and left the room, leaving a stunned Tetsu.

"I ain't ever seen her wear makeup before" he mumbled.

"Oh my goodness Naomi, is this your daughter? She's grown up to be so beautiful."

One of the old ladies who were waiting in the shop called out after seeing Ai walk in with the pastries.

"Thank you so much Grandma, of course she takes after m—"

Naomi's words stopped abruptly after she turned to her daughter, her expression morphing into one similar to Tetsu's.

Seeing her mom react in such a way as well, Ai felt even more embarrassed.

'Can't I just wear make up without being gawked at?'

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 127 - 127: Heading to Shuei (1)

Ken made his walk from the train station to the front of the school with his bag slung around his shoulder. Since today was the day of the friendly match, the coach had organized a bus for the team to depart from their school at 9am this morning.

Spring looked to be on its last legs as the morning breeze carried with it some heat. Since it was the second week of May, the cherry blossoms were already gone, signaling the coming of Summer.

Soon the cicada's would be singing their song of triumph, bringing with it the glorious sun.

Coming around the corner he saw that there were already quite a few people gathered. The coaches plus most of the first squad had arrived early, and were just waiting for the other players and staff to arrive.

Ken saw his friend Shiro standing stiffly against a pole, his expression one of pain and discomfort.

Seeing Ken from afar, Shiro averted his gaze and tried to look inconspicuous. Yet due to his sore muscles, even turning his head elicited a painful response causing him to wince.

"Here he is." Yuta called out with a smile.

"Hey rookie, throw me a few pitches so I can warm up okay?" Makoto said, immediately going into his warm-up routine.

Ken smiled in response, but before he could answer the coach sent a karate chop onto the top of the captain's head.

"Stop messing around. We're meant to leave in 10 minutes."

"Everyone seems to be energetic this morning." Ken said, a smile creeping onto his face.

"Can you blame us? This is the first game we've been able to play in almost 3 months." Hiroki came over, putting his arm around Ken's shoulder.

The two had gotten closer over the last month. While it was still a rather new friendship, Ken already knew a lot about his old teammate so it gave the illusion they'd both known each other for a long time.

Ken nodded, looking over the members present, even spotting Akira who surprisingly acknowledged him.

'Oh? Seems like he's matured a lot faster than last time. Is it because of my charm?' He thought, inwardly praising himself.

'Speaking of charm...'

"Where's Tatsuya?" He saw Jun amongst the first squad, but his brother was missing.

"He's over there hitting on the managers." A small voice came from behind him, causing Ken to spin around.

"Ah, thanks Naoki Senpai." He replied.

Ken thought it was a little ironic that the person with a fringe that covered his eyes was the first person to find Tatsuya. However, it was only now that he fully understood what was said.

He quickly turned his head, looking towards the three managers who were approached by the handsome and debonair Tatsuya.

His eyes widened as he saw Ai shifting uncomfortably and staring at the ground. Ken instantly felt a pang in his heart, followed by a wave of displeasure and anger.

With his long strides, he quickly made it over to the four students and stood in between Tatsuya and Ai.

His imposing frame and defined chest now blocked the 2nd year student who suddenly had a look of annoyance creep onto his face.

"Senpai, I believe your brother is looking for you." He said, a fake smile plastered on his face. Ken's words were as polite as possible, which was quite difficult for him at this point.

"Eh? Are you messing with me?" Tatsuya lifted his head, looking right into Ken's face which was only a foot away from him.

Ken did his best to remain calm, but his facial features suddenly turned menacing and his voice dropped a few octaves.

"Go see your brother. Se-n-pai"

He accentuated the 3 syllables of the last word, giving off a dangerous atmosphere. This paired with the expression on his face told Tatsuya everything that he needed to know.

"Ha ha ha~ Sorry Ace, we were just chatting" He said, patting Ken on the shoulder.

After doing so, he quickly made his way over to the others, not turning back.

Since he was a player, Tatsuya had often been in confrontations with other potential suitors and could often tell who he could walk all over. However, he instinctively knew that Ken was not one of those people, so he quickly gave up.

Even if he were to eek out an unlikely victory, it would destroy the team chemistry. Plus, he could tell that the manager wasn't exactly into him enough to make it worth his while.

Ken breathed a sigh of relief, not even realizing he had been clenching his fists hard.

Coach Hanada saw the whole thing and was quite taken aback. However, an understanding expression formed on his face not long later.

'I guess he is a teenager after all.' He thought.



In the entire time he'd known Ken, there was always a mature air around him. He always kept his emotions in check and analyzed things rationally, never jumping to conclusions.

Yet here he was, ready to fight for his lady's honor.

"Ah I wish I could be young again." Coach Hanada said, letting out a deep and melancholic sigh.

"T-Thank you Ken." Ai said, tugging on his shirt from behind.

Her voice was soothing as usual, however there was a hint of vulnerability in it, alerting Ken.

He turned around and was suddenly struck dumb.

Staring back at him was definitely Ai as he knew her, yet the light makeup and grateful expression on her face made her seem a little older and more elegant. While it wasn't as exaggerated as her mother, it held an entirely different kind of charm.

Ken couldn't help but stare at her for a while, causing Ai to blush in response.

"Geez, first my parents and now you. Can't a girl wear a little make up every now and then?" She said shyly.

"So pretty." These words came out of Ken's mouth somehow, likely due to the malfunctioning of his brain.

Instantly Ken felt severe embarrassment assault him causing him to quickly avert his gaze. Yet inwardly he was screaming at his brain, demanding to see the manager who would let him say such a mortifying thing out loud in front of Ai.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 128 - 128: Heading to Shuei (2)

Ai too felt her face heat up in response to these words, yet they didn't feel forced or dirty like other times she had heard it. In fact, it caused her to feel butterflies in her stomach, even bringing a smile to her face.

"Okay everyone, let's jump on the bus." Coach Hanada announced.

'YOU'RE THE BEST COACH!'

Ken inwardly rejoiced, he had been saved by the bell. However, he still needed to smoothly extricate himself from the girl in front of him, hopefully making up for the awkward atmosphere.

"Okay bye."

With that he turned around and headed to the bus.

'W-What the hell was that!?'

Ken was mortified. He would need to set up a performance meeting with his brain at a later date to talk over these past 30 seconds of decisions.

Ai blinked a few times before...

"Pfft hahaha"

She broke into one of her giggling fits.

Thankfully her hand was covering her mouth and others were preoccupied with getting onto the bus that no one but the other two managers heard her.

Both Kaori and Yuko had witnessed the whole situation and were about to step in when they saw Ai was uncomfortable. That was until Yuko noticed Ken storming over quickly with purpose.

Using her women's intuition she was able to see the shining white knight in the form of Ken who had come to rescue the damsel in distress. With a practiced ease, she picked up Kaori and retreated to a safe distance where they could watch the proceedings.

However they were left speechless at the abrupt ending.

Yuko and Kaori looked at each other as if to confirm they had seen the same thing, only to be interrupted by the muffled giggles of Ai who seemed to be in a great mood.

"Is she delusional or something?" Kaori commented, watching the girl giggling violently.

Ken brute forced his way onto the bus, almost flattening Shiro who was gingerly walking up the steps. He let out a squeal, drawing a pitiful sight as he clung onto the bus handles for dear life.

After finding a seat, Ken placed his head down and felt his face heat up.

Thankfully he managed to recover a few minutes later by the time everyone got on the bus.

"Looks like we have most of the people here." The coach said, standing up at the front of the bus and getting everyone's attention.

His face turned up into a smile, "There's still one person who wanted to come and cheer us on."

With that he moved to the side.

A boy made his way up the stairs slowly, holding a crutch underneath each of his arms. His body looked in tremendous shape despite the brace on his knee.

"Yusuke!"

"Welcome back."

"Haha let me use your crutches later."

Morale was instantly boosted, despite the players already being hyped for their very first game of the new year, the atmosphere reaching an even higher level.

Yusuke waved to the team mates he had worked alongside for the past month and couldn't help but smile. He moved his gaze, looking for a certain person in particular.

Ken lifted his head, his eyes locking with the injured boy.

A look of gratitude appeared on Yusuke's face, telling Ken everything he needed to know. He then made his way through the bus aisle and spoke up, pointing to the seat next to Ken.

"Mind if I sit here?"

"No worries."

The two sat in silence for a little over 5 minutes into the 40 minute trip, however it wasn't awkward.

"Thank you."

Ken didn't respond, nor did he feel he had to. To him, the only natural conclusion was to do what he did, since he knew about the tumor thanks to the system.

He also did not want Yusuke to be a liability during nationals with his injury, hence his actions weren't completely altruistic. It was all for the end goal of winning the nationals this year.

Yusuke didn't seem to be phased by the lack of response.

"The doctor said I should be fine to go back to training in about 3 weeks from now as long as I complete the physical therapy." He stated, feeling a smile form on the corner of his lips.

"Good. Don't push yourself too hard." Ken replied.

"Yeah..."

