

Cote 351

Chapter 351: Should I Give You One of the Rings?

In the morning, Kaoru arrived at Class A's classroom and immediately noticed Sakayanagi sitting in his seat, surrounded by strange gazes.

Especially when he heard Totsuka Yahiko loudly muttering something about "connections," Kaoru realized the rumors had spread faster than he expected.

Compared to something like Ichinose Honami stealing, Sakayanagi Arisu's situation was far more serious.

If this were confirmed, the fairness that ANHS had always touted would become a joke.

Sakayanagi Arisu being in Class A made sense, but the chairman's daughter being in Class A?

That was something worth pondering.

With just a little push, the school would have a major headache.

"Good morning, Mitoma-kun," Sakayanagi greeted him, her expression calm as if the rumors didn't bother her at all.

Beside her stood Kamuro Masumi, whose gaze was somewhat shadowed.

"Morning," Kaoru replied.

Just as he was about to head to Sakayanagi's seat, Masumi silently gave up her own spot, standing to the side like she was being punished.

"Stop staring. You two should hurry up and talk," Masumi said, crossing her arms impatiently when she noticed his odd look.

This was Kaoru's first time sitting in a high school girl's seat, and he couldn't help but feel a little curious.

He ran his fingers over the desk, then glanced at Masumi's long legs beside him.

The black knee-high socks clung tightly to her calves, while the smooth, pale skin of her thighs peeked out from beneath her skirt, delicate and tempting.

The hem was so close that lifting his head just a little might reveal even more.

But all he usually got was her icy, disgusted glare—one that made it clear she saw him as worse than trash.

"How long do you plan on helping her, Mitoma-kun?" Sakayanagi's voice pulled his attention back.

"You mean today's incident?" Kaoru frowned. "If she admits her mistakes and still earns Class B's trust, what will you do?"

"Nothing. The fact is, you helped her again," Sakayanagi replied, her tone unchanging. "With your interference, even if she confesses, everyone's attention will shift to me. On top of that, I get to experience the joy of being drowned in rumors. What do you think I should do?"

Kaoru was taken aback.

He had expected Sakayanagi to at least put up a fight, but she was giving in this easily?

"The only thing I didn't expect was how fast it happened," Sakayanagi murmured, lost in thought before falling silent again.

She remained silent, but Kamuro Masumi interjected, "Someone saw you on a date with Ichinose the other day. Is that true?"

"You think I managed to win over Ichinose-san?" Kaoru feigned surprise.

When dealing with others' questions, the best way to avoid a direct answer was to counter with a reasonable question of his own.

"Who knows? You two looked pretty close. And why are you so defensive?" Kamuro Masumi curled her lips.

In truth, she had known about it that very day—after all, Karuizawa Kei wasn't the only one who had been secretly tracking his location.

"Even a pervert can get a girlfriend, huh? Tch, she got a terrible taste."

Kaoru stared expressionlessly at her thighs, startling her into instinctively shrinking back.

But then she remembered they were in a classroom—there was no way Kaoru would pounce on her here—so she forced herself to stand her ground, feigning composure.

"So she really is your girlfriend?" Sakayanagi Arisu suddenly snapped out of her thoughts, her gaze fixed intently on Kaoru.

"Yep. I even have seven more rings. Want one now?" Kaoru expressed his thoughts candidly.

If he ran out of rings, he could always just pull out a few more.

These "Wedding Rings" held no extraordinary effects—their sole purpose was to automatically adapt to the preferences of the woman wearing them, generating a design perfectly suited to her tastes. In other words, they guaranteed 100% satisfaction.

Thus, even though both Ichinose Honami and Karuizawa Kei's rings had come from Kaoru, their appearances were completely different.

"Hah? Just how many people are you planning to marry?" Kamuro Masumi was dumbfounded.

"Didn't anyone tell you? Poligamy is a crime!"

Sakayanagi Arisu, however, didn't seem angry.

She blinked, a pleased smile playing on her lips.

"If possible, could you show me the ring Mitoma-kun has prepared?"

As she spoke, she extended her flawless, delicate hand toward him, as if expecting him to slip a ring onto her finger.

But Kaoru Mitoma knew her mood was far from pleasant.

She was testing him—if he produced a ring now, she might trace its design all the way back to its origins.

Prepared for this, Kaoru replied smoothly, "Not yet. If Sakayanagi-san can beat me in a game of chess, then I'll give you the ring."

Sakayanagi fell silent for a moment before breaking into a soft laugh.

"Fine. We'll see about that."

Seven rings, huh? She'd find out exactly what kind of scheme he was hiding.

Two major incidents had occurred that morning.

The first was that Sakayanagi Arisu from Class 1-A had been exposed as the school chairman's daughter, sparking rumors that she had gotten in through connections.

Students from all three grades were buzzing about it.

The uproar lasted until evening, when the school was forced to issue a public statement clarifying that while Sakayanagi Arisu was indeed the chairman's daughter, her admission had gone through the school's standard review process and fully met all enrollment requirements.

At the same time, the school publicly disclosed Sakayanagi Arisu's entrance exam results, confirming that there was no suspicion of cheating involved.

With the official debunking of the rumors, the uproar gradually died down within two or three days.

However, some believed the school had blacklisted discussions on the matter, preventing students from talking about it, which explained why the controversy faded so quickly.

Another major event was Ichinose Honami's public confession.

Upperclassmen weren't particularly concerned with first-year affairs and merely treated it as gossip.

Only Nagumo Miyabi, upon hearing the news, completely lost his composure, nearly smashing the vase he kept in the student council office.

However, the first-year students were utterly shocked.

Many had firmly believed Ichinose Honami would never steal, dismissing the rumors as

baseless. No one expected her to admit it outright.

Honestly, even Class B students were dumbfounded by the situation.

Especially when Ichinose reiterated her confession in class.

Once everyone processed it, they unanimously responded with warm smiles toward their leader.

What else could they do but continue to believe in her?

Were they supposed to reject who she was now because of past mistakes?

Thus, when Kaoru finished his tutoring session and returned to his dorm, he pushed open the door to find Ichinose Honami alone in the kitchen, wearing an apron.

Noticing the sound of the door, the girl suddenly turned around, her gaze landing on Kaoru, her eyes instantly sparkling.

"You're back, Kaoru."

Kaoru fell completely silent.

She was still in her school uniform, with only a simple white apron tied around her waist.

As she turned, her skirt swayed slightly, revealing her fair thighs and the distinct curve of her perky ass.

Chapter 352: Liking Is a Feeling

The correct answer to such a question should be a firm denial—immediately asserting that no one could compare to her uniqueness, that his feelings for her could never be the same as for anyone else.

Yet, sensing the girl in his arms growing quiet, Kaoru hesitated before finally speaking.

"If it were the same, I wouldn't have given Honami the ring before. If it were different, I wouldn't be here with you now."

It seemed like an affirmation of his feelings for Ichinose Honami, but she understood the implication.

He wouldn't let go of her, nor would he let go of others because of her.

If he had done that, the two of them wouldn't be together now—because the opportunity that brought them together would never have existed.

"Like a scumbag," Ichinose murmured, her voice tinged with something between resignation and sorrow, as if she had expected this answer all along.

"Then, would Honami allow this scumbag to ask you one question in return?"

"No."

"What if he genuinely believes he likes you very much right now?"

"...Probably just a physical kind of liking."

Ichinose kept her expression stern.

She could feel Kaoru holding her without any restraint—the slightest movement from her elicited a reaction from him.

Though she wasn't deliberately provoking him, the sensation was unbearably embarrassing, as if she had already become some shameless woman.

For an inexperienced girl, this was too much.

She had only meant to kindly cook a meal for him, yet he had taken it as an opportunity to harbor improper thoughts—even calling her "Would make a great mom" earlier.

"Should I pretend not to like you when I do?" Kaoru said matter-of-factly.

"Liking someone can't be hidden. Whether it's their soul or their appearance—do I really need a reason?"

Ichinose wanted to cover her face.

How could someone be so shameless? Who would say things like this while teasing a girl?

"Honami, liking has never been about reasons—it's a feeling. Being with you feels comfortable, and I want to keep being with you. It's this feeling that lets me say I like you now. I could never have been this honest before."

"I-I get it!" Ichinose stammered, her voice barely audible as she lowered her head.

"Anyway, let go of me already. You're always like this... it's embarrassing."

"Fine. Shall we go take a bath together now?" Kaoru hadn't forgotten the earlier topic.

"You go ahead first. I'll join you right after I finish cooking." Ichinose Honami felt him release her and breathed a sigh of relief, though she soon grew ashamed of her own reaction—she'd already become accustomed to such things, feeling no trace of aversion.

But in the end, was there really no other way?

The girl concealed her expression, not letting him see, as she continued preparing the lavish dinner for the evening.

Seeing she still had work to do, Kaoru returned to the living room, picked up his phone, and sent a few messages—one to inform Karuizawa Kei that tonight's tutoring session was canceled, another to check updates from Kiriya Ikuyo and the others.

Ah, right—he'd nearly forgotten about Kushida Kikyo.

If that woman dared to use phone calls as an excuse to check up on him again, he'd have to teach her a lesson next time.

After handling these matters, Kaoru deliberately didn't bring a change of clothes.

He stripped off his day's attire in the bathroom, wrapped a towel around his waist, and stepped into the bath.

