

Cote 311

Chapter 311: Two Drama Queens

Horikita Suzune let out a quiet sigh.

In the end, she truly hadn't been able to catch up to her brother's footsteps.

The gap between them only grew wider.

Not only had she lost in the group competition, but she had also ranked last in her grade.

All of this meant that Class 1-D had suffered a crushing defeat in the sports festival.

Yet, for some reason, the moment she saw their points drop to zero, Horikita Suzune felt an odd sense of calm.

The award Sudou had been hoping for didn't go to him—instead, it went to Kamuro Masumi from Class 1-A.

At the same time, six students from Class 1-D would face penalties for their poor individual rankings.

Even now, Horikita Suzune could still recall the chorus of complaints—some blaming their classmates for not trying hard enough, others accusing Class A of abandoning them, and a few even furious at Class C's tactics.

But no matter what, Class 1-D had returned to its original state at the start of the new semester.

Horikita Suzune had thought she would struggle to accept this outcome, but surprisingly, it didn't feel all that terrible.

This class had always been a mess—self-centered, disruptive, and constantly running from reality.

Now, at least, they had no choice but to face it.

A faint sense of satisfaction flickered in her heart.

Serves them right.

Maybe now they'll finally wake up.

Her mood was almost pleasant as she embraced the zero points like a sweet, ripe fruit.

Not only that, but after the relay race, Horikita Manabu hadn't left immediately.

Instead, he approached her.

"It seems this is your limit, Suzune."

"No... I never intended to surpass you, brother. Just being able to stand on the same field as you is enough for me. But in your eyes, I must just be an embarrassment, right?"

The moment she said those words, she caught a flicker of surprise in his gaze.

"Finally gaining some self-awareness?" Horikita Manabu replied coolly.

"Keep struggling here from now on. Don't expect me to look after you."

Under her watchful eyes, his figure gradually faded into the distance, and the memory abruptly ended there.

The sports festival was already yesterday's event.

The girl stared at her reflection in the mirror, Kaoru's words echoing in her ears.

She felt like she understood something now.

But she still had many doubts.

Horikita Suzune wrapped herself in her coat and stepped out of the room.

The moonlight was serene, the air crisp, and the entire academy shimmered under a delicate veil, enhancing the profound silence of the moment.

She walked silently to the elevator and pressed the button for the second floor.

Though the journey felt tense, no one interrupted her, and she arrived on the second floor unnoticed.

The hallway was just as deserted, with some rooms already dark—after all, it was one in the morning.

Horikita moved with practiced ease to a certain door, pressing the doorbell lightly before waiting quietly for someone.

Strangely, the response seemed much slower than previous times.

Frowning, she thought to herself—she had given advance notice, so there was no reason for such sluggishness.

Just as she was about to ring again, the door suddenly swung open, revealing Kaoru standing before her.

"You're late," Horikita said with slight displeasure.

Noticing his bare chest, her frown deepened.

"You'll catch a cold at night. But if you enjoy being an exhibitionist, suit yourself."

"I have something I want you to see," Kaoru said, stepping aside to let her enter.

Most people would have turned and left upon hearing such a suggestive remark, but Horikita sensed nothing amiss.

Though she knew she ought to be wary of men, her relationship with Kaoru was different.

Moreover, she was utterly clueless about matters between men and women, so no strange thoughts crossed her mind.

"If it's the same thing as last time, I'll smash it immediately."

Of course, Horikita remained cautious.

Anyone who had been thoroughly humiliated in front of others would react the same way.

"Of course not. Actually, I've caught someone quite extraordinary."

As he spoke, Horikita stepped into his room and instinctively glanced at a figure struggling violently on the bed.

Her expression froze.

Noticing her gaze, the figure writhed even more desperately, muffled whimpers escaping intermittently.

"Please quiet down, Kushida. The neighbors need their rest," Kaoru said, stepping past the stunned Horikita and crouching beside the bed.

"Besides, you were the one who promised to fulfill my requests. It's too late to back out now."

There lay Kushida Kikyo on his bed, her hands bound tightly behind her back with what appeared to be a towel, her wrists marked with cross-shaped imprints.

No matter how she struggled, she couldn't break free.

Perhaps Horikita's sudden appearance had unsettled her—the girl twisted her upper body frantically, desperate to escape.

Her pale arms flailed, her big chest rubbing against the sheets, her skirt disheveled, and her slender legs kicking wildly like a caterpillar.

As she tried to turn over, her face accidentally buried into the pillow, muffling her cries.

Only when Kaoru helped her up did Horikita notice the strange object stuffed in her mouth.

"Mmmph—!" Kushida's face was flushed, but she couldn't utter a single word.

"I'll take it out, but keep your voice down. You know the consequences if we're discovered," Kaoru said, reaching to remove the gag, now damp with the girl's breath.

The next moment, Kushida Kikyo shouted agitatedly, "Why is this girl here?!"

Her outburst snapped Horikita Suzune back to reality.

Seeing Kushida in such a state, Horikita's cheeks flushed slightly as anger flickered in her heart.

She hadn't even questioned Kushida yet, and here the other girl was already interrogating her?

"Kushida-san, lower your voice."

"I get it now. Did you two plan this from the start to gang up on me?"

"You seem to have quite a problem with Horikita?"

"Damn it! Didn't you promise that as long as I satisfied you, you'd keep it secret and never tell another soul?"

"I believe Suzune has the right to know."

"Suzune? Suzune again? How intimate. Have you two been..."

"Enough." Horikita Suzune coldly interrupted their exchange, her gaze icy as she stared at Kaoru.

"I believe I deserve an explanation now."

Kaoru Mitoma had anticipated this.

He promptly recounted how he'd discovered Kushida Kikyo badmouthing others behind their backs, including her plans to retaliate against Horikita Suzune.

Never expecting their "little angel" to be like this, he'd decided to intervene, threatening Kushida until she was forced to humiliatingly submit to his demands.

"So Kushida's recent friendliness toward you was all your doing?"

Facing Horikita's question, Kaoru just nodded without the slightest hint of shame.

Chapter 312: The World Turned Upside Down

"You're truly a hopeless pervert."

In the dead of night, the scene of a shirtless man and a girl bound face-down on the bed did carry an undeniably improper air.

"I simply couldn't let it go. Besides, I never claimed to be a good person." Kaoru maintained a solemn expression, though the squirming girl behind him made for quite the conspicuous contrast.

Horikita Suzune frowned deeply.

Truth be told, she wasn't particularly interested in what Kaoru had done.

What irritated her now was not knowing how to handle this situation.

Tonight was supposed to be her little secret with Kaoru.

That she hadn't immediately walked away already demonstrated remarkable patience.

"Who would've thought even the usually aloof you would visit a man's room at midnight. Quite unexpected."

Kushida Kikyo stopped struggling.

Her uniform was disheveled, the collar slightly open to reveal the curve of pale softness beneath.

Below her slender waist, her legs were clad in black stockings, with only a small stretch of fair thigh skin visible.

Her pretty face bore a faint blush—whether from her earlier struggles or the current scrutiny was unclear—as she panted lightly, casting an uncomfortable glance toward Horikita.

"Is this also your doing?" Horikita ignored Kushida, directing her question at Kaoru.

"Have I interrupted something?"

"I hadn't gotten around to anything yet." Kaoru appeared thoughtful.

"I considered refusing you tonight, but then I realized double the pleasure might be more enjoyable."

"I refuse. I would never—"

Just as Horikita began her refusal, Kushida immediately cut her off.

"No way! Whatever relationship you two have, I absolutely won't... won't show such indecent behavior in front of her!" Kushida Kikyo was so agitated that she nearly lost her balance, her eyes burning with hatred—a stark contrast to her usual angelic demeanor.

"I don't recall ever offending you," Horikita Suzune frowned. "Unless you dislike me because of my past attitude, in which case, that's a different matter."

"Heh, even now, you're still as high and mighty as ever, Horikita," Kushida sneered.

"Cut the act. I don't believe for a second you've forgotten me."

Horikita had no intention of engaging with her, but the implication that they had a past made her pause in thought.

Truthfully, she felt an instinctive aversion to Kushida Kikyo.

Though she couldn't pinpoint why, her gut told her to stay far away from someone like her.

As if at some point in the past... No, she did remember encountering someone similar before.

"Were we in the same middle school?" Horikita stared at her intently.

"I think I recall someone like you causing quite a stir back then."

Kaoru Mitoma blinked.

So, the secret was finally coming out?

"See, a little reminder was all it took. After all, I'm a terrible woman in every way," Kushida smiled, her eyes glinting dangerously.

"It's my own fault for being careless. I wanted to get you expelled, but someone overheard my complaints. What a shame."

"Just because of that, you wanted to drive me out of school?" Horikita couldn't comprehend it.

"Hehehe, if you exposed my past, I'd be the one expelled, wouldn't I?"

