

Cote 221

Chapter 221: Buzz Buzz

The term "secret weapon" gave Horikita an odd feeling.

Though she didn't know what it was, she couldn't help but suspect Kaoru.

"In your eyes, I must be an irredeemable pervert, right?" Kaoru toyed with the small pink object, its peculiar shape immediately betraying its nature.

"Isn't that the case?" Horikita smoothed her skirt and stood before him with her legs pressed together, poised like a proper young lady.

However, she noticed that the so-called "wire" was actually a pull-string—something that likely needed to be inserted deep into certain places before being retrieved.

"A pervert has their own way of playing. It's best not to judge them with your limited perspective," Kaoru advised her tactfully.

Horikita remained indifferent. "I don't need to understand a pervert. Just tell me what I'm supposed to do."

Kaoru studied her slender figure—the black leather belt cinching her waist tightly, accentuating the alluring curve between her hips and waist.

Every inch of her was perfectly proportioned, exuding a smooth, silky texture.

Wearing a dress with stockings—honestly, he couldn't fathom her thought process.

Just as this thought crossed his mind, the girl opposite him seemed to read his mind and glared fiercely.

"What do you think I'm doing? It's all because of you!" Horikita's face flushed slightly, her voice tinged with irritation.

"I never imagined there'd be a foot fetishist like you in this world!"

It did have something to do with him, Kaoru admitted inwardly as he averted his gaze and cleared his throat.

"Ahem. There are two options here. Which one do you want to try?"

Horikita answered immediately, "I don't want the collar!"

"Wait, let me explain. This secret weapon will be used on you—and it'll involve intimate areas." Kaoru held up the small device and pressed the switch.

"Its technical name is Vibrator, a specialized weapon with devastating effects on girls."

Buzz—Horikita Suzune stared blankly at the small vibrating object in his hand, utterly confused until she heard his explanation, after which her delicate face turned completely red.

"No way! Absolutely not!"

Just the thought of certain images made Horikita Suzune feel her face burning and her entire body heating up.

This instinctive shame made her want to flee immediately.

"This is the perverted way to play. Did you really think I'd be satisfied just looking at your panties?" Kaoru Mitoma turned off the small device.

Horikita Suzune bit her lower lip and whispered, "At most, I'll let you touch the top part. I'll even give you a lap pillow—just don't use that thing."

These were the terms from the original list, which she remembered clearly.

"In that case, I'd be at a bit of a disadvantage," Kaoru Mitoma replied, also recalling the details.

Seeing his reaction, Horikita Suzune tentatively suggested, "How about letting you lick once more?"

Kaoru's face darkened.

Did she really think this was some kind of reward?

"If that's how it is, let's just cancel the contract. I'll go talk to the student council president later."

"Wait, why?!"

"If you can refuse this today, you might keep refusing me in the future," Kaoru said. "Besides, wasn't it you who insisted that more extreme things were possible?"

Horikita Suzune fell silent.

Though she knew he was right, the idea was terrifying for someone as inexperienced as her.

"Can you turn around?" The girl lowered her gaze slightly, avoiding his eyes.

"Why?" Now it was Kaoru's turn to be puzzled.

"Even I feel embarrassed. I've never shown my body to anyone, let alone the opposite sex."

After a pause, Horikita Suzune unconsciously tightened her grip on her clothes.

"You don't need to take anything off for this." Kaoru blinked at her.

Horikita Suzune looked surprised and hesitated.

"You... didn't you say you were going to put it in?"

"That's too rough. I wouldn't do something like that." Kaoru stood up and sat beside her, noticing how her entire body tensed up instantly.

The girl's faint fragrance was unmistakable and the slight blush on her cheeks drew Kaoru's gaze.

Alone together, discussing such a strange topic—it was already subtly stimulating his body.

Kaoru leaned in and whispered something into Horikita Suzune's ear, causing her earlobes to flush softly.

"T-That's so shameless." Horikita Suzune didn't know what else to say. "You really won't do anything else?"

"Can I take a photo?" Kaoru asked.

"No." Her eyes instantly turned icy.

"See? If you don't agree, I'll only do what you've permitted." Kaoru smiled. "This is supposed to be consensual. I don't want to make things awkward between us."

Horikita Suzune stared at him blankly before suddenly turning her face away, muttering sarcastically.

"How noble. Weren't you the one who aggressively tried to make me drop out at first?"

Kaoru didn't respond.

Instead, he picked up the small device and casually asked.

"Can I help you?"

Horikita Suzune turned her head and gazed at him intently.

Kaoru remained unfazed, even meeting her eyes directly.

The atmosphere between the two remained silent for a long time until Horikita Suzune suddenly spoke.

"Close your eyes."

Kaoru Mitoma gave her a puzzled look, unsure what she was up to, but cautiously closed his eyes nonetheless.

The next moment, a sharp pain shot through the soft flesh at his waist, causing him to snap his eyes open in an instant.

"Alright, Mitoma-kun, you can enjoy yourself now." Horikita Suzune watched his pained grimace with immense satisfaction, a rare smile gracing her lips.

She knew Kaoru Mitoma must have planned this in advance—otherwise, how could such a thing possibly appear at school?

Since there was no escaping it, Horikita Suzune decided not to resist.

Instead, she pinched him to vent a bit of her frustration.

However, she had overestimated herself.

When Kaoru Mitoma suddenly pulled her close by the waist and boldly lifted her skirt, her smile froze.

Not stopping there, he brazenly invaded the most sensitive part of her.

To make it easier, he pulled her into his lap, her soft, rounded ass now resting in his palm.

This pervert—Horikita Suzune felt her face burn with embarrassment.

Under his touch, her sensitive body trembled slightly.

She could even feel faint traces of his breath brushing against her, sending intense reactions coursing through her, her heart pounding uncontrollably.

"You... didn't say you could just... touch me however you want... mmm..." Her words came out in broken gasps as one hand weakly pushed against his chest while the other nervously gripped his wandering hand, afraid he might go even further.

"I'm not moving randomly. I'm just trying to find your sensitive spots." Kaoru Mitoma whispered by her ear.

"Turn around. This position isn't very convenient."

After a moment's hesitation, Horikita Suzune obediently followed his instructions, shifting in his arms until her back was against him, like a child sitting in their father's lap.

Buzz—

Something suddenly turned on, making her tense up instantly.

Even though Kaoru Mitoma had promised not to insert it, she couldn't help but feel nervous.

Then, his palm covered her chest while his other hand slipped beneath her skirt, pressing the vibrating object just below her stomach.

"Ah—!"

In an instant, her entire body shuddered violently.

Overwhelming pleasure surged through her, causing her to writhe uncontrollably in his arms.

Soft, whimpering moans escaped her lips.

Chapter 222: Troublesome Woman

The end of summer slipped away quietly, the weather gradually cooling, though the scorching sun still blazed fiercely.

Kaoru Mitoma had just reached the first floor when he spotted a few familiar figures emerging from the elevator.

"Huh? Isn't that Mitoma-kun?" Honami seemed pleasantly surprised, waving cheerfully at him.

"Good morning," Kaoru greeted back, noticing the girls beside her.

First was Amikura Mako, who noticed Kaoru Mitoma the quickest, yet remained silent, her expression seeming somewhat awkward.

Facing Mitoma, she only offered a polite smile.

Beside her was Shiranami Chihiro, a girl who resembled the girl-next-door type, her gaze shifting between him and Ichinose Honami as if lost in thought.

"Mitoma-kun, are you going out too?" Honami naturally walked up to Kaoru.

She wore a white short-sleeved shirt, the slightly loose fabric effectively concealing her overly striking figure.

The exposed skin of her arms carried a refreshing summer coolness, her snow-like complexion drawing attention.

As a complement, she had simply paired it with a black long skirt, the cinched waist tightly accentuating her slender figure—so delicate it seemed one hand could easily wrap around it.

White soft-soled shoes hid the girl's feet, leaving only a small portion of her calves visible before Kaoru's eyes—smooth and delicate, clearly offering a texture different from stockings.

"Yeah, I was planning to watch a movie," Kaoru Mitoma delivered his pre-prepared line.

The reason the two had met here was, of course, due to a carefully orchestrated scheme.

That said, Mitoma had no idea what Ichinose Honami intended to do.

Calling it a date felt a bit forced, especially since she had brought Amikura Mako and Shiranami Chihiro along—making the situation all the more confusing.

"Eh? We were thinking of watching a movie too!" Ichinose Honami beamed. "Why don't we go together?"

Just as Kaoru was about to nod, Amikura Mako hastily interjected, "Wait a second, Honami-chan! Didn't we agree to go get our fortunes told?"

"Oh no, I almost forgot about that!" Ichinose Honami recalled one of today's objectives and couldn't help but feel troubled.

"Fortune-telling?" Kaoru sounded as if he was hearing the term for the first time.

"You don't know about it, Mitoma-kun?" Honami explained, "There's a fortune-teller who's supposedly incredibly accurate, and they're visiting Keyaki Mall this summer—today, in fact. Everyone's really interested."

"Sounds like fun," Kaoru mused.

Amikura Mako immediately sensed danger—and sure enough, he asked, "Mind if I tag along?"

