

Cote 531

Chapter 531: Sounds in the Restroom

"W-wait, I was just saying you should cross-dress!" Kamuro attempted to counterattack Kaoru, wanting to reclaim the initiative—otherwise, the situation was becoming unbearably awkward for her.

"Does Masumi still want to take off her clothes?"

Kaoru blinked, having already discerned that Kamuro had mostly regained her sobriety.

Kamuro's face burned with embarrassment.

She knew she had been drunk earlier, but could she admit that now?

Not only was it impossible, but the lingering alcohol continued to numb her nerves.

The scalding blood rushing through her veins stimulated her hormones throughout her body.

Logically, she should despise Kaoru toying with her delicate feet, yet the alcohol amplified the peculiar sensation of being played with.

This thrill of secretly enjoying something she knew she shouldn't brought Kamuro an inexplicable joy.

Unbeknownst to her, the feelings she was experiencing were exactly what she imagined a bar would evoke—under the combined stimulation of alcohol, lighting, and music, a young body is tempted by primal instincts, gradually giving rise to longing and desire.

Although this wasn't a bar, the enclosed environment, the effects of alcohol, and the presence of someone she liked right before her eyes similarly bestowed upon Kamuro a peculiar sensation.

Her mind was unsettled, as if a hole had opened in her stomach lining.

Her entire body felt abnormally feverish, leaving her at a loss.

"But if it makes Masumi happy, I could even wear women's clothing."

Kaoru spoke with clear hesitation, "There's a women's clothing store on the first floor. At worst, I'll just buy an outfit."

Kamuro suddenly froze, then burst into laughter, laughing so hard that Kaoru's face darkened.

"What's so funny? Isn't this what you asked for?"

"So you were actually considering cross-dressing? If I told Sakayanagi that, she'd definitely go 'ah—'..."

Just as Kamuro was laughing heartily, Kaoru expressionlessly began playing with her calf, his fingertips gradually moving upward until they brushed against her plump thigh.

Her initially cheerful expression instantly turned even more flushed.

Biting her lower lip, she pushed against Kaoru's shoulders with both hands, trying to stop his upward movement.

Her gaze was fierce, but soon it couldn't help but glisten with a hazy moisture.

No matter who it was, subjected to Kaoru's teasing, they would likely show a pleading expression.

Though she wore safety shorts, her snow-white, full thighs could not escape Kaoru's grasp.

The tall, soft body before him was enough to provoke any man's desire to dominate.

Unconsciously, Kamuro's pushing hands transformed into a tight grip on him.

She desperately suppressed the sounds rising in her throat, her breathing growing heavy.

Kaoru had initially only intended to teach her a lesson, but whether it was her curvaceous, satisfyingly firm buttocks or her dazzling thighs, everything about her was enough to excite him.

And so, his fingertips reached the edge of her safety shorts. Kamuro bit her lip and stared at him, offering no resistance.

Seeing that expression, Kaoru's heart raced wildly.

Anyone with half a brain could guess what the girl was thinking.

"Masumi..."

His soft call brought Kamuro somewhat back to her senses.

Meeting his gaze, her thoughts in disarray and her cheeks flushed, she whispered.

"Go on. You like me anyway. All men want this, especially a pervert like you."

Under normal circumstances, she would never say such a thing.

The last time she'd allowed him to look lower was likely just a momentary lapse of judgment.

But today, she had been drinking.

"I just wanted you to have a good time today." Kaoru took a deep breath. "Actually, this afternoon..."

"I heard you've been accompanying them on dates all along."

Kamuro looked down at him slightly, a few strands of hair falling as her fair neck was perfectly displayed.

With flushed cheeks, she tried to appear nonchalant. "Just counting their names makes me think you're too exhausted."

After spending Valentine's Day with them, followed by Kamuro's birthday—such time management and energy were certainly beyond ordinary endurance.

"Rarely is it your birth..."

"It doesn't matter. I never cared in the first place. Birthdays are just symbols, dates marked on the calendar. I don't care about any sense of ceremony."

"Isn't it because you have no friends?"

"How much do you love using that joke?"

Kamuro gritted her teeth, then relaxed. "Forget it. I don't think it matters anyway. Would you not like me if today didn't exist?"

Kaoru froze.

He had just noticed Kamuro mentioning "like," and now she said this—did it mean she acknowledged their relationship was special?

"Has Masumi accepted my confession?"