Once again the two were silent for a while before Yusuke turned towards Ken with a serious expression.

"Ken if it wasn't for y—"

"Don't sweat the details man." Ken interrupted him, already feeling unworthy of the praise.

"Just make sure you recover properly, we'll need you in order to win Nationals this year."

Yusuke stared at his benefactor with a stunned expression for a moment, however it was quickly replaced with a smile. It seemed that Ken was not good with receiving gratitude, so he decided to drop the matter entirely.

"Yeah, no worries. I'll be fighting fit in time for the prefectural tournament." He stated confidently.

There were no more words the rest of the way between the two, yet they still enjoyed each others company.

Soon enough the bus came to a stop, yet everyone stayed in their seats besides the coach.

"Okay guys, the game starts in an hour so I want everyone to head straight for the locker rooms and get changed before we have a quick chat. We'll then head onto the field to warm up."

"Alright, no dilly-dallying let's go."

With that he ushered everyone off the bus, not leaving until there was no one left behind.

The team walked in the school gates and headed towards the baseball field located at the back of the school. It almost felt like an excursion walking into another school dressed in one's own uniform.

There was a small crowd of 40 people near the baseball fields who had come to watch the friendly, mostly made up of students from the school.

The opposition coach walked out to meet Coach Hanada and shook his hand. He was an older gentleman, yet his eyes were sharp and filled with intelligence.

"Thanks for coming out all this way Coach Hanada." The older man said, a harmless smile plastered on his face.

"Thanks for having us Coach Goto."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 129 - 129: Unexpected (1)

Around an hour later, both teams had finished their warm ups and lined up to bow before the beginning of the match. Shuei won the toss and elected to bat first, sending Yokohama High onto the field.

There had been no changes to the lineup announced by Coach Hanada, so Ken was relegated to the bench for this game.

Ken glanced at Akira who had taken his position on the mound with a serious expression framing his features.

'Don't get too comfortable up there.' He mused, in good spirits.

"Play ball!"

The umpire announced the start of the game, to which a round of cheering began from the Shuei crowd.

Shuei High School was an average school whose baseball club had limited success over the years. Until recently, they had attended Koshien only 3 times in the school's history, yet somehow their fate had changed seemingly overnight.

Kanagawa prefecture was difficult to advance in. The final spot was generally vied over by the big four teams.

Shonan Senior, Zama High, Fujimi and lastly Yokohama High.

Yet with a few key additions to the squad, Shuei had taken Kanagawa by storm. Ken's eyes moved to a player in the opposition dugout who had curly black hair, brown skin and foreign features.

Carlos Toro who was also of mixed lineage was a well known clean-up batter who had propelled the unassuming Shuei High to Koshien two years prior as a first year.

There was word that he had already received offers from Universities to join their team in preparation for the draft into the NPB.

PAH

"Strike."

"Whoa that guys pretty fast."

"His pitches should be at least 135km/h."

A few students in the Shuei dugout commented on Akira's fastball, assessing its speed and effectiveness.

Carlos on the other hand had no reaction. He seemed disinterested, as if the pitches weren't worthy of his attention.

"I reckon Carlos could still easily hit that thing out of the park if he was playing."

A teen commented, seemingly sucking up to his stoic teammate.

"Bah, a pitch like that isn't even worth his time." Another chimed in.

"Come on man, you know Carlos never plays in friendlies. Not unless someone interests him."

The man in question sat quietly, watching the game disinterestedly.

Akira seemed to be in top form as he swiftly dispatched both the first and second batters. He was currently staring down at the 3rd batter with a full count, yet there was not a hint of complacency on his face.

A blitzing fastball on the outside was framed perfectly, giving the umpire no choice but to call the strike and put an end to the innings.

Coach Hanada stroked his chin, his usual poker face painted on.

'Akira really has come a long way in such a short time.' He commented inwardly.

Ken too noticed the changes, making him feel a little odd. In his previous life, while Akira did go through lengths to change, it was never this pronounced.

'Is it because I've changed so much that it's effected him?'

Since he would never be able to find the correct answer, he quickly put it to the back of his mind. It was now Yokohama's turn to bat.

Tatsuya made his way to the batters box, shifting his body around and getting limber.

"Kyaa! That guy is so hot"

"Wow is he a model?"

Hearing the words of the opposing teams spectators praising him, a sleek smile filled his features as he squared up.

"I'm fired up!"

DONG

The very first pitch was a fastball to the outside, which was quickly sent flying over the first baseman's head. By the time the ball was collected, Tatsuya had already slid towards the second base, securing a double.

"Nice work Tatsu!"

"Let's go! Nice double."

The more vocal players on their team called out words of praise, inflating Tatsuya's ego even more.

"Whoa! This guy is also hot, is he a twin?"

It was now Jun's turn to head to the batters box. However unlike his brother, he was shy, not necessarily enjoying the attention.

Despite this, he was just as talented as his twin.

DING

"B-Bunt!?"

Not expecting a bunt on the first pitch, the pitcher scrambled towards the ball which had been perfectly delivered on the line between first base and home plate.

Since there was a delay before the pitcher arrived at the ball, Jun's fast feet had already secured him the single.

Now Yokohama were already in a great scoring position with no outs and runners on 1st and 3rd bases.

"Let's go Makoto!"

"Send em' home captain!"

Makoto stepped up to the batters box with a determined expression. His large muscular frame made the pitcher feel intimidated even from a distance.

The pitcher looked at his coach, almost as if he didn't want to be there.

However, Coach Goto merely smiled at him, giving no clear directions.

"Why am I even starting in this game..."

He let out a sigh, mumbling complaints to himself. His usual position was a relief pitcher, and he wasn't even the second option. At first there was only excitement when he discovered his name as the starting pitcher.

Yet now he knew that he was in over his head.

Having only pitched 2 times, he was already in a tight position.

'Looks like I have no choice...'

After finally accepting his situation, he wound up and sent a pitch above the strike zone, hoping to jam the muscular batter and at least get one out.

Unfortunately for him...

**DONG!**

Makoto sent the ball flying with such power that it sailed over everyone's heads, notching an easy 3 runs for the visiting side.

"Woohoo! Nice hit Captain!"

The Yokohama bench came alive, hollering and cheering for the spectacular hit which sent them well into the lead despite it only being the first innings.



Ken nodded, not expecting anything less from the opening batters. This was especially the case since he knew that the pitcher on the mound was not their actual Ace.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 130 - 130: Unexpected (2)

'Looks like we're not the only team that wants to hide their trump cards before nationals.'  
He mused.

Without their Ace and Carlos in the squad, Yokohama's victory was all but assured. While this would be good for morale, Ken had no interest in watching such a show.

He stood up slowly and began to stretch his arms and back, limbering up.

"Shiro let's go, it's time for our training."

A whimper came from beside him. It was so high pitched and full of despair that he wasn't even sure if this was a sound that humans were capable of making.

After a few moments without a proper answer, Ken had no choice but to lift the shorty by the jersey and carry him off.

'N-No please NO!'

Shiro screamed inwardly, however no words came out of his mouth.

By the time Hiroki walked up to bat, Ken and Shiro had already disappeared to the open space beside the field and began their training.

In the first innings, the pitcher gave up 5 runs total before he was able to strike out the 9th batter Akira for the final out. He breathed a sigh of relief before heading back to the dugout with the change over.

"Nice work Takashi."

Coach Goto placed a hand on his shoulder, encouraging him.

"Just one innings right? That's all I had to do?"

The old coach smiled and nodded. "Kazuhiro can take it from here."

In the next innings, Akira continued his good pitching form and only gave up a single hit to the clean-up batter. His confidence was at an all-time high as he retreated back to the dugout after 3 outs.

The score was 5-0 at the bottom of the 2nd, out of a possible 9 innings.

Yokohama was in high spirits as they sent Tatsuya back out to bat. However, they were surprised to see that a new member was standing on the mound for Shuei instead of the previous pitcher.

"Let's go Kazuhiro!"

"Strike em' all out"

If Ken was watching he would recognize this person as the pitcher for the Chiba Falcons in his previous life. While he was only a first year, one could tell by his demeanor that he was a force to be reckoned with.

Tatsuya instinctively knew that the new player on the mound was strong, merely by his presence. His eyes narrowed as Kazuhiro began his pitching motions.

WHOOSH

PAH

The ball was like a firework as it rocketed into the outstretched glove of the catcher, causing Tatsuya to blink a few times in disbelief.

'What the hell was that?'

It was as if the ball was alive, moving through the air on its own whim, leaving him guessing.

Tatsuya shook his head, clearing out the useless thoughts.

'I'll hit it next time.'

"Strike"

"Out."

He was forced to leave only two pitches later, scratching his head in confusion.

"His pitches are tricky Jun, be careful." Tatsuya told his brother on the way back to the dugout.

96

97

98

99

100

Meanwhile in the open area next to the baseball field, Ken was currently swinging his bat and watching over Shiro whose expression made it look as if he was being tortured.