Though she directed her words at Horikita, Kushida subtly glanced at Kaoru beside her.

"You must know what I did in middle school—exposing everyone's secrets publicly, paralyzing the entire class. I heard no one attended lessons for months afterward."

"I have heard of that incident. But do you really think you can make me drop out?" Horikita found it almost laughable.

Did she look like an easy target?

"Horikita, you want to climb to Class A, don't you?" Kushida smirked.

"What if I collaborate with other classes?"

Horikita fell silent.

No matter how vigilant she was, betrayal from within was hard to guard against.

If Kushida launched a sneak attack, she truly wouldn't be able to stop it.

"I won't tell anyone. You can pretend I don't exist."

"If only it were that simple. The problem is, just seeing you fills me with unbearable unease. Unless everyone who knows my past disappears, I'll never have peace."

"In that case, will you make him disappear too?" Horikita said coolly, gesturing to the man beside her.

"He overheard you badmouthing others. He has leverage over you. What will you do about that?"

Kushida gritted her teeth, glaring at Kaoru before taking a deep breath and murmuring.

"If this man has demands of me, doesn't that mean I can control him too?"

Horikita couldn't disagree.

Lustful men were indeed like that.

"So, is that why you let him tie you to the bed?" Horikita's voice was icy.

"Like some pitiful toy. How pathetic."

"Oh, so you're saying you're better than me?" Kushida narrowed her eyes.

"Coming to a man's room in the middle of the night—don't tell me you two were planning to play house."

"I'm leaving. I won't disturb you any further." Horikita Suzune knew any excuse would sound flimsy, so she simply turned to go.

Kushida glanced at Kaoru, who merely shrugged.

Clearly, this wasn't enough.

"Master, if you can get this girl expelled, I'll agree to any demand of yours."

At those words, Horikita Suzune stopped in her tracks.

"Kushida, I only brought her here to see you for Suzune's sake."

"Is she your girlfriend?"

"No."

"Have you slept with her?"

"No."

"Then my offer should be very tempting for a pervert like you, shouldn't it?"

"..."

Horikita Suzune turned back, her cold gaze fixed on Kaoru Mitoma and Kushida Kikyo—especially the latter.

"Well, since the cat's out of the bag, I might as well go all out, Horikita." Kushida, no longer feigning reluctance, straightened her posture and deliberately pressed herself against Kaoru.

"Honestly, a woman like her must be so boring for you. Why not team up and kick her out of school?"

The girl's warm breath brushed against his ear, and the soft, weighty pressure against his back felt almost overwhelming.

"Actually, I was planning to have Suzune expelled too—"

"Sorry, but your attempts to drive a wedge between us won't work." Horikita Suzune cut Kaoru off, stepping forward barefoot until she stood before the two of them.

"That said, I do agree with you on one thing—this man is a lecher. Given even the slightest opportunity, he'd do all sorts of unspeakable things."

"Could it be you're actually worried about getting expelled?" Kushida smiled sweetly, their gazes locked over Kaoru's shoulder as if sparks were flying between them.

"No. I've never worried about that. If I were to be expelled, it would only be because I wasn't good enough."

"Accidents do happen sometimes."

"Kushida, Mitoma-kun and I aren't lovers. We're not even friends. To be precise, our relationship is about the same as yours with him."

"What?"

"At our first meeting, he also threatened me harshly. Due to certain circumstances, I had no choice but to submit to him."

Kushida froze for a moment.

Of course, she knew what had happened back then—after all, she had been involved as well.

However, she hadn't expected Horikita Suzune to bring it up now.

Soon after, she snapped back to reality and let out a dry chuckle.

"So even you have a side that bends to a man..."

"That's why, someday, I will break free from his control. Threats like making me drop out don't mean much to me." Horikita's tone was indifferent, as if she didn't care about the threat at all.

"If that's the case, why are you telling me this?" Kushida's eyes turned icy.

"Because I suddenly feel very annoyed." Horikita replied.

"Considering my relationship with Mitoma-kun, having someone in class who's always watching me like a hawk makes me uncomfortable."

"What an honor." Kushida's smile didn't reach her eyes.

"Let's get back on track. Tonight was your arrangement, wasn't it?" Horikita turned her gaze to Kaoru Mitoma.

She wasn't an idiot—despite receiving her message, he had tied Kushida up here, clearly harboring ill intentions.

"I was originally planning to get intimate with Kushida-san. I didn't expect you to show up tonight." Kaoru spoke without a hint of shame, seemingly oblivious to the truth.

But then again, no normal person would ever guess the truth behind this.

"Don't tell me you were thinking of having both of us at once? Let me make this clear—it's either just me, or you choose her!" Kushida's eyes widened.

Though the tension in her heart had finally eased, she deliberately put on an expression of extreme resistance and disgust.

"Is that not allowed?" Kaoru's voice suddenly darkened.

"Don't forget, both of you have weaknesses I can exploit."

Horikita knelt before him, her ankles resting against her slightly plump hips.

Then, she placed her hands on her jacket.

With a soft sound, the jacket slowly loosened, revealing what lay beneath.

She wore a loose short-sleeved shirt, the peaks of her chest faintly visible.

The sleeves exposed her snow-white skin—just like yesterday, except she had swapped her long pants for shorts.

Without stockings, her slender, delicate calves were fully visible, smooth as jade.

Kaoru was stunned.

Even Kushida looked at her strangely.

Not only did she deliver herself to his doorstep, but she came in vacuum-sealed packaging too?

"If tonight is your demand, I'll do my best to satisfy you." Horikita stared coldly at Kaoru, her gaze as if looking at trash.

"I apologize for trying to escape earlier. From now on, I won't run away again."

Kaoru blinked.

Could it really be this easy? Was there no catch?

"However, I have one question." Horikita glanced at Kushida. "Is my status higher than hers?"

"W-What?! You've already become this man slave—what status do you even have left?!" Kushida's face flushed red with agitation.

"She came first, so she should rank a little higher than you." Kaoru hesitated.

If not for the fact that she had to keep up the act, Kushida might have bitten him right then.

"Can you blindfold her next?"

"Hah?! What are you two planning to do? Is this really necessary?"

"Let's gag her too."

"Horikita, you shameless woman... Mmmph..."

Chapter 313: Suzune Wears Cat Ears

What Horikita Suzune was thinking, perhaps only she knew.

Kaoru Mitoma's "Emotion Perception" could only detect her dissatisfaction, though the exact reason remained unclear.

Given her conditions, Kaoru had no choice but to take out a handkerchief.

He then tied it around Kushida Kikyo's head, covering her eyes.

"Don't tie it too tight," Kushida whispered in warning, her gaze hinting at lingering displeasure from earlier.

Kaoru remained silent, sealing Kushida's lips once more.

With her eyes covered, hands bound behind her back, and seated on the bed, the sight grew increasingly suggestive.

"What exactly were you two planning to do earlier?" Horikita asked, eyeing the gag with curiosity—it was her first time seeing such a thing.

"Are you taking this all the way?"

From an outsider's perspective, Kaoru and Kushida did appear particularly intimate.

It was hard to imagine what a man might do to a bound girl in such a state.

"Honestly, I prefer taking my time," Kaoru admitted, his hand drifting to Kushida's thigh.

The texture of her stockings was incredibly smooth, exuding a delicate, youthful aura unique to girls her age.

Perhaps because her vision was obscured, Kushida's senses sharpened.

Her body tensed instinctively, her cheeks flushing deeper.

Unable to speak, she could only let out muffled whimpers.

Horikita had initially been skeptical, but seeing Kaoru's hands wander over Kushida just as freely quickly dispelled her doubts.

"This might be forward, but... could you tell me just how many 'close friends' you have like this?" She paused.

"People like me and Kushida."

"My dream is all of you," Kaoru replied smoothly, his fingers sinking slightly into Kushida's thigh as she pressed against him.

"Whether it's you or Kikyo, letting either of you go would be a waste."

"Will what happens tonight become a regular occurrence?" Horikita's voice grew colder, mirroring the now equally frigid Kushida before her.

"I won't go too far with you." Kaoru reached for Kushida breast with his other hand, his true nature seemingly laid bare.

"Frankly, I'm surprised you stayed. You must know what staying entails—ending up like Kikyo, completely at my mercy."

Kushida instinctively arched her back before collapsing weakly into Kaoru's arms, her chest heaving with ragged breaths.

"Running away is pointless. You already let her see me, which means you want me to fulfill your desires alongside her." Horikita remained composed.

"No matter how unwilling I am, I have to accept reality—just like yesterday's sports festival. I knew I couldn't catch up to my brother, but I still had to run my hardest."

"What did the student council president say to you?" Kaoru glanced down at the girl in his arms—her damp, rosy lips slightly parted.

Though he couldn't see her dazed eyes, her expression was unmistakable.

Horikita ignored the question. "What do you want me to do?"