Kamuro immediately turned her head. "I didn't say that. You liking me doesn't mean I like you. It's just that, considering you like me, I occasionally keep you company."

So many stubborn people—probably enough to form a mahjong table.

Kaoru pulled her into his embrace.

She was surprised but remained silent.

"You're hard."

Kamuro simply stated her observation, since she was now sitting in Kaoru's lap.

"Because Masumi is in my arms."

Kamuro realized it wasn't just him.

When his breath touched her earlobe, just leaning in to speak, her body had reacted on its own, heating up in a way that was too embarrassing to mention.

Fortunately, he hadn't removed her safety shorts earlier, so she was still safe.

"Can't you move it away?"

Kamuro had never seen the real thing, only heard fragmented explanations.

What if she accidentally soiled her clothes?

"Maybe you could move a little?"

Kaoru was surprised she wasn't resisting as usual, instead allowing him to hold her in his arms.

Kamuro shifted slightly, only to feel the troublesome thing pressing against her as if retaliating, firmly nudging between her thighs.

"Ahem, I can't quite control it."

Kaoru explained somewhat awkwardly.

"I don't mind."

Kamuro felt exasperated, leaning against his chest as the alcohol made her drowsy.

Kaoru breathed in her scent, her soft body in his arms, his hands unconsciously holding her waist as he began to move slowly.

"Have you done it with them?" Kamuro asked abruptly.

Kaoru thought it wouldn't hurt to tell her, so he whispered a few names near her ear.

"Not Sakayanagi?"

Kamuro looked puzzled. "Shouldn't a brat like that be pinned to the bed and taught a lesson?"

"You hold quite a grudge against her." Kaoru chuckled.

"Just... never mind. Your affairs have nothing to do with me."

Kamuro said, "How long are you going to stay hard?"

Kaoru paused. "I can't control that."

"Hmph, your mind is full of dirty thoughts."

Kamuro said this, but her small hand grew restless. "In that case, I'll change my request. Show me yours."

"What?" Kaoru thought he had misheard—why did it sound so familiar?

"I've already let you look, now it should be my turn, right?"

Kamuro reached out and indeed touched something strange.

She felt both curious and inexplicably excited.

Kaoru realized the severity of the situation, but the girl in his arms had already restrained him.

With no way to retreat, he could only let her unzip his pants.

Chapter 532: I Am Not an Object for the Two of You to Toy With

The events of today had taken Sakayanagi Arisu by surprise.

Kaoru had actually skipped class with Kamuro, and he did it so publicly, blatantly ignoring school rules in an unusually conspicuous way.

Come to think of it, today was her birthday. Was this a date?

"How outrageous! He completely disregards the class and will cost us points!" Hearing Totsuka Yahiko's complaints, Sakayanagi Arisu surveyed the atmosphere around her.

Perhaps the shock of them skipping class was too great—most people were discussing the incident, with some believing it was simply a young couple's date.

After today, the nickname "Harem Overlord" would undoubtedly be firmly established.

What a headache.

Sakayanagi Arisu took out her phone and saw that the two's location was stationary at Keyaki Mall.

Though she didn't know what he was thinking...

She couldn't help feeling a little irritated.

[Did Mitoma-kun say anything to you?]

Not far from her, Yamamura Miki seemed startled, then quickly typed on her phone and cautiously replied.

[Today is Kamuro-san's birthday. Mitoma-kun said we could have a small gathering tonight.]

Perhaps feeling it was inappropriate, she hastily added.

[Sakayanagi-san... would you like to come?]

Kamuro's social circle was very small.

Aside from Yamamura Miki and Kaoru, she usually only interacted with Sakayanagi Arisu.

Therefore, it was only natural for Yamamura Miki to ask.

However, Sakayanagi Arisu casually tapped on her phone as she responded.

[I have a gift prepared. Please bring it to her.]

Just because she had a good relationship with Kamuro didn't mean Kamuro had a good relationship with her.

Like Kaoru's previous piercing remarks—did she see Kamuro as a tool or as a friend?

One day after school, she had glanced over and noticed someone casually taking beer and gum from a convenience store without paying, which suddenly piqued Sakayanagi Arisu's interest.

That was how their subsequent interactions began.

So, their connection was merely born from her sudden curiosity.

Besides interest, her motivation for controlling Kamuro was indeed because she needed a tool.

Sakayanagi Arisu knew her physical capabilities were limited.

Her health issues forced her to rely on others' strength. If she were alone, she could accomplish nothing—even walking slightly faster would leave her breathless.