"Of course! You're more than welcome!" Honami's face lit up with a smile.

The plan was proceeding smoothly!

Amikura Mako glanced at her, then at Kaoru, pressing her lips together as her already sensitive thoughts began to spiral.

"Didn't expect you to be interested in fortune-telling. Shouldn't you be saying something like, 'Fortune-telling is so lame'?"

Almost muttering to herself, Amikura Mako stared fixedly at Kaoru.

"If I were the type to say that, I wouldn't have left the house to watch a movie today," Kaoru replied, his gaze drifting to the girl's calves.

Noticing his gaze, Amikura Mako subtly averted her eyes, then felt a flicker of irritation.

Meanwhile, Honami watched their little exchange, her smile unwavering.

"We're running out of time—let's get going!"

With that, she led the way out of the hall and stood under the scorching sun outside.

Amikura Mako had no choice but to follow and Kaoru Mitoma also moved.

However, as Shiranami Chihiro passed by him, their eyes met.

[Shiranami Chihiro: Envy, Jealousy, Melancholy, Longing...]

[Recommendation: Praise her more, include her, treat her gently, and grope her breasts to effectively reduce the target's jealousy.]

Like a fleeting glance, Shiranami Chihiro quickly averted her eyes.

However, Kaoru Mitoma was a little confused.

Whether it was Shiranami Chihiro's reaction or the prompt from 'Emotion Perception', he could hardly make sense of the situation.

...

"Hey, Mitoma-kun, what do you want to get a fortune reading for?"

As they walked, Ichinose Honami suddenly asked Kaoru Mitoma.

In that instant, Kaoru could sense Amikura Mako perking up her ears.

"The meaning of life?" Kaoru replied uncertainly, though he did indeed have such doubts.

However, this answer sounded somewhat dismissive to Amikura Mako, who couldn't help but purse her lips.

"Mitoma-kun, have you been feeling lost about life lately?" Honami asked curiously.

Kaoru thought for a moment before murmuring, "Sometimes, I wonder if I've done something wrong."

Honami suddenly froze.

She didn't expect that response, and her heartbeat quickened beneath her chest.

"I think as long as you can correct it, it's never too late. If you need help, I'll be there for you."

Their eyes met, and Kaoru couldn't help but smile. "So the fortune teller is right here?"

"Ehehe, I'm more of a counselor for worries," Honami giggled before turning to Amikura Mako. "By the way, Mako-chan, who are you pairing up with later?"

Amikura Mako paused, then replied nonchalantly, "I'm fine with anyone."

"What do you mean by 'pairing up'?" Kaoru asked naturally.

"The fortune teller only accepts consultations in pairs, not individuals," Honami explained. "So we were originally planning to team up."

Wait, weren't there three of you?

As if sensing Kaoru's confusion, Amikura Mako interjected, "Yume-chan will be here soon."

So it seemed Kaoru was the extra one.

"It's fine! Once Yume-chan arrives, I'll pair up with her," Honami said cheerfully. "Mitoma-kun, why don't you team up with Mako-chan first?"

"W-Wait, why me!?" Amikura Mako stammered, her face flushing red.

There was no way she could let Kaoru know what she wanted to consult about!

"Because it just fits, doesn't it?" Honami winked at her.

"Guh..." Amikura Mako roughly understood her meaning—after all, she had discussed this topic with Honami before.

Besides, today's fortune-telling was also related to Kaoru.

But this was just too embarrassing.

She had already declared they were just friends, yet here she was, secretly yearning for him.

What a terrible woman she was.

Amikura Mako could hardly stay calm.

In fact, ever since she first saw Kaoru earlier, she hadn't been calm at all.

Chapter 223: Love Fortune-Telling

Soon, Kaoru Mitoma saw the long line forming.

He had expected students to have free time during summer break, but the sheer number of people exceeded his imagination.

And most of them were couples, with only a few coming with friends.

Kaoru even spotted some teachers and shop employees—this fortune teller seemed genuinely popular.

"Hehe, I'm going to line up in front with Chihiro-chan!" Honami said, slightly smug as she secured a forward position with Shiranami Chihiro.

Kaoru Mitoma silently watched, still unable to figure out her intentions for the day.

"That's way too sneaky!" Amikura Mako was dumbfounded, though her peripheral gaze kept assessing Mitoma's expression.

Seeing no reaction from him, she subtly inched a bit closer before slightly distancing herself again.

Standing side by side under the sweltering heat, it was inevitable that they'd worked up a sweat after walking all this way.

Even though Amikura Mako didn't press too close, Kaoru could still catch her scent.

Perhaps due to their height difference, just a slight turn of his gaze easily brought the girl's face into view, along with the glimpse of snow-white skin at her collar.

In such circumstances, standing beside a beautiful girl was, frankly, a bit overwhelming.

Noticing the line was still moving slowly, Kaoru asked, "Want to grab something to drink?"

"You're going to buy some?" Amikura Mako eyed the line ahead. "We're not even in the sun here. If we tough it out, it might be our turn soon."

"My treat," Kaoru replied.

Amikura Mako fell silent for a moment, as if resigned, before muttering softly.

"Then I'll have juice."

Kaoru nodded, then asked Ichinose Honami and Shiranami Chihiro what they wanted before temporarily leaving the line to head for a nearby vending machine.

By the time he returned, the line had moved considerably.

Accepting the chilled juice from Kaoru, Amikura Mako politely said, "Thanks."

"By the way, what are you planning to get a fortune for?" Kaoru took a sip of his drink, his gaze lingering on her.

"The meaning of life," Amikura Mako deadpanned.

Kaoru gave her a strange look—was this a subtle dig at him?

"Are you really dissatisfied with your life right now?"

"No, I'm just dissatisfied with myself." As she spoke, Amikura Mako stole a glance at him.

It was odd how this guy seemed entirely unfazed by what she'd said before.

"Because of bad exam results?"

For a high schooler's troubles, academics were the only thing Kaoru could think of.

"W-what? Why the sudden jump to studies?" Amikura Mako was both annoyed and a little guilty—her midterm and final exam rankings were middling at best.

Her academic performance really wasn't great.

"Then what is it?" Kaoru asked as a matter of fact.

Amikura Mako fell silent again, torn between hesitation and reluctance.

She didn't want to share her feelings with Kaoru, but staying quiet would make it seem like she was lying.

"Love," the girl paused. "I want my fortune told about my destined one."

"I see." Kaoru remembered her mentioning before that she'd had a crush in middle school.

Still, even if she got a fortune now, Kaoru didn't see much point—after all, Amikura Mako couldn't even go out.

By the time she graduated and moved on, the guy might already have a girlfriend.

A thought suddenly struck Kaoru—was she worried about that and seeking answers through fortune-telling?

"I only have one photo with him, a group picture we took together at graduation," said Amikura Mako. "He probably doesn't remember me. The reason I came to this school might be because I was afraid he'd start dating other girls here."

"Were you two not close?" asked Kaoru Mitoma.

Amikura Mako shook her head. "We were in the same club, but not the same class. Since he joined before me, I always called him 'senpai.'"

As she spoke, her lips suddenly tightened.

"And also... I wasn't pretty back then. I had braided pigtails, long bangs—I looked really plain. So he probably never noticed me."

Kaoru Mitoma studied Amikura Mako's delicate face.

Now, she wore her hair in a high ponytail, smooth and straight, revealing her fair neck, exuding youthful energy—nothing like the "plain" girl she described.

Even if she were to braid her hair again now, she'd still look like an adorable younger sister.

"He must have no taste," Kaoru declared firmly.

Amikura Mako grew flustered under his gaze and forced herself to stay calm, taking small sips of her cold juice to keep her face from heating up.

"You've never seen how I looked before. I was completely unnoticeable in middle school," she said, glancing at him.

"Unlike you—I bet you were popular with girls back then, right?"

Kaoru had even forgotten most of his youth—how could he possibly remember middle school?

"Not at all. I was a member of the 'go-home club,' playing video games every day."

Amikura Mako eyed him skeptically, finding his words hard to believe.

But she also knew he was dodging the topic, which made her a little annoyed.

After stewing in silence for a while, she realized he hadn't bothered to keep the conversation going.

A dull ache settled in her chest.

She'd thought mentioning her crush would at least get some reaction out of him, but he didn't seem to care at all.

Kaoru, however, wasn't overthinking it.

Honami had warned him several times, so he figured he ought to respect his girlfriend's feelings.

Though Honami had been acting strange today, for some reason pairing him up with Amikura Mako.

After waiting for about an hour or two, it was finally Kaoru and Amikura Mako's turn.

"This fortune teller is amazing—she got everything right!" Honami exclaimed excitedly as she came out.

"We'll wait for you outside," Shiranami Chihiro said, sounding a bit down.

Curious, Kaoru stepped into the makeshift fortune-telling room. Inside sat an elderly woman, the space dimly lit except for a single candle burning on her table, alongside a crystal ball.

"Hehe, please take a seat," the fortune teller said.

Two chairs were placed in front of her. Kaoru and Amikura Mako sat down, watching her nervously.

Noticing their tension, the fortune teller smiled and pulled out a card reader.