Kaoru gave Kushida's ass a light pat before turning to Horikita.

From a nearby box, he retrieved a pair of cat ears and a fluffy tail.

Seeing these items, Horikita Suzune clearly froze for a moment.

"You don't actually expect me to wear such embarrassing things, do you?"

"I told you, tonight was originally Kikyo's task."

"...I understand."

At this point, even regret was too late.

Steeling herself, Horikita Suzune took the cat ears and tail from his hands, only to immediately show confusion in her eyes.

She had never worn such things before—how exactly was she supposed to put them on?

She removed her outer jacket, fully revealing her short-sleeved gym shirt and shorts.

Taking a deep breath, she placed the cat ears on her head as if marching to her doom.

"Adorable. More stunning than I imagined," Kaoru murmured.

Nothing was more eye-catching than a girl in gym clothes wearing cat ears.

Behind him, Kushida Kikyo shifted slightly.

"What a strange fetish," Horikita Suzune said, trying to suppress her emotions, though her ears were already burning red.

She fiddled with the tail in her hands—it was meant to be tied around her waist, hanging behind her hips.

Right, not an insertable type.

Both of them had worried Horikita Suzune might not be able to handle that, potentially backfiring.

Lifting the hem of her gym shirt, she exposed a section of soft, pale stomach as she fastened the tail around her waist.

Immediately, the slender, fluffy tail arched slightly as if extending from her backside.

Though such outfits were common in anime, witnessing it in person still made his heart skip a beat.

Especially seeing the normally aloof Horikita Suzune wearing cat ears and a tail—the stark contrast with her usual demeanor made the cuteness all the more striking.

Kaoru Mitoma suddenly thought of Sakayanagi Arisu.

A cat-eared loli wouldn't be bad either.

Maybe he could have her wear a school swimsuit to fulfill another fantasy.

"Is this enough?" Horikita Suzune asked uncomfortably.

Not only was this her first time wearing something so unlike her style, but his gaze was also unbearably intense.

"You're adorable. It's making my heart race," Kaoru Mitoma chuckled.

"But one correction—from now on, you have to end your sentences with 'nya.'"

Horikita Suzune stiffened.

Not just cat ears—she had to meow too?

"Can't do it?"

"J-just this much... I can indulge you... meow..."

"Didn't catch that."

"Ugh... Understood, nya."

As if mustering every ounce of willpower, Horikita Suzune forced out the meow, her face burning crimson.

Her usual composure and aloofness vanished instantly—now she was just a flustered catgirl.

"A few more," Kaoru smiled.

Behind him, Kushida Kikyo subtly poked him, signaling to record this.

"Nya nya nya nya~" Horikita Suzune desperately suppressed her shame.

Why did this feel so humiliating when Kaoru hadn't even done anything bad to her?

It was even more mortifying than their previous encounters.

This guy really was a master at playing with people's hearts!

"Stand up, spin around, then act cute—you know what that means?"

"Act cute?"

"Strike the pose you think is most adorable."

"Ugh..."

Horikita Suzune barely held back from shouting "Just kill me already!" She knew Kaoru was deliberately trying to make her squirm.

Then, the catgirl Suzune silently stood up, her fluffy cat ears twitching slightly.

The girl's long hair cascaded down to her waist, and as she turned, her slender tail swayed playfully over her perky bottom.

Moments later, she gritted her teeth and struck what she thought was the cutest pose, letting out two embarrassed meows.

"You're so lewd, Suzune," Kaoru said sincerely.

"It's all because of you! Whose fault do you think this is?" Horikita Suzune glared at him, barely restraining herself from kicking him, thanks to the remnants of her rationality.

"You should be glad I can withstand your test," Kaoru replied, rummaging through the cardboard box again.

Horikita Suzune eyed the box—likely a delivery package from an online purchase—wondering what strange item was inside.

Soon, Kaoru Mitoma pulled out a cat teaser wand.

"Y-you've got to be kidding me..."

Chapter 314: Suzune's First Kiss

[Pulling an ahégao face while flashing a peace sign],

[So turned on, can't take it anymore—must slap her thighs right now!],

[Peeking under Suzune's skirt and getting stomped half to death????],

[Want to play some little games with Horikita Suzune],

[Fuck her],

[Can't handle it—need to tease her until her shame explodes!],

[Can Suzune scold me a few more times?],

[Want to see Suzune and Kikyo's rivalry],

[Kiss Horikita Suzune senseless],

[Lick her until she can't take it anymore]...

Even the wishes surrounding Horikita Suzune had never imagined her dressed as a catgirl.

Wearing a breezy short-sleeved top, her chest—hiding snowy peaks—rose and fell slightly.

Her snow-white thighs pressed together as her hands braced against the floor, revealing an impossibly slender waist, like a cat crouching low.

Her slightly plump ass arched upward, a fluffy tail swaying atop it.

With a flushed face, she lifted her head, obeying someone's command to strike this humiliating pose.

There wasn't much exposed skin on her body—her pristine legs resembled exquisite works of art, gleaming with delicate allure, utterly captivating.

Even the cat ears and tail only added a layer of cuteness and contrast to Horikita Suzune that she normally lacked, accentuating her charm rather than exuding a seductive, coquettish vibe.

Yet, what was truly enticing was her very self.

Her crimson cheeks carried a vexed allure, her disheveled black hair cascading down, framing her flawless, porcelain skin.

Pressing her lips tightly together, the look she gave Kaoru might have been the most beautiful thing in the world.

Kaoru loved how composed she had seemed earlier—and he equally adored the expression she wore now, furious yet unable to retaliate.

Swish—

The cat teaser wand swayed in the air a few times.

Horikita Suzune pounced on it with a deadpan expression.

"No good. Cats don't have dead-fish eyes like that. At least make it lively," Kaoru Mitoma frowned.

"If I'm not having fun, I can't guarantee I'll keep our promise."

"Only a pervert could do something this embarrassing... nya."

By the end, Horikita Suzune nearly wanted to burrow into the floor.

She stole a glance at Kushida Kikyo on the bed.

Thank goodness she had made Kaoru blindfold her—otherwise, this would be unbearably awkward.

"This is your mistake, Suzune. No matter what you face, you must give it your all. You can't just resist and slack off because you dislike it," Kaoru told her seriously.

"Whether it's being assigned to Class D or cooperating with your classmates, do you always think, 'For the sake of promotion, I'll just go through the motions with them'?"

Horikita Suzune slightly parted her lips, as if wanting to say something, but then lowered her gaze.

It seemed he understood exactly what was on her mind.

"Still, you ended up calling Sudou back. Just for that, your threat level in my eyes has risen a bit." Kaoru chuckled, waving the cat teaser in front of Suzune's eyes for a while.

Truthfully, there was nothing much to say.

She had simply forced Sudou Ken to turn back—if he didn't return, she wouldn't either, like a child throwing a tantrum.

In the end, Sudou Ken voluntarily shared his reason for coming to ANHS and Horikita Suzune likewise told him her own.

In a way, it was the first time the two had truly understood each other.

For Suzune, this feeling was strangely novel.

For some reason, she immediately thought of Kaoru Mitoma, and tonight, she had foolishly walked right into his trap.

Even Suzune found it a little ridiculous—why had she been so eager to come here?

"Trying to tease me, meow?" Suzune batted at the cat teaser in front of her, as if it were the despicable Kaoru himself.

"For you, there's nothing more thrilling than humiliating an enemy like this, right? Honestly, I have to admit your talent in this area—you're a full-blown pervert, meow!"

Kaoru blinked.

She was adapting to her role even better than before.

"But this isn't so bad for me either. I'll remember every single bad thing you've done to me, nya!" Suzune felt like her usual persona was crumbling.

No matter how fierce her expression or how serious the matter, adding a "nya" at the end instantly turned her into a comedic character.

A slight tremble came from the bed—Kushida Kikyo seemed to be stifling laughter, her shoulders shaking faintly.

But with something stuffed in her mouth, she couldn't laugh out loud.

Suzune's face burned with embarrassment.

She comforted herself, thinking, 'At least she can't see me'.

'It's not like I'm making a complete fool of myself.'

However, Kushida could still make out blurry images.

Kaoru knew that if he tied the blindfold too loosely, Suzune would notice Kushida's reaction.

So he deliberately chose a thinner handkerchief, straightened it out, and tied it around Kushida's eyes—just enough for her to vaguely see shapes.

It was blurry, likely only silhouettes, but enough for Kushida to catch Suzune's antics with the cat teaser.

Suzune had no idea that her playful struggle with the toy was being watched.

In her mind, while Mitoma's reason for capturing Kushida was suspicious, there was no way Kushida would willingly endure his perverted games.

No, no—no one in their right mind would volunteer to be toyed with by Kaoru.

Thus, Suzune concluded that Kaoru had brought Kushida along to play some twisted two-person game with her—something entirely in line with her impression of him.