"No slacking off Shiro." Ken barked out between swings, narrowing his eyes at his friend.

"D-Die... I'm gonna die"

Shiro's voice was meek, reminiscent of someone on their last legs.

'He's so dramatic...' Ken thought to himself, a smile creeping onto the corner of his lips.

However, to Shiro this made him look like even more of a demon, armed with a metal bat.

"Eeeek!"

In truth, today was the third day of Shiro's two week training plan. This was usually the toughest day thanks to the build up of fatigue and small tearing of the muscles. As long as the boy could persist, it would only be downhill from here.

Ken could only get through half of his 500 required swing before he needed to assist Shiro with completing the workout. Like a personal trainer, he guided his friend through the rest of the workouts, providing as much support as necessary.

Quite a while later, he was interrupted by a familiar voice behind him.

"Ken why aren't you watching the match?" Yusuke said, his eyes moving to the collapsed Shiro who was covered in sweat and panting heavily on the ground.

"There's no need, I already know we'll win." He said simply.

Yusuke rolled his eyes in response, "Maybe you should check out the score then?"

"Hmm?" Ken seemed a little surprised at Yusuke's words, yet he still went to the side of the fence peaked in.

It was currently the top of the 8th inning and the score was 5 to 5.

"Huh? We didn't score any more runs off that pitcher?" He asked.

"They changed pitcher in the 2nd innings and we've yet to get a decent hit since then." Yusuke explained.

"Did the coach tell you to come get me?"

Yusuke shook his head in response. "No, I just thought you might want to watch."

Ken was thoughtful for a while, but he eventually nodded. "Thanks but I'll just watch from here."

With that, Ken took up position and once again began his bat swings. He still wanted to get his 500 in before they got on the bus today.

"Is that who I think it is?" Ken's eyes narrowed, seeing the pitcher make his way up to the mound.

The teen had an angular face and an earring on his left ear, giving him a slight delinquent vibe. His eyes were sharp, matching with his sleek hair style and overall aesthetic.

"Kazuhiro Kimura... I don't remember playing against him in my previous life." Ken mumbled, his intrigue slowly rising.

The first pitch flew forward from his fingertips, making a beautiful sound as it landed squarely in the glove.

Ken's eyes widened in response.

"Now it's become interesting." He said with a smile.

He waited for the next pitch and imagined himself in the batters box.

WHOOSH

Ken stepped forward and let his bat rip through the air, creating an almighty sound.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 131 - 131: A Chance (1)

WHOOSH

"What was that noise?"

The spectators in the stands heard the sound of something cutting through the air behind them, causing a few people to jump in fright.

WHOOSH

Once again it sounded, allowing them to finally pinpoint the source of the noise.

"Who is that guy? And why is he swinging a bat over there?"

WHOOSH

"W-What the hell..."

The sound was so loud that the spectators were having difficulty focusing on the match in front of them. Since majority of them were students, seeing Ken's fierce expression while swinging what could be classed as a deadly weapon, was enough to deter anyone from asking him to politely stop.

Even the few parents who had decided to attend were intimidated by the sight, choosing to do their best to ignore it.

"Three outs. Changeover"

The top of the 8th innings ended once more without a score from the away team, keeping the game tied at 5-5. Yasushi, the 2nd baseman trudged out of the batters box with some annoyance on his face, feeling humiliated by the 3 pitch strikeout he just suffered.

Since he was the 8th batter on the team, expectations weren't high. But something about the first years face when he struck him out pissed him off.

"Yuta, how are Akira's pitches?" Coach Hanada asked, deciding whether or not it was time for a change of pitcher.

In the midst of putting on his chest protector, Yuta turned and replied confidently. "Akira's still got plenty of fight left in him."

"Mmm good. Let's not let them get any runs, I'll figure something else out for the final innings." He said mysteriously.

Seiji's eyes were focused on the boy in the distance who had been swinging away for the entire inning. He had noticed it from the beginning.

Each swing that Ken performed was timed perfectly with the pitch thrown by the first year on the mound. He was visualizing and adjusting it perfectly, despite being so far away from the players.

'Looks like he's eager to get into the game.' The coach thought, rubbing the stubble on his chin in contemplation.

"Just another 150 or so more and I'll be done with my mission for the day" Ken mumbled to himself.

He found it easier to swing when watching the pitcher throw, it helped him visualize and calibrate his mental training with the physical training.

Unaware of the misunderstanding his batting practice had brought, Ken continued to do the same with Akira pitching to the Shuei batters.

Despite throwing well over 100 pitches this game, Akira still persisted.

'There's no way I'm giving up my chance... Not today.'

Channeling his inner strength, the lanky 2nd year began his wind up and sent the ball flying towards the open glove of Yuta.

DING

The ball was hit poorly straight towards first base. Hiroki didn't even have to move from his spot and was able to bend down to complete the first out of the innings.

"Out."

"One out! Nice work Akira."

'Yes! This is good.'

Akira was all smiles as he went back to the mound. He only needed to get a couple more outs and they would be on the front foot next innings.

Luck seemed to be on their side as the next batter also got out easily. He sent the ball flying straight up into the air and into the waiting glove of Yuta.

"Nice work Yuta!"

The Yokohama dugout cheered in response to the play.

"2 outs! One more and then its counterattack time."

Even the players on the field were getting into it, eager to turn the score in their favor.

There were only 2 people on the Yokohama bench who seemed out of sorts, not matching the fervent atmosphere.

One was Shiro who had somehow managed to make his way back to the dugout after barely surviving Ken's devilish training regime. Judging by how dirty his clothes were, he looked as if he crawled on his stomach all the way.

The other was Ai, who currently had a pouting look on her face.

'Here I thought we would be able to chat while he wasn't playing... Stupid Ken.'

She wasn't really upset, just a little disappointed. It was one thing if he was focused on the game, but he had left right after the 1st innings without so much as a word.

In a huff, she decided to go look for Ken.

Leaving the bustling field, she walked over to the open area and coincidentally saw the man she was looking for swinging his bat. His gaze was focused intently on the field as he continued to sharpen his form.

Ai's face softened considerably.

'He must want to play so badly.' She thought, inwardly forgiving him for ditching her earlier.

Meanwhile, Ken was busy counting down his remaining swings in his head, feeling his muscles begin to get heavy from fatigue.

Even though it had only been a few days since he began the 2nd part of the Ascend to the Peak mission, he could already feel the small increase in the strength of his back and arms.

"Hey Ken. I finally tracked you down" Ai said, feeling her stomach flutter a little.

Ken was so focused that he didn't even hear her soft voice.

"3 outs. Change!"

The players on the field began to head back to their respective dugouts.

"Ahem." Ai cleared her throat, feeling a little awkward.

Ken turned around from the field, finally noticing her. His eyes went wide since he wasn't expecting her to be alone and looking for him. He felt his heart skip a beat seeing how cute she looked with makeup on.

Her beautiful blue eyes were staring at him curiously, leaving him feeling almost out of breath.

"Hey, sorry I was a little preoccupied." He admitted, rubbing the back of his head and smiling awkwardly.

Despite vowing that he would treat Ai as a friend, there was still a deep part of him that found it difficult. Perhaps it was the early high school version of himself that kept rising to the surface, eroding at his rationality.

After all, he had the biggest crush on her in his previous life.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 132 - 132: A Chance (2)

Ken would have found it much easier to ignore these feelings if she had have joined the Fashion club like she was supposed to. Yet she chose the baseball club, just like himself.

If he was vain, he might think that she joined for his sake. However, Ken still lacked a lot of self-esteem thanks to his previously pessimistic outlook on life.

He was working hard to tackle these issues, but that would take a long time to break apart such things.

"Ai... Why did you join the baseball club, if you don't mind me asking."

Ken didn't know why, but this question came out of his mouth. Perhaps it was his ego, or it could have been because he wanted to know what had changed from his previous life.



Ai froze on the spot, feeling her cheeks redden considerably. This only further accentuated her cuteness, causing Ken to gulp nervously in response.

'Oh man what do I say? I can't lie and say that I've always liked baseball...'

She fidgeted nervously, staring at her shoes so as to hide her embarrassment.

'B-But I can't tell him the truth can I? That I joined because I wanted to get closer to him.'

A mental conflict raged on in her mind, clashing with her principles and sense of self. She didn't want to lie, but she didn't feel ready to make herself so vulnerable just yet.

She raised her head slowly, while still debating how to answer the question.

"Huh?"

Upon reaching Ken's shoulder height, she saw Coach Hanada on the baseball field waving his arms and trying to call out to them.

"Ken, I think the coach is calling for you." She said with confusion.

"Oh?" Ken turned around only to see the red-faced coach waving at him, gesturing for him to come back. Judging by his mannerisms, he wanted him to hurry up.

"Ah, sorry Ai. Let's chat again later okay." Ken said, quickly jogging over to the field where the coach was.

Ai let out a sigh of relief, thanking the coach for his timely intervention. However, she felt a little sad seeing Ken run off without actually knowing how she felt.