"Which area would you like your fortune told?"

Kaoru glanced at the prominently displayed price list beside her, which listed four or five different packages, the cheapest starting at 5,000 points.

"I'll take the basic package," Amikura Mako said, handing over her phone first.

The basic package covered academics, love, career, and more.

"Hehe, may I ask for this young lady's name?" The fortune teller smiled as she looked at Amikura Mako.

After Mako told her, the fortune teller first examined her palm, then slowly began recounting the results of the divination—most of it was no different from the usual fortune-telling spiel heard on the streets.

However, when the topic turned to romance, Mako's expression stiffened slightly.

"Due to certain circumstances, you've been hesitating and unable to move forward, little girl. It seems you're in a bit of trouble." The fortune teller observed Mako's reaction closely.

"What is it you wish to know?"

Mako found it difficult to speak, her gaze flickering subtly toward Kaoru Mitoma.

"Hehe, no need to say it out loud. My eyes can see the secrets you don't want others to know."

Kaoru clicked his tongue in surprise—was this fortune teller really that skilled?

Just as he thought this, the fortune teller immediately turned her gaze toward him, her aged face curling into a knowing smile.

"Little girl, sometimes the meaning of meeting someone is simply to bid them farewell. No matter how unbelievable it may seem, perhaps this very moment is the most beautiful time of your life."

Kaoru smirked.

Such vague nonsense could only fool a few naive students at best.

"However, I must warn you," the fortune teller turned back to Mako, "if you don't toughen up, you'll suffer greatly in the days to come."

Mako remained silent, seemingly lost in thought, her expression unreadable.

"My name is Kaoru Mitoma. None of these options seem to have what I'm looking for." Kaoru handed his phone to the fortune teller.

"Can you tell what my problem is?"

Faced with what sounded like a challenge, the fortune teller merely chuckled.

"Of course. I can see the side of you that you don't want others to know."

"Then, please tell me—what should I do next?" Kaoru stared directly into her eyes.

"When you're tangled in the past, isn't the present just the past of the future?" The fortune teller performed some kind of ritual over her crystal ball.

"Even if you wish to go back, there will come a day when you long to return here."

Kaoru narrowed his eyes.

He knew cold reading was an essential skill in the fortune-telling trade—he was somewhat familiar with it himself—but this didn't quite feel like cold reading.

The fortune teller murmured, "The past is the past, the present is the present. Just like this young lady, you're burdened with too many worries. In truth, your concerns are entirely unnecessary."

"I don't agree that they're unnecessary. Humans are emotional creatures—we grieve over someone's death, we blame ourselves for past mistakes. You can't abstractly separate a version of yourself from a certain period and then complacently detach the corresponding responsibilities along with it."

Yet, in response to Kaoru's rebuttal, the fortune teller simply smiled.

"You've already given a satisfactory answer yourself."

Kaoru blinked in surprise, only to hear her continue, "As for your question, fate has already given its hint. Just be patient a little longer."

What kind of nonsense was this?

Beep—

Kaoru looked at the deduction on his phone—this cryptic woman had just taken 10,000 Personal Points from him.

Wait, Sakayanagi Arisu had sent him quite a few messages.

Since his phone had been on silent, Kaoru hadn't noticed at all.

Opening them, he saw that the earliest message had been sent half an hour ago

.Then came the messages sent over ten minutes ago, a few minutes ago, and just now.

"Hehe, it finally shows as 'read,' Mitoma-kun~"

"How rare, your location is actually at the Keyaki Mall. I remember you're usually in the dorm, right?"

"Wait a moment, I'll be right there"

Chapter 224: Fanning the Flames

Kaoru Mitoma might as well have had a question mark floating above his head, but he knew Sakayanagi Arisu's personality well—this girl would absolutely show up uninvited.

'Hey, Mitoma-kun, it's summer vacation. Must be boring staying alone in the dorm~'

'How about a game of chess?'

These were Sakayanagi's initial messages.

Having received no reply, and with the ability to check location information between friends, she quickly discovered Mitoma wasn't in the dorm but at the Keyaki Mall outside.

Though Kaoru couldn't see her expression, he could easily imagine it—with her level of curiosity, she'd never let this slide.

Just as Kaoru stepped out of the fortune-telling room, Ichinose Honami, who'd been waiting there, immediately approached him.

"How was the fortune-telling experience?"

"Complicated."

"Eh? I thought her accuracy was amazing! She could guess exactly what I was thinking about!"

Seeing Ichinose's cheerful smile, Kaoru wanted to ask what exactly she'd had read, but considering they weren't alone, he held back.

"So, Mako-chan, what did you think?" Ichinose leaned toward Amikura Mako, whispering, "Did she mention anything about..."

Amikura's face gradually turned red before showing a complicated expression.

She shook her head lightly, "I didn't understand what she was saying. Something about giving up early, I think?"

Kaoru secretly sighed in relief—so he wasn't the only one who didn't understand.

That was reassuring.

At that moment, Shiranami Chihiro quietly moved closer to him, her voice barely audible.

"Honami-chan had your fortune told."

Kaoru froze, instinctively wanting to ask more, but she smoothly moved away to join Ichinose and Amikura without another word.

This was strange.

She must have seen him with Ichinose before, yet not only hadn't she said anything, she'd kept completely silent.

And what did that comment mean?

Even if Ichinose had his fortune told, what did that have to do with her?

Why go out of her way to tell him? Did the fortune teller say something unfavorable about him?

Kaoru frowned, but before he could think too deeply about it, Ichinose enthusiastically suggested heading to the movie theater.

"Wait, can I use the restroom first?"

"Eh? Sure! We'll wait here. Come back quickly!"

"It might take a while—"

Before he could finish, Kaoru suddenly heard a familiar voice.

"My, my, where are we going, Mitoma-kun?"

Sakayanagi Arisu appeared before the group with an amused smile.

Leaning on her cane, she wore a white beret that neatly held her smooth, short hair in place, with a few strands cascading down to her pale neck.

The thin shirt she wore emphasized her petite frame, while her slightly short pleated skirt revealed slender, milky-white legs.

Surprisingly, she wasn't wearing stockings, leaving her smooth skin completely exposed—her pale thighs even seemed to glisten faintly under the light.

Beside her, Masumi Kamuro silently watched Kaoru without a word.

It was also a rare sight to see them in casual clothes, but Masumi Kamuro wore a short-sleeved off-shoulder blouse that revealed a smooth expanse of skin, with a slight curve at her chest.

Paired with slightly tight-fitting jeans, it perfectly accentuated her long, straight legs, making it a rather eye-catching sight.

"Bathroom emergency," Kaoru Mitoma suppressed his surprise.

He had been thinking of how to shake off Sakayanagi, but she had already caught up to him so quickly.

It seemed that by the time she sent the message, they were already nearby.

"Is that so? I thought you were trying to avoid me," Sakayanagi Arisu glanced at the fortune-telling booth nearby, then at Ichinose Honami.

"I didn't expect you to be interested in fortune-telling. Did you plan to come here today?"

"No, we just happened to run into Mitoma-kun on the way. Do you want to try fortune-telling too, Sakayanagi-san?" Ichinose Honami replied politely.

"A little. What did you ask about?"

Kaoru averted his gaze.

Her "little interest" was probably directed at the content of their fortune-telling.

"Sorry, that's a secret. But I think this fortune-teller is quite skilled," Ichinose smiled.

"You and Kamuro-san should give it a try. You might gain something from it."

"I have no interest in these nonsensical things," Kamuro crossed her arms, her expression slightly displeased.

"By the way, is someone no longer satisfied with just Class A?"

"Ahem, I'll head to the restroom first. You guys chat," Kaoru decided to escape reality.

"Hurry back. Don't make me wait too long, or I'll get lonely—thinking about you, always and forever."

As she spoke, Sakayanagi's face took on a sorrowful expression, her melancholic gaze seemingly capable of etching Kaoru into her memory for a lifetime.

Noticing that both Ichinose and Mako Amikura were stunned into silence, Kaoru couldn't help but fall quiet.

This girl was truly dangerous.

"Tch. Normally, you don't even step outside the door, but now you're out shopping with a bunch of pretty girls and ignoring messages. How cruel," Kamuro fanned the flames as if enjoying the spectacle.

"I do go out to buy things sometimes, you know?" Kaoru gave her a deadpan look.

"Going to the convenience store counts as going out?" Kamuro retorted.

Kaoru eyed her suspiciously.

How did she even know about his habits?

"Hey, hey, what's with that look? I was just guessing!" Kamuro, of course, understood what his expression meant and reacted strongly.

"Were you looking for Mitoma-kun?" Mako Amikura hesitantly asked.

From Sakayanagi and Kamuro's reactions, it was clear they weren't interested in fortune-telling—but rather, the person who had gone for it.

"Earlier, you could say so. But now it seems we've interrupted you," Sakayanagi said meaningfully, her gaze lingering on Amikura, whose eyes kept darting towards Kaoru.

"Not at all. Actually, we were just about to go watch a movie. If Sakayanagi-san and Kamuro-san are willing, why don't we all go together?" Ichinose smiled warmly, seemingly oblivious to Sakayanagi's implications, extending a natural invitation.