Originally, Suzune had no intention of humoring Kaoru's whims.

But in the end, Kushida's words had provoked her into it.

From the start of the semester until now, the successive blows and failures had made Horikita Suzune begin to doubt herself.

At this moment, she was genuinely afraid that Kaoru might completely crush her without mercy.

"Suzune, when a cat hunts, its tail wiggles first. Yes, just like that."

"Come here, Suzune—pounce!"

"By the way, Suzune, have you ever tried grooming? All felines do..."

At the last moment, Horikita Suzune finally couldn't take it anymore.

Seizing the moment when pouncing on the cat teaser, she suddenly tackled Kaoru, forcefully pinning his hands down as their eyes met.

"Had enough fun?" Horikita Suzune said coldly.

"A bit regretful—I should've bought those cat paw socks," Kaoru remained unrepentant.

"Also, this is an offense against your master."

"Sorry, but this is just how cats are..."

As she spoke, Horikita suddenly realized their proximity—never had she seen his eyes so clearly before. Her breathing instantly became erratic.

"You forgot to add a 'nya'," Kaoru corrected her.

"Enough, you pervert." Horikita Suzune released his hands in flustered panic, trying to create distance when she noticed Kushida Kikyo approaching, a flicker of suspicion crossing her mind.

Kaoru saw Kushida too and immediately wrapped his arm around Horikita's waist.

With a swift reversal, Horikita found herself beneath him, caught completely off guard.

"Y-you... what are you doing?" Horikita suppressed her inner turmoil.

She didn't understand her own panic—it wasn't his actions, but some primal response.

The clearer she became about facing a man, the more flustered she grew.

"Bad kittens deserve to be disciplined by their master," Kaoru smiled.

"And I'll fulfill a long-held wish while at it."

Before Horikita could process his meaning, the "wish" became self-evident in the next moment.

Something soft brushed her lips, the sensation electrifying her entire body as her mind went blank, ears ringing.

Horikita's eyes widened slightly—her first kiss had been stolen by force.

The perpetrator now firmly held her shoulders, enveloping her completely in his embrace.

In that instant, countless images flashed through her mind: Manabu retreating figure, Kaoru words, her relentless efforts, Class D's struggles, failed special exams, zero points, Class A, graduation, her brother, pursuit, admiration...

Horikita raised her hands to push against Kaoru's chest in resistance, yet her strength had inexplicably abandoned her.

A single kiss had reduced her to this helpless state—with Kushida Kikyo sitting right beside them no less.

"Mmmph... nnggh... mmm..."

His kiss was assertive yet carried no roughness, as if cherishing Horikita with each gentle peck.

This only intensified the surreal sensation—the masculine chest, muscular arms, and distinctly foreign kiss seemed determined to brand this moment permanently into her very being.

Even her breathing took on a sweet cadence as her gasps grew more erratic, eyes glazing over with a misty haze.

Just when Horikita thought Kaoru would escalate further, he suddenly stopped, gazing at her intently.

That look snapped Horikita back to reality.

Staring at him in shock, an unprecedented fury surged through her as she forcefully shoved him away.

"How despicable! To force a kiss on someone without even asking for their consent—did you ever consider my feelings?" Horikita Suzune's gaze was super cold.

"Or are you planning to take things all the way next?"

No matter what she had felt moments ago, her rational mind had now returned, bringing with it a tinge of fear.

What if Kaoru Mitoma had decided to go further?

She suddenly felt disillusioned with Kaoru.

It was precisely because he had always been restrained that she had humored his antics until now.

"Because you once told me, 'Either kill me or make me fall for you,'" Kaoru murmured softly.

"I don't want to die. So, to make you like me, I had to fall for you first."

Horikita Suzune fell silent.

Her thoughts were in turmoil—not just because of the kiss, but also because of the strange, unfamiliar sensations stirring within her.

"Do you really expect me to believe the words of a lecher like you?"

"On the contrary, precisely because I am a lecher and you are a beautiful girl, I'm certain I can fall for you."

"You once said you'd have me expelled from school."

"My resolve hasn't changed. When you fail, I'll expel you without hesitation—though I might just leave with you."

"..."

Bang!

A moment later, Kaoru watched as Horikita Suzune slammed the door shut, leaving him alone in the room with Kushida Kikyo, still lying on the bed.

Chapter 315: What Is Your Relationship?

With the end of the sports festival, the weather turned cooler, and yellow leaves began to scatter along the pathways.

On the eve of the student council's transition, Sakayanagi Arisu arrived at the council office to find Nagumo Miyabi sitting alone on the sofa.

"I thought you'd have already taken the president's seat by now."

Her remark didn't faze him.

Instead, a faint smile played on his lips.

"I hold too much respect for President Horikita to overstep before his term officially ends."

"I hear the student council elections begin next week. Aren't you preparing?" Sakayanagi placed her hat on the table and sat across from Nagumo.

"It's rare to have two vice presidents so equally capable."

Nagumo's smile faded.

Was she deliberately bringing up Kaoru Mitoma in front of him?

"Heh. First-years lack the experience and understanding of this school to take on the presidency. Besides, it's also President Horikita's wish."

Sakayanagi chuckled softly.

Clearly, Nagumo was feeling the pressure—otherwise, he would have confidently declared that someone like Kaoru was no match for him in an election.

Instead, he was suddenly bringing up "experience."

It seemed Kaoru's influence over the second-years had unsettled him.

Though Class 2-A hadn't suffered major losses during the sports festival, the event had given other classes hope.

Combined with Nagumo's underwhelming performance, doubts about his competence were beginning to surface.

"Let's get back on topic. Did you find my gift satisfactory?" Sakayanagi spoke calmly, a hint of amusement in her eyes as she recalled her unspoken understanding with Kaoru.

"From the results, your gift wasn't bad, but the effect was limited. Losing just due to group competition isn't satisfying enough for me." Nagumo Miyabi tried his best to appear nonchalant, yet his fingers were already digging deep into the armrests of the sofa.

"If I go too far, I risk exposure," Sakayanagi Arisu said softly. "Isn't Ryuen-kun your ally? He was the sole victor in the sports festival. Even he can't satisfy you?"

"Just some petty underhanded tactics," Nagumo replied coldly, completely forgetting that he himself was accustomed to such methods.

After a pause, Nagumo continued, "Katsuragi from your class is also under Mitoma's influence. From what I know, those two are about to take control of Class A. Your future might end up in their hands."

"What makes you say that?" Sakayanagi showed no change in expression.

"Only three first-years joined the student council, and two of them are from Class A," Nagumo deliberately paused.

"Though Ichinose is capable, Mitoma and Katsuragi clearly stand out more. One of them will likely become the next student council president."

"Hehehe, who can say what will happen a year from now?" Sakayanagi smiled faintly before asking,

"Did you call me here today just to chat about the student council and Mitoma-kun?"

"As a return gift, I'd like to invite you to join the student council." Nagumo dropped the pleasantries—this was the real reason he had asked Sakayanagi to come today.

Originally, he had planned to support Ichinose Honami to counterbalance Kaoru Mitoma, but she had shown no interest.

Left with no choice, Nagumo had to look for another candidate.

Sakayanagi Arisu was a good choice.

Having her join the student council would surely help keep Mitoma in check.

"I appreciate the offer, but the student council doesn't suit me," Sakayanagi refused bluntly.

"With my personality, I'd only be satisfied if I were in charge."

"This year's first-years sure have big mouths," Nagumo narrowed his eyes, as if recalling something.

Just as Sakayanagi was about to speak, he continued, "However, I have another gift in return—one that might just fulfill your wishes."

As he finished speaking, a shadowy smile crept onto Nagumo's face.

...

"Wow, today was so much fun! I really hate sports festivals, though!"

"Muu-chan, you were terrible! You kept clinging to me even though I told you I wouldn't fall!"

"But Kamuro-san from Class A was amazing!"

"It's the first time I've seen a girl that fast—even the boys couldn't catch up to her!"

"I—I got her autograph!"

On the way back to the dorms from Keyaki Mall, Ichinose Honami couldn't help but smile as she watched her classmates chatting and laughing.

Even though Class 1-B had lost 50 points in the sports festival, no one was particularly disheartened, let alone complaining.

After all, it was a competition based on physical ability—there was no point forcing it.

Speaking of Kamuro Masumi, Ichinose found herself thinking about Kaoru.

She wondered how he was feeling now.

Was he troubled by his class's loss?

They had spoken on the phone and when she had probed him, Kaoru had shown no reaction—as if he wasn't upset at all.

Come to think of it, the two of them hadn't spent any time alone together recently.

Maybe she should try asking him out?

Ichinose Honami found her cheeks burning as these chaotic thoughts ran through her mind.

Was their first date actually during the cruise?

"Honami-chan?" Amikura Mako called out to her.