'I hope we can spend more time together soon.' She wished inwardly.

"Hey coach, what's up." Ken asked, oblivious to the situation he was in.

"Coach Hanada, you have 30 seconds to send out your replacement player otherwise you will forfeit."

The umpire didn't seem pleased as he didn't even give the coach time to speak before stating his piece.

Coach Hanada's red face got a shade darker, yet he held his tongue.

Grabbing Ken by the arm, he quickly ushered him to the dugout.

"Hurry up and get your helmet and gloves on. You're heading up to bat next." He said impatiently.

He had decided to put Ken in the game because he knew the team needed a spark. It was also evident that Ken was raring to go, having been swinging a bat all by himself off the field.

Yet when it was finally his turn, the boy was off flirting with one of the managers.

'Bloody kids these days.' He thought, not at all jealous.

Ken did as he was told, quickly donning his helmet and gloves and walking out onto the field. He didn't need to warm up since he'd performed around 400 swings since the game had started.

If anything, he probably needed to give his muscles a little bit of a rest.

He arrived at the batters box and got into position, rolling his shoulders and stretching his back to get rid of some of the fatigue that had built up.

On the pitchers mound, Kazuhiro looked at the tall Ken and tried not to scoff. Ever since he had been on the mound this match, no one had come close to getting a clean hit on his pitch.

And he didn't plan on letting it happen now either.

He stared down at the catchers glove and let out a controlled breath before nodding. He performed his wind up and threw it hard down the lane.

PAH

"Strike."

The ball went straight into the open glove of the catcher without Ken swinging.

'Damn it'

Ken frowned and stepped away from the plate, stretching. Seeing this Kazuhiro to let out a chuckle and scowled.

'I can't believe that they sent this beanstalk up to bat out of desperation.' He thought.

The next ball came on a similar speed, yet the trajectory was different.

PAH

"Strike."

Once again Ken did not swing, allowing the ball to go straight through to the catcher. He also stepped away from the plate once again, this time holding the bat above his head and leaning to the side to stretch out his obliques.

The Yokohama dugout was confused, not knowing what Ken was up to. In their minds he was a dynamite batter and had a canon arm, so it was odd to see him in such a situation, even stretching between balls.

However, no one was more nervous than Coach Hanada who couldn't even sit down right now. He paced back and forth in the dugout, not knowing what to do.

He had held up the game for an extended period of time while trying to get Ken's attention, yet if he were to strike out in 3 pitches the opposing coach would not let him live it down.

His attention moved to Coach Goto in the other dugout who just so happened to look his way at the same time.

'So this kid is your trump card huh? Pitiful...'

Or at least that was what he believed that the old codger would be thinking right now. Goto held his usual calm smile upon his face as he gazed at his opposition.

'Come on Ken... Let's see you hit it out of the park so I can wipe that damn smirk of his face.' The coach clenched his fists and trained his eyes on Ken who had just stepped back into the batters box.

'Okay, I finally managed to get rid of that damn cramp. Now it's time to smack this pitch.'

A wicked smile formed on Ken's face as he turned his attention to Kazuhiro upon the mound.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 133 - 133: Final Innings (1)

Ken squared up in the batters box, turning his attention to Kazuhiro on the mound. The boy had an arrogant expression on his face, likely built up from being told he was a genius since a young age.

The problem with these players was that they always had a shock when realizing that there was always a bigger mountain to climb, or an even better genius waiting around the corner.

'Carlos is the only one who can hit my pitches. So hurry up and head back to the bench.'

Kazuhiro loaded up and sent the ball rocketing towards the strike zone once again, a victorious expression already nestled upon his features.

Ken felt as if time had slowed down, noticing the effects of his skill crunch time activate on its own. The system seemed to think that this was a turning point in the game, of which it was not wrong.

A smirk appeared on Ken's lips as he could clearly see the trajectory of the ball, feeling his strength and coordination increase thanks to the skill.

DOOOONG!

Ken sent all of his power into the swing, making contact in the center of the bat and creating a wonderful sound that reverberated through the field. He seemed to be the only one to react as he slowly dropped the bat and began to jog over to first base.

He almost felt a little bad for the little genius on the mound. This defeat could have a positive or negative impact on him, the rest would be up to how he handled it.

"Yes!" Coach Hanada pumped his fist in celebration, watching the ball seemingly disappear on the horizon.

"ORYAA! Nice guts Junior!" Makoto called out, flexing in his direction.

The rest of the Yokohama dugout broke into celebration, hooting and hollering as Ken made his victory lap around the bases.

Shuei's bench was dead silent, still unable to process the whole series of events. To them, this was the first time they'd seen their Ace be hit for a home run by anyone but Carlos.

Carlos who had been disinterested just moments before, was now standing at attention with his eyes focused on Ken's figure.

'That hit...'

His mind replayed the entire scene over and over again. Right from the beginning, Ken's form was perfect with no unnecessary movements, allowing him to use all of his strength without any loss of power.

If it was just this it wouldn't have been as impressive. Yet the perfect accuracy and control to hit Kazuhiro's ball in the dead center of his bat was purely masterful.

It was very possible that it could have been a fluke, however Carlos did not believe that was the case. He could instinctively tell that this person was a monster.

Carlos felt his apathy vanish, finally feeling his heart beat in anticipation.

"He's strong."

Ken didn't even need to watch the ball to know it was already out of the park. He could tell just by how the ball felt coming off his bat in addition to the sound. Now that he thought about it, that was probably the best hit of his life.

He finally made it back to home plate where Tatsuya was waiting with his hand held out for a celebratory high five.

"Nice homer Ace." Tatsuya said with a grin.

"Heh."

Ken let out a chuckle and headed back to the dugout. While pitching was still his number 1 love in baseball, he couldn't help but admit that there was a certain satisfaction that came with knocking a ball out of the park.

The catcher who was already despairing, overheard Tatsuya call the monster batter Ace and almost cried out in shock.

He squatted down and asked "Why did you call him Ace? Is that his name?"

Tatsuya looked over at the catcher and couldn't help but grin.

"No no, he's our rookie Ace pitcher."

Seeing the look of shock painted on the catchers face as he said those words brought a vengeful grin onto his face. They had been led by the nose by this batter, so it felt good to be able to hit back in such fashion.

Coach Hanada couldn't help but send a vicious smirk towards Coach Goto who was still doing his best to keep the plain smile on his face. However, he could see some faults which were brought to the surface after Ken's play.

"Nice hit Ken."

The coach seemed pleased as Ken walked back to the bench, even holding out his fist for a fist bump to which Ken obliged.

"Warm up your shoulder, I'll have you pitch in the final innings."

"Hmm?" Ken suddenly felt a bout of excitement.

'I never expected him to let me pitch in the very first friendly game...' He thought inwardly. However, he definitely wouldn't complain about getting onto the mound, no matter the circumstances.

"No worries coach, I'll be ready."

He got back to the dugout only to receive a round of praise from the rest of the team. Ai and the other managers too gave him words of encouragement.

The only person who seemed a little out of sorts was Akira who was currently wearing an ice compress on his shoulder. It seemed he was already told he'd be sitting out the final innings, giving his spot over to Ken.

However, he still nodded in Ken's direction.

"Shiro, come help me warm up."

Shiro was unresponsive, looking as if his soul had already left his body and returned to the underworld.

'Maybe I should let him have a break.' Ken thought, feeling a little bad for the boy.

"Yasuki-senpai, would you mind helping me out?" Ken asked politely.

"Ah sure."

With that, the two disappeared to go warm up Ken's shoulder.

On the field, Kazuhiro still seemed to be frazzled thanks to Ken's amazing home run. His pitches were beginning to lose their sharpness, allowing Tatsuya to finally put bat on ball.

Unfortunately, the ball was sent straight to the right outfield and caught on the fly.

"Tch, I gave up a good opportunity."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 134 - 134: Final Innings (2)

He walked back to the bench and said a few words to his brother on the way.

"He's still not recovered. Make sure you send him flying."

Jun nodded in response before heading into the batters box. He gripped the bat tightly and narrowed his eyes.

'Damn it! How dare that guy hit my pitch like that...'

Meanwhile, Kazuhiro was still caught up with Ken's hit. He was feeling humiliated, especially since he had been inwardly gloating beforehand.

'I won't let anyone else get a hit from me'

His face changed, turning into one filled with determination as he began his wind up. The air around him seemed to change, giving one the impression that this boy was on a battlefield.

WHOOSH

The ball came flying through the air towards the outstretched glove of the catcher, looking as if it wanted to blow past everything like a cannonball.

Jun's eyes opened wide with shock, not expecting such a lively ball.

DING

'Damn it!'

He quickly accelerated towards first base, realizing he had messed up.

Kazuhiro swooped in and collected the ball that was rolling his way, throwing it in one smooth motion towards the 1st base.

"Out!"

The first base umpire shouted, causing the Yokohama bench to let out a disappointed groan in response.