She could be considered a textbook invalid.

However, in this school, she had encountered an extremely mysterious individual, something she hadn't been accustomed to before.

Sakayanagi Arisu sometimes wondered what expression he would make if she took his hair and compared its DNA with a certain producer's.

It would definitely be amusing, right?

Because she was so curious, she asked her father to investigate.

Unexpectedly, even her usually calm and gentle father showed an extremely serious expression and warned her not to get too involved.

Although his two-year meteoric rise through the entertainment industry as a producer was legendary enough, it wasn't sufficient to make certain people wary.

What was it then?

Hypnosis, black magic, futuristic technology, aliens, super soldiers, sexual prowess, genius producer, extraordinary musician—all sorts of rumors and gossip converged around him, making people take notice.

On the first day they met, Sakayanagi Arisu saw none of these rumors in him.

She only saw a boy full of youthful spirit sitting in the back, wearing a clean school uniform.

He hadn't buttoned his blazer, revealing the white shirt underneath with the collar completely open.

His slightly immature throat stood out prominently against his pale neck, and his somewhat slender shoulders seemed to hold up the morning sunlight.

With calm eyes, he coldly observed the entire classroom.

When his gaze fell on certain people, it would linger briefly, yet without any unnecessary desire or movement.

The clamor of the crowd only accentuated his aloofness.

What was he thinking at that time?

Sakayanagi Arisu watched his movements: he would occasionally touch his own neck, his breathing slightly hurried.

Although he had brought his own bag, he borrowed paper and pen from Kamuro beside him. Unfamiliar with his surroundings, he showed surprise and unease upon seeing the school's promotional brochure.

During discussions, he suggested self-introductions and used paper and pen to record everyone's comments and names.

When responding to her greeting, he seemed to have some ulterior motive. In crowds, he often fixated on specific targets.

In the first few days, he didn't speak to anyone, often zoning out while staring at a particular spot.

He had no habit of going out and stayed in his room for about a month before returning to normal. His first reaction to concern from others was resistance.

During classes, he behaved normally but frequently let his eyes follow attractive girls...

Clearly, he started with intense self-isolation, but it gradually faded away.

When did it begin?

Sakayanagi Arisu's eyes grew distant.

Without a doubt, it was during summer vacation, especially when Ichinose Honami frequently appeared by his side.

This aligned perfectly with the rumors—he was a lecher.

But what did it have to do with her?

Who he liked to be with, whom he lusted after—Sakayanagi Arisu didn't care. Initially, she was merely curious about him.

Purely curious, like seeing a cat that could do backflips and wondering how it was done, what the reason was, and whether another cat could be taught.

In the end, this backflipping cat only wanted rewards from female cats, which irritated Sakayanagi Arisu.

From her understanding of Kamuro, as long as the other party was a bit forceful, Kamuro would obediently comply—after all, Kamuro was all bark and no bite.

"I heard there are capsule rooms at Keyaki Mall... They wouldn't be there today, would they...?"

Hearing the jealous tone in the boy's voice, Sakayanagi Arisu was momentarily taken aback.

She had almost forgotten—the school had capsule rooms, supposedly for temporary rest.

But everyone wasn't stupid; it was essentially a disguised love hotel.

After all, people had booked them before—like during Christmas and Valentine's Day.

The upperclassmen had many tricks up their sleeves; they couldn't possibly use the dorm, right?

What if someone ran into them? It would be too embarrassing.

In fact, some had already witnessed girls entering and leaving Kaoru's room.

Sakayanagi Arisu walked out of the classroom expressionlessly during the class break.

Navigating through the crowded corridor, she leaned against a corner and dialed Kaoru's number.

Amidst the static, she heard slightly labored breathing.

"What's wrong, Arisu?"

The other party was holding their breath, accompanied by the sound of fabric rustling.

What were they restraining?

"Heh, just checking on a truant student slacking off."

Sakayanagi Arisu smiled. "Kaoru-kun, is Masumi-san with you?"

"She is. Actually, today—"

"Let me hear her voice."

"..."

Sakayanagi Arisu narrowed her eyes, suddenly regretting making a phone call. She should have used video chat instead.

"How troublesome. Is that Sakayanagi?"

Kamuro's voice came through from the other end. "What do you want?"

Though she tried to sound nonchalant, her ragged breathing betrayed her.

Listening carefully, one could even detect faint whimpers.

Sakayanagi Arisu's face remained impassive.