"Ah, yes? What is it?" Ichinose snapped back to attention, then immediately realized she'd responded incorrectly.

"Sakayanagi-san is up ahead—it looks like she's waiting for us?" Amikura didn't seem to notice her odd behavior.

Ichinose felt a sudden relief.

Ever since summer break, Mako had returned to her usual self, no longer bringing up Kaoru in front of her.

It should be fine now.

Still, Ichinose couldn't shake her lingering concerns, though she didn't know how to bring them up with Mako.

"I didn't expect to run into you on the way back. Saves me the trouble of searching, Ichinose-san."

At that moment, Sakayanagi Arisu appeared before her.

Leaning on her cane, wearing a hat and the school uniform, she looked like a little princess.

"Did you need something, Sakayanagi-san?" Ichinose noted her uniform—she must have just returned from the school building, the only place where uniforms were required.

Sakayanagi didn't answer immediately, instead offering a polite smile to Amikura and the others.

"Pardon me, but may I borrow Ichinose-san for a moment?"

"O-of course."

Naturally, they didn't want to intrude further.

With cheerful goodbyes to Ichinose, they continued on their way toward the dormitory.

"You all seem quite close. How enviable."

"What did you want to talk to me about?"

"Fufufu. This isn't the best place. Let's take a little walk, shall we?"

Without waiting for a response, Sakayanagi turned and headed in another direction.

On weekends, students were either in their dorms or at the Keyaki Mall.

Baffled, Ichinose followed, unsure what Sakayanagi wanted to discuss.

"What is your relationship with Mitoma-kun?"

Chapter 316: Please Keep Your Distance from Him

The sudden question wasn't entirely unexpected.

Ichinose had imagined scenarios where she might face such an inquiry and had even prepared several answers.

Though initially startled, she knew exactly how she should respond.

"Eh? My relationship with Mitoma-kun?" She was stalling—even she was surprised by her own hesitation.

Her original answers should have been something like "an interesting friend" or "Mitoma-kun is a good person," simple deflections that wouldn't expose their secret connection.

After all, neither Kaoru nor she wanted that revealed.

Yet, an inexplicable tightness in her chest and a surge of anxiety made the words stick in her throat.

Especially when she recalled Sakayanagi's behavior before the sports festival, Ichinose felt unsettled, as if the slightest hesitation would cost her something precious.

"Playing dumb doesn't suit you, Ichinose-san," Sakayanagi Arisu said softly.

"Though you're cautious and restrain your emotions, your eyes don't lie. You harbor feelings for Mitoma-kun, don't you?"

In an instant, Ichinose Honami's eyes flashed with panic before she forced a smile.

"What are you talking about? Me having feelings for Mitoma-kun? If you mean friendly affection, then yes, I do like him very much."

So she couldn't hide it from others after all?

Despite her constant efforts to distance herself, the truth had still come to light.

It felt like she'd betrayed his kindness.

Pursing her lips, Ichinose felt an odd sense of relief.

If this was exposed, it also meant she could openly be with Kaoru.

That prospect wasn't entirely unwelcome.

"Having witnessed his silver tongue, it's hard not to fall for that man," Sakayanagi didn't challenge her excuse but instead murmured cryptically.

"But given your position, are you really allowed to love him?"

"Who I like is my personal matter. More importantly, why do you care about my relationship with Mitoma-kun?" Ichinose suddenly abandoned her pretense.

That man might be shameless most times, but occasionally he could be surprisingly earnest.

Sakayanagi stopped walking and turned to face her, wearing an enigmatic half-smile.

"There was a day when, thanks to Mitoma-kun, you realized the true horror of this school. Am I wrong?"

Like a lightning strike, Ichinose froze in place, her mind reeling.

How could Sakayanagi know about that incident?

"Surprised?" Sakayanagi gazed at nearby trees whose crowns were already turning yellow as autumn approached, the crisp breeze playing with her hat.

Ichinose knew her reaction was too telling.

Even if Sakayanagi had been uncertain before, she must be convinced now.

"Nagumo-senpai... did he tell you?"

"Who would have thought that the kind and gentle Ichinose-san could be a thief? I was quite shocked when I heard the news."

"I..." Ichinose Honami didn't know how to respond.

Shame struck her forehead once again, making it difficult to raise her head as her face burned with humiliation.

"Nagumo-senpai wants me to make good use of this information. He seems quite dissatisfied with you. Crushing Class B would bring me significant advantages."

Ichinose Honami remained silent.

"He also mentioned that Mitoma-kun knows about this too." Sakayanagi Arisu smiled.

"I'm curious—has Mitoma-kun done anything to you?"

As she spoke, she keenly noticed Ichinose stiffen slightly.

The moment their eyes met, the other girl subtly averted her gaze.

"What... do you mean?"

"Mitoma-kun is far from the gentle and humble person he appears to be. Given the opportunity, he wouldn't hold back at all. Knowing your dark past yet doing nothing—that doesn't align with my impression of him."

"I don't have to tell you anything, do I?"

"Hehe, probably for the sake of Class A's interests, right? I suppose he threatened you to betray Class B?"

Sakayanagi deliberately voiced her speculation, observing the girl's microexpressions.

Instead of the expected reaction, she saw Ichinose faintly exhale in relief.

"I won't betray everyone, no matter what kind of threat it is." Ichinose took a deep breath, her gaze firm.

"Even if you try to blackmail me now, my answer remains no."

"Don't be so tense. I just wanted to understand you better." Sakayanagi chuckled.

"If you had become Mitoma-kun's pawn, I'd be in quite a predicament right now."

Ichinose stayed silent.

She couldn't answer this question easily—Sakayanagi's implication was too ambiguous.

"I hope you aren't his. It would be too tragic if Class B's leader had secretly become someone else's puppet."

"Sorry, I don't quite follow."

"Do you want to lead Class B to rise to Class A?"

"That's everyone's goal."

"Fufufu, how ironic. A former criminal now speaks of 'everyone.'" Sakayanagi narrowed her eyes.

"Do you think you're qualified to carry the trust of the entire class? Can you trust every single one of them?"

Her words were like a sharp blade, mercilessly exposing the deepest fears and worries in Ichinose's heart—just as Kaoru had done before.

"If someone were to reveal your past, how many people do you think... no, do you think anyone would still trust you? Or do you believe that simply repenting will make your sins vanish?"

"I know I made an unforgivable mistake in the past, but I won't repeat it."

"Every criminal says that."

"I... won't run away. But I'm not a criminal—the law never convicted me..."

"Trying to deny your past now?"

"I just don't want to be bound by the past anymore. Dwelling on it endlessly, agonizing over it—none of that will change anything. I can't take back the decisions I made back then, and staying stuck like this will only hold me back. The only thing I can change is the present. I'll do my best to make everyone believe that the old Ichinose is gone—this is the Ichinose of now!"

"..."

Sakayanagi Arisu suddenly smiled.

She looked at Ichinose Honami, who seemed to be pouring out all her strength, at her reddened eyes, and then uttered something entirely unexpected.

"In that case, why don't we make a little wager?"

Ichinose Honami had just vented her emotions and was momentarily unable to process this.

"Nagumo-senpai has handed the authority to punish you over to me, but I don't intend to follow his instructions completely. I will still reveal your past to everyone, but I won't interfere with their judgment."

Seeing Ichinose's bewildered expression, Sakayanagi added with a smile.

"If you can endure this and Class B still trusts you, I'll congratulate you—and we'll have an opportunity to collaborate."

"But if—" Sakayanagi paused.

"if you fail, I want you to keep your distance from Mitoma-kun."

"Why?" Ichinose blurted out, no longer holding back. "Why should I listen to you?!"

"Because it's my turn now," Sakayanagi replied coldly.

"Without Mitoma-kun, you wouldn't have found the resolve you just showed. Someone who can't even overcome their own past will only be eliminated in the coming exams. A woman like that has no right to stand before him."

Ichinose bit her lip hard, her thoughts in complete disarray.

Her confidence had been seen through—it was true that Kaoru Mitoma had given her the determination she needed.

Chapter 317: Student Council Transition

With various handover preparations underway, the Student Council held its final meeting chaired by Horikita Manabu the day before his official resignation.

Nearly all the officers were present, much like when Kaoru and the others had first joined the council.

However, the third-year members now wore relaxed expressions.

After two long years of work, this group of officers was finally concluding their tenure in the Student Council—marking the beginning of the final phase of the third-years' battles.

Free from all burdens, they could now devote themselves entirely to their class struggles.

Even as rivals, they couldn't help but exchange smiles during the farewell gathering.

"After my resignation, I nominate Nagumo Miyabi of Class 2-A as the next Council President. Does anyone object?"

As Horikita's voice faded, the room fell into silence.

The appointment of a new Student Council President could either be decided through a school-wide election or by the outgoing president's nomination—a privilege of the position.