Jun tagged Makoto on the way past, telling him to be careful.

"Unlucky Jun." Tatsuya said with a wry smile. Despite not facing the ball himself, Tatsuya knew that the pitcher on the mound had already mentally recovered from his setback.

Next to the field, Ken was warming up his arm with Yasuki, the backup catcher. He had already thrown to him during practice for the past month so there was no issues right now.

'Time to test out my new lively pitches skill.'

It had only been 2 days since he had received the skill from a Silver Lottery ticket, so he did not have a chance to practice with it just yet.

Unfortunately, this also meant that Yasuki had yet to catch one of them too.

"Okay Yasuki, I'll be pitching for real now." He announced.

Yasuki's eyes narrowed and he got into position. Ken's pitches were fast, but his control had improved tremendously since he first caught them. As long as he was alert, there should be no issues as usual.

Ken performed his full wind up before stepping forward and whipping out his arm. He made sure to flex his fingers at the tail end of his pitch, sending the ball ripping through the air towards the glove.

'H-Huh!?'

Yasuki panicked as he saw the ball rocket out from Ken's fingers, appearing blurry from how fast it was spinning through the air. The ball seemed to come alive as it danced and weaved towards him.

PAH

Thankfully, the ball ended up in his glove albeit not in the ideal place he would have liked. His hand felt a little numb from catching the ball which was by his estimation in the early 140's.

He stood up and was about to ask Ken what the hell that pitch was, before he was interrupted by the coach.



"Ken, let's go. It's your turn to pitch."

"Coming."

Ken bowed slightly to Yasuki and headed back towards the pitch.

Yasuki's gaze followed his figure.

'He's gotten better again...'

Back on the field, Makoto was standing at third base with a sulking expression. He had gotten all the way to a full count, and was even starting to get the hang of Kazuhiro's timing.

However, the player at first base managed to pull off an incredible catch on a foul ball from him, securing the third out.

"If I had just one more chance..." He mumbled.

"Don't mind Captain. We're up by 1 run and our new star rookie is coming to pitch for us."

Naoki Ito the shortstop with the fringe came over and encouraged the captain. With his eagle vision, he was easily able to see that Makoto was annoyed.

"Well it's about time." He commented, feeling fired up.

"Let them hit it Ken! We've got your back." Hiroki at first base called out.

"Show them your guts! ORYAHH!" Makoto added, using the opportunity to flex.

Yuta made his way to the mound and placed the ball into Ken's glove, a calm smile on his face.

"You nervous?" He asked.

"Nervous? Nah. It's just a friendly." Ken replied, inspecting the ball.

"Hahaha. Someone tell that to the coach."

Ken tilted his head in question, before looking over and seeing Coach Hanada pacing back and forth anxiously. The sight made him laugh, easing the tension considerably.

Yuta proceeded to tell him the signs before heading back to home plate so the final innings of the match could be played.

The current score was 6-5 in favor of the visiting Yokohama. As long as they could get 3 outs without giving up a run the match would end.

"Play!"

Ken turned his attention to the batter and adjusted his cap. This was the 8th batter in the Shuei line up, so he should have no issues at all.

Meanwhile in the Shuei dugout, there was looks of confusion everywhere.

"Isn't that the kid who sent Kazu's pitch flying? He's also a pitcher?"

Even Coach Goto was frowning, ditching his usual warm smile.

Carlos was a little intrigued, however he didn't have much expectation. If Ken was a great batter, he held little hope that he would be anything more than a mediocre pitcher to compensate.

"They're probably just resting their Ace since he's pitched over 120 balls." One of the other players added.

However, the catcher who had heard Tatsuya call him Ace was currently unsure. He had a bad feeling about the whole situation, yet he wasn't sure that anyone would believe him.

Not knowing how much of a stir his appearance on the mound had caused to the opposition, Ken took note of Yuta's signs before nodding.

He brought his hands to his chest and lifted his knee before taking a large step forward with his long leg. As he planted his left leg, his arm whipped out, sending the ball flying towards the open glove of Yuta.

PAH!

Silence.

Carlos's face morphed at the sight, feeling his whole body fill with adrenaline.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 135 - 135: Showdown (1)

"S-Strike."

The umpire finally made the call, breaking through the silence.

Yuta felt his hand turn numb from catching the cannonball that was sent his way.

'Damn, has he always thrown that fast?'

He stared at the ball that had taken a while to stop spinning even after he caught it in his glove. It was as if the ball had a mind of its own.

Only after a few seconds was he able to collect himself and throw the ball back to Ken. Although he was shocked in his mind, he outwardly tried not to show it.

He had caught hundreds if not over a thousand of Ken's pitches in practice, yet none of them had been this fast. It was like he was a completely different pitcher in a real game.

"Nice pitch." He called out.

Once again Ken got into position, waiting for the batter to come to his senses. Although it wouldn't matter considering he wouldn't even be able to catch a whiff of the next two balls.

A taunting grin appeared on Coach Hanada's face as he stared at the opposing coach from his position in the dugout.

'How do you like our new Ace old man?'

Coach Goto could practically feel Coach Hanada's gaze burning into the side of his skull, yet he did not react. He didn't want to give the younger man the satisfaction that he so desperately wanted.

Inwardly he was trying to come up with a way to claw back the game. Since it was the last innings, this was their final chance before the curtain was drawn.

His gaze naturally moved to their best player Carlos who had been watching on lazily. However, the coach's eyes widened as he saw his star batter staring eagerly at the opposing pitcher on the mound.

'Does he want to face him?'

Goto's mind raced as he weighed up the pros and cons of using Carlos in this friendly match. He had originally thought that Carlos didn't like to play friendlies and that he'd need to win with just their Ace Kazuhiro, but that might not be the case now.

"Carlos, did you want to have a bat?"

Hearing his name, Carlos finally took his attention away from the field. The coach's words were like music to his ears and exactly what he wanted to hear right now.

Seeing his expression, the coach didn't even require a verbal answer. He could see his decision written all over his face.

"Okay. You'll replace Kazu in the batting line up."

"Strike three! Out."

The batter dazedly walked back to the dugout and placed his bat away. He was so dazed that he even forgot to take off his helmet before sitting on the bench.

"I couldn't even see his pitch." He said softly, to no one in particular.

The poor kid didn't even get a chance to swing the bat before he was struck out in 3 pitches. It almost felt surreal, like he was playing against a pitcher who was many years older than him despite him being a 3rd year in high school.

Carlos placed his helmet on and headed onto the pitch, grabbing his bat and going through his warm-up motions. Since he was replacing Kazuhiro who was first in the batting lineup, there was one more person that needed to bat before it was his turn.

Unfortunately, since that player was the 9th batter, no one had any hopes for him.

To no one's surprise, the very first ball was sent roaring down the middle of the strike zone and was completely missed by the batter.

Unlike his teammate, he had decided to just swing at the ball even if he couldn't see it. After all, you miss every ball that you don't swing at.

Since this pitcher seemed to not like to waste pitches, this was actually a sound strategy.

However, it was Yuta who was leading Ken right now. He had the utmost confidence that none of these small fry could touch even the seam of Ken's fastballs right now, so he saw no point in throwing any wasted pitches.

The next two balls were similar, yet both ended in humiliation for the batter who just seemed to be swinging wildly.

"Strike three! Out."

The batter felt like crying as he left the batters box, only to see Carlos making his way there. His eyes widened and hope started to blossom inside him.

He was about to wish him luck, however Carlos did not even look at him. He was too busy staring at the opposing pitcher on the mound with keen interest.

"Nice pitch!"

"Woohoo! Let's go Ken!"

The Yokohama bench screamed out words of encouragement, they could practically taste the win on the tip of their tongue.

Ai too was quietly cheering. Her heart beat faster as she watched Ken on the mound, showing the results of his hard work and determination in training.

'He's so cool' she thought inwardly.

If Ken could hear her thoughts he might turn as red as a tomato.

Thankfully he was focused on the game, well the player who had just entered the game.

'So the main boss has appeared huh?'

Yuta also saw Carlos and frowned. He had plenty of data on this guy, but he knew that he would be hard to beat, even with Ken's abilities.

"Timeout please." He said, jogging over to the mound.

"What's up?" Ken asked, his tone relaxed despite how tense Yuta was.

"This guy is bad news. He was one of the best batters at nationals last year, Carlos Toro. I suggest that we walk him and strike out the next batter." Yuta said, his eyes trained on Ken's expression.

"Walk? In a friendly match?" Ken tilted his head and asked.

He had matched up against Carlos before in his previous life and had been smacked out of the park during the prefecture tournament. If it wasn't for Daichi saving them with a 2 run home run, they would have lost back then.

Therefore Ken had a little bit of a grudge, unbeknown to Carlos.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 136 - 136: Showdown (2)

Yuta let out a sigh. Throughout his time as a catcher, he had played with many pitchers, yet they all seemed to share the same traits. He thought that Ken might be a little different considering he was rational and level-headed.

However, by the look on his face Yuta knew he wouldn't be able to convince him to walk the man before him.