Was she just material for the two of you?

"Masumi-san, your conquest difficulty is really too low."

Chapter 533: Taking It Too Far

The man's suppressed breathing, accompanied by strange wet sounds, made the girl's voice grow heated and unsteady.

"D-don't talk nonsense!"

Kamuro sounded like a bristling kitten. "We're not on a date or anything! Don't go misunderstanding things on your own!"

It sounded terribly forced.

Sakayanagi Arisu suddenly envisioned a scene of a man pinning down a girl—the girl desperately holding back while feeling furious about the interruption.

"Heh, today is Masumi-san's birthday, isn't it?"

Sakayanagi Arisu said calmly, "I've prepared a gift for you. Are you free to meet during lunch break?"

"Ah—nnh..."

At that moment, Kamuro let out a strange sound.

Sakayanagi Arisu's smile grew increasingly strained.

Though annoyed by their behavior, they probably weren't in a love hotel.

Because passersby's voices could be heard from the other end of the line, along with occasional sounds of running faucets—unlike an enclosed capsule room.

She felt somewhat relieved, but where exactly were they?

No sounds of orders or shop staff—not in a store.

Yet they were suppressing their voices, indicating they were in a place where exposure would be inconvenient.

"N-no need! I'll be back in the afternoon. This guy spent millions to get the mall to open... it's really infuriating!"

Kamuro spoke through gritted teeth, but beyond her voice, the rustling of clothes could be heard.

Sakayanagi Arisu paused slightly before laughing softly.

"I see. That makes me want to come even more. Where are you?"

There was one more class until lunch break. She would have to endure.

"At... at the mall! It's not like we have anywhere else to go."

Kamuro was playing dumb.

"Masumi-san." Sakayanagi Arisu enunciated each word clearly, "Where are you?"

The atmosphere fell silent, with only faint panting audible from the other end.

Sakayanagi Arisu's face immediately darkened.

"Kaoru-kun, you seem to be having a bit too much fun there?"

The phone quickly returned to Kaoru.

He whispered, "The situation is complicated—it's not what you think. Masumi-san and I will return in the afternoon."

"Hehehe, the class is currently discussing how to deal with you two. Have you thought about what explanation to give?"

Sakayanagi Arisu's voice was icy cold.

She didn't mind who Kaoru did bad things to, nor did she care if he did them right in front of her.

However, situations like this were what she hated most - completely ignoring her feelings.

"Tomorrow is Saturday, no classes. I think by Monday they won't care too much anymore."

Kaoru paused, "Besides, birthdays are like universal magic. I think it should be fine."

"Hehe, completely self-centered as always, Mitoma-kun."

Sakayanagi Arisu said, "If you two plan to get a room, remember to take necessary safety measures."

"Get a room? Get out of here!"

Kamuro's voice immediately came from the other side, one could easily imagine her blushing face.

"Who said anything about getting a room!"

Hearing this, Sakayanagi Arisu felt relieved.

Based on her understanding of Masumi, even if she was unwilling, she wouldn't actually get a room just to save face after being exposed so suddenly.

"Ahem, we really have no such plans."

Kaoru cleared his throat, "Anyway, if you want to give Masumi a gift, we can meet after school. She's not very willing to have a birthday party, I think only you and Miki will give her gifts."

Actually, aside from them, probably few people in the entire school knew about Kamuro's birthday.

Just as Sakayanagi Arisu was about to say something, she suddenly heard Kamuro's exclamation.

"Wah, it, it suddenly came out... aah... it got on my hand, you jerk..."

"Don't shout, Masumi!"

"Wh, what can I do... this is too scary... mmm..."

"Wait, why are you holding it so tight?"

"Isn't it supposed to go inside?"

"There's nothing left, stop rubbing it."

"Ha, how was I supposed to know... guh... d, doing this with you for the first time, what am I even doing!"

"Tissue, wipe it off quickly."

Sakayanagi Arisu hung up the phone expressionlessly.

Fortunately, her relationship with him wasn't that of real lovers - the so-called engagement was just for fun.

Otherwise, what expression should she make after hearing that conversation?

She almost forgot - Ichinose Honami was publicly recognized as his official girlfriend. What kind of feelings must she have facing such things?

As a girlfriend, having to watch her boyfriend flirt with another woman, even smiling while being cheated on - she must have a very strong heart indeed.

Sakayanagi Arisu clicked on Ichinose Honami's profile picture, edited a message, and clicked send.