Sakayanagi chuckled. "No, there are too many girls here. I can't let him take advantage for free."

At those words, Kamuro and Ichinose subtly averted their gazes.

They knew that if Kaoru Mitoma wanted to take advantage of the dimly lit cinema, they wouldn't be able to refuse.

"Mitoma-kun," Sakayanagi Arisu called softly.

Kaoru Mitoma turned to her and had no choice but to say.

"I'm already reflecting on it."

"Heh, you'd better be." Sakayanagi Arisu paused, then revealed a gentle smile.

"Though I wasn't expecting this kind of scenario, it seems you've changed a little."

Changed—was she referring to their conversation back then?

Kaoru Mitoma recalled his birthday, when Sakayanagi Arisu had criticized him for being too ascetic, lacking material desires.

Because he never thought he would stay, he had never developed any materialistic cravings or even the desire to enjoy life.

But—

Wouldn't she be angry?

Kaoru Mitoma watched as Sakayanagi Arisu led Kamuro away, her composed steps betraying no emotion, as if she had only come to take a glance.

It was said that chaebol families were quite liberal about personal relationships—some even kept multiple lovers.

Chapter 225: Jealousy?

Ichinose Honami showed no reaction to Sakayanagi Arisu's interruption, continuing to chat and laugh as she led everyone to the cinema.

Kaoru had wondered if she might try something in the theater, but all she did was quietly hold his hand in the darkness—nothing more.

"You've worked hard today," Ichinose Honami murmured, leaning slightly closer.

"Not really. There wasn't anything particularly tiring today, was there?" Kaoru glanced at her face, illuminated by the screen's glow, making her look even more pristine and alluring.

"are you looking forward to a date with just the two of us?" Ichinose Honami kept her eyes fixed on the screen but spoke in a volume only they could hear.

Denying it now would be a lie.

"If things progress too quickly, we might end up doing things couples do," Kaoru whispered, subtly stroking her small soft hand.

Ichinose Honami's cheeks flushed slightly, clearly understanding his implication.

Pressing her lips together, she whispered, "No... we're not really a couple yet."

What did 'really a couple' even mean?

Though she didn't say it outright, Kaoru understood her meaning.

Their relationship was far from pure.

Starting from blackmail, even if it progressed to the final step, no genuine feelings would ever form.

There was only one way to break this dynamic.

Kaoru remained silent, letting the screen's flickering light wash over him as the characters onscreen held hands, gazing up at fireworks blooming across the sky.

"Wow—"

Shiranami Chihiro let out a small gasp, intently watching the rare kissing scene.

Her ears reddened slightly, as if she had thought of something.

Meanwhile, Amikura Mako, seated beside Kaoru, grew increasingly engrossed as the movie's plot unfolded.

"Hey, you heard about Mako-chan's fortune earlier, right?" Ichinose Honami suddenly remarked.

"Love fortune-telling?" Kaoru Mitoma had noticed Amikura Mako's expression at the time.

"She wanted to have her true love divined. That old woman was being all mysterious—I have no idea what she was thinking."

Ichinose Honami suddenly tightened her grip on Kaoru Mitoma's hand, as if she was angry.

"Ow."

"I don't believe you. You must know what she's thinking."

"Didn't you tell me not to think about her?"

Ichinose Honami bit her lip, unsure what to say.

In her role as the older sister figure, she should be stopping either Kaoru Mitoma or Amikura Mako.

Yet ever since hearing Amikura Mako's troubles, she'd felt hesitant, while also blaming herself somewhat.

It seemed she'd done something wrong, resulting in Amikura Mako being caught in some kind of pain and conflict.

Honestly, if Kaoru Mitoma could just change his ways a little, Honami would probably be considering whether to set the two of them up.

"How do you feel about Mako-chan's true love?" Ichinose Honami asked nervously.

She knew some boys cared if a girl had liked someone before—it could bother them.

"Don't feel anything. I've never met the guy," Kaoru Mitoma said. "Though I am a little curious. She hasn't confessed, has she?"

"No, Mako-chan's never even been in a relationship." As she said this, Ichinose Honami suddenly realized she was just as inexperienced in love herself.

The closest she'd gotten to a boy was with Kaoru Mitoma.

Thinking about how she'd not only lost her first kiss to him, but also let him touch her legs, butt, and breasts—pretty much everywhere—the girl couldn't help feeling ashamed.

"That's pretty normal. I had a crush on a girl before too, but after not seeing her for a while, I can't even remember what she looked like."

The moment he finished speaking, Kaoru Mitoma clamped his mouth shut.

"Kaoru had a crush on a girl?"

Sure enough, Ichinose Honami turned her gaze on him.

"What kind of girl was she?"

Though he didn't detect any signs of anger, some primal instinct still made Kaoru tense up, as if a chill had shot straight through his organs.

"I can't remember anymore, sorry." Kaoru kept his cool.

He knew this was a conditioned reflex left over from his past life—being surrounded by women had inevitably made him sensitive.

Ichinose Honami watched him quietly for a moment before looking away.

Just when Kaoru thought the topic was over, she suddenly spoke again.

"By the way, what's your relationship with Sakayanagi-san?"

This was something Kaoru Mitoma also wanted to explain quickly.

In many people's eyes, he and Sakayanagi Arisu were practically a package deal.

During the deserted island test, Sakayanagi's faction had already treated him as one of their own.

"Classmates. And I guess you could say we're friends," Kaoru Mitoma said after some thought.

"You know about our bet—she lost recently and is a bit sore about it."

Ichinose Honami smiled faintly and said nothing more.

Faced with this situation, Kaoru Mitoma began sweating bullets.

Though the two of them weren't officially dating, for some reason Ichinose Honami carried herself with an unshakable composure that was no less imposing than Sakayanagi Arisu's.

Especially when remembering Karuizawa Kei's suggestion, Kaoru felt even more guilty.

At that moment, Ichinose Honami seemed to pick up on his mood, the corners of her lips quirking up slightly.

"I'm glad you could explain these things to me, Kaoru-kun."

Kaoru Mitoma froze for a moment, then immediately noticed she was tightly gripping his hand—just like a real girlfriend would—with a trace of bashfulness flashing through her eyes.

After that, the movie ended.

...

When Kaoru Mitoma returned to the dormitory, he found a girl squatting at his door.

"What are you doing here?"

"Waiting for you to come back, obviously. Hurry up and open the door—it's boiling out here."

Hearing her complaint, Kaoru was momentarily at a loss for words.

The girl was none other than Masumi Kamuro, whom he had just met at the Keyaki Mall.

He felt the need to emphasize this because Kaoru genuinely wondered if she was missing a screw or two sometimes.

"How long have you been waiting?" Kaoru asked while unlocking the door.

"Not long. I came down as soon as I saw your location." Masumi couldn't be bothered to hide it anymore—she'd already slipped up earlier.

"Did Sakayanagi send you to spy on me again?" Kaoru stepped inside.

"What do you want to drink?"

"Do you have hot cocoa?"

"No."

"Then never mind."

When Kaoru glanced back, he saw her bending over in the entryway, her small fingers hooking her shoes before slipping them off, revealing her clean bare feet.

"Disgusting stare, you foot fetishist." Masumi glared at him coldly.

"If you know I'm a foot fetishist and still walked in here, doesn't that make you the bigger pervert?" Kaoru retorted irritably.

"Why wouldn't I dare?" Masumi muttered under her breath. "I bet you've already licked your way through not just Class A but girls from other classes too, huh?"

To be honest, aside from Ichinose, Sakayanagi, and Horikita, Kamuro Masumi had been present for every one of Kaoru's "exploits"—practically the frontline reporter.

Though she'd only witnessed Kikyo Kushida firsthand.

Still, Masumi wasn't an idiot.

Some things were obvious just from context.

"Did you come here just to insult me?" Kaoru sighed.

Masumi scanned his room before unceremoniously plopping onto his bed, looking faintly surprised.

"I thought your room would be full of porn things, with you watching lewd stuff all day..."

Noticing Kaoru's expression darkening, she abruptly changed the subject.

"What was that about earlier?"

"What do you mean?"

"You were with that beauty from Class B. Shouldn't you at least try to tone it down a little?"

Amused, Kaoru studied her indifferent expression.

"Are you lecturing me, Kamuro?"

"Sakayanagi will lose to you sooner or later. She doesn't even resist your perverted demands, and you already have Kushida. Isn't that enough for you?" Masumi paused.

"Even if you get a girlfriend someday, do you really think she'd accept this side of you?"

Kaoru was taken aback—he hadn't expected her to have a sense of justice.

[Masumi Kamuro: Jealous, irritated, conflicted...]

[Recommendation: Comply with her words, comfort her, lick her thighs and fondle her breasts to significantly boost target's affection.]

Never mind.

He'd overestimated her.

"My stance is simple," Kaoru said quietly. "I like you—and I like everyone else too."

Masumi froze for a second, too stunned to even blush before anger took over.

"Hey, do you have any idea how awful it is to say that to a girl's face?"

"And? I've already licked all over you and now you want me to abandon my responsibility?" Kaoru Mitoma spread his hands.