The bathroom was classic Japanese in style—no matter how small the space, a bathtub was essential.

However, this compact tub would be a tight squeeze for two.

Kaoru rarely used it himself, though Karuizawa had taken a few baths here recently.

It didn't seem so bad now.

Filling it with hot water made it worth looking forward to.

After a short wait, Ichinose's voice came from outside.

"Kaoru, should I come in now?"

Kaoru sat upright.

Though this wasn't his first time in such a situation, it was his first with her, and he couldn't help feeling nervous.

"Come in."

The moment he spoke, Kaoru froze.

The girl carefully pushed open the bathroom door.

The apron that had been tied around her waist was gone, revealing a pair of smooth, fair legs—even her stockings had disappeared.

Her bare feet padded softly against the damp floor as she stepped inside, her face completely flushed, though she forced a calm expression as she slowly approached Kaoru.

But this alone wasn't what stunned him into silence.

It was because she was still fully dressed—only her stockings had been removed.

"Couldn't find the spare towel?" Kaoru asked, unable to hide his disappointment.

Seeing his reaction, Ichinose knew she'd guessed right and couldn't help but smile mischievously while blinking.

"Does Kaoru's room actually have extra towels lying around?"

Kaoru suddenly realized he'd made a tactical error.

His room shouldn't have more than one towel—who kept spares ready in their bedroom?

"There is a spare, but it probably hasn't dried yet," he explained calmly, swiftly changing the subject.

"Wearing clothes in here will just get them wet. Wouldn't it be better to take them off?"

"I'm not the one taking a bath. I'm just here to scrub your back—I never agreed to join you." Ichinose flashed a triumphant, devilish grin, having already noticed the bathtub filled with hot water.

This guy was definitely plotting something.

"Fine, I won't look then. And didn't we just agree on this?" Kaoru made a last-ditch effort, "Actually, I wanted to help Honami wash your back too."

"Didn't hear that." Ichinose Honami said sternly, pressing her hands on his shoulders to turn him around.

The guy had a good physique—the muscle lines on his shoulders and abdomen were clearly visible, and his back faintly revealed a robust outline.

Not overly exaggerated muscles, but with a lean touch that wouldn't scare girls; instead, it would make them particularly excited.

Just touching him lightly with her fingertips made the girl's heartbeat drum so loudly she immediately withdrew, feeling her whole body burning up.

She had just thought of something particularly naughty.

"No turning around, no peeking, no talking, no moving..."

Listening to the endless list of prohibitions, Kaoru's lips twitched slightly.

How could there possibly be so many rules in this world?

"As you command. I won't do anything."

"I'll trust you for now."

Ichinose Honami picked up the showerhead, tested the water temperature, and, finding it suitable, crouched behind him.

Warm water instantly soaked his back.

Soon after, slender, smooth hands touched his back, tracing the lines of his muscles and spine.

The gentle movements of her fingertips felt ticklish yet pleasant.

When the water stopped, Kaoru could feel her picking up a towel to wipe his back.

Her hands brushed over his shoulders, moving downward, hesitating briefly at his waist before finally returning to the ribs beneath his arms.

Though Ichinose Honami tried her best to avoid intimate contact, her full chest occasionally brushed against his back—like a dragonfly skimming the water—suddenly grazing past, only making his nerves tense further.

"Can you wipe the front too?"

For a moment, Ichinose Honami's movements froze.

"Didn't we agree I'd only wash your back?"

"What's the harm? I want to see Honami's face."

"Shameless."

Considering she was still in her uniform, Ichinose Honami hesitated but eventually agreed to his request.

However, the girl had underestimated the risks in the bathroom.

Chapter 353: You'll make a Great Mom

Since spare dorm keys could be purchased, it was only natural that Ichinose Honami could unlock the door—especially since she had obtained Kaoru's permission beforehand.

After the initial surprise, Kaoru quickly regained his composure, though the sight of a beautiful girl in an apron in his room felt somewhat surreal.

Particularly when she held a ladle, smiling brightly and saying, "Welcome back."

Even someone like Kaoru couldn't help but entertain some bizarre thoughts.

"Honami."

As he approached step by step, Ichinose noticed his unusually intense expression and instinctively grew flustered.

She realized how suggestive her presence here might seem—almost like a newlywed wife.

But he was the one who had given her a ring! If she was having such delusions, it was entirely his fault!

"W-what's wrong?" Ichinose knew she shouldn't panic.

As his girlfriend, her being here was perfectly normal.

"D-dinner isn't ready yet... If you're thinking of doing something... naughty now..."

Her voice trailed off weakly.

Over time, she had learned what "naughty" meant, especially when Kaoru closed the distance without a word.

If even she could imagine herself as a newlywed wife, surely Kaoru's imagination was running even wilder.

Like, say... a welcome-home kiss...

Just as her thoughts spiraled, Kaoru suddenly dropped to his knees, wrapped his arms around her slender waist, and pressed his face against her soft stomach.

"Honami, you'd make such a great mom."

Hearing these words, Ichinose Honami froze completely.

Her previously uneasy mood plunged into utter stillness, her brain momentarily short-circuiting.

"P-please don't say things like that!" Ichinose's face burned crimson.

What kind of remark was that? Shouldn't he have said she'd make a great wife instead?

"I just came to thank you! We can't be talking about... that kind of thing yet!"

"I genuinely believe you'd be perfect as a mother," Kaoru said with complete sincerity.

Nothing was more evocative than coming home to see a high school girl wearing an apron, and now he could even catch the sweet, soft fragrance clinging to her.

"I-I get it! Just get up already!" Ichinose felt strange sensations coursing through her entire body.

His hands were positioned just inches from touching her hips, and his warm breath tickled her abdomen in a way that felt oddly intimate—as if she really had become a mother.

Of course, Kaoru had no intention of obeying.

He let his hands wander playfully along her thighs and the curve of her ass, drawing out adorable flustered reactions until she was genuinely about to lose her temper.

Only then did he casually stand up.

"That was too much! Even I have my limits, you pervert Kaoru."

Clearing his throat at her puffed-cheek anger, Kaoru deftly changed the subject.

"By the way, how did things go today?"

Remembering the day's events, Ichinose's lips curled slightly upward in quiet happiness.

She'd truly intended to handle this matter alone without involving Kaoru, which was why she'd avoided seeing him these past few days.

Kaoru understood her intentions perfectly and hadn't forced his way in.

Yet in the end, he'd still helped her settle scores beautifully.

"I said everything—all the things that had been weighing on my heart for so long." Ichinose's voice softened, then brightened with relieved laughter.

"It turned out so much better than I feared. I thought... no one would want to associate with someone like me anymore..."

Though she'd mustered her courage, the deepest recesses of her heart still held terror.

Even now, retrospective fear gripped her.

That's why Ichinose had come here.

Kaoru gently embraced the girl once more, stroking her small head as he murmured.

"I love being with you, Honami. It's such a comfortable feeling. Maybe that's how others see it too—they trust you, open their hearts to you because being with you feels right. They love the version of themselves they become around you."

As he spoke, Ichinose returned the embrace, her words almost like a soliloquy.

"I... I really like how it feels being with you too. Even when you're doing perverted things... Actually, it'd feel strange if you stopped..."

"Oh?" Kaoru's nose twitched. "Honami, are you making miso soup?"

"Mhm. Don't you like it?" Ichinose sounded puzzled.

"The pressure cooker's about to blow." Kaoru calmly observed the kitchen where steam was erupting like a volcanic geyser.

"Waaah!!"

As the girl's shriek filled the air, Kaoru enjoyed watching her flustered scrambling—though her practiced hands soon had the situation under control.

Without missing a beat, she began preparing tempura next.

Observing the girl in her apron, her perky ass slightly lifting the hem of her skirt, her smooth and delicate thighs pressed together, slender calves wrapped in black knee-high socks—though not much skin was exposed, the apron's coverage lent her a more domestic air, diminishing some of her youthful vivacity.

Yet, this sight was undeniably alluring, like a spring blossom quietly unfurling in the rain, its delicate branches trembling in the downpour while its fragrance slowly wafted forward, so tender it tempted one to pluck it immediately.

From behind, Kaoru embraced her again, whispering in her ear.

"I forgot to mention earlier—Honami looks adorable in an apron."

Ichinose Honami's face instantly flushed crimson, her shoulders trembling faintly as if even her ears had turned red.

Still, she forced herself to remain composed.

"Even if you call me cute, I won't do anything naughty with you right now."

"I don't think about doing naughty things every day either."

"Guh... P-please don't make me say it... Y-your... lower half... isn't it pressing against me right now?"

"..."

Kaoru felt slightly awkward.

Since the girl was busy cooking, her movements inevitably caused her perky bottom to brush against certain areas.

Moreover, due to Karuizawa influence, his desires had gradually been stoked.

"My apologies. I just wanted to hold you."

"You'd better mean that." Ichinose Honami huffed softly, her face still flushed with displeasure.

"But... well, Kaoru is a boy, and a pervert at that, so I can understand what you're thinking right now."

"Does that mean I'm allowed to do something?"

Ignoring her choice of words, Kaoru suddenly grew excited.

"No!" Ichinose Honami's fair complexion grew even redder.

Even if she could allow it, she would never say so.

"Go take a bath already—you smell awful!"