No matter how strong one is, humans are ultimately selfish creatures.

...

Kamuro peeked out and, seeing no one in the restroom, couldn't help but sigh in relief.

She straightened her skirt and walked out confidently.

"Come out, there's no one outside."

Kaoru emerged from the stall and saw her standing in front of the sink, diligently wiping her hands clean.

However, upon closer observation, one could notice the girl's legs were slightly unnatural - slightly stiff and pressed tightly together.

Her black knee socks were somewhat misaligned, and her fair, plump thighs seemed to retain certain traces.

"Why did you have to answer Sakayanagi's call? You almost got us exposed earlier." Kamuro expressed her dissatisfaction

"Stop rambling. Just teach her a lesson!"

"She's even prepared a gift for you, and you're still complaining?"

Kaoru also washed his hands, noticing the girl in the mirror furrowing her brows.

"A gift... Forget it, I won't bother with her. She's always ordering people around—consider it my payment."

Kamuro was quite pragmatic, indifferent to such superficial things.

"Speaking of gifts, I actually prepared one for you too."

Kaoru's millions certainly weren't wasted; he was about to take Kamuro to receive her gift.

"A gift?"

Kamuro looked at him suspiciously, touching her lower abdomen.

"Isn't it this?"

Kaoru's face darkened. "Am I that perverted? Besides, we didn't actually do it."

"What's the difference from actually doing it?"

Kamuro shot him a sidelong glance. "Someone was acting pretty twisted earlier, getting fixated on that part of a girl and insisting on doing it there."

"You said you didn't want to dirty your clothes, so I did it this way."

"And ended up dirtying this instead. Well done, you foot fetishist."

"..."

Seeing him unable to retort, Kamuro felt a bit pleased.

Recalling what had just happened, she chuckled inwardly—so this is what it feels like to do something bad. It didn't seem so bad after all.

With that thought, the girl tugged uncomfortably at her skirt.

Even with safety shorts on, the sticky residue inside made her feel uneasy.

With even the slightest movement, the tightly wrapped skin clearly registered a strange sensation, as if she could still smell the scent—thick with male hormones.

"Hurry up and leave. This is the women's restroom." Kamuro said nonchalantly.

Looking at her outward appearance, who would have thought that such a cool, detached girl would have traces of a man beneath her skirt?

Chapter 534: Additional Exam

That afternoon, Sakayanagi Arisu didn't show up as promised but asked Yamamura Miki to deliver her gift instead.

Kamuro resisted the idea of them celebrating her birthday, claiming it would only mess up her mood, so they ended up meeting at a café.

However, when she received Yamamura Miki's gift, she couldn't suppress the upward curl of her lips.

Her mood seemed even better than when she received Kaoru's gift.

Perhaps it was hard to explain, but Kaoru felt a bit discouraged.

The carefully chosen gift he'd picked out—something most girls would love, a premium gift set—was apparently less appreciated than Yamamura Miki's.

Unexpectedly, the moment Kamuro saw the gift set, her face immediately fell.

"Don't make that face. I may not like overly sentimental occasions, but today was still enjoyable."

Kamuro turned her cheek aside, her fingers unconsciously twirling a strand of hair.

"So... thank you."

The tail end of her sentence was like a fleeting spark—easy to miss if one didn't listen carefully, leaving only her feigned nonchalant expression.

Though she usually seemed unapproachable and often wore a disdainful look, Kaoru always felt she just wasn't good at expressing her feelings.

Perhaps this was what Sakayanagi Arisu meant by "high difficulty to conquer."

"You'd be cuter if you were a little more honest."

Kamuro stiffened for a moment, then her gaze returned to its usual trash-regarding demeanor.

"A man who mindlessly sends cosmetics and accessories has no right to say such things."

Kaoru silently took a sip of coffee

. It had worked before, but apparently the same answer didn't work on different people.

"You two have such a good relationship."

Yamamura Miki said with some envy, "Did you enjoy your date today?"

"Ha! It w-wasn't a date at all!"

Kamuro firmly denied, "I just skipped class with him, we didn't do anything. Besides, look at how many girls this guy has involved himself with—who would actually go on a date with him?"

Yamamura Miki nodded with partial understanding.

Still, if it wasn't a date, why were the two sitting together, shoulder to shoulder?

Though confused, Kamuro's words left Yamamura Miki feeling slightly upset.

Whenever she recalled the rumors surrounding Kaoru, her heart would twinge.