"Besides, perversion isn't my goal—it's just a process to understand another person."

Masumi Kamuro remained unconvinced by his twisted logic and scoffed, "Even if you can handle a 'girlfriends', society won't let you build a harem."

"I'm working on solving that problem." Kaoru Mitoma was dead serious.

His accumulated rewards had grown considerably, and someday, he might truly bend society to his will.

Masumi Kamuro thought he was daydreaming and curled her lips, "Don't even think about it. If people can't take it anymore, you'll spend the rest of your life in prison."

She had witnessed Kaoru Mitoma threatening Kushida Kikyo before, and it had left her uneasy, dissatisfied with his methods.

For once, Kaoru Mitoma had no clever retort.

"I'll keep your advice in mind, Kamuro-san."

Masumi glanced at him before leaning back, sprawling across his bed.

Since she was wearing jeans, she didn't have to worry about accidental exposure like usual.

However, lying flat like this only accentuated the curves of her chest.

"Hey!"

"Say what you want."

"I'm annoyed. Seeing you like this is irritating."

Kaoru Mitoma sat below, pouring himself tea, utterly unfazed.

"Want to stomp on me a few times to vent your frustration?"

"No." Masumi immediately refused. "That would just be rewarding you. I won't indulge you."

Sometimes, dealing with a pervert was just impossible.

For normal people, being stepped on would be humiliating.

But for a freak like Kaoru Mitoma, he'd probably take the chance to lick her feet or peek under her skirt.

Chapter 226: The Second-Year

Kaoru Mitoma glanced at Masumi Kamuro lying on his bed—it didn't seem like Sakayanagi had sent her here.

"Are you bored?"

"Extremely. This summer break, aside from being ordered around by Sakayanagi, I've got nothing to do." Kamuro let out a cold laugh.

"That girl can't even function without me now. Soon, she'll need my help just to use the bathroom."

Kaoru Mitoma fell into thought.

Truthfully, he'd never considered how Sakayanagi managed daily life.

With her leg disability, she couldn't walk without a cane—clearly, her life wasn't easy.

For instance, as Kamuro mentioned, using the bathroom was a challenge, and so was bathing.

If she slipped and fell, wouldn't Sakayanagi be unable to get up?

"I feel like you're thinking something disgusting," Kamuro suddenly remarked.

"Not at all. I was just thinking Sakayanagi's condition must be troublesome." Kaoru Mitoma reviewed his current rewards—none could cure her ailment.

He'd need to draw one specifically suited for Sakayanagi.

"It's probably incurable. If it weren't, she wouldn't be carrying that cane every day." Kamuro pondered.

"But who knows? Maybe future medical advancements will fix it."

"That sounds optimistic, but considering this country's so-called 'talents' include you, I'd say the odds aren't great."

ANHS is a specially supported high school endorsed by the authorities, designed to cultivate talents deemed beneficial to society—and these talents are none other than the students of Class A.

Kamuro quickly grasped the implication.

As a member of Class A, she was naturally one of those talents the authorities had high hopes for.

"What a shame, letting in a useless person like me. If not for someone's help, this waste might have been expelled already," Kamuro mused with mock self-reflection.

"And just thinking that it's not just me—a good-for-nothing—but also a lecherous creep who managed to slip in... I'm truly losing faith in this country."

"Careful, or that lecherous creep might come after you," Kaoru Mitoma chuckled.

Kamuro ignored him, turning on her side.

The scent of him surrounded her—his pillow, blanket, and sheets all carried a faint, distinctly masculine musk.

It wasn't unpleasant at all.

But with someone watching, she resisted burying her face in them.

Still, it was strange.

Her earlier irritation was slowly fading, replaced by something else entirely.

It was like breaking open a jar of honey.

A small taste would feel too bland, but drinking a little more would be unbearably sweet.

What confused her even more was—what exactly was she even thinking about?

Suddenly, she sat up, her face slightly flushed.

To mask her embarrassment, she pretended the room was too warm, fanning herself with her hand.

Buzz—

Kaoru glanced at his phone—clearly, someone had messaged him.

When he saw the sender, a smile tugged at his lips.

"Kamuro, want to come out with me tonight?"

"Hah? Why would I go anywhere with you?" Kamuro retorted, mildly annoyed.

"You've got nothing better to do anyway. Might as well meet someone with me," Kaoru added.

"And if they happen to be armed, you can take the hit for me, right?"

"Hey, hey, what am I, some kind of superhero?" Kamuro's expression darkened.

"Why drag me into a fight? If you're scared of getting beaten up, just pick a place with surveillance cameras!"

Kaoru sighed. "I'm afraid my request might be... too much for them to handle."

At that, Kamuro fell silent.

Around 11 p.m., the dormitory grounds were shrouded in darkness, with only the dim glow of streetlights flickering faintly.

The distant chirping of crickets echoed sporadically.

At this hour, not just the students—even the dorm supervisors were likely asleep.

"Who exactly are you meeting that you had to drag me out so late? So suspicious," Kamuro grumbled, trailing behind Kaoru.

"A guest who's been running late for a long time," Kaoru replied, scanning the area.

It was the agreed-upon spot—no surveillance cameras, and with a clear line of sight to spot anyone approaching.

Kamuro peered around too, but the darkness made it impossible to see anyone.

"Hey, it's past the meeting time, right? Was this just a prank?"

Just as she was about to gloat, a figure suddenly emerged from the shadows nearby.

"I apologize for calling you out at such a late hour, Mitoma." The figure stepped forward into the moonlight, revealing his face.

"I deeply regret the delay on my part."

Kiriyama Ikuyo - the leader of Class 2-B and one of the student council members.

Kamuro Masumi initially startled at the unexpected presence of a man standing in the shadows, instinctively glancing at Kaoru Mitoma.

Finding his expression completely unperturbed, she gradually regained her composure.

Almost immediately, curiosity about their meeting began growing within her.

"No need to apologize. I'm in no hurry." Kaoru smiled. "After this period of observation, you must have reached some conclusions?"

"Before that, may I ask about this girl's presence?"

"She's Kamuro-san from my class."

Kiriyama Ikuyo remained silent for a moment, choosing not to question Kamuro Masumi's trustworthiness.

Instead, he stated, "Horikita-senpai has already informed me about the special exam results. Your year's Class A is truly extraordinary."

Kaoru showed no surprise.

After returning, he had briefed Horikita Manabu about the exam situation.

Even if he didn't, given Horikita's methods, the information would have been obtained regardless.

Kiriyama took the initiative, "Mitoma, after Horikita-senpai steps down, I hope to collaborate with you."

"I believe student council transitions typically involve elections?" Kaoru inquired.

Kiriyama nodded, then responded helplessly, "With multiple vice presidents in place, an election should indeed be held. But given our current capabilities, we can't possibly prevent Nagumo from becoming president."

Kamuro Masumi was thoroughly confused—why had the conversation suddenly shifted to student council succession?

"Has the entire second year already fallen under his influence?"

"The second years... have mostly become Nagumo's allies, though many harbor resentment." Kiriyama sighed.

"But they've given up resisting, willingly submitting to Nagumo's commands."

After a moment's contemplation, Kaoru spoke, "Because he possesses vast amounts of Personal Points, enabling some students from lower classes to advance to Class A?"

Even first-years had heard rumors about Nagumo Miyabi—he made no effort to conceal his ambitions, openly declaring his intent to push reforms that would give more students opportunities to reach Class A.

Kiriyama explained, "Initially, Nagumo didn't have many Personal Points. It was around the start of the second semester when he began employing various methods to pressure other classes—even convincing his opponents to sign contracts—that he amassed his current wealth."

"What kind of contracts?" This was the first Kaoru had heard of this.

Kiriyama gave a bitter smile, "You've heard how second years under Nagumo's control collectively divided exam rewards, right?"

Examining the rankings across second-year classes did reveal such patterns, and Kaoru nodded in acknowledgment.

"At first, Classes D and C couldn't endure Nagumo's tactics and surrendered. Nagumo then had most of their students sign contracts." Kiriyama continued, "These contracts outlined how exam rewards would be distributed—Nagumo promised them a portion of the rewards in exchange for monthly contributions of Personal Points."

Hearing this, even someone as dense as Kamuro could understand.

Even if it was just a small portion, the combined amount from both classes was nothing to scoff at.

"How much do they have to hand over?"

"30%." Kiriyama Ikuyo noticed the surprised expression on Kaoru Mitoma's face and added.

"This ratio may not seem like much, but sometimes classes inevitably have to expend large amounts of Personal Points."

"Expulsion?" Kaoru Mitoma keenly picked up on this point.

Kiriyama Ikuyo was momentarily stunned—he hadn't expected Kaoru Mitoma to react faster and more sensitively than anticipated.

"It is indeed about expulsions, but how did you know?"

"Because there have been very few expulsions among third-years and our first-year class hasn't had any dropouts yet." Kaoru Mitoma pondered for a moment.

"If expulsions could only happen during midterms and finals, that would be too simplistic."

Of course, he hadn't mentioned another reason yet.

Since the school claimed that Personal Points could buy anything within the institution, they should also be able to purchase exemption from expulsion penalties.