"I want to bathe with you." Kaoru stated his intentions plainly.

"Absolutely not!" Ichinose Honami's stance was firm.

She had only come to help Kaoru cook as a gesture of gratitude, not to offer herself up.

"How about just scrubbing your back? I won't do anything else—you know that." Kaoru refused to give up.

Sure enough, Ichinose Honami began hesitating.

"You scrub mine, I'll scrub yours. We'll both be wrapped in towels, so nothing will be visible."

This was a complete lie—his room was a single, so where would a second towel come from?

Ichinose Honami bit her lip.

If it was just helping him wash his back, she did want to reward him like this.

After all, discipline without rewards was ineffective.

But before giving the reward, she had to make sure he understood how hard-earned it was.

"Fine... but you have to agree to one condition."

"What condition?"

"No matter what I ask, you have to answer very, very honestly."

"...How about a different condition?"

Kaoru had a feeling this line of questioning would be fatal.

No matter how he answered, she wouldn't be fully satisfied and would only press further.

Or perhaps... today was finally the day he'd meet his end.

"No." Ichinose Honami flatly rejected his request.

"Either you answer my question and I'll help wash your back, or you go take a bath by yourself."

Seeing there was no way out, Kaoru had no choice but to agree to her terms.

"Listen carefully. I'll only ask once. You must tell the truth—no lies."

"I promise I won't lie."

Ichinose Honami still trusted Kaoru's promises.

However, she hesitated for a moment before softly asking.

"Is your liking for me... the same as your liking for other girls?"

Kaoru took a deep breath, feeling his scalp tingle.

What kind of terrifying question was this?

Chapter 354: Pushed Too Far

Watching the girl pour body wash into her palm, Kaoru wasn't sure what expression to make—he hadn't expected her to actually agree.

At this moment, due to the earlier back-washing, Ichinose Honami's uniform was slightly damp.

While using the showerhead, water had inevitably splashed onto her, soaking the front of her shirt.

The white fabric gradually turned translucent, revealing skin and delicate collarbones, the faintly indented lines somewhat alluring.

Similarly, the damp shirt clung tightly to the girl's full, perky chest—mature and tantalizing in just that aspect.

Crouched in front of Kaoru, the slightly short skirt hinted at a half-glimpse of something mysterious, while her smooth, snow-white thighs pressed against her calves, outlining plump curves.

Her knees were faintly flushed, utterly endearing.

As she raised her eyes, Kaoru instinctively covered his legs slightly—his desires had been running a bit too high lately, thanks to Karuizawa Kei's.

"Gulp... I shouldn't have agreed to this. It's way too embarrassing."

The moment their eyes met, Ichinose Honami had already turned her flushed face away, clearly realizing the overwhelming impact of facing each other like this.

"Looking at you like this, Honami, you're really adorable—it's almost like a motherly feeling," Kaoru began spouting nonsense again

. "Don't be shy. Just think of me as a baby and help wipe me down."

"How could there possibly be a high school baby?" Ichinose glared at him reproachfully.

But the mention of babies inevitably made her feel bashful.

At her age, she was no longer naive—she knew exactly how babies were made.

"The one right in front of you is one," Kaoru shamelessly retorted—or rather, he had been harboring such thoughts all along.

Ichinose didn't want to indulge him.

Biting her lip, she suppressed her shame and nervousness, slowly reaching out toward him.

With the slippery soap aiding her movements, her palm pressed against his chest, her fingertips tracing the contours of his muscles as if caressing him.

Her face burned, and her heart pounded uncontrollably.

Just as Kaoru seemed to be scrutinizing her body, she too had been stealing glances at his—filled with youthful vigor, brimming with vitality, undeniably strong and robust no matter how she looked at it.

Before this, she would never have paid attention to a boy's physique.

Yet now, she couldn't help but stare, and when she touched Kaoru, her chest fluttered like a startled deer, her entire body trembling with an indescribably strange sensation.

To make matters worse, Kaoru only had a towel wrapped around his waist, leaving the rest of his body completely exposed to Ichinose's gaze.

Considering she had never even held a boy's hand before, this level of impact was simply too much for the young girl!

Unaware of the chaotic thoughts swirling in her mind, Kaoru only felt ticklish under her touch.

Seeing her flushed face, he couldn't resist teasing her, poking her cheek playfully.

"D-Don't move around!"

Ichinose seemed genuinely annoyed, but Kaoru paid no heed to her.

Instead, he chuckled and patted her head.

The girl before him exuded a shy charm—her crimson cheeks, delicate lips, and fiery glare only adding to her allure.

Facing each other like this inevitably led to such situations.

Kaoru could enjoy her attentions while amusing himself by teasing her.

"If you keep moving, I won't help you anymore!"

"Ahem, I just wanted to praise you, Honami. You're doing great—it feels really nice. But your clothes seem a bit wet."

"Because you won't stop fidgeting!"

"My bad. You should take it off then. It's your school uniform—it'd be bad if it got dirty."

"..."

Ichinose felt she really ought to get angry this time.

This guy was getting carried away—not only did he make her wipe him down, but he also kept teasing her.

"Wash yourself. I'm leaving." The girl put on a stern face, rinsing the soap off his body and her hands with the showerhead before preparing to stand up.

"Wait—"

Before Kaoru could finish, he saw Ichinose sway unsteadily as she rose, prompting him to quickly reach out to steady her.

The next moment, Ichinose Honami's legs gave out, and she collapsed into his arms.

Having been squatting for so long, the numbness from poor blood circulation left her too weak to stand, and she instinctively reached out for something to steady herself.

Caught off guard, she ended up sprawled directly across Kaoru's lap.

"Are you okay?" Kaoru asked, supporting her shoulders, his heart pounding with fear.

A fall here could have been serious.

"Guh..." Ichinose didn't respond. Instead, she lifted her flushed face, their gazes locking.

Kaoru immediately realized the gravity of the situation.

He had already noticed where the girl had bumped into him—her entire face had been buried between his legs just moments ago.

"Because Honami is so cute, so—"

"N-no, don't say it!" Ichinose cut him off, her face burning with embarrassment, as if trying to reassure herself.

"I know it's just a normal physiological reaction! It's no big deal, not a problem at all!"

Liar.

How could it not be a problem? She had practically thrown herself onto it.

If not for the towel blocking the way, her lips might have touched it.

Uwah, why did it have to press up against her while she was talking?

The distance was so close that Ichinose couldn't help but notice the suspicious bulge in the towel right in front of her.

Only a few centimeters separated her from it—as if she might accidentally brush against it at any moment.

"N-no! Absolutely not!"

Panicked, Ichinose scrambled to get off him, moving as fast as a frightened rabbit.

However, she failed to notice what she was still clutching in her hand.

"Wait, Honami!" Kaoru had already realized, but it was too late to stop her.

This time, Ichinose didn't fall.

She managed to stand up smoothly—but in doing so, she also took Kaoru's towel with her.

Swish—

Ichinose snapped back to reality, sensing something off about the texture in her grip.

She looked down at the towel in her hands, then instinctively turned her gaze toward Kaoru—only for her pupils to tremble in shock.

"UWAH—?!"

Her scream was practically an air-raid siren.

The sight was far too impactful for the young girl's soul—especially the sight of that intimidating thing.

It was her first time seeing the real deal, and her face burned so hot she thought steam might shoot from her head.

She covered her cheeks with both hands.

"N-not now! I-I'm not ready yet! Absolutely not!"

Watching her peer through her fingers, face crimson as she stared at him, Kaoru was at a loss for words.

He could only shield himself below while standing up.

"It's a normal physiological reaction, and I wasn't planning to do anything to you tonight."

Whether he had any such intentions beforehand or not, his priority now was to calm Ichinose down.

He softened his voice.

"Uh... could I have my towel back?"

"Eh? The towel?" Ichinose froze.

She suddenly realized that while covering her face, she was still holding Kaoru's towel—meaning she had pressed it against her own cheeks.

"Guh—!"

A despairing shriek echoed through the bathroom, followed by complete chaos.

"Honami, don't run around!"

"H-here's your towel back!"

"Watch the floor!"

"Uwah!"

With a dull thud, the panicked little rabbit slipped and suddenly fell backward.

Had Kaoru not anticipated this, she might have hit her head on the ground.

Ichinose Honami cautiously opened her eyes and realized she was lying on something soft rather than the cold floor.

"Hiss—"

A pained hiss came from above.

Only then did Ichinose realize she had fallen into Kaoru's arms, her head bumping against his abdomen.

"Does it hurt?"

Instinctively, Ichinose tried to sit up, but her arm accidentally brushed against a certain spot, eliciting another sharp inhale from Kaoru.

"Wait, Honami, don't move there."

Ichinose looked down and saw that she had been pressing down on him earlier.

Gone was his usual imposing demeanor—now he looked like a severely injured caterpillar.

"This is all my fault," the girl said guiltily. "I'll call a doctor right away. You can't die."

Seeing her on the verge of tears, Kaoru felt both helpless and amused.

Weakly, he reassured her, "I won't die. My body isn't like an ordinary person's. I'll recover quickly."

"You can't lie to me," Ichinose bit her lip tightly, scanning his body before reaching to check his head, afraid she might find traces of blood.

"Really, I'm fine." Kaoru slowly sat up.