"Yuta-senpai."

"Mmm?"

"What happens if I walk him here and then we get into a situation where I have to face him in the prefecture tournament? Will I have to walk him again?"

Yuta seemed a little taken aback, not expecting such a response.

"This game is low stakes, so what's wrong with losing? If I run away now, what's to stop me running away from even bigger challenges further down the track."

Ken's words were calm and he spoke in an even tone, however they sent waves through Yuta's mind. He stood stunned for a while, processing them.

"Yokohama High, please hurry up." The umpire said, snapping Yuta out of his thoughts.

"Y-Yes sorry."

He turned back to Ken and flashed a smile, "Let's do it."

Ken gave Yuta a thumbs up, happy that he was able to convince him. He then turned his attention to Carlos who looked as if he had just lost a bet.

'Time to pay you back... With interest.' He smiled fiercely and gripped the ball in his glove.

During the time when the two were chatting, Carlos was gritting his teeth. There was nothing that pissed him off more than being walked when he was at bat. Since it had happened many times in the past, he knew exactly what the catcher was doing when he called timeout.

'They're gonna walk me in a friendly match? Cowards.'

All of his motivation was thrown out the window and he almost walked out of the batters box in response. That was until he saw Ken turn in his direction with a fierce look on his face.

Yuta made his way past Carlos and squatted down before speaking up.

"Let's see what you've got."

Carlos felt his heart beat faster in anticipation.

"Hahaha that's more like it."

Now that the gauntlet had been thrown down, the two parties stared down the pitching lane at each other, their expressions filled with fierce competitiveness.

Ken nodded towards Yuta who had made a sign before going straight into his wind up and sending the ball flying towards the eager Carlos.

WHOOSH

PAH

The sound of Carlos's bat cutting through the air was loud, only drowned out by the noise caused by the ball hitting leather.

"Strike."

Despite missing the ball, Carlos didn't seem worried.

'The ball is a little faster than I thought so my timing was a little off.'

He made some mental adjustments, before gripping his bat tightly once more. In his mind, the next ball was going to be sent packing.

"Nice pitch Ken!"

This time it was the coach who called out words of encouragement, clearly embroiled within the battle. He was inwardly pleased that Ken had not decided to walk the powerhouse Carlos, even if it meant risking their potential win.

'It's a showdown between men.' Seiji Hanada felt the full impact of the players youthfulness on the field.

"Send it out of the park Carlos!"

Not to be outdone, Coach Goto also dropped his smiling facade and began to yell out to his player. It seemed that the fated battle on the pitch was also effecting him despite his age.

Even though it was only a friendly match, both teams dugouts were alive, cheering for their respective teams. The crowd full of Shuei supporters also joined in, creating a lively atmosphere.

Ken felt the noise drown out as his Crunch Time skill activated in a timely manner. A smile appeared on his face as he felt his body bolstered with an additional power which began to flow through him.

'There's no way I can lose.'

Yuta made the sign for a forkball, placing his glove just below the strike zone.

However, Ken shook his head. This wasn't a fight where he needed to use a breaking ball to outwit his opponent.

'My fastball won't lose to anyone.'

A wry smile appeared on Yuta's face as he received the rejection from Ken.

'Okay Ace, I'll trust you.'

With that he called for a fastball on the inside, getting a nod in response.

Ken loaded up and sent his pitch flying, feeling as if he generated a lot more power than his previous pitch as it shot towards Yuta's open glove.

DING

PAH

"Strike two."

'Huh!?! It got even faster?'

Carlos was currently at a loss. He was completely confident that he had got the timing down, yet he had only barely managed to make contact with the top of the ball.

Yet instead of being disheartened, a wide grin appeared on his face.

"HAHAHA. Show me more!"

'This is it. This is the kind of pitches I want to face... Just like back then at Koshien.'



He gripped his bat once more and stared at the boy on the mound who appeared to be like a tall and ancient tree, standing grandly as if it was part of the field itself.

'More... MORE!'

Ken caught the ball from Yuta and walked back to his position. He picked up the rosin bag and coated his hand in the powdery substance before throwing it back onto the ground.

'I think it's time to try out the lively pitch now. I just hope Yuta can catch it.'

He looked at Carlos who was all but foaming from the mouth in anticipation for his next pitch and couldn't help but chuckle. He couldn't blame him, he too was looking forward to this next pitch and gaining payback for past grievances.

After receiving the sign from Yuta for another fastball to the inside, Ken nodded before adjusting his cap. This final ball would be an announcement of his return to High School baseball.

He took one last look at Carlos before he began his wind up. Ken's muscles seemingly bulged as he performed the same action he'd done thousands of times in both his lives combined.

The moment he planted his foot, he whipped his arm around and shot the ball out from his flexible fingertips. The moment it left his hand he knew that it was one of the best pitches he had thrown.

DING

PAH

"Strike three! Out! Game set."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 137 - 137: Training Demon is Born (1)

"What a great game, it was really neck and neck there for a while. But it looks like the best team won at the end of the day."

Coach Hanada looked like a smiling buddha as he held out his hand towards the opposing coach.

Coach Goto felt his entire face twitch in annoyance, contemplating whether or not to wipe the smile off the rascal's features physically.

Fortunately he decided to be the bigger man and take the hand offered, albeit using a bit more strength than he usually would for a handshake.

"Let's see what happens when there is more at stake... In the prefecture tournament."

Seiji's face returned to normal after these words, a smirk appearing at the corner of his mouth before replying.

"Don't lose before you face us."

"Bah, I should be saying that to you." Goto said, before he himself let out a smile.

With that, the first friendly on the road to Nationals was completed with a narrow Yokohama High victory.

As the Yokohama players made their way to the front of the school to get on the bus, Coach Goto surveyed his players. Most of them looked pretty down, especially one student who was still on the bench staring at his bat.

He addressed the players, saying some things about this being a learning experience for everyone before donning his usual calm and smiling demeanor. Inwardly though, he was a little frustrated.

"Carlos..."

Once everyone had left, the coach approached his star player to check in on him.

"That pitcher... What was his name?" Carlos asked, not taking his eyes off his bat.

"I believe it was Ken. Ken Takagi."

Carlos was silent for a few moments before he stood up, gripping his bat tightly.

"Ken... Is it written with the character for strength or sword I wonder."

After saying so, he began walking off without another word towards the school.

At first Goto was worried that Carlos may be a little depressed after not being able to hit a pitch from a first year, however these thoughts were quickly dismissed in this short interaction.

Carlos only wanted to know the names of those he thought were strong, adding them to his list of rivals he needed to overcome. Since he had asked for Ken's name, that was all Goto needed to know that a fire had been lit under him.

He turned towards the retreating back of Carlos and let out a genuine smile.

"Ahh to be young."

\*\*\*

Ken and the rest of the Yokohama players were feeling jubilant as they packed onto the bus and waited to depart. The coach who had stayed behind to "discuss" the game with the opposing coach only entered around 5 minutes later.

He was all smiles, forgoing his usual poker face which the players had been used to seeing. It was clear that he was very happy with the win over their prefecture rival Shuei.

"You all played well today for our first friendly of the new school year."

A cheer erupted at the coach's words, showing just how happy the team was.

"However, next match against these guys won't be easy at all. Thanks to this game I can already see what our strengths are and where we are lacking." He continued, looking around the bus.

His words calmed down the players, who took on a serious air.

"But for now, let's celebrate a well fought victory."

As the bus took off, Ken received a lot more attention than he was expecting. Yuta, Makoto, Yusuke and even both the Aoyama twins praised him for his heroics in the game.

The only person who seemed a little odd was Hiroki, the person currently sitting next to him on the bus.

He was silent for almost 20 minutes, clearly deep in thought. Since he didn't look like he wanted to chat, Ken didn't disturb him. Sometimes people just needed a moment to think and sort through their feelings.

"Ken..."

"Mm? What's up?"

Hiroki paused for a moment, seemingly gathering his thoughts.

"I want to get better. Do you think you could help me?"

He looked at Ken, his face full of resolution.

Ken faltered, doing his best to keep a straight face.

'Damn. Why did it have to be Hiroki of all people?'

He had already seen through the Identify function that Hiroki could no longer improve thanks to his lack of potential. But if he turned around and said that he couldn't help him, it could easily destroy their budding friendship.

Ken felt a headache coming on.

Out of desperation, he decided to use the Training Plan function on Hiroki in hopes of finding something.

NAME: Hiroki Kondo

AGE: 17

TALENT ASSESSMENT: A+

POTENTIAL: A+

SYSTEM IS UNABLE TO CREATE A TRAINING PLAN SINCE TARGET HAS REACHED THEIR POTENTIAL.

Ken's expression darkened.

'Figures... What was I hoping for? A way to increase his potential?'

WOULD USER LIKE TO REMOVE THE CAP ON HIROKI KONDO'S POTENTIAL?

COST: 4000 Major points

TIME REQUIRED: 2 Months

[Y/N]

"Eh!?"