Chapter 227: Sincerity in Cooperation

In Kiriya Ikuyo's memory, Nagumo Miyabi's contract with the second-year students had left a particularly deep impression.

First, Nagumo had replaced the original Class A in the first semester, then thoroughly crushed Classes C and D before proposing cooperation—luring them into jointly distributing future exam rewards.

Not only that, Nagumo Miyabi had exploited the school's class promotion conditions to tempt many students dissatisfied with their lower-tier classes, offering them sufficient Personal Points.

As long as these students were willing to work for Nagumo, he would select the most loyal among them before graduation and help them advance to Class A.

Faced with such terms, even Kiriya Ikuyo's class had wavered.

Of course, another reason for their hesitation was the contract about sharing exam rewards.

With the other three classes already united, they had no choice but to join—remaining on the sidelines wasn't an option, and refusal would only lead to continued losses.

Thus, under Nagumo Miyabi's orchestration, the second-year students achieved an overall alliance while also gaining numerous subordinates willing to work for him.

Nagumo could not only collect Personal Points within his own class but also extract 30% from other classes.

In just about half a year, his accumulated assets had reached an astonishing figure.

This was also why Kaoru Mitoma had been able to extort Personal Points from Nagumo twice—he still had plenty to spare.

In fact, if Nagumo hadn't used Personal Points to reward his subordinates, his reserves would likely have been even greater.

"Although we've also earned considerable rewards through contracts, expulsion are inevitable, and the Personal Points we've accumulated can vanish in an instant."

Kiriyama Ikuyo sighed deeply.

Not long ago, they had faced a special exam that nearly resulted in a classmate's expulsion.

"You can avoid expulsion by spending points?" Kamuro suddenly perked up.

Though she wouldn't say it aloud, she was somewhat worried about potential future expulsions.

"Aside from Mandatory Expulsion, there are generally relief measures—paying twenty million Personal Points or three hundred Class Points," Kiriyama Ikuyo replied.

Kamuro gasped—that price was far too steep!

Even harsher than class transfer conditions.

Even for the current Class A, paying that much would be a devastating blow.

"What does Mandatory Expulsion mean?" Kaoru Mitoma was particularly concerned about this.

Even though there were no surveillance cameras here, Kiriya Ikuyo still adhered to the principles she should uphold, answering vaguely.

"Sometimes, expulsion is part of the test."

Kamuro's pupils contracted slightly as she murmured, "So that means, at some point in the future, we'll have to personally expel one or two classmates?"

Kiriya Ikuyo fell silent and did not respond further.

Seeing this, Kamuro's expression darkened.

The atmosphere remained quiet for a while until Kaoru Mitoma spoke up again, "Don't panic. It's probably a special circumstance, not the norm. And there are ways to avoid it."

Both Kamuro and Kiriya Ikuyo were stunned—there were ways to avoid Mandatory Expulsion?

Of course, there were ways to avoid it.

For example, spending some Personal Points to buy a scapegoat from another class, having them transfer over to become a Class A student before expelling them.

However, Kaoru Mitoma wasn't entirely confident about this unless he involved Shiho Manabe and her group, so he kept the thought to himself.

"After all that's been said, the real issue lies with Nagumo himself," Kaoru Mitoma stated.

"None of you second-years can stand against him, or perhaps he's simply beyond your ability to handle. You can't deal with him, so you have no choice but to surrender in humiliation."

It was obvious that the second-years had lost confidence in defeating Nagumo Miyabi, which was why they agreed to his contract, resigning themselves to complete defeat.

In truth, Kiriya Ikuyo was no different.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have secretly arranged to meet Kaoru Mitoma alone in the middle of the night.

Such cautious behavior was a clear reflection of his lack of confidence.

Kiriya Ikuyo clenched his fists silently.

As an upperclassman, he should have immediately refuted Kaoru's words and questioned his disrespectful attitude.

But as a defeated man, he could only loosen his fists and mutter.

"There was someone who could have defeated Nagumo, but..."

Kaoru Mitoma could sense his negativity and couldn't help but smile.

"It's not a big deal. The reason Nagumo can control the second-years is simply because you all see no hope."

Because they couldn't see any possibility of defeating Nagumo Miyabi and advancing to Class A, many were willing to surrender and place their faith in Nagumo's promises.

Kiriyama Ikuyo shook his head.

"It might sound ridiculous to you, but I don't have much confidence myself. I just... can't accept it, which is why I want to stop Nagumo."

Kaoru Mitoma pondered the upcoming student council elections.

Kiriyama Ikuyo was clearly isolated—it was uncertain whether even his own class would listen to him.

Even if an election were held, Nagumo Miyabi essentially held the votes of the entire second-year class.

At best, Kaoru could only persuade Class A and Class B of the first-years to vote for him.

Buying votes with points was absolutely forbidden.

"Just make Nagumo lose a few times, right?" Kaoru Mitoma suddenly said.

"During the previous Personal Points exchange incident, it was clear he wasn't some invincible guy."

Kiriyama Ikuyo's expression turned solemn as he whispered, "Your name has been circulating among the second-years for months now."

Kaoru Mitoma was taken aback—the entire second-year class knew about him?

"I'm not the only student who wants to oppose Nagumo. If he pushes through his reforms, the competition will become even fiercer and more ruthless, turning the school into his personal playground." Kiriyama Ikuyo stared straight at him.

"Though it's embarrassing as a senior to ask a favor from a junior, I must ask for your help!"

Kamuro glanced at him, then at Kaoru Mitoma.

This guy was a total foot fetishist, yet he could attract the attention of a second-year student?

"Not help—equal cooperation." Kaoru ignored Kamuro's gaze.

Kiriyama Ikuyo finally cracked a faint smile.

He knew his own limits and was well aware he couldn't match Kaoru's abilities.

"Don't celebrate yet. Since it's cooperation, there must be mutual benefit—only then can it be a win-win."

At Kaoru's words, Kiriyama's smile froze before he slowly replied, "That makes sense. Go on."

"As the junior, I should state my terms first." Kaoru raised a finger. "First, you'll support my candidate for student council president."

Kiriyama frowned. "Even if we hold elections now, we probably can't beat Nagumo."

"Not now—next term."

Though Kaoru didn't believe he would fail, it was best to prepare for contingencies.

Kiriyama didn't hesitate and immediately nodded.

"Fine. But you're not running for president?"

"Katsuragi will. Not me." Kaoru replied.

"Second, in the upcoming actions, you'll fully cooperate with me. If execution falls short or you back out midway, you'll bear the consequences."

This was about establishing who held the reins.

Kiriyama hesitated briefly before finally nodding.

"If Nagumo is ousted and your class ranking changes—say, your class rises to Class A—your class will pay me 15% of its monthly Personal Points."

At this, Kiriyama couldn't hold back.

"How can you guarantee we'll return to Class A?"

"Just deduct points from Nagumo's class." Kaoru recalled. "Isn't the gap between your class and his around 400 points?"

Kiriyama fell silent for a moment. "Sorry, it's 550 now. We lost quite a few in the recent exam."

"No problem. We'll make it up later."

Seeing Kaoru's calm expression, Kiriyama almost doubted himself—as if Class Points meant nothing in his eyes.

"Fine. If you can pull it off, 15% is acceptable." Kiriyama had nothing left to lose anyway.

Kaoru raised a fourth finger, but before speaking, he glanced subtly at Kamuro, as if debating whether to voice his next demand.

Kiriyama noticed his hesitation and tensed.

Everyone knew that the later the condition, the more critical it was.

"There's a girl in your class named Kiryuin, right?"

Kiriyama blinked in surprise but quickly nodded, puzzled.

"What about Kiryuin?"

Kaoru Mitoma said in a deep voice, "Can you have her step on me with her feet, scold me, and then agree to a few of my unreasonable demands?"

Kiriyama Ikuyo was completely dumbfounded.

Beside them, Kamuro covered her face with her hands, suddenly regretting having come with Kaoru.

This kind of request was just too embarrassing!

"W-wait, is this a joke?" Kiriyama Ikuyo tried to make sense of Kaoru Mitoma's words.

"It's not a joke. I really need Kiryuin-senpai," Kaoru Mitoma paused, "If you're unsatisfied, the earlier demands can be scrapped."

"Huh?" Kiriyama Ikuyo stood frozen like a wooden chicken.

Kaoru Mitoma's attitude was firm, "This is a prerequisite to defeating Nagumo. Otherwise, I won't cooperate with you."

Kamuro really wanted to drag this guy back right now.

He might not care about shame, but she is!

"Hold on, let me calm down first," Kiriya Ikuyo felt he needed to steady himself, "You want Kiryuin to fulfill... this kind of unusual request for you?"

"Yes."

"Do you like her?"

"No."

Kiriya Ikuyo was confused as fuck.

He simply couldn't imagine someone actually wanting to be stepped on by Kiryuin Fuka, though her long legs were admittedly quite captivating.

"If you can't decide, let me talk to her directly," Kaoru Mitoma frowned.

Kiriya Ikuyo quickly shook his head, "Wait, I'll relay your request to her. Whether she agrees or not, I can't say."