Thanks to past rewards that enhanced his physical abilities, his body, though seemingly ordinary, was actually special.

Ichinose stared at him silently, like a child who had done something wrong.

"You should go out first. I'll join you for dinner after I shower, or the food will get cold," Kaoru said softly.

He wasn't sure how to comfort her—it wasn't like he could just straighten up and regain his usual imposing air.

"I'll wait for you outside." Ichinose handed him the towel, glancing back repeatedly as she stepped out of the bathroom.

Once she was gone, Kaoru checked himself over—nothing seemed broken.

Though he had claimed he was going to shower, he only soaked briefly before quickly stepping out.

He hadn't been lying about one thing: Ichinose really was a great "mother."

Her cooking skills were exceptional.

Even though he'd tasted her homemade lunches before, these dishes still impressed him.

Kaoru had originally planned to call it a night there.

After all, Karuizawa Kei had been frequently visiting his room lately, and with Ichinose around too, it wouldn't be long before others took notice.

However, he hadn't anticipated Ichinose's reaction.

"Kaoru... should I take a look?"

After dinner, the girl nervously made this request.

Chapter 355: Confession

After leaving the room, Ichinose's face remained flushed with lingering embarrassment.

She really had become a shameless woman.

At this rate, it wouldn't be her correcting Mitoma—it would be Mitoma corrupting her.

Even realizing this, Ichinose didn't know what to do.

Their relationship wasn't a normal romantic one, and she had no prior experience with love, leaving her completely lost.

No, wait—that wasn't right.

She and him were a couple, so why should she care about whether it was "normal"?

It was precisely because she had always considered their relationship special that she felt so uncertain.

But if she put herself in the shoes of a normal girlfriend, wouldn't she be able to gradually change Kaoru?

Ichinose Honami recalled many girlfriend-specific tactics, like the classic checking up on him, or making their relationship public, strictly prohibiting other women from getting close to Kaoru.

It did seem like a good idea, but would it really work?

For the young girl, this question was too profound.

Although Kaoru had expressed to her that he was already reflecting on himself, she still didn't believe she had changed anything about him.

Initially, she had planned to use so-called possessiveness as an excuse to make Kaoru pay more attention to her.

However, possessiveness wasn't entirely the same as liking someone—it was simply not wanting to share something with others.

In other words, what exactly was liking someone?

Kaoru said his liking was a feeling, and Ichinose Honami also thought it made sense.

Being with him was comfortable, and she didn't dislike doing naughty things with him.

But sometimes, she really did get quite angry with him.

And how could any girl not care if their partner was a huge flirt?

With a heart full of confusion and disappointment, Ichinose Honami left the second floor and returned to the girls' dormitory, stopping in front of Amikura Mako's room.

Soon after, Amikura Mako appeared in her pajamas, looking somewhat surprised to see Ichinose Honami.

"Honami-chan, what happened to you?" Amikura Mako first noticed Ichinose Honami's condition.

She was wearing a jacket over her shirt—one that didn't look like it belonged to a girl—and the shirt underneath was damp with suspicious stains, as if she had been fooling around with someone and hadn't had time to tidy up.

Even her hair was a mess.

Ichinose Honami's face flushed red.

Not only had she helped Kaoru wash his back, but she had also done something naughty with him.

Her mind hadn't fully processed it yet, and she hadn't had time to clean up the traces on her body.

She could still feel her hands and mouth sticky.

"N-nothing, I just wanted to talk with Mako-chan for a bit. Can I come in?"

"Sure, that's fine. Come in."

"Excuse me."

Amikura Mako wore a smile, which made Ichinose Honami let her guard down slightly.

However, the moment she stepped inside, Amikura Mako sniffed the air, her eyes devoid of any warmth.

A strange scent, a boy's jacket—could she have just come from his room?

A girl's room was naturally different from a certain boy's.

After all, this was a place where she would live for three years, and Amikura Mako had decorated her room warmly, filled with personal belongings everywhere.

A few plush toys sat on her bed, ones she had won herself from a claw machine during an outing with Ichinose Honami and the others in the past.

Seeing the plushies, Ichinose Honami's gaze involuntarily drifted elsewhere as she sat properly at the desk, while Amikura Mako sat somewhat casually across from her.

"Are we talking about what happened today?" Amikura Mako spoke first. "I really think no one minds Honami-chan's past. Everyone makes mistakes—I once accidentally lost someone else's belongings too."

No one could understand the taste of malice better than Amikura Mako.

In a way, she and Ichinose Honami had shared similar experiences.

"No, that's not what I wanted to talk about..." Ichinose paused, her chest tightening as if bound by something.

A flicker of self-loathing flashed in her eyes before she pressed her lips together and spoke again.

"You already knew, didn't you?"

Amikura Mako stiffened slightly, then tilted her head.

"Huh? What do you mean, Honami-chan?"

"I never intended to hide it from everyone. At first, I really disliked him. The only reason I agreed was because I had no choice." Ichinose's expression turned remorseful.

"I'm sorry, Mako-chan."

Amikura Mako fell silent for a moment.

"Why apologize? I never said I liked him."

Seeing this, a complicated look crossed Ichinose's face.

In truth, she had been testing Amikura Mako.

If Amikura Mako hadn't known who "he" was, she would have been completely confused.

But the fact that she could respond like this meant she not only knew but was also aware of Ichinose's relationship with "him."

"But... I like him now." Ichinose took a deep breath and exhaled slowly.

"At first, I thought about stepping aside for you, but I was worried he might do something bad to you. And he's just... terrible. I was really concerned for you, Mako-chan."

"Why worry about me?" Amikura Mako seemed to be suppressing her emotions.

"I don't like him. The problem is you—how could you like him? Don't you know what he's really like?"

Amikura Mako felt her worldview had been shaken.

She couldn't understand how Ichinose could accept Kaoru Mitoma, even though he could be kind at times.

"I know. That's why I wanted to talk to you about it." Ichinose looked at her seriously, enunciating each word.

"Mako-chan, I'm Kaoru's girlfriend. We've been together since before summer break."

Amikura Mako averted her gaze.

Girlfriend or not, there's no need to stare at me like that.

It's not like I'd steal him.

Then, Ichinose began explaining how she and Kaoru had gotten together, including the initial blackmail.

Aside from the parts involving Amikura Mako, she summarized the past briefly—she had been short on Personal Points at the time, so she agreed to his conditions.

If it were anyone else, they might not have brought this up voluntarily, perhaps feeling too ashamed or even embellishing the story of their relationship.

Ichinose Honami, however, was different.

She felt that although her memories with Kaoru had moments of sadness and humiliation, there were also times of joy and happiness.

These were unique and precious things to her, and she wouldn't avoid or hide them.

Just like how Kaoru shamelessly declared he would "Take em all," she would openly acknowledge her feelings for him.

Thus, Ichinose Honami chose to lay her cards on the table with Amikura Mako.

After hearing everything, Amikura Mako fell completely silent, as if she didn't understand Kaoru at all—whereas Ichinose Honami seemed to know him far better than she did.

And under these circumstances, Ichinose Honami could still accept Kaoru?

But upon closer thought, Kaoru's words and actions were sometimes better than most guys.

If you ignored his lecherous side, he was actually quite charming.

For a moment, Amikura Mako's emotions were incredibly complicated.

Because she had already experienced it once yesterday—Kaoru Mitoma didn't seem to treat Ichinose Honami as just a convenient woman.

Instead, he had genuinely considered her feelings.

In comparison, she felt like she had no advantage.

"Can I ask you something?"

"Go ahead."

"Why do you like him?"

"I don't know," Ichinose Honami smiled. "Maybe because liking someone is just a feeling. Being with him feels... nice."

Amikura Mako froze.

She suddenly realized she had been searching for reasons all along—trying to find a justification to either accept or reject him.

In the end, she had convinced herself of a reason to refuse, which was why she had been so conflicted and hesitant.

After a while, the girl spoke bitterly, "I see. But... he has a lot of women around him, Honami-chan. You'd better be prepared."

Ichinose Honami gave her a soft smile, then slowly moved closer and gently took her small hand.

"That's why... I want Mako-chan to help me."

Chapter 356: United Front

Truthfully, Kaoru had overlooked one thing.

Based on Ichinose Honami's usual behavior, he had judged that her sense of morality was strong—and he wasn't wrong about that.

However, precisely because of this, Ichinose Honami couldn't completely sever her excess emotions.

She couldn't bring herself to employ the so-called "main wife tactics" and remained unable to be ruthless.

It wasn't just because Amikura Mako was involved, but also because she realized it would be utterly futile.

When she couldn't even control Kaoru, concepts like "main wife" or "declaring sovereignty" were nothing but illusions.

The essence of "correcting" him was to make Kaoru acknowledge her rules and change the parts of himself that didn't align—not to force him to submit to her.

The current situation was that she hadn't made Kaoru accept her rules, so she felt she hadn't truly "corrected" him.

Kaoru's rules were simple: he wanted to "Take all" and wouldn't let anyone go.

Thus, Ichinose Honami was in an awkward position.

Normally, girls would scold Kaoru and angrily break up with him.

But Ichinose Honami had never considered breaking up.

Either she would "correct" Kaoru into a pure love warrior, or she would actively integrate herself into his world—accepting his rules while proposing her own.

The first priority?

Correcting Kaoru's lecherous tendencies.