Seeing the mixture of expressions on Ken's face, he suddenly felt inadequate.

"It's okay, I shouldn't have burdened you with my problems." He said, a forlorn expression appearing on his features.

"A-Ah wait Hiroki. Sorry I was just thinking of ways that I could help you." Ken replied, trying to cheer the fellow up.

'Looks like I've got no choice now.'

Ken clicked the yes button and instantly saw his balance of Major points disappear. A comprehensive list of directions and exercises appear in front of him, filling his vision. Even he who was a training advocate suddenly paled after reading it.

"So you'll help me?" Hiroki asked, his eyes sparkling.

"Heh... It won't be easy though." Ken gulped.

"Good! It wouldn't be worth it if it was easy."

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"D-Demon! How can this even be called training!?"

Hiroki was seemingly fighting for life as he cursed Ken's 9 generations of ancestors. He crumpled onto the floor after completing the 50th repetition of climbing the stairs by the riverbank.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 138 - 138: Training Demon is Born (2)

Ken wasn't feeling much better despite his S grade stamina. He could feel his legs trembling as if they were jelly, however he persisted.

"I-I told you it wouldn't be easy." He placed his hands on his hips and stared out into the horizon, trying to look as if he wasn't struggling himself.

However, Hiroki saw straight through it.

"Bah, just tell the truth. You're trying to make me quit."

Ken shook his head vehemently.

"Do you think I'd be doing this crap with you if I wanted you to quit?"

"Ah."

Hiroki suddenly saw the flaw in his words and felt a little embarrassed. At least until his leg began to cramp up, causing him to roll in pain on the ground.

"H-Hiroki!"

Thus ended the first day of Hiroki's special training, only hours after completing their first friendly match.

After his strength and conditioning training was completed, Shiro improved considerably. His physical grade was now B+ and his fielding had improved to A-.

He finally thought that he was free from training, until he was dragged by both Hiroki and Ken to their extracurricular sessions.

What ensued was a level of torture that made his previous experience seem like a relaxing walk in the park.

Almost a month into the harsh training, Yusuke showed up, finally free of his injuries after being cleared by his doctor. He quickly joined the party, and apart from Ken, he was the only one who was not complaining bitterly by the end of the sessions.

Ken wiped the sweat from his brow after throwing his final pitch to Yuta.

"Great work Ken." Yuta called out as he headed over to him.

"Man your pitches have become sharp lately." He said with a smile.

"Thanks." Ken took the compliment, but didn't let it get to his head. Despite keeping up his 150 pitches a day, he was still stuck at the A- grade for pitching.

"Hey, you're close with Hiroki right?"

"Mmm? Yeah why?" Ken was a little taken aback.

"He seems to be a bit tired lately, do you know what's going on?"

Ken froze for a moment, feeling a little guilty.

"Ah, well he asked me for help with training so we've been doing some sessions after practice." Ken admitted, feeling a little embarrassed.

"Oh?" Yuta seemed a little interested, but he didn't pursue any further.

"I've gotta go Senpai. Great work today." Ken said, heading over to get ice for his shoulder.

Yuta nodded, watching Ken's retreating figure in contemplation.

A little later that day, Ken, Yusuke, Hiroki and Shiro were at the usual spot where they had been training lately. He had borrowed some markers from the club and set up stations for the interval training set out by the system.

One would think that after a month of doing the training program that it would be a little easier, however that was not the case. The system seemed to know exactly how far to push Hiroki until he dropped.

Since Shiro was below Hiroki's physical grade, he was the one that suffered the most throughout the training. However, with how miserable everyone was at the end, he felt slightly better and could persist.

Ken took the others through a warm up routine to ensure that no one would get hurt, something he did at the start of every session. He was about to speak but was interrupted.

"So this is where you guys have been training?"

Ken turned around and saw Yuta's smiling face staring back at him.

But that was not all, he was flanked by nearly all of the first squad members.

"Heh, so our cute juniors have been training in secret all this time. I can feel my muscles shivering in anticipation." Makoto said, taking the opportunity to strike a flexing pose.

"Got room for some more?"

"You guys..." Ken seemed shocked, however a smile appeared on his face afterwards.

He had wanted to make the team stronger and had been worrying about his dwindling Major points. However now, the perfect opportunity had arisen to progress all at the same time.

The newcomers had smiles on their faces, looking eager to join in on the fun.

Hiroki, Shiro and Yusuke also had smiles on their faces, yet theirs looked a lot more sinister.

'Hehe more fools have decided to join.'

They say that misery begets company, so the trio rejoiced in the fact that there were more people who decided to join in on the suffering.

Ken took the newcomers through the warm-up exercises for a few minutes and explained the different training that they would be doing. What was once smiles on the faces of the newcomers quickly turned to frowns.

Apart from Makoto, the rest seemed as if they had just swallowed a rock.

"Alright let's go."

And so the newcomers began the training, quickly finding out that their earlier assessment of the difficulty was still too lenient.

An hour later, Ken had his hands on his knees and was busy trying to catch his breath. Besides Makoto, he was the only one left standing.

Seeing the Captain on his own two feet, Ken felt his respect for the man increase even more.

'As expected of the captain.'

"That was fun, even if it was a little easy. Do you do this every day?" He asked.

BLURGHH

The sound of someone emptying the contents of their stomach rang out in the background as Ken was about to answer.

"Ah, we do this every day after practice. On Saturday as well." Ken replied.

Makoto's face paled a little, however he did his best to seem unfazed.

"Well, I'll see you here again tomorrow then." He said before walking off, trying to stay cool.

Unfortunately for him, his body didn't seem to want to comply. His legs began to wobble as if they were made out of jelly, creating a hilarious scene.

"Pfft HAHAHA!"

The players who had been staring daggers at Makoto during his declaration earlier all burst into hearty laughter.

"Is that really the captain? He looks like a baby trying to walk for the first time!"



Another bout of laughter ensued, only being drowned out by another person vomiting.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 139 - 139: Forged Star (1)

"Mom, I'm home."

Ken staggered through the front door of his home, feeling his muscles protest from the hard training he'd been doing. If it was just the team training and Hiroki's training he wouldn't be this exhausted.

However, he still had to swing his bat 500 times a day on top of the 150 pitches he made himself complete. Thankfully, today was the last day of his Ascend to the Peak (2) mission, meaning he would receive more rewards soon.

"Welcome home Kenny. Dinner will be ready soon, go and shower first."

Yuki replied without turning around, keeping her focus on the stove. It was only when she heard Ken's stumbling that she turned around and finally looked at him.

A look of worry appeared on her face as she saw the state of her son.

"Kenny, do you really have to train so hard?" She asked, feeling subconsciously guilty for his suffering.

Ken waved his hand dismissively, "Gotta train hard to be the best mom. I bet Daichi is training even harder than me."

Despite her son trying to ease her worries, Yuki still felt bittersweet.

"Okay I'm off to get cleaned up." He said, dumping his dirty clothes on the side of the washing basket.

Yuki's eyebrow twitched in annoyance, feeling her earlier sympathy disappear entirely.

After dinner, Ken told his mother he was heading to sleep early since he was tired.

However, he really just wanted to get into the Image Training a bit earlier tonight since he was 500 swings away from his much needed rewards.

It was a risk entering the Image Training before 9pm, but he wanted to take it. Since he was in fact exhausted, the sooner he finished, the sooner he could get some sleep.

Without wasting any time, Ken clicked the button and ended up in Koshien once again. A place where he visited every night.

#### #BATTING MISSIONS:

- > Hit 1000 bunts successfully - 250 Major points + Silver Lottery ticket [Claimed]
- > Hit 1000 balls into outfield [1000/1000] - 250 Major points + B-grade Stamina Elixir [Claimed]
- > Hit 3000 foul balls [3000/3000] - 250 Major points + Silver Lottery ticket [Claimed]
- > Hit 1000 sliders [1000/1000] - 250 Major points [Claimed]
- > Hit 1000 curve balls [1000/1000] - 250 Major points [Claimed]
- > Hit 1000 fastballs [1000/1000] - 250 Major points [Claimed]
- > Hit 1000 home runs [939/1000] - 2000 Major points + A-grade Strength Elixir + Gold Lottery ticket

"Almost done..."

Ken stared at the missions that he'd been slowly working at over the past month. Since he spent all of his Major points on the training plan to remove the cap on Hiroki's potential, these mission rewards were like rain during a drought.

He quickly opened up his stats, and took a look.

SYSTEM LEVEL: 3 (2080/10000 Major points to level up)

NAME: Ken Takagi

AGE: 16

TALENT ASSESSMENT: A

POTENTIAL: S+

MAJOR POINTS: 2080

USER STATS:

>Physical Fitness: A+

>Pitching: A-

>Fielding: B-

>Game Intelligence: B-

>Mental: A+

>Skills: 15

PHYSICAL FITNESS: (Avg. A+)

Balance and Coordination: S

Agility: A+

Strength: A

Stamina: S

Ken frowned, still annoyed that his pitching had stagnated at the A- grade. It just showed how hard it was to improve when one got to such a level, even with the additional training benefits he had.