On another note, for some reason, Sakura Airi, who had been Depressed before, had inexplicably recovered.

What caught her attention was how Sakura Airi had started chattering nonstop about Kaoru.

On days when Kaoru was absent, the study group turned entirely into a gossip circle, with Sakura Airi and Hasebe Haruka often reaching consensus on certain topics.

While they were happy, Yamamura Miki found herself feeling somewhat gloomy.

However, today was Kamuro's birthday, and Yamamura Miki didn't want to dwell on it too much.

So she proactively changed the subject.

"By the way, there's been a strange smell all along. Have you noticed it, Masumi-san?"

Kamuro seemed to freeze again, which puzzled Yamamura Miki slightly.

"A s-strange smell?"

Yamamura Miki nodded, then racked her brains to describe the odor—like something fishy and foul, faintly emitting a spoiled scent.

It sounded disgusting, yet Yamamura Miki realized she didn't feel repulsed.

Instead, she felt an inexplicable stirring in her heart, a strong urge to find out what it was.

"Not really, maybe it's your imagination."

Kamuro stammered, her pretty face slightly flushed.

Her eyes darted toward Kaoru beside her, as if warning him about something.

Yamamura Miki sniffed the air, growing even more puzzled. It was her first time smelling such a scent—it was too strange.

Moreover, her body seemed to feel somewhat restless and warm.

"Ahem, don't overthink it." Kaoru raised his coffee cup and said to Kamuro, "Happy Birthday, Masumi."

'What the— That's such a lame way to change the subject!'

'You're the one who made me embarrassed!'

Kamuro glared at him fiercely, her legs tightly pressed together—something she hadn't even realized herself.

If she hadn't been willing, how could she have satisfied him earlier and let that filthy thing stay inside?

"Happy Birthday, Masumi-san." Yamamura Miki also smiled.

This is really too much.

These two... even though she's currently with a pervert.

Kamuro pursed her lips and reluctantly raised her coffee cup.

"Don't let it happen again."

...

As the mock exams ended, the final exams drew closer.

During the class meeting in March, Mashima expressionlessly wrote "Additional Exam" on the blackboard.

Under the surprised gazes of everyone, he spoke, "Originally, the school planned to hold the final special exam of the academic year after the finals, on March 8th. However, this year's circumstances are slightly different."

Perhaps due to the unusual aura he emitted, the students of Class A looked at each other, with most realizing the seriousness of the situation.

"Up until today, not a single first-year student has dropped out. This is unprecedented in the school's history." Mashima Tomoya said coldly, "Considering this, the school has decided to add an additional special exam."

"Wait, that's strange. Just because no one has dropped out, we have to take an extra exam?"

In response to Totsuka Yahiko's agitation, Mashima nodded, "That's right, exactly."

Kaoru furrowed his brows.

An additional exam meant it was a last-minute decision.

Was it pushed by Nagumo, or by the newly appointed acting chairman?

"There's no need for you to worry. Based on my understanding of you all, this additional exam holds no disadvantages for you."

Mashima continued, "The additional special exam does not involve intelligence or physical ability. It's so simple that every one of you can fully understand this."

Without exception, the students, including Katsuragi, showed expressions of confusion.

Although they couldn't grasp what Mashima was saying, they could tell that his expression was different from usual when announcing special exams—it seemed somewhat relaxed.

Soon after, the students of Class A, Year 1, quickly understood Mashima's mood.

This additional exam was a class vote.

As the name implied, the entire class would vote together, with two types of votes: Criticism Votes and Praise Votes.

Each person could freely choose three students they believed deserved praise and three who deserved criticism.

Starting today, the exam would last for four days, with the final vote taking place on March 6th.

The voting results would only determine who ranked first in Praise Votes and who ranked last in Criticism Votes.

"The student who ranks first in Praise Votes will receive [Protection Points]. This is a new rule, different from Personal Points. As long as you have [Protection Points], even if you face expulsion, it can be nullified."

Kaoru was stunned for a moment, then his expression turned blank.

Was this Nagumo's way of protecting himself?

No, probably not.

Nagumo was unlikely to consider others' thoughts, and his initial proposal hadn't mentioned these [Protection Points].

If Nagumo wanted him expelled, why would he introduce something like [Protection Points]?

Was it the school's idea?

Chapter 535: Forced Expulsion

Protection Points—at least Kaoru had never heard of them from upperclassmen.

According to Mashima Tomoya's explanation, they were clearly a powerful tool against expulsion.