Of course, she never expected Kaoru to suddenly give up his womanizing ways—and there was no way he ever would.

At the very least, couldn't he control himself a little?

Ichinose Honami had once counted on her fingers—setting aside herself and Amikura Mako, there was Sakayanagi Arisu, Kamuro Masumi, Kushida Kikyo, Asahina Nazuna, and Tachibana Akane.

Wasn't that just way too many?

If Kaoru fell for every girl he met, no matter how open-minded she was, she couldn't possibly tolerate it.

So, the first thing that needed to change was this—no more adding to the list.

Then there was the issue of dating multiple people at once.

This was the most pressing concern, and it couldn't be taken lightly.

Simultaneously dating several girlfriends—forget jealousy—what kind of looks would they get from others?

What would happen after graduation? Who would hold higher status? And what about their families?

Most importantly, Kaoru couldn't just treat this as some casual fling.

That would be far too irresponsible.

"You want my help?" Amikura Mako was momentarily stunned, wondering if she had misheard.

"Did I hear that right? What could I possibly help you with?"

"Mako-chan, do you like Kaoru?" Ichinose Honami asked bluntly. "I want the truth. If you lie, I'll get angry."

Amikura Mako was even more bewildered.

Then her face flushed red, and she bit her lip, hesitating before finally mumbling, "I... I don't know. Ever since I saw that other side of him, I felt disgusted, repulsed... but sometimes I still remember how it was when we were together."

"So you do have feelings for him." Ichinose suddenly smiled, pinching Mako's nose playfully.

"Actually, I'm just like you, Mako-chan. I have no experience with love either. I keep thinking about all the things I hate about him, and then his good points—getting angry for no reason, liking him for no reason."

"It's all because you guys egged me on back then!" Mako's face burned even hotter.

"At first, I didn't think anything of it at all. You're the ones who led me astray, making me tense up every time I see Mitoma-kun, like every little thing he does is a prelude to a confession."

"I was just testing you back then!" Ichinose's own face reddened.

"Besides, you were the one who called me later and said you might have fallen for Kaoru."

"I never said that!" Mako refused to admit she had ever said such a thing.

She had only confided her frustrations to Ichinose Honami as if complaining about some trivial matter.

Ichinose withdrew her hand, her smile fading as she returned to her usual demeanor.

Softly, she murmured, "I don't want to break up with Kaoru. And I don't want to see you struggling and suffering like this, Mako-chan. We're supposed to be good friends."

Mako froze.

Then she heard Ichinose continue, "If Kaoru and I were in a normal relationship, I would never do something like this, but... So, I want to know—what do you think, Mako-chan?"

Now she understood.

Amikura Mako covered her mouth in disbelief before stammering, "W-wait, this... this can't possibly work... Me and him... No, no, no, no! Honami-chan, has he been tricking you?"

"Maybe. I want to have him all to myself—but is that really possible?" Ichinose's voice turned distant.

"In places I don't know about... you'll still be with him, won't you, Mako-chan?"

Amikura Mako was about to deny this statement, but recalling yesterday's events, she fell silent.

Her gaze shifted to the side as she murmured softly, "No matter what, agreeing to let him continue being unfaithful is too much. It's just too unfair to Honami-chan."

"Not necessarily. Whether he wants to be unfaithful, whether those girls have feelings for him, or whether they'd even agree to his ideas—all of that is still unknown." Ichinose Honami smiled.

"If he can handle all those issues, do you think I'd have any reason to refuse, Mako-chan?"

Even if the other girls agreed to Kaoru's ideas, what could she, the "main wife," do to stop them?

Amikura Mako's expression turned complicated.

"Are you... considering my feelings in this?"

"Partly, but it's also because of Kaoru. If Mako-chan truly likes him and can accept this, I won't oppose it. But if you hate the idea, then no matter what, I won't let him get close to you." Ichinose Honami was firm.

Like was like, dislike was dislike.

If Kaoru Mitoma ever tried to force or threaten anyone, she would be the first to refuse.

Amikura Mako hesitated, wanting to say something but unable to find the right words.

The situation was overwhelming for her.

"Also... I was hoping Mako-chan could help me." Ichinose Honami continued, "You know Kaoru has quite a few girls around him. Some might not realize his true nature, while others might want to monopolize him. I want to ask you to help me explain to them that it won't work."

Not only did she need to control the numbers at the source, but she also had to eliminate competition.

Ichinose Honami didn't want to receive only a fraction of his affection.

"Stopping Kaoru's unfaithfulness isn't something one person can do alone. I can tell he won't change his mind easily." Ichinose Honami had already sensed Kaoru's mindset—sometimes, his thoughts weren't even in this school, lost in distant contemplation.

Combined with his experience in dealing with girls, she had a sharp intuition that her rivals extended far beyond the girls in school.

If things continued like this, Ichinose Honami could already foresee her fate.

She had to take the initiative.

Amikura Mako touched her own cheek and spoke up, "How... can I help you?"

"After the exams, let's go on a date together." Ichinose Honami took her small hand, her face flushing slightly.

"Next month is Christmas. I want to tell Kaoru how I feel."

"N-No way!" Amikura Mako stammered, her words faltering.

"Three people?! That's just..."

She didn't finish her sentence, her entire face burning red as her voice trailed off.

"It is a bit of a reward for him, but I won't force you, Mako-chan. So... H-stuff... we won't do that..."
Ichinose Honami's face was equally red.

"Mako-chan, you're so indecent!"

"I am not!" Amikura Mako retorted weakly.

But going on a Christmas date—wasn't it always leading to that kind of thing?

Still, she subconsciously sighed in relief.

If all three of them did something indecent together, it really would be too much of a reward for Kaoru Mitoma.

"Wait... have you and Mitoma-kun already... done it?" Amikura Mako suddenly remembered something critically important.

"No way!" Ichinose Honami retorted just as guiltily.

After all, they hadn't gone all the way—she still considered herself a pure and innocent girl.

Seeing her reaction, Amikura Mako understood.

Her face flushed even redder.

At their age, she was hardly ignorant—she knew there were things far more scandalous than kissing, and some that were even simpler than losing one's virginity.

"But... is this really okay?"

Faced with Amikura Mako's question, Ichinose Honami fell silent for a moment before smiling as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

"Since he plans to Take all, that's not my problem to worry about. Let him figure it out himself."

Chapter 357: The Sleeping Black Tea

A few days later, Kaoru saw Sakayanagi Arisu and Kamuro Masumi standing outside his room early in the morning.

"Good morning, Mitoma-kun." Sakayanagi Arisu greeted him before casually stepping past him and walking into his room as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

"At least say 'excuse me' or something?" Kaoru grumbled in slight annoyance.

Who in their right mind barged into someone's room this early in the morning?

"It's not like it's our first time here. It's freezing outside—move." Kamuro Masumi pushed her way in just as forcefully, her eyes scanning the room

"Huh. Weird. Nothing's hidden in here?"

"What exactly are you looking for?" Kaoru shut the door behind them, exhaling in relief.

Thank goodness they hadn't come at night.

"It's much better than before, Mitoma-kun." Sakayanagi Arisu immediately noticed the extra pairs of disposable slippers by the entrance before her gaze drifted to the caterpillar-shaped plush on the bed, the signs of kitchen use, and the overall arrangement of the room.

"What's this?" Masumi paused, picking up a long strand of hair from the floor, her expression turning icy.

"I haven't had time to clean yet." Kaoru glanced at her legs. "Also, take off your shoes before coming in."

"Tch." Masumi couldn't be bothered. It wasn't like this guy hadn't brought who-knows-how-many girls into this room already.

If she got mad over every little thing, she'd have died from anger long ago.

Today was a day off, so both Sakayanagi Arisu and Kamuro Masumi were in casual wear.

The former wore a black pinafore dress over a white long-sleeved blouse with a cute ribbon at the chest, exuding the refined air of a proper young lady.

The skirt's length was just right, revealing her slender, straight legs encased in sheer black tights—delicate yet subtly alluring in an untouchable way.

Masumi, on the other hand, didn't seem to have put much effort into her outfit—just a long-sleeved top and a jacket paired with jeans.

However, the high-waisted design accentuated her slim waist, and the curve of her perky backside was unmistakable.

Now, both had taken off their shoes.

Sakayanagi Arisu sat on his bed, her cane resting beside her, the tips of her toes lightly touching the floor, her ankles tinged a soft pink.

Meanwhile, Kamuro Masumi had settled at his desk.

The weather outside was getting closer to winter, but the room remained comfortably warm and cool like summer.

Kamuro Masumi had just sat down not long ago and already took off her coat. Even such a simple action couldn't help but draw attention.

"Would you like something to drink?" Kaoru averted his gaze from the curve of her chest.

Size was relative—currently, she was the most prominent figure in the room, while Sakayanagi Arisu was completely obscured by her bowtie.

Masumi wanted hot cocoa and Sakayanagi wanted coffee, but Kaoru prepared black tea for them instead.

"Are you doing this on purpose?" Masumi asked, exasperated.

"I didn't have cocoa, and the coffee ran out. Make do with this," Kaoru replied, placing the tea in front of her before handing another cup to Arisu.

"Be careful, it's hot. Don't spill it on my bed."

"Is this really black tea?" Sakayanagi sniffed lightly, her eyes widening in surprise.