Under his slightly trembling gaze, Kaoru Mitoma fell silent for a moment.

"Fine."

Kiriyama Ikuyo immediately sighed in relief, only to hear Kaoru Mitoma spoke again.

"If she refuses, then the earlier terms still stand. Our cooperation remains valid."

Hearing this, Kiriyama Ikuyo couldn't help but look surprised before breaking into a relieved smile.

So it was just a joke after all.

However, Kamuro wore a complicated expression.

She knew Kaoru Mitoma was absolutely serious—in fact, tonight's objective might very well have been Kiryuin Fuka all along.

Chapter 228: The New Semester

"Hey, can you not sleep in the office?"

Kaoru Mitoma groggily opened his eyes to see a girl with a bun hairstyle swaying in front of him.

Instinctively, he reached out towards her.

"W-wait, just who do you think you are, reaching for your senpai like that?!"

Only after getting smacked on the head a few times did Kaoru fully wake up, immediately spotting Tachibana Akane's flushed face.

She was holding a clipboard—clearly the weapon she had used to assault him.

"Has the president not returned yet?" Kaoru Mitoma sat up from the sofa, glancing around.

Only he and Tachibana Akane were present.

"He's busy, unlike a lazy bum like you," Tachibana Akane said sternly, "And who gave you permission to sleep here? If anyone saw, they'd think the student council was slacking off."

Kaoru Mitoma checked the time—he had napped for about half an hour.

"Aren't you supposed to be inspecting the clubs?" Kaoru Mitoma recalled that as Horikita Manabu's secretary, Tachibana Akane was responsible for keeping track of all club activities.

Moreover, it was a new semester—club activities, budgets, and competitions all needed to be reviewed by her before funding could be approved.

During summer vacation, sports clubs like basketball and badminton went out to compete and achieved decent rankings.

The student council certainly couldn't refuse their application forms.

The school even rewarded them generously with Personal Points—the lowest amount being 2,000 points.

"I finished the inspection, only to come back and find a lazy bum." Tachibana Akane huffed slightly in dissatisfaction.

Having been in the student council for about two years, she was already well-versed in her duties.

Kaoru Mitoma's gaze drifted to her thigh.

Beneath the white pleated skirt, they exuded a vibrant, youthful energy.

When she turned around, her petite waist dipped slightly, drawing attention to her perky ass beneath her skirt.

Yet, the very fullness of her ass only served to highlight the graceful curve of her waist even more.

"If you don't mind, take me along next time."

"It's not a matter of whether you can or not—as a junior, you must follow my lead. Take your peers, Ichinose and Katsuragi-kun, for example. They're doing quite well." Tachibana Akane sat at her desk, compiling the day's work while still finding time to scold Kaoru Mitoma.

"I do go out with them sometimes, just not often," Kaoru defended himself.

"Hmph, so you admit it's not often enough," Akane retorted, her tone turning sour.

"Whatever. The president likes you anyway, always keeping you in the office. Not like me."

"Are you... jealous of a guy?" Kaoru asked uncertainly.

"D-don't be ridiculous!" Akane's face flushed red. "I-I'm just... helping you reflect on yourself!"

"I don't think someone who sneaks snacks in the office is in any position to help me reflect," Kaoru shot back without mercy, seizing on her weakness.

"Ugh..."

Unable to counter him, Akane could only sulk in frustration.

Even if she did sneak snacks in the office, he didn't have to say it outright!

She hadn't planned on sharing her snacks with him in the first place, and now she was even less inclined.

Still, imagining Kaoru's disappointed face when he realized he wouldn't get any, a smug smile flickered across the girl's lips and her anger faded slightly.

Kaoru had no idea what she was thinking and simply continued waiting for Horikita Manabu.

Before long, Manabu finally returned.

"Is the meeting over?"

"Yes, sorry to keep you waiting."

"Is it really important?"

Manabu nodded, his gaze lingering briefly on Akane before he took a seat opposite Kaoru.

"The school has decided to hold a sports festival from September to early October. Although they sought my opinion as student council president, I was mostly just an observer during the meeting." He spoke matter-of-factly—while the student council had a role in some school affairs, their involvement was limited, with no real decision-making power.

"Eh? Another sports festival?" Akane's eyes widened.

Most students kept their distance from athletics, especially when participation was mandatory.

And given how this school operated, their sports festival would undoubtedly be different from others—tied directly to class standings.

"Yes. The homeroom teachers will explain the details tomorrow," Manabu said, pausing briefly.

"But there's no doubt this is a special exam for the semester—and a crucial one."

"So even you don't know the specifics, President?" Kaoru asked.

"No. The school only asked the student council to assist with setting up the venue and preparing equipment." Manabu thought for a moment.

"The events are probably standard—otherwise, they wouldn't have involved us."

Having students help prepare for a special exam would violate the school's principle of fairness.

So even if the sports festival events were leaked, it wouldn't matter—or rather, success would depend entirely on individual ability.

"That feels odd. If this is a special exam, students with strong athletic skills would have a clear advantage. It's too harsh on those who aren't as physically capable," Kaoru mused.

"Exactly. I have zero confidence in this," For once, Akane agreed with him.

Horikita Manabu watched Kaoru Mitoma's thoughtful expression and smiled faintly.

"Based on past experience, the special exam won't be that simple."

"I think the real challenge might come later," Kaoru said, feeling a sense of foreboding.

After all, both second and third years had seen students drop out during the second semester.

Following the sudden dropouts in the first semester, it was unlikely that midterms or finals would claim more victims—meaning the special exam had to be the culprit.

Logically speaking, this sports festival couldn't possibly expel students simply for poor athletic ability, right?

If that were the case, Sakayanagi would be the first to go.

"Let's set aside the sports festival for now," Manabu said with clear approval.

"I've already heard from him—it seems you're quite confident about defeating Nagumo."

"Even if I don't act, he'll come after me eventually," Kaoru thought.

Having extorted Nagumo Miyabi twice, he knew the guy wasn't the forgiving type—sooner or later, he'd seek revenge.

Manabu chuckled. "Your performance in the special exams has been outstanding. Even I feel more confident because of it."

Kaoru had kept some details from his class, but with Horikita Manabu, he had been almost completely transparent.

Securing over 600 Class Points across two special exams was more than enough to earn Horikita Manabu full trust.

Chapter 229: The Sports Festival

Tachibana Akane listened to their conversation for a while, but after hearing about the first-years' exam results, she couldn't stay calm.

"How much? Did you just say how much?"

"What's wrong?"

"You went from 1,004 points before summer break to 1,756 points after?"

Seeing her disbelief, Kaoru handed her his phone with a playful wink.

"If you don't believe me, check my profile yourself."

The school-issued customized phone doubled as a student ID, allowing users to check both their Personal Points and their class's Class Points.

Because of this, Akane suddenly grew hesitant.

"Ahaha, it's really not that impressive. Any normal Class A could pull this off."

Horikita Manabu silently observed the girl, choosing not to expose her bluff right away.

Even during their own year, the best they had managed was an increase of around 400 points—nowhere near enough to surpass the entire grade level.

"In that case, you must be amazing, senpai," Kaoru said understandingly, gazing at Akane.

"Having been in Class A for two years, I bet you've saved up a ton of Personal Points, right?"

"Guh..." Akane swallowed hard.

Not only had she lost to him in Class Points, but her savings couldn't compare either.

Kaoru had previously exchanged Personal Points with a third-year, spending 3 million but still retaining around 4 million.

Combined with his monthly income, he was likely the wealthiest first-year.

Meanwhile, as his senior, Tachibana Akane points barely held a few hundred thousand—making her seem downright pitiful in comparison.

"D-don't get cocky! It's just that your year doesn't have any particularly strong students!" she snapped, her voice rising the less confident she felt.

Sometimes, Kaoru really wanted to pull her over his knee and give her a good spanking.

"You're wrong, Akane" Horikita shook his head.

"This year's first-years might actually be stronger than Nagumo's batch."

Tachibana Akane immediately calm down.

She might dare to act arrogantly in front of Kaoru Mitoma, but she wouldn't dream of talking back to Horikita Manabu.

"From Class A, there's Sakayanagi and Katsuragi. From Class B, Ichinose and Kanzaki. And from Class C, Ryuen. Though I haven't interacted with all of them, these students are certainly worth keeping an eye on."

It was obvious that Horikita Manabu had looked into the first-year students thoroughly, familiarizing himself with the leaders of each class.

However, he made no mention of Class D.

"President, no mention of me?" Kaoru Mitoma asked shamelessly.

"Am I not worth your expectations?"

Horikita Manabu gave him a strange look. "You shouldn't need me to expect anything from you, should you?"

"I might still have room to grow," Kaoru chuckled. "Like Horikita Suzune, for example. From what I know, she's already realized her own problems and is trying to change."

Perhaps it was because Class D's performance was too poor, or perhaps because his sister still showed no signs of improvement, that Horikita Manabu had deliberately avoided mentioning Class D.

Sure enough, after a brief silence, Horikita Manabu spoke again.

"Her problem is her lack of self-awareness. No matter how impressive her academic scores may look on paper, in reality, she's just a fragile cotton doll."

As her older brother, he undoubtedly understood her personality far better than anyone else.