They could only be used by the individual and could not be transferred to others.

Even with such restrictions, it was still an astonishing reward.

Kaoru couldn't help but think that if the school's reforms were like this, it might not be so bad.

With special rules and the upcoming OAA, the reforms proposed by Nagumo indeed felt like they leaned toward a meritocratic individualism.

In addition to the first-place winner in Praise Votes receiving Protection Points, the last-place student in Criticism Votes would naturally face corresponding penalties.

"Since the essence of this additional exam is that none of you have been expelled so far, I believe you should understand what the consequence of ranking last is."

Mashima looked at each student and, under the uneasy gazes of some, calmly uttered a chilling words.

Expulsion.

"This is the result for the last-place student, so please consider your votes carefully."

Mashima added, "Though I doubt any of you will take it seriously."

"Ex... expulsion!?"

"Compared to some people's panic, Katsuragi wore a peculiar expression.

Having understood Mashima's hint, he silently raised his hand.

"Katsuragi-kun, do you have something to ask?" Mashima's expression remained unchanged.

Katsuragi immediately responded, "Can the remedial measure mentioned earlier be used?"

At this, the entire class simultaneously turned their gaze toward Morishita Ai.

The intense stares made her slightly uncomfortable, though she understood their meaning.

Mashima finally revealed a faint smile, recalling Chabashira Sae's grim expression in the office.

"Yes, but there's a slight change in the price."

The homeroom teacher explained, "Considering this is an additional exam, the school has removed the 300 Class Points threshold for you. In other words, you now only need to pay 20 million Personal Points to save the expelled student."

The remedial measure originally had two thresholds - Class Points and Personal Points.

The temporary removal of the Class Points requirement was the result of negotiations between the homeroom teachers and the acting chairman.

However, such details couldn't be shared with the students below the podium. Most probably didn't even know the chairman had been replaced.

"We currently have 31.03 million Personal Points."

Morishita Ai's tone was calm, as if she were merely stating how many bread rolls they had to eat.

Even knowing they had been saving Personal Points, Mashima couldn't help being surprised.

Such an exaggerated amount accumulated in just one year.

Maintaining this state, Mashima suspected this year's Class A might have no expulsions until graduation.

Even Horikita Manabu's class had seen several students drop out midway.

"Hahaha, this exam is useless against us!" Totsuka Yahiko laughed unrestrainedly.

His laughter instantly dissolved the tense atmosphere in the classroom.

Even the usually invisible Yamamura Miki breathed a sigh of relief.

"That was almost terrifying. So we just need to spend 20 million to pass? Doesn't that mean our class can completely ignore this exam?"

"Fortunately we saved our points!"

"Excellent! We're getting a Protection Point for free!"

Instantly, Class A of the first year was filled with cheerful laughter.

Indeed, there was no helping it - theirs was the only class in the entire grade that could produce 20 million Personal Points in one go, allowing them to completely disregard this additional exam.

At this moment, other classes were likely suffering and lamenting.

However, Kaoru felt somewhat conflicted.

Ichinose Honami didn't have that many Personal Points.

Her class would inevitably face the most difficult decision since school began.

No matter who got expelled, it would be painful for her.

He checked his phone - his personal balance was reassuring and could definitely help, but he didn't know if she would accept it.

Setting aside Class B for now, Class C should be fine.

Since Manabe had aligned with him, Kaoru had been careful about her conduct, advising her to avoid conflicts within her class.

His reasoning had been simple - given Manabe's impulsive nature, he worried she might be targeted in exams.

So far, Manabe and others had faithfully followed his advice.

As Mashima Tomoya said, this completely anonymous voting process was perfect for backstabbing.

Nominally called Criticism Votes, it was essentially Ostracism—the entire class would decide who to exile.

The lesson from history is that people tend to write down the names of those they dislike, resulting in unpopular individuals with poor reputations being particularly vulnerable.

Thus, Kaoru wasn't just worried about Manabe; students like Horikita Suzune, Sakura Airi, and Karuizawa Kei were also at risk.

"While I understand how you feel, please quiet down. I still need to explain the rules of the special exam."

Mashima suppressed the class's commotion and continued writing the rules on the blackboard.

Rule 1: Praise Votes and Criticism Votes influence each other. The result is calculated as Praise Votes minus Criticism Votes.

Rule 2: Students cannot vote for themselves, whether with Praise Votes or Criticism Votes.