"Nevermind, it's time to go get to work..."

With that, Ken selected the Amateur difficulty and was teleported to the batters box. Seeing the familiar figure of himself caused a smile to form on his face.

"Let's get these rewards."

Two hours later, Ken's consciousness appeared back in his room. He stared at the ceiling for a while, feeling a sense of accomplishment wash over him that only came after working hard.

[Mission Complete]

Received:

2000 Major Points

A-Grade Strength Elixir

1 Gold Lottery Ticket

#MISSION: Ascend to the Peak (part 2) [Complete]

\*Task: Swing your bat 500 times both physically and in image training per day.

TIME: 0 days remaining.

REWARDS:

>Gold Lottery Ticket

>Unlock Mission: Ascend to the Peak (part 3)

[Received Gold Lottery Ticket]

"Ahhhh, come to me my pretties."

Ken breathed out a sigh of satisfaction seeing all of the windows appear in front of him. The noise the system notifications only added to his peace of mind.

After enjoying the feeling for a few moments, he opened up the new mission. If anything, he was hoping to take a bit of a break from the Image Training for a while so he could sleep for longer and improve his body's recovery.

His eyes widened after seeing the mission, unsure if what he was reading was true.

#MISSION: Ascend to the Peak (part 3)

\*Task: Consume at least 3500 calories a day for the next month

TIME: 30 days remaining.

REWARDS:

>Skill: Poker face

>Skill: Training Demon

'Huh!? What is this?'

Ken rubbed his eyes a few times, however it had no effect on the window hovering in front of him.

'Does the system want to fatten me up?'

There could be no other explanation for such a mission, unless it wanted to torture him.

'Wait, how many bowls of rice would I need to eat to get to 3500 calories?'

Ken began the math in his head which took a lot longer than he would have liked to admit.

'FOURTEEN BOWLS OF RICE!?!'

"I-I'm gonna die if I eat that much." His voice came out in a whisper as he felt his stomach churn just thinking about it.

However, when he looked at the rewards his eyebrow raised in curiosity. He was surprised to see the Poker face skill since he had been thinking it would be useful recently.

It sounded self explanatory, compared to the other skill anyway.

'Training Demon? What kind of skill is that?'

At first he thought it might be like his Doryoku and Disciplinarian skills, but that shouldn't be the case. He couldn't imagine the system allowing him to be too overpowered.

Unfortunately there was no way of viewing the details of a skill until he acquired it.

Disregarding the copious amounts of food he would have to eat this coming month, Ken was looking forward to acquiring two new skills.

Feeling his eyes starting to droop, He quickly decided to spin the wheel before heading to bed. He currently had a Silver Lottery ticket and two Gold tickets.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 140 - 140: Forged Star (2)

The system seemed to be tired of giving out worthwhile rewards, giving him a B-grade Agility Elixir from the Silver Lottery ticket. After quickly exchanging it for some more Major points, he moved onto the Golden wheel.

Ken crossed his fingers, hoping for something good. Every time he had spun the Golden wheel he'd been given something extremely useful, so he had a good feeling about it.

[Congratulations, you have acquired "Potential Booster"]

[Potential increased to SS+]

Ken's jaw dropped.

'W-What the hell!?! There was such a reward?'

He felt a surge of adrenaline rush through his body as he stared at the rewards on the window in front of him. The whole situation with Hiroki had subconsciously made him nervous at his own potential cap.

If Ken was to be capped at S+ it was very possible that he may be just an average player in the NPB which meant getting into the Majors would be nothing but a pipe dream for him.

Therefore receiving a boost in his potential put his mind at ease.

'If the system is capable of increasing my potential then I really have nothing to worry about.' He thought, feeling his body relax significantly.

"This really feels like cheating..." Ken mumbled, however there was a big grin on his face.

He only managed to calm his excitement after a while, staring at his last remaining Gold Lottery ticket.

Without any expectation, he pressed the spin button and watched the small wheel rotate quickly, turning into a blur. Soon enough it began to slow down, finally falling on an icon with dollar signs.

[Congratulations, you have acquired 5,000 Major points.]

"Ah..."

Ken was a little disappointed, though he couldn't complain too much. There would be more opportunities in the future to acquire Gold Lottery tickets, especially since the prefecture tournament was beginning at the end of June.

With these Major points he had now accumulated around 7500, 2500 shy of the requirement for upgrading his to the next level.

'I wonder what I'll get when I upgrade the system level next?' He thought to himself.

The last time he upgraded the system, he acquired the Image Training function, which had been a game changer for him. Not only did it allow him to train without becoming exhausted, it also gave missions which in turn bagged him rewards.

"Ahh, I can't wait."

With those words, Ken drifted off to sleep, dreaming of stepping onto the real mound of Koshien once again.

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The next month passed by in a flash. Soon enough, the whole baseball club had joined in on Ken's extracurricular training after practice. Even the managers took some time out of their day to attend, cheering on the hot-blooded teens during their workouts.

Ai also brought some baked treats from her parents bakery for everyone to munch on afterwards, making her even more popular with the players.

However after Tatsuya's warning, they quickly relinquished their enthusiasm in case the Training Demon himself increased their workouts.

Ken had to admit that while the training sessions were difficult, he found himself having so much fun. Watching everyone working together while sweating it out in the afternoon sun felt entirely surreal.

Just over a year ago he was a 24 year old office worker who drank away his sorrows and kept anyone who loved him at arms length. If he hadn't have been given this second chance, he likely would have continued to live a miserable existence.

With his mothers help, Ken was able to increase his calorie intake to 3500 a day for the past month and had begun to fill out his once wiry frame. With the increased workload, he burned through the additional calories and converted them to muscle, even growing taller as if he had a growth spurt.

He had also received the rewards from the final part of the Ascend to the Peak mission line, giving him the Poker Face and Training Demon skills.

Poker Face: Allows user to maintain a neutral expression, even when emotions are unstable.

Training Demon: Your effort and dedication to training incites those who train with you to perform better. Increasing their training benefits by 20% (does not affect the user.)

Since this was the first day since receiving his new skills, he could finally see the effects of the new Training Demon skill.

Everyone seemed fired up as they each went through the exercises he had set up. At any one time there was 5 people at each of the stations, doing either burpees, running up and down stairs, lunges and even push-ups and sit-ups.

Hiroki was currently in the middle of running up and down the staircase, his breath harsh as he felt the sweat pouring off of him. Despite doing these exercises every day for the past 2 months, he didn't feel as if he was improving.

It was as if he had hit a plateau, and nothing he did would help him break through such a wall. There were times where he wanted to give up, but with the whole baseball club now joining in on the exercises, he was now too embarrassed to speak up.

If he ever began to slack off, Ken would bark at him from afar with a scary expression on his face, forcing him to pick up the pace.

This was the last exercise of the day, yet Hiroki began to feel his body heat up more than usual. He almost stopped out of fright, but there was a voice in the back of his head telling him to keep pushing through.

He grit his teeth and fought against the feeling, gasping for air and pushing his tired muscles as hard as he could. There was a fleeting sensation that he wanted to grasp, but it felt just out of arms reach.

'I can't afford to let this feeling go!'

"Alright everyone, let's wrap it up." Ken's voice called out, receiving a groan of approval from the rest of the group.

However, Hiroki didn't seem to hear him. He kept running up and down the stairs without pause.

Yuta was about to step forward and say something, but Ken quickly grabbed his shoulder.

"Just wait a moment." He said.

Now everyone turned their attention towards the lone person who was still working hard. Sure he looked like he was about to collapse, but everyone could only feel respect for him.

After around 2 minutes of non-stop action, Hiroki suddenly felt a shudder run through his body. He managed to climb the last two steps, only to collapse onto the ground, sucking in deep breaths.

There were tears in his eyes, but his face broke into a huge smile as he stared at the clouds in the sky.

'I... I did it.'



Instinctively, Hiroki could tell that he had made the breakthrough that he was so desperately searching for. It was as if an invisible wall had crumbled before him, leading to an unknown path down the line.

Ken felt it too. The expression of pure joy on his friend's face was enough to know that he had succeeded.

To be sure, Ken used Identify on his friend once more.

TO USE IDENTIFY ON THIS TARGET WILL COST 200 MAJOR POINTS DUE TO THE DISPARITY IN ABILITIES. WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTINUE?

[Y/N]

'Huh!?'

Ken was shocked. Had Hiroki improved so much that he now needed to spend Major points to identify him?

Extremely curious, Ken selected yes and if it wasn't for his new Poker Face skill his eyes would have bulged out of their sockets.

NAME: Hiroki Kondo

AGE: 17

TALENT ASSESSMENT: S

POTENTIAL: ??

USER STATS:

>Physical Fitness: S

>Pitching: B-

>Fielding: S+

>Game Intelligence: S

>Mental: S

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