"She should have some self-awareness by now," Kaoru mused, thinking back to Horikita Suzune during summer break.

Honestly, what interested him most was how she would go to any lengths to change her circumstances.

Despite her obvious frustration, she had still acknowledged his contract, accepted his unreasonable demands, and even later proposed terms of her own.

None of this was because she had given up resisting—rather, she had calmly accepted her situation while simultaneously working to overcome it.

Of course, the more she acted this way, the more it highlighted her most fatal flaw.

"With you in Class A, Suzune probably has zero chance of breaking through your defenses," Horikita Manabu said with a bitter smile.

"I just hope she can reevaluate herself and her surroundings, stepping down from her high horse."

"Is that my mission from now on?" Kaoru scratched his head sheepishly.

There was no better teaching method than letting someone who prided themselves on excellence be repeatedly humbled.

"You seem unusually concerned about Suzune?" Horikita Manabu shot him a sidelong glance, finding it odd how the conversation had veered in this direction.

"Well, she is the president's sister. Sometimes I worry I might have gone too far."

"No, you can go even further. She won't change unless she hits a wall."

"..."

Kaoru averted his gaze.

If he went any further, he'd have to start calling Horikita Manabu 'brother-in-law'.

"Alright, let's end the discussion here." Horikita Manabu turned to Tachibana Akane.

"For the upcoming sports festival preparations, you'll be in charge of guiding Mitoma and the others."

As the student council president, he naturally didn't have much time to mentor newcomers.

"Eh? Me, guiding him?" Tachibana Akane was displeased at first, but then it occurred to her—this was a rare opportunity to boss Kaoru around openly.

A smirk crept onto her lips.

Seeing her expression, Kaoru quickly tried to dissuade her.

"Just so we're clear, I'll be participating in the competitions too, so I won't have much free time."

"Enough, every student has to participate in the competition—it's not just you," Tachibana Akane huffed.

"Don't worry, the student council is short-handed, so we're definitely in need of labor."

Kaoru Mitoma's face darkened.

Was that even supposed to be comforting?

September 1st.

After enduring long-awaited classes, Mashima Tomonari held a class meeting in the afternoon.

"Starting today until early October, all classes will have additional physical education sessions to prepare for the Sports Festival. I'll distribute the new schedule—please keep it safe."

At the mention of the Sports Festival, a wave of murmurs spread through the classroom.

Even A-class students weren't immune to the dread of athletic events.

Since Mashima had also included Sports Festival materials with the schedule, Kaoru skimmed through them.

Unsurprisingly, ANHS Sports Festival was unlike those of ordinary schools.

The school adopted a head-to-head format, dividing all grades into two teams: A-class paired with D-class as the Red Team, while B-class and C-class formed the White Team.

Under this system, students from different grades would collaborate and compete across year levels.

Kaoru couldn't help but ponder—no wonder Nagumo Miyabi wanted to challenge Horikita Manabu.

Cross-grade matchups were indeed part of the event.

"Damn it, why do we have to team up with those class D losers?"

Some in the class, particularly elitists like Totsuka Yahiko, had already noticed the competition format on the handout.

"Is the school trying to drag us down with class D?"

"This is ridiculous! We'd be better off competing alone!"

"Whatever, let those D-class freeloaders have their scraps."

Kaoru frowned.

Though their voices weren't particularly loud, these thoughtless complaints exposed A-class's biggest flaw.

Chapter 230: Bros, Let Me Lick You

Beyond the team battles, the Sports Festival also featured two competition formats:

Full Participation Events (mandatory for all students).

Scoring:

1st place: 15 points for their team

2nd place: 12 points

3rd place: 10 points

4th place: 8 points

5th and below: -1 point per rank

Group events awarded 500 points to the winning team.

Selected Participation Events (voluntary sign-ups)

Scoring:

1st place: 50 points

2nd place: 30 points

3rd place: 15 points

4th place: 10 points

5th and below: -2 points per rank (Final relay race awarded triple points.)

Final rankings would be determined by total scores.

Penalties & Rewards:

The losing team (Red or White) would deduct 100 Class Points from all participating classes, regardless of grade.

Within each grade, rankings would also be calculated separately:

1st place: +50 Class Points

2nd place: No change

3rd place: -50 Class Points

4th place: -100 Class Points

"Excuse me, but is there no reward for the winning group?" Katsuragi noticed the missing explanation in the materials.

"Winning merely means avoiding point deductions—don't get your hopes up too much," Mashima replied flatly.

"Even if your group wins, if your first-year ranking is still low—say, dead last—you'll still lose 100 points."

Under his gaze, another wave of hushed murmurs spread through the classroom, with many students showing clear skepticism.

"With Katsuragi-san on our side, there's no way we'll lose!" Totsuka Yahiko shouted loudly

Kaoru Mitoma glanced around.

Not only the original members of the Katsuragi faction but also other students were echoing Totsuka Yahiko's words.

Meanwhile, Sakayanagi Arisu, the leader of the opposing faction, sat quietly in her seat, her cane resting across her lap.

With a faint smile, she silently observed the scene before her.

Just as Kaoru Mitoma had judged Nagumo Miyabi, Katsuragi Kouhei now appeared to be unifying Class A—yet at the same time, he was also being put on the spot by his own class.

Even if they had suffered some losses in the VIP exam, compared to the other classes, Class A's victory was overwhelmingly dominant—so much so that one could say they had won effortlessly.

Not that this was necessarily a bad thing.

Katsuragi had indeed rapidly elevated his standing, to the point where even students from the Sakayanagi faction were considering switching sides.

If this continued, Sakayanagi might soon find herself completely isolated.

However, this cotton-candy-like expansion of authority could easily melt under the slightest heat.

If Katsuragi lost even a single special exam, the situation would take a sharp turn for the worse.

The sense of security Katsuragi had brought to Class A would crumble, replaced by panic.

"Sensei, what does this punishment mean?" someone suddenly asked.

On the next page of the handout, the school had specified special rewards for individual students.

The school would award 5,000 Personal Points—or an equivalent of three points on written exams—to the student who placed first in an individual competition.

Second place would receive 3,000 Personal Points or two exam points, while third place would get 1,000 Personal Points or one exam point.

The student who placed last in an individual competition would have 1,000 Personal Points deducted.

If they had fewer than 1,000 points, they would instead lose one exam point.

Additionally, the student with the highest overall score across all competitions would receive the title of 'Most Outstanding Student' along with a reward of 100,000 Personal Points.

Finally, the top three students from each grade would be awarded 10,000 Personal Points each.

Though it was surprising that the school was offering exam points as a reward, most Class A students didn't care.

Their grades weren't so poor that they needed an extra point or two.

Instead, their attention was drawn to the very last explanation.

"After the competitions conclude, the ten students with the lowest overall scores in each grade will be penalized," Mashima repeated, then added, "But don't worry too much—it's just a deduction of ten points on the next written exam."

For high-achieving students, this punishment wasn't particularly severe.

But for those with poor athletic abilities and only average grades, it was undeniably harsh.

"Is it ten points off the total score, or per subject?"

"I won't be answering questions about that now. I'll explain the details before the exam, and the list will also be announced then."

"That's so unfair!"

Kaoru Mitoma could understand their frustration.

If it was ten points deducted per subject, it would be nothing short of a disastrous collapse.

For example, the girl sitting next to him now wore a completely blank expression.

"Kamuro-san, want to copy my answers when the time comes?" Kaoru whispered.

Kamuro turned to look at him as if snapping out of a daze, her chest rising and falling for a moment before she bluntly said.

"Fine. When the time comes, we'll drop out together. Wherever you go, I'll follow."

After a semester of interaction, Kamuro had largely figured out Kaoru's personality.

Arguing with him was pointless.

Thus, at times like this, all Kamuro needed to do was nod.

"Only a puppy would follow its owner around like that," Kaoru eyed her skeptically.

Kamuro couldn't hold back anymore and snapped, "You're the puppy! The kind that chases after girls, wagging its tail, shamelessly licking their feet!"

Clearly, she was still hung up on what happened during summer break.

"Because I'm a foot guy," Kaoru Mitoma couldn't be bothered to explain further.

"If a girl's attractive, I won't just lick—I'll do plenty of other outrageous things too."

Kamuro stared at him in disbelief.

How could this guy dare say such things in the classroom?

"You're no exception. Even if we're good buddies, that doesn't mean I'll go easy on you."

As he spoke, Kaoru glanced at the girl's thighs.

Her black stockings only reached her calves, not even covering her knees, leaving her fair, smooth thighs bare.

Since she was sitting sideways, the curve of her petite but perky ass was especially noticeable.

Her plush thighs pressed against the chair, the outline of her hips subtly visible beneath her skirt—a tantalizing glimpse that teased the imagination.

"You're the worst! That's sexual harassment!" Kamuro's face flushed slightly as she met his gaze, a mix of embarrassment and irritation bubbling up inside her.

For some reason, around Kaoru, she always became acutely aware of her femininity.

Her usually bold and carefree demeanor would instantly regress.

Maybe it was because his gaze was just too perverted—utterly shameless.

She could practically guess what he was thinking.