She could tell the tea was of good quality.

"A kind person gave me some earlier," Kaoru nodded. "Would you like something to eat?"

"What exactly do you have to offer?" Masumi eyed him suspiciously.

"Nothing," Kaoru answered bluntly.

"If you don't have it, then don't ask people!" Masumi felt quite annoyed.

"Hehehe, don't take it to heart, Masumi-san. We were just here to have some fun, after all—this is Mitoma-kun's place," Sakayanagi smiled gently.

"Besides, it was our fault for disturbing so early in the morning. We were just too excited after receiving Mitoma-kun's invitation."

'So you do know it was improper.'

'I almost thought this was a room inspection', Kaoru mused internally.

"If you two want to play chess, then play chess. Why drag me into it?" Masumi took a sip of black tea, finding it rather bitter.

She really didn't like this kind of tea.

"To prevent someone from resorting to desperate measures," Sakayanagi explained softly, her smile unwavering.

Kaoru's face darkened.

"I hope it's not because someone refuses to admit defeat."

"Oh? More than that, I'm worried someone might get so angry they lock me up here," Sakayanagi blinked playfully.

"After all, I perfectly fit someone's fantasy of a loli. What if they decide to do something bad to me?"

Kaoru glanced at Sakayanagi's chest, prompting her to expressionlessly tap his shin with her cane.

"I didn't even say anything."

"No need. With someone like you, your face says it all."

"I was just thinking—this size is just right for a loli."

Kaoru got another tap.

The young lady's temper was truly unpredictable.

She was the one who called herself a loli, yet now she was angry.

"Enough small talk. Where's your chess set?" Sakayanagi placed her tea on her lap.

Her cup was a mug, so she didn't have to worry about it being too hot.

The gesture gave off the air of a young lady enjoying afternoon tea.

Since they were going to play, Kaoru had naturally prepared the board and pieces.

He sometimes practiced, though only briefly.

After setting up the board, Kaoru looked up at the girl's delicate face and asked.

"Aren't you coming down?"

"Masumi-san will play for me." Sakayanagi still hadn't taken a sip of her tea—perhaps she wasn't thirsty—but aside from resting it on her lap, there was nowhere else to place it nearby.

Noticing Kaoru's gaze, Masumi scowled.

"I'm just helping her. It's not like I want to play. I don't understand any of this."

So Masumi was just her proxy?

But thinking about it, Sakayanagi had leg problems.

Making her kneel in front of Kaoru for long periods was out of the question.

She could only sit on the bed and watch the two of them play.

Forget kneeling—Mitoma had noticed she never wore thigh-high socks, only tights or garters, because thigh-highs would slip down, and fixing them would be troublesome for her.

Thus, Kaoru accepted their rules.

The first move went to Sakayanagi, with him responding afterward.

Under Sakayanagi's direction, Masumi moved the queen, securing control over the center of the board.

Then, on his turn, Kaoru dutifully moved his piece.

"Hehehe, Mitoma-kun's chess skills haven't changed at all, have they?"

After just a short while, Sakayanagi had already gauged Kaoru's level, her face full of amusement.

"It's not over yet. Don't speak so confidently."

"Even if you act tough, the path to victory won't change, you know?"

"Do you really think I have to compete with you just to determine a winner?"

"Hehehe, that expression is quite amusing. Is it because there's no bet this time, so you think it doesn't matter even if you lose?"

"Do you want to make a bet?"

"No, today I'll just accompany you for a while and chat a bit."

As she spoke, Sakayanagi Arisu smiled and picked up her teacup, taking a delicate sip.

After she finished drinking, Kaoru inexplicably stared at her intently, as if watching a little rabbit walking into a trap—utterly baffling.

"Could it be that you want to bet... bet... bet..."

Sakayanagi Arisu felt her eyelids grow heavy.

Everything before her flickered in and out of focus. She was so tired, so sleepy.

Just as the girl was about to collapse, Kaoru swiftly caught her.

Chapter 358: Prank

At that moment, Kamuro Masumi was completely stunned.

Since Sakayanagi Arisu had been sitting on the bed behind her, she hadn't noticed anything amiss—until Kaoru Mitoma suddenly rushed over and caught Sakayanagi just as she was about to fall.

"Huh?"

Kamuro Masumi's pupils constricted slightly, unable to believe what she was seeing.

In the blink of an eye, Sakayanagi had fainted?

Quickly snapping back to reality, she stood up in a panic.

"She must be having a heart attack! We need to take her to the infirmary right now!"

However, Kaoru didn't follow her suggestion.

Instead, he gently laid Sakayanagi on the bed and calmly said, "No need for the infirmary. She's still breathing."

As soon as he finished speaking, he checked Sakayanagi's pupils and pressed his ear against her chest—her heartbeat was steady.

The effect was just as intended.

"She's unconscious! How is that not a problem?!"

"Have you ever seen her take medication before?"

"Not that I recall."

"Then it's not that serious. Besides, I was the one who put something in her tea. I know exactly how it works."

"So it was you who— Wait, you drugged Sakayanagi?!"

Kamuro Masumi looked at him as if he were an irredeemable pervert, instinctively taking a step back.

Her calf bumped against the nearby table, and her gaze dropped to the teacup still sitting there.

In an instant, she understood—he had drugged the tea!

"Relax, the effect only lasts about an hour or two. I tested it on myself last night. It just lets the person sleep peacefully, nothing more." Kaoru wasn't lying.

To be safe, he had experimented on himself first.

The Wish Machine's "Sleeping Tea" had no side effects.

"No, no, no! That's not the issue here!" Kamuro Masumi was practically treating him like a criminal.

"Why did you drug us? Has your fetish evolved from being a foot freak to a lolicon who forces sleep and then... you know?!"

"Not at all. I didn't drug you—the dose was small, and I only gave it to Sakayanagi." Kaoru gave her a puzzled look.

"Besides, if you were asleep, I wouldn't get to see your expressions. Why would I go through the trouble?"

Kamuro Masumi froze.

Forget why he hadn't drugged her—had he actually considered doing something to her and Sakayanagi Arisu?!

"She should have vaguely anticipated that I might do something to her today. Otherwise, she wouldn't have brought you along. But she's too confident—arrogant, even—and that overconfidence became her weakness." Kaoru turned his gaze back to Sakayanagi Arisu's sleeping face.

"She assumed that with you here, I wouldn't dare do anything too extreme to her—at worst, just play a game of chess or endure her taunts. That's why she fell for it."

Kamuro Masumi's lips twitched slightly.

Not only had Sakayanagi failed to predict this, but even she hadn't seen it coming.

No, no—no normal person would expect Kaoru to resort to drugging someone, right?

"Is this... something the school allows students to buy?" Masumi's expression darkened.

If the school permitted students to freely purchase such drugs, wouldn't that lead to all kinds of poison-related incidents in the future?

"I made it myself in secret." Kaoru clearly didn't want to dwell on the topic as he rummaged through his things nearby.

"I'd appreciate it if you kept this between us. Don't tell anyone."

"Impossible. Drugging and knocking out a girl is a crime, no matter how you look at it." Masumi flatly refused.

This kind of thing—either you drug someone together, or you don't do it at all. She had no idea what he was thinking.

Right now, Sakayanagi was asleep on the bed, and Masumi just stood there, feeling incredibly awkward.

How was she supposed to explain this when Sakayanagi woke up later?

"You're right. In that case, how about doing me a small favor?" Kaoru tossed his phone toward Masumi.

"Take some pictures for me later."

Masumi caught the phone reflexively, but upon hearing his request, she nearly hurled it back at him.

"What the hell are you planning?! Let me make this clear—if you try anything bad with Sakayanagi, I won't just stand by and watch!"

"Relax. I just want to snap a few embarrassing photos of her."

Kaorua pulled out a tube of lipstick.

Compared to markers or paint, this was much easier to handle and wouldn't leave any lasting traces.

While Masumi was still processing his words, he had already approached Sakayanagi.

To be honest, the little princess's sleeping face was quite lovely.

Her slightly upturned eyelashes had settled, her eyes tightly shut, her cute little nose perked up, and her soft pink lips pressed together.

Her fair, delicate skin had a snow-like sheen, looking as if a gentle poke would sink right in—who knew how soft it would feel?

Her petite body lay flat on the bed, her chest rising and falling gently.

A pretty bow covered her modest curves, and beneath her skirt extended a pair of slender, straight legs, tightly wrapped in thick tights, revealing only the most refined contours—enough to make someone want to reach out and touch them.

For a brief moment, as Kaoru drew closer, he felt as though he were approaching a sleeping beauty.

But despite the fleeting thought, he proceeded to doodle several turtles on Sakayanagi's lovely face—all while she remained completely unaware.

"Are you a child?" Masumi looked at him with utter disdain.

After going to such lengths to drug her, this was all he wanted to do?

"You might as well have just challenged her to a bet. Maybe you could've pinned her down and drawn on her properly."

"I can't beat her!" Kaoru said it as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

"You think I like doing this? If I could win against her, why would I need to drug her?"

Kamuro Masumi was momentarily speechless before asking, "You're not expecting me to take pictures of her like this, are you?"

"I thought you'd enjoy it. Any normal slave would seize the chance to retaliate, wouldn't they?" Kaoru replied, sounding genuinely puzzled.