However, compared to other high schools, Advanced Nurturing High School's Student Council wielded greater authority.

For instance, the transition should have taken place around December, but Horikita had moved it up to October.

While Nagumo Miyabi had pushed for this decision, it still underscored the Council President's influence.

Horikita scanned the room.

The third-years were indifferent—it no longer concerned them.

The second-years, mostly Nagumo's allies, naturally had no objections.

As for the first-year students, their opinions couldn't influence the student council's decisions.

The only vice president capable of affecting decisions was currently locked in a silent battle of glares with the fuming Tachibana Akane.

"It seems there are no objections. Then, Nagumo Miyabi will be the next student council president."

Upon hearing Horikita Manabu's announcement, Nagumo Miyabi stood up out of courtesy and respect, offering him a polite smile.

"President Horikita, thank you for your trust in me. Over the past year, I've deeply appreciated your guidance. Being able to join the student council under your leadership has always been the luckiest and most correct decision I've made. To be personally chosen by you as your successor—to be honest, I feel both honored and humbled."

"Your abilities are sufficient for the role of president," Horikita replied impassively.

"Among all the past student council presidents, President Horikita is undoubtedly one of the very best. In your presence, I dare not feel the slightest bit of complacency." Nagumo chuckled before forcibly suppressing the smile on his lips.

"However, I can't help but regret your and the other seniors' resignations. Competent executives shouldn't step down so early."

"That has always been the tradition," Horikita responded.

"Indeed. That's why I plan to abolish the general election system and the fixed membership limit, while also allowing students to apply to join the student council at any time." Nagumo declared his intentions without restraint, boldly announcing his decision even before officially taking office.

In response, apart from Tachibana's visible disgust, most of the executives merely showed mild surprise.

"Is that so?" Horikita's expression remained unchanged.

"Heh, if I were to blindly follow tradition, I'm sure the very president who promoted me would be disappointed, no?" Nagumo let out a light laugh.

"Unfortunately, a new president comes with many constraints. It may take some time before President Horikita can witness real change in this school."

Merely reforming the student council clearly wasn't enough for Nagumo—he wanted to push further, which would inevitably require the school's permission.

To achieve that, he still had much work ahead.

"After our resignations, the student council's executive lineup will also change. What are your plans for the transition?" Horikita remained composed. He had already foreseen this outcome—what he could strive for now were future opportunities.

Nagumo glanced deliberately or otherwise at Kaoru Mitoma, who stared back with dead-fish eyes.

A faint smile crept onto Nagumo's face.

After all, the president had the authority to assign roles.

In other words, Nagumo now had the power to remove Kaoru from his position as vice president.

"Tonokawa will take over Tachibana's duties as secretary. As for the treasurer, let Mizowaki handle it. Next is..." Nagumo went through the appointments one by one, yet deliberately left one position unmentioned.

His selections were almost entirely his trusted allies from Class 2-A, completely excluding students from other classes—a clear sign that he no longer trusted them.

Kiriyama Ikuyo stood silently on the periphery.

The moment they launched their attack, any chance of reconciliation between them had vanished.

From now on, they could only be mortal enemies locked in an even fiercer struggle.

Among the seven second-year executives, apart from him and one student from Class 2-C, the rest were all from Class 2-A.

Now, the two exchanged glances, each harboring different emotions.

A sudden thought struck Kiriyama—wasn't this the perfect opportunity to win the other over?

"Finally, regarding the vice president position..." Nagumo Miyabi's gaze fell upon the first-year section, specifically locking onto Kaoru Mitoma.

"After I assume the presidency, Mitoma will not be the only remaining vice president. I doubt a first-year's capabilities alone can handle the daily workload."

"I recommend Kiriyama-senpai to succeed me," Kaoru promptly responded.

Kiriyama Ikuyo's lips twitched imperceptibly.

Having just clashed with Nagumo during the sports festival, becoming his vice president now would be like a lamb walking into a tiger's den.

"No, Kiriya has more important duties," Nagumo chuckled.

"I've decided to have Ichinose share your workload. The two of you will serve as co-vice presidents."

A stunned silence fell over the assembly.

Students exchanged bewildered glances, struggling to process what they'd just heard.

Even Kaoru appeared momentarily taken aback, let alone the directly affected Ichinose Honami.

"No, absolutely not! I'm completely unqualified for such a position!" She waved her hands frantically.

"Please reconsider this appointment—I could never—"

"This is a carefully considered decision that won't be rescinded," Nagumo stated calmly, his eyes briefly flickering toward Horikita Manabu.

"If anything, you're overqualified for the role."

Ichinose stood speechless, instinctively stealing a glance at Kaoru.

"Appointing two first-years as vice presidents is unprecedented," Tachibana Akane interjected with a frown.

"While I've been guiding them, freshmen simply lack the experience to manage without senior leadership."

She added pointedly: "There's no historical precedent for this arrangement."

Nagumo responded coolly, "My apologies, Tachibana-senpai, but I have complete faith in Ichinose. If Horikita-senpai could promote Mitoma, my appointing Ichinose is only natural."

"Mitoma-kun is exceptional—his capabilities are undeniable, and—"

"Actually," Nagumo interrupted, "Ichinose ranked first in our entrance exams. Her abilities match Mitoma's perfectly. Moreover..." His voice turned steely.

"As incoming president, I retain full authority over appointments. This represents the changes I intend to implement."

Tachibana found herself at a loss for words.

After exchanging glances with Horikita, Nagumo turned to Kaoru with a smirk.

"Satisfied with your new partner?"

"I have no objections to Nagumo-senpai's decision," Kaoru replied evenly.

Nagumo suppressed a scoff.

The boy's stubborn facade was laughable—no doubt he believed his schemes were succeeding.

Little did he know...

He'd already set Sakayanagi Arisu against Ichinose.

Once Sakayanagi made her move, he'd swoop in and rescue her.

Ichinose's gratitude would be his for the taking.

From there, manipulating Ichinose to suppress Kaoru influence—both within student council and among first-years—would be child's play.

The plan was foolproof.

This very certainty had motivated him to share Ichinose's information with Sakayanagi.

The thought brought an unconscious smile to Nagumo's lips, particularly when envisioning how he'd reshape this school in his image.

....

The meeting quickly came to an end, and Horikita Manabu asked Kaoru Mitoma to stay behind at the end.

"Do you have any thoughts?" Horikita Manabu inquired.

"He probably thinks he has leverage over Ichinose," Kaoru replied calmly.

Tachibana Akane's eyes widened in disbelief.

"Honami-chan actually has leverage?!"

Kaoru looked at her with some confusion.

Were the two of them that close?

Still, given Ichinose Honami's personality, it wasn't surprising that she had won over someone as arrogant as Tachibana Akane.

"Is the issue serious?" Horikita Manabu also hadn't expected Nagumo Miyabi to suddenly name Ichinose Honami.

"I know his type well—I could guess his moves blindfolded," Kaoru paused.

"To what extent will the school consider his suggestions?"

"Theoretically, he could change some rules," Horikita Manabu said. "For example, he once mentioned abolishing the conditions for class transfer points. That would likely pass."

"Isn't the school worried some rules might favor certain students?" Kaoru asked.

"They are. That's why I can't guarantee how far Nagumo will go. Honestly, even he probably doesn't know himself," Horikita Manabu sighed.

"So the school will adopt Nagumo's proposals as long as they seem fair and impartial?" Kaoru mused.

"From now on, it's up to you. I suspect changes will come as early as next semester." Horikita Manabu studied Kaoru closely.

He could tell that while Kaoru had his own goals, his focus wasn't entirely here.

"I understand."

With that, Kaoru gave a slight bow before straightening up.

"Starting today, President, please direct your attention to the third-years and graduation exams."

For a brief moment, Horikita Manabu's expression turned complex—somewhere between relief and concern.

Finally, he stood up.

"I trust in your abilities. I'm leaving Suzune to you as well."

Kaoru's expression turned odd.

He wanted to say, "Rest assured, brother-in-law," but only dared to think it.

"Hey, what about me, your senior?" Tachibana Akane interjected, clearly displeased.

"I've taught you so much. Shouldn't you be bowing and thanking me properly?"

Kaoru was surprised by her audacity.

Had she really taught him anything?

Chapter 318: The Biting Senior

"Wha—what's with that look?!"

For some reason, Tachibana glared at Kaoru, as if she had been greatly mocked.

"I'm always the one correcting your mistakes, aren't I? Like being disrespectful to seniors, having an arrogant tone, not working hard, and only knowing how to bully your elders..."

Watching her count on her fingers, Kaoru Mitoma couldn't help but feel exasperated.

It was precisely because of this trait of hers that even if he wanted to respect her, he just couldn't muster the feeling.

"Yes, yes, thanks to senpai's guidance, I was able to break those bad habits, like sneaking snacks in the office."