"Cut the crap. I'm not a freak like you." Kamuro Masumi coldly raised her phone and snapped a few photos of Kaoru and Sakayanagi Arisu.

Well, she was just clearing her own name—making sure Sakayanagi wouldn't mistakenly blame her when the real culprit was Kaoru.

These photos were her evidence.

"Get closer. Why are you standing so far away?"

"Stop nagging. By the way, your turtle looks hideous."

"Why would I draw it nicely?"

"Not trying anywhere else?"

"Where else is there to draw?"

"What about her arms?"

"Should we write something?"

"Writing is fine, but what's with this line—'Lady Kamuro, I am your little slave'?"

"Stop hitting me! I surrender! Wait—don't snatch it!"

And so, completely unbeknownst to Sakayanagi Arisu, Kamuro Masumi and Kaoru Mitoma had their fun with her.

"Feels good. Everyone needs to unwind sometimes." Masumi admired her handiwork, the frustration she'd bottled up finally released, and couldn't help but smile.

"'My brain doesn't work,' 'I'm a cute little loli'... Kamuro, you're seriously disgusting." Kaoru held up his phone, mocking her masterpiece.

"Shut up. The last person I want to hear that from is you. Whose fault do you think this is?!"

A faint blush crossed Masumi's face before she decided Kaoru was just shifting blame.

"Too bad she's wearing tights today. Otherwise, I'd have written a few tally marks on her thighs." Kaoru sighed regretfully.

Masumi glanced at Sakayanagi's calves and said flatly, "A few tallies? If I weren't here, I bet you'd go even further."

"I swear I'm not a foot fetishist." Kaoru felt he could still salvage this.

"Think about it—if I were, would you even be allowed to wear shoes in class?"

"You're so disgusting." Masumi's gaze was practically lethal.

Kaoru wanted to argue further, but after looking at Sakayanagi and the "art" on her, he fell silent.

Just as Masumi was about to return the lipstick, she froze, realization dawning.

Wait—what had she just been doing?!

She'd joined in scribbling on Sakayanagi, turning from a bystander into an accomplice!

And this guy had been filming the whole time?!

"Mitoma!"

The moment Masumi lunged at him, Kaoru was already prepared.

He sidestepped smoothly, leaving her to crash onto the floor.

"Kamuro, calm down. We're in this together now."

"Together my ass! You tricked me into this!" Masumi ignored his excuses.

If she could just delete those photos, she could still play innocent.

Even if Sakayanagi questioned her, she could feign ignorance.

In the cramped room, Kaoru struggled to evade Masumi's assault as the two circled the small table a dozen times.

She was no delicate Sakayanagi Arisu—her physical prowess was on par with most boys, and now, fueled by humiliation and anger, she swiftly caught up to Kaoru after a few laps and tackled him to the ground.

"Give me the phone!" Kamuro Masumi straddled his waist, pinning him down with her legs while pressing his wrists against the ground.

This position maximized her control, leaving him little room to struggle.

"You were having so much fun earlier—why delete the evidence of your enjoyment?" Kaoru protested weakly, though the position did give him an undeniable awareness of the girl's perky ass.

"Because I never wanted to get involved in your mess! You're the one who tempted me!" Masumi's face burned red, but she maintained her furious glare.

"No, no, no. The moment you agreed to Sakayanagi's request, you were already in too deep, Masumi," Kaoru said.

"Now you only have two choices—stand with me or stand with Sakayanagi."

"You want me to side with you?" Masumi's expression turned icy.

"No way. Being near you feels like an open invitation for harassment—what's next, licking my feet?"

Kaoru trembled with indignation.

Had his reputation really sunk that low?

Chapter 359: Go Ahead, Lick Then

The scene now was bizarre—a silver-haired lolita lay sprawled on the bed, deep in an infant-like slumber, her face and arms covered in strange doodles and cryptic scribbles.

On the ground, a girl was straddling a man.

Her slightly plump curves were clearly outlined by her thin long-sleeved shirt and jeans.

Bent at the waist with her legs clamped around the man's hips, the rounded shape of her pert backside was prominently visible through the tight jeans, the curve pressing against the man's abdomen as if to pin down his resistance.

Every now and then, she would reach out to snatch at the man's phone.

"Hurry up, give me your phone!"

"You've already done it, why care about this now?"

"I was accidentally fooled by your sweet talk. Thinking carefully, you could've just drugged me too. The only reason you didn't was because you wanted to drag me down with you."

"You're already in deep."

"Damn it!"

Any passerby who happened upon this scene might think they'd stumbled upon some mysterious ritual.

Kamuro Masumi didn't dare get up from him, not even shifting slightly, otherwise Kaoru Mitoma could immediately break free from her restraint.

She could only use her body weight, pressing one hand against his wrist while desperately reaching for the phone with the other.

However, Kaoru stretched his arm straight out, keeping the phone just beyond her reach.

Kaoru likewise didn't dare loosen his grip on the phone, otherwise Kamuro would immediately get up from him.

The moment she made any move to rise, he would seize her and prevent her from standing.

Thus, the two found themselves in a deadlock, neither daring to make any sudden moves.

"Stop squirming!" Kamuro glared at Kaoru.

With their current proximity, she could feel his breath against her neck.

"You're the one who shouldn't move." Kaoru took a deep breath, his nose filled with the girl's sweet, soft fragrance.

Perhaps from exertion, a few strands of her hair clung to her forehead.

Moreover, her collar sagged slightly from gravity, faintly revealing delicate skin and a glimpse of pale collarbone, as if a little further would expose the peaks of her chest.

"I don't understand what goes through the mind of a foot-fetishist like you."

Panting slightly, Kamuro finally gave up when she realized she couldn't win the tug-of-war.

"Whatever, consider today my bad luck."

With that, she finally got up from Kaoru.

Kaoru watched her with lingering suspicion, but continuing this stalemate seemed pointless.

He bluntly said, "You don't actually have to obey Sakayanagi. Even if she threatens to expose your past—it's not like you have any friends. Who would care about that anyway?"

Kamuro's mouth twitched.

How very sorry she was for not having any friends.

"Without value, the class might abandon me someday." Kamuro cut him off before he could speak, anticipating his response.

"This isn't just my thinking—many in class feel the same. Take Yamamura—why do you think she obeys Sakayanagi's orders?"

"I could protect you too, you know?" Kaoru was perplexed.

Whether within the rules or beyond them, he now had the ability to shield Kamuro.

"Until graduation?" Kamuro Masumi scoffed dismissively.

"Give it up. Most people prioritize class interests over individuals. Asking them to sacrifice both Personal Points and Class Points to protect one person is far too sentimental."

This approach seemed more like Class B's style.

Their Class A didn't need to climb rankings—they just needed to ensure smooth graduation.

On that basis, losing one or two worthless burdens would actually benefit Class A more.

"I understand your perspective, but are you really useless right now?" Kaoru smiled.

"After becoming the grade-wide champion at the sports festival, do you think anyone would abandon you?"

Kamuro Masumi stared at him intently.

Kaoru hesitated for a moment, about to speak, when the girl suddenly leaned in and snatched his phone with lightning speed.

"Finally fell for it. Dealing with you really is a pain."

Kaoru's smile faded as he stared blankly at Masumi.

"Ah, damn—it's password-locked." Masumi frowned the moment she got her hands on it.

"What's the password?"

"Like I'd tell you?" Kaoru remained unshaken—otherwise, he wouldn't have been so careless.

"Your birthday?" Masumi glanced at his expression, noticing his slight stiffness, and immediately started entering the code.

"Wait, even if you delete the photos, what are you trying to hide? Once Sakayanagi wakes up and sees you unharmed, she'll assume you conspired with me." Kaoru made a last-ditch effort to reason with her.

"If you can guess her thoughts, why wouldn't she guess yours? As much as I hate to admit it, I'm her last line of defense." Masumi flipped through the gallery.

"Tch, you really are a foot fetishist creep—you even took pictures of feet."

"I'm not a foot fetishist! She was the one walking around with her legs exposed—why shouldn't I look?" Kaoru was tired of his image being dragged through the mud.

He felt the need to set the record straight.

"You even took pictures of my feet. How is that not being a foot fetishist?" Masumi gave him a strange look.

She was wearing jeans—her entire legs were covered except for her exposed feet.

"Honestly, today I was planning to take some... provocative photos. You know, while Sakayanagi was unconscious." Kaoru admitted his crime.

"I didn't expect you to show up too. My bad."

"Disgusting." Masumi shot him a look of utter contempt. "To you, feet are the most provocative thing, huh?"

"Don't slander me!" Kaoru felt humiliated.

How could he possibly be a foot fetishist?

Masumi smirked coldly and stretched out her right leg—her slender calf and white-socked foot planted firmly on the floor in front of Kaoru.

"If you admit you're a foot fetishist creep, I might let you have a lick."

Kaoru stared at her foot.

The texture of socks was nothing like stockings, and the scent was completely different too.

Noticing the hesitation on Kaoru's face, Kamuro Masumi snorted twice.

A foot-fetishist pervert was still a pervert—normal people wouldn't hesitate because they'd never even consider licking in the first place.

"Don't want to? Or would you prefer bare feet?" Masumi said, as if accommodating his feelings—or deliberately tempting him.