Hearing the first part, Tachibana Akane was initially pleased, but the next moment her face turned bright red as she stammered.

"W-what are you talking about? I don't understand at all!"

"Thinking about not being able to eat snacks in the office anymore makes me inexplicably melancholic," Kaoru shook his head and sighed deeply.

Tachibana couldn't take it anymore and simply headbutted Kaoru's chest like a fierce mortar shell, sending him stumbling back a few steps.

"Hey hey hey, are you trying to kill me, senpai?" Kaoru clutched his chest.

"Oww, that hurts! You're too hard!"

Intending to teach Kaoru a lesson, Tachibana instead ended up staggering herself.

Clutching her head as she crouched on the ground, she looked up at Kaoru with teary eyes.

Kaoru fell silent for a moment—this girl was truly all bark and no bite.

"I told you not to look at me with those eyes!" Tachibana was both embarrassed and angry, knowing how ridiculous she looked right now.

But it was his fault for deliberately bringing up her secrets—it wasn't like she never shared snacks with him!

"Just one semester has passed, yet you two have grown much closer," Horikita Manabu rarely showed a smile.

Watching their playful bickering lightened his mood considerably.

Tachibana quickly stood up, hastily denying any connection with him,

"Not at all... There's zero affection between me and this guy. My feelings toward him... our relationship is 'null'!"

Seeing Kaoru's smirk, the girl felt her face burn with embarrassment—it was so hot!

But feeling nervous in front of her crush was only natural!

Why did he have to make such a disgusting expression? It was infuriating!

"By the way, if it weren't for this guy, we wouldn't have lost 100 points during the sports festival!" Tachibana seemed to be changing the topic... no, she wasn't changing the subject, just posing a simple question to Kaoru because she couldn't stand his usual attitude.

"When it came to the actual competition, you were completely useless after all."

"Oh? Senpai was watching my matches?" Kaoru seemed surprised. "My apologies, I didn't notice you there."

Tachibana huffed twice: "Of course I was watching you—I saw every match! Don't think you're so great just because you took first place. In the end, you still made us lose!"

"I'm sorry. It's all my fault."

"Huh?"

"I tried my hardest, but not only did I lose, I even dragged senpai down with me. I'm truly sorry."

"W-wait, it's not that serious!"

Fooled by his excellent acting, Tachibana began to regret her harsh words.

"I didn't mean to blame you! I only said that because I was a little upset with you earlier!" she hurriedly explained.

"It really doesn't matter—you don't need to take it to heart at all!"

Kaoru blinked.

This senpai seemed to have some motherly potential.

"Really?"

"Really, really! I was just annoyed with you earlier."

"Is that so? Then shouldn't senpai apologize to me now?"

"I'm sorr— Wait, are you tricking me?"

"Am I?"

"Uwaah!"

Without hesitation, Tachibana bit Kaoru, revealing a pair of Little Fangs that left him grimacing in pain for quite some time.

In the end, Kaoru had no choice but to treat her to a meal—otherwise, this senior likely wouldn't have let go.

...

After leaving the student council office, Kaoru soon spotted Kiriya Ikuyo sitting on a bench, clearly having waited for some time.

"In the first semester of our second year, the gap between us and Nagumo was 400 Class Points," Kiriya began.

"The school seems dissatisfied with Nagumo's strategies, and the penalties in the past six months have been severe. The amount of Class Points we can earn has drastically decreased."

Kaoru sat beside him and listened as he continued, "Class 2-A's points dropped from 2100 to 1745, with 100 of those thanks to you. However, our class also fell from 1700 to 1320."

Though both sides suffered significant losses, the gap remained unchanged—still over 400 points separating Class 2-B from their goal.

Without Kaoru's help, that gap would likely have widened to around 600 points.

"Sorry, I originally expected Nagumo to fall to last place," Kaoru sighed.

The sports festival was a test of physical ability—if the difference in strength was too great, even the best strategy wouldn't help.

"You can't blame yourself. The root of the problem lies with us," Kiriya said bitterly.

"If you had arrived earlier, the gap between us and Class 2-A wouldn't be this extreme. But we've had too many dropouts."

Kaoru recalled what Sakayanagi Arisu had told him at the start of the term about the upperclassmen's dropout rates.

While the third-year had fewer than 10 dropouts, the second-year was already approaching 20.

"As exam penalties grow harsher, our class has lost three more students in the second year," Kiriya said heavily.

Unlike Nagumo Miyabi's targeted sabotage of their class, the exams themselves had a cruel system in place.

From a logical standpoint, losing one or two weaker students wouldn't be too devastating for the class.

But even talented students were at risk—Class 2-B had already lost several of their best.

In truth, the problems ran deeper.

Kiriya knew his class had many other issues—too many incompetent students and oddballs, for one.

"Does the school allow you to disclose details about your special exams?" Kaoru asked.

"Yes. To prevent leaks, each year's exams are different," Kiriya replied.

"The rewards from the sports festival will probably be used in the next exam. Any thoughts?" Kaoru suspected the school wouldn't hand out points without reason—it was likely a clue for the upcoming test.

Kiriyama hesitated. "Around this time in previous years, it was usually written exams. But I'm not entirely sure."

Kaoru fell into thought.

If it was a written test, what could he do?

Should he personally tutor Class 2-B?

Or perhaps drug Class 2-A and knock them all out on exam day?

"Mitoma-kun, I really appreciate your help." Kiriyama Ikuyo suddenly smiled.

"Thanks to the sports festival, the class morale seems to have recovered quite a bit. Let us try tackling the next exam on our own."

"Feel free to contact me anytime if you need assistance." Kaoru didn't want to dampen their enthusiasm—a class without fighting spirit had nothing at all.

"Well, well, what a coincidence running into you two here today. Kiriyama, that smug look on your face is quite telling."

Unexpectedly, Kiryuin Fuka appeared before them, wearing a radiant smile.

Chapter 319: Yet Another Skeptic

The moment he saw her, Kaoru immediately recalled her performance during the sports festival—many girls couldn't keep up with her pace and her clear, cheerful laughter often echoed across the field.

Her exuberance had surprised her classmates, who initially thought Kiryuin Fuka might finally be turning over a new leaf.

However, Kiryuin remained as unapologetically herself as ever.

After the competition ended, she walked off the track as casually as if she'd just finished a workout.

Now, she stood before them holding shopping bags emblazoned with luxury brand logos, clearly having just returned from Keyaki Mall.

"What are you doing here?" Kiriya Ikuyo frowned at her sudden appearance.

Had it not been for her decent performance during the sports festival, his tone might have been even more impatient.

"That's my line. Were you lying in wait here to ambush a beautiful girl?" Kiryuin chuckled, then added upon seeing Kiriya's dark expression.

"Come on, Kiriya, don't make that face. I am a beauty, aren't I?"

"Dealing with you is a waste of time," Kiriya Ikuyo retorted bluntly. "If you have something to say, spit it out. If not, hurry up and leave."

This was the main path students took back to the dorms, which was why Kiriya had chosen to wait for Kaoru here.

Their encounter wasn't entirely unexpected.

"Kiryuin-senpai, would you like me to walk you back?" Kaoru glanced at her shopping bags—no doubt filled with items purchased using the Personal Points he'd given her.

"Heh, men really are more considerate when they're younger," Kiryuin replied with an amused smile.

"To be honest, thanks to your points this month, I've been able to indulge myself a little."

'No kidding,' Kaoru thought.

200,000 points in "friendship fees" plus another 500,000 in rewards—if this were the outside world, you could've gotten a sugar daddy to spoil you rotten several times over.

"Honestly, I'm more surprised you accepted them, senpai. I thought you might refuse."

"Oh? Regretting it now?"

"If I ever run out of money, would you drop me without a second thought?"

"Is that what you're really worried about?"

Kiryuin acted as though she didn't notice Kiriya's stormy expression, plopping herself down on the bench between them with deliberate casualness.

"Whatever. I'm leaving." Kiriya stood up. "Mitoma-kun, let's talk later. I'll fill you in on the details."

"Can't you tell me too?" Kiryuin called after him, clearly intrigued.

"Since when do you care about class matters?" Kiriya shot back icily.

"Oh, just because I wasn't interested before doesn't mean I'm not now. Besides, the fact that you're asking a junior for help is interesting enough on its own. Kiryūin Fūka

"If it weren't for people like you in Class B, I wouldn't have needed to seek help from others," Kiriya Ikuyo forced out through clenched teeth.

"So I'm the one obstructing Kiriya?" Kiryūin seemed completely oblivious to his expression.

"Since the start of the term, you've contributed nothing to the class—either acting alone or arbitrarily criticizing class decisions. I hope you have some self-awareness." Kiriya Ikuyo sounded particularly caustic, his irritation barely contained.

"Kiriya, no need to praise me in front of juniors like this. Even I might get embarrassed."

Seeing Kiryu's shameless grin, Kiriya Ikuyo felt his blood pressure spike dangerously.