Her fingers pinched the edge of her sock, slowly pulling it off to reveal fair, delicate toes and a rosy, tender ankle that looked utterly delectable.

At the sight, Kaoru's throat moved slightly.

The corners of Masumi's lips curled up faintly.

Then, suddenly, she saw Kaoru move toward her, leaning in.

A flicker of shyness flashed in her eyes instinctively, but she quickly steadied herself.

After all, this guy was a foot-fetishist pervert—of course he couldn't resist.

It was exactly as she'd expected.

However, the next moment, Masumi only felt a warm, wet sensation on her cheek.

Chapter 360: Slap!

Slap!

Perhaps out of pure instinct, the moment she sensed something strange, Masumi reacted as if swatting a fly—her hand lashed out reflexively.

Unsurprisingly, Kaoru clutched his cheek.

After all, licking a girl's face was practically asking to get hit.

"Ah—s-sorry, I don't know why I just..." As she spoke, Masumi gradually processed what had happened.

Her face burned crimson, her eyes brimming with humiliation and fury.

"What the hell were you doing?!"

This guy had taken advantage of her guard being down to lick her face!

This wasn't just foot-fetishism anymore—this was irredeemable perversion!

Masumi felt goosebumps rise all over her body.

The sticky sensation still lingered on her cheek.

She touched it—was it really gone? Or had it already seeped into her skin?

"Didn't you tell me to lick?" Kaoru said calmly. "A lick is a lick. The location shouldn't matter."

"How could it not matter?!" Masumi was stunned by his shamelessness.

Then, she suddenly realized just how dangerous her situation was—if this guy decided to do something to her now, she probably couldn't stop him.

"You were bold enough to ask me to lick your feet. Doesn't that make you the more depraved one?" Kaoru sneered.

"What kind of normal girl takes off her socks in a guy's room and tells him to lick her toes? That's clearly your kink."

Masumi laughed in disbelief.

This guy was actually playing the victim first? She raised her phone coldly.

"Take a look at these photos. What are these? Either you're sneaking shots of my butt or Sakayanagi's feet—you perverted creep!"

"I took some, sure. But aren't these the ones you took?" Kaoru pointed at certain photos on the phone.

"I took pictures of feet, fine. But you even snuck shots of Sakayanagi's chest."

"Lies! When did I ever—?!"

"Don't believe me? Check for yourself."

"If I don't find any, you're dead."

Just as Masumi started flipping through the album, a hand suddenly appeared in her vision.

Before she could react, it effortlessly snatched the phone away.

Masumi froze for a moment before realizing she'd been tricked—he'd deliberately distracted her.

"You damn per—"

The girl had just lifted her head when she found herself staring into a pair of eyes so close they seemed within reach.

Their deep pupils resembled the abyss of the ocean, as if countless flickering stars resided within them.

The words she had been about to speak came to an abrupt halt.

A soft, warm sensation brushed against her lips, and a gentle warmth suddenly teased her hair.

Her heart pounded wildly, as if a little deer inside her couldn't take it anymore and was about to burst through her chest.

After a moment, Kaoru looked at her stunned expression and chuckled softly.

"Kamuro-san, perhaps both you and Sakayanagi-san were mistaken. My target today might just be you."

Kamuro Masumi froze for a long time, unconsciously touching her lips as a whirlwind of emotions surged within her.

Was her first kiss really gone just like that?

For a girl, a first kiss was naturally something of great significance.

It should happen in the perfect place, under an intoxicating atmosphere, where his gaze would be so mesmerizing that she'd willingly close her eyes, stand on her tiptoes, and bravely meet his kiss with a touch of unforgettable passion.

"How disgusting."

Kamuro Masumi glared at him coldly.

Of course, she didn't have such girlish, fairy-tale fantasies.

Instead, she spat in disgust, pulled out a tissue, and vigorously wiped her mouth.

"Tch, it's all your saliva. You're such a creep. If you pull something like this again, I'll call the police. Sexual harassment is a capital offense, you know."

Kaoru frowned, as if things hadn't gone as he'd expected.

[Kamuro Masumi: Chaos, chaos, chaos...]

[Suggestion: Display your "Erotic Massage Technique" in front of the target to effectively ease the awkward tension.]

Was her brain still not processing what had happened?

"Heh, Masumi-san is completely dazed. You could actually take the chance to kiss her again."

For some reason, a familiar voice came from the bed.

Kaoru turned around to see Sakayanagi Arisu lying on the bed, propped up on her side, watching them with an amused smile.

However, she probably hadn't noticed the thing on her face yet—otherwise, she definitely wouldn't be smiling.

"W-when did you wake up?" Kamuro Masumi panicked, not just because she had also been involved in the scheme, but also because her first kiss had been witnessed by Sakayanagi Arisu.

"I've been awake for a while now, Masumi-san." Sakayanagi was lying—she had just woken up, right in time to see the moment the two kissed.

As she spoke, she glanced at Kaoru, trying to discern something from his expression.

Despite having just woken up, Sakayanagi's thoughts were crystal clear.

The first thing she realized was that she had fallen victim to Kaoru's trap—he had drugged her tea.

He must have slipped in something like sleeping pills, which had knocked her out for nearly an hour without her even realizing it.

It wasn't entirely Sakayanagi's fault for falling for it.

Who would expect someone to drug their tea?

Such tricks were things you'd only encounter in the outside world—students here wouldn't even have access to such things.

Sakayanagi felt deeply frustrated.

Though she trusted that Kaoru wouldn't do anything truly dangerous to her, this kind of unpredictable, helpless feeling of being completely at his mercy was unbearable.

It left her feeling utterly insecure.

She tried to sit up but suddenly froze.

From Sakayanagi Arisu's perspective, her sleeve was pulled up, revealing strange words on her originally snow-white arm—what appeared to be a few sentences.

"I am an adorable little loli..."

As Sakayanagi read the words aloud, Kamuro Masumi shuddered and casually turned away.

She wasn't some perverted lolicon—there was no way she had written that.

"Fufufu..." Sakayanagi felt her sanity crumbling as an extremely dangerous smile crept onto her face.

"Mitoma-kun, would you mind explaining what this means?"

"Arrogantly clinging to the belief that you can't lose—I don't even know why you dared to accept my invitation. Chess clearly favors you, so why would I willingly walk to my doom?" Kaoru waved his phone smugly.

"In this world, there's more than one formula for victory. Opponents don't always play by your rules. And right now, I have hundreds of photos of Sakayanagi-san."

At the last sentence, Sakayanagi nearly lost her composure.

So he drugged her just for a prank and to take embarrassing photos?

The moment she woke up, she had braced herself for the worst, never expecting Kaoru Mitoma to completely defy her expectations.

This pervert!

"What's the point of these things?!" Sakayanagi immediately dismissed his so-called efforts.

"I don't care about these photos. Even if you spread them, they won't affect me."

The first step to avoiding blackmail was to deny the importance of the leverage—she couldn't let him use it against her.

"Who said I was going to spread them?" Kaoru blinked innocently. "Actually, I invited a few classmates over for a gathering today. They should be arriving soon."

In an instant, Sakayanagi's expression froze.

Masumi knew the little princess had been utterly defeated.

The moment she drank that tea, today's loss was inevitable.

"Masumi-san, were you just going to stand there and watch?" Sakayanagi's voice was laced with pain, as if she had been betrayed.

"I tried my best. It's just that this pervert is too much of a pervert." Masumi averted her gaze guiltily.

"You saw it yourself earlier—he almost assaulted me."

She didn't answer directly, nor did she lie—she simply omitted part of the truth.

Kaoru didn't expose her act.

Once he sent those photos to Sakayanagi later, she'd understand the meaning of regret.

"Is this your revenge against me?" Sakayanagi recalled the moment Kaoru had invited her.

"I don't understand why you're protecting Ichinose-san."

"It's not just about that. I just wanted to teach the haughty little princess a lesson," Kaoru replied.

Sakayanagi bit her lip before suddenly commanding, "Masumi-san, snatch his phone!"

Masumi knew this was a test—Sakayanagi wanted to see if she would still obey.

So she put on a show, making a few half-hearted swipes at Kaoru before predictably missing.

"At this point, no amount of desperate struggling will change anything." Kaoru stepped closer to the bed with an impassive expression, looming over Sakayanagi as her eyes flickered with panic—as if he might pounce on her at any moment.

"Guh... You're even taking my first kiss?" Sakayanagi Arisu forced a calm and composed demeanor, coldly meeting Kaoru Mitoma's gaze.

"Think carefully about the consequences. I'm not a woman who can be easily dealt with."

The next moment, Kaoru's fingers trailed over the girl's calf.

Her shoulders trembled slightly, clearly feeling his fingertips moving upward along her leg, past her knee, and slowly stopping on her thigh.

Just a little further, and his hand would invade beneath her skirt.

"You really are a perverted foot fetishist." Sakayanagi seemed to resign herself, closing her eyes as if waiting for something.

However, Kaoru grabbed her waist and swiftly flipped her over, revealing the girl's perky ass before him, the skirt draping over the slightly raised curve of her hips.

Slap—

Sakayanagi froze for a moment before her entire face slowly flushed red.

She had been spanked by Mitoma again—this time on the bed, right in front of Kamuro Masumi.

"Mitoma-kun, this is the second time... I won't guh—"

Slap—

"You... this is how you treat a girl? Mmmph..."