Fortunately, he retained enough rationality to suppress his anger.

Though he thoroughly disliked Kiryu Fuka, Kaoru seemed interested in her, forcing him to hold back his emotions.

"Mitoma-kun, as you can see, this woman has a terrible personality. I hope you'll be careful."

With that, Kiriya Ikuyo turned and left without hesitation.

"This is the first time I've seen Kiriya-senpai angry," Kaoru remarked.

"Don't mind him. He's always like this—complaining about himself, the class, Nagumo, the school..." Kiryu shrugged, utterly indifferent.

She never cared about others' opinions or feelings.

Nothing mattered more than her own amusement.

"Aren't you afraid of expulsion, senpai?" Kaoru Mitoma asked. "If you're judged as a hindrance to the class, you might get pushed out."

"Let them try," Kiryuin laughed dismissively. "Even if they expelled me, I wouldn't complain. Life here is fun, and I'm confident I'd thrive anywhere with my abilities."

Kaoru glanced at the shopping bags beside her.

While he understood splurging after sudden windfalls, her demeanor suggested this was routine—like casually picking up a few clothes.

Given Class 2-B's circumstances, it was unlikely to sustain such habits.

Had she once been an heiress?

"Mitoma, how many Personal Points do you have left?" Kiryuin abruptly asked.

"Running low, senpai?" Kaoru blinked, as if ready to hand over every last Point at her command.

"Even seniors rarely spare 200,000 Points monthly, let alone gift them to others," she replied flatly.

"I know you squeezed plenty from Nagumo. Even if you spent them all on me, I wouldn't be moved."

To her, this was just Kaoru's pursuit tactic—a playbook she'd seen from countless whales.

The only reason she humored him was amusement.

This school's unique system barred wealthy heirs; Points had to be earned.

Yet Kaoru had gifted her 700,000 Points—then deadpanned asking if she'd step on him with her feet.

Now that was entertaining.

Therefore, Kiryuin Fuka agreed to Kaoru Mitoma's request without hesitation.

"You don't need to send me anything next month."

At the time, she had indeed found it amusing, but she wasn't the type to take advantage of small favors—especially not from someone who might be pursuing her.

However, Kiryuin didn't expect Kaoru to actually get upset.

"Are you doubting my sincerity, senpai?"

"I've had my fill. Any more would just be bullying my underclassman."

"Actually, I'd prefer it if you bullied me a little more."

"?"

Kiryuin Fuka felt a question mark pop up above her head.

Despite being exceptionally skilled at reading people, she couldn't help but feel a flicker of confusion.

Kaoru noticed her reaction and frowned.

"Did you think I was joking?"

"Are you mentally ill?" Kiryuin gaze sharpened.

"No matter how much money you spend on me, I won't say yes."

"Senpai, did you think I was trying to pursue you?" Kaoru asked.

Kiryuin nodded. "I know I'm cute, but you're probably not my type."

Kaoru didn't rush to respond.

Instead, his gaze drifted downward, settling on the girl's legs, which looked especially smooth and alluring encased in black tights.

"Senpai, I believe my request back then was about something else."

Chapter 320: A Genuine Foot Fetishist

ANHS didn't have strict rules about what kind of stockings students had to wear, only requiring them to don their uniforms when entering or leaving the school building.

As a result, many girls opted for thigh-highs or knee-high socks.

However, some who disliked stockings simply went bare-legged—especially in the summer.

Kaoru had seen more than a few girls with naked legs beneath their skirts.

Stockings or bare legs?

It was hard to choose between the two.

The former accentuated a girl's slender, graceful leg lines, with the thin fabric smoothing out minor imperfections and enhancing their allure.

Different stockings also carried different kinds of appeal.

Bare legs, on the other hand, were a true test of a girl's figure.

In theory, fair skin, a slim waist, and long legs were the ideal, but in reality, most fell short—literally.

Not to mention, fair skin wasn't all that common.

A girl who confidently bared her legs had to be truly self-assured about her figure.

Kaoru had seen Horikita Suzune's bare legs, as well as the calves of Karuizawa Kei, Ichinose Honami, and Kushida Kikyo.

The reason why beauties are called beauties is that they rarely have any flaws in their figure or appearance.

Kaoru was particularly fond of Suzune calves—slender yet full of strength, soft with a hint of elasticity, making them irresistible to the touch.

Ichinose and Kushida, on the other hand, had slightly fuller thighs.

Perhaps due to their overall voluptuous figures, especially the former, who had the classic hourglass shape—ample curves in all the right places, embodying the ideal childbearing physique, a natural motherly figure.

No matter how critical one's standards might be, Kaoru had to admit that Kiryuin was a special exception.

This senior stood over 170 cm tall, even surpassing most male students.

In a country like Japan, she was practically a giant among girls.

At least among the girls Kaoru knew, almost no one could match her height.

Her tall frame came with an exceptionally long pair of legs, their smooth, delicate skin faintly visible beneath the hem of her white skirt.

Surprisingly, she was wearing black pantyhose—a bold choice even for mature women, let alone a student.

Yet, Kiryūin showed not the slightest discomfort.

She was used to being stared at and paid no mind to such gazes, nor did she care to.

She sat beside Kaoru, casually crossing her slightly plump right leg over her left, arms stretched out to either side as she leaned back against the bench.

The way she crossed her legs was almost brazen—something that would feel out of place on any other girl.

But on Kiryūin, it exuded a unique charm, radiating her signature confidence and arrogance, making it impossible to look away.

One couldn't help but feel the urge to kneel before her and kiss the back of her feet.

"You want to lick my feet?"

At this moment, Kiryūin wasn't sure what expression to wear.

She had seen plenty of men's attempts to woo women, but never a request like this.

Still, compared to the usual hypocrites, Kaoru seemed genuinely sincere.

She couldn't detect even a hint of jest on his face—as if this was truly his goal.

"If possible, I'd like to have a more intimate relationship with you, senpai. But for now, I really do hope you'd step on me."

Truthfully, Kaoru felt a bit ashamed.

After all, he was saying this in public, where he'd inevitably draw strange looks.

"I won't deny it, Mitoma—you're an interesting guy. But don't you think it's rude to say something like that to a cute girl?" Kiryūin lifted her leg playfully.

"Or are you really going to kneel here and let me step on your face?"

This was the main path back to the dorms.

She didn't think he had the guts—most foot fetishists only dared to act out in hotels or private rooms.

Kiryūin assumed Kaoru was just bluffing, masking his attempt to pursue her with some absurd excuse.

It was a terrible cover, really.

Even if he was trying to court her, it wasn't like she'd bite.

Why resort to such a vulgar and ridiculous approach?

"Mitoma, if you—" Just as she spoke, Kiryūin saw Kaoru suddenly drop to one knee before her, his hands gently grasping her raised feet.

"If you're going to step on my face, it's better without shoes. Let me take them off for you."

For a brief moment, Kiryūin Fuka's mind went blank.

Even someone as aloof as her could only stare dumbfounded as Kaoru effortlessly slipped off her shoe, his warm hands closing around her ankle.

"Are you serious?" Kiryūin couldn't help but ask.

"If I said I liked you, senpai, would you agree to go out with me?" Kaoru replied.

"Since you wouldn't, I might as well let you step on me a few times—at least then I can feel your warmth."

Kiryūin fell silent.

She suddenly realized this guy might not just be an admirer, but a particularly perverted foot fetishist.

How could she be so sure?

How many freaks in this world could say something like that to a girl's face with a straight expression?

Clearly, Kaoru was no ordinary pervert.

For some reason, a flicker of panic flashed through Kiryūin heart.

Had she pushed things too far?

But now that things had come to this, was she really going to back down?

Wouldn't that be too embarrassing?

If even Kaoru dared to kneel here without hesitation, wouldn't it be pathetic if she retreated?

Wait... could it be that Kaoru was betting she wouldn't actually go through with it, which was why he knelt so boldly?

"My, my, the underclassmen these days are quite bold. Even I, your senior, am taken aback," Kiryūin said with a smile, refusing to believe he wasn't bluffing.

"Spending 700,000 Personal Points just to have me step on you a few times?"

"Actually, I'd prefer if senpai could indulge me like this every month," Kaoru murmured, delicately tracing the curves of the feet before him.

Her long legs were sheathed in black stockings, and only upon closer inspection could one glimpse the faint hint of fair skin beneath.

"You really are bold. If someone sees us later, I won't lift a finger to help you, you know?" Kiryūin felt an odd sensation—this was the first time a man had held her foot.

It was strange.

Though she knew she shouldn't let him continue, her competitive spirit flared up.

Since this was Kaoru request, she had no choice but to oblige.

Even if he regretted it later, she wouldn't take any responsibility.

Kiryūin thought she had figured out Kaoru's game—but in the next moment, he shattered her assumptions.