Rule 3: It is strictly prohibited to vote for the same person multiple times, or to abstain or leave ballots blank.

Rule 4: The exam will repeat until both a first-place and last-place student are determined. The last-place student will be expelled.

Rule 5: Each student must cast one mandatory Praise Vote for a student from another class.

...

In simple terms, Praise Votes can offset Criticism Votes.

For example, ten Praise Votes offset five Criticism Votes, resulting in a net score of five points.

The final outcome depends on who has the highest and lowest scores.

Naturally, the results cannot be identical.

If Praise Votes and Criticism Votes completely cancel each other out, leaving scores at zero with no first or last place, the school will continue voting according to Rule 4.

Even if there are multiple first-place students, the voting will continue.

This was a forced expulsion exam—either one person gets expelled, or the class meets the remedial threshold.

There was no third option.

This was a critical moment where every student, except those in Class A, faced a major decision.

At this thought, many turned eager eyes toward Sakayanagi Arisu and Morishita Ai.

Morishita Ai tilted her head slightly.

She could understand why Sakayanagi Arisu received such attention—after all, it was Sakayanagi who had emphasized the importance of Personal Points back then.

But why were they looking at her? She hadn't done anything noteworthy.

Unaware that her image had transformed into a walking treasure vault, where even slight movement seemed to produce the clinking sound of gold coins.

A sound like angels singing.

Chapter 536: Stop Wearing It

For Class A, there was no need to discuss this special exam further.

When Mashima asked if there were any questions, no one raised their hand—not even Katsuragi, who seemed indifferent.

From start to finish, Sakayanagi Arisu remained silent, as if she had anticipated this outcome.

Thus, the homeroom session concluded.

Kamuro propped her cheek on her hand, watching Mashima leave the classroom with boredom.

Having narrowly avoided disaster, the atmosphere grew lively as everyone celebrated their past decision.

Hah.

She thought it had little to do with that decision.

Even if it were Class B, they couldn't have produced 20 million Personal Points all at once.

It wasn't that others didn't value Personal Points—it was that someone had propelled Class A to this position.

Their points now equaled the combined total of the entire grade besides themselves.

The fundamental reason for all this was that Class A of the first year possessed substantial capital.

It was said that Nagumo Miyabi had once dominated the entire grade in the same manner.

Kamuro glanced at Kaoru beside her. What was he thinking about now?

Kaoru was playing with his phone.

Or rather, he was messaging someone, completely unaware of Kamuro's surreptitious gaze.

"Worried about someone?"

Kaoru looked up to see Kamuro watching him nonchalantly. Her slightly aloof, pretty face no longer carried the flushed redness from days before.

It seemed their relationship hadn't progressed further despite that incident.

Perhaps it didn't need to progress further—this was simply her usual attitude.

"Unlike us, others aren't so fortunate."

Kaoru turned his phone screen toward her, allowing her to see his chat history.

Kamuro was slightly taken aback. Was he really this comfortable showing her such things?

Though feeling somewhat peculiar, Kamuro didn't feign reluctance and took a brief look.

[If it's about the additional exam, I can help.]

[How many points are you short right now?]

[This isn't between classes—just my personal assistance to you. You can treat it as borrowing points, since that's how it was before.]

These were the messages he had just sent to Ichinose Honami, making Kamuro's feelings even more complicated.

[Sorry, I just saw your message.]

[I'm happy that you're willing to help me, Kaoru, but this would trouble you too much.]

[I understand your intentions, but this isn't just my personal matter. I feel too ashamed to keep seeking your help, especially since I haven't even repaid all the previous points yet.]

Was she reluctant to accept his help because it involved class matters?

While it's natural for a boyfriend to help his girlfriend, they were technically opponents from different classes.

If people thought Kaoru was helping his girlfriend during this exam, would they suspect he might continue assisting her in future exams, betraying his class?

Ichinose Honami had likely considered this and thus declined her boyfriend's offer.

At the same time, Kaoru had anticipated she would think this way, which was why he added that final line—yet she still refused.

"What a troublesome woman."

Kamuro offered her assessment.

"After all, this isn't a small amount—over ten million personal points. Not everyone can produce that."

Kaoru operated his phone, continuing to reply to her messages.

"What about the previous points?"

Kamuro seemed somewhat concerned. "You helped her before?"

"Just lent her a few million."

Kaoru nodded.

This was the result of when Ryuen had tried to target Class B of the first year, and he had fueled the situation.

Kamuro fell silent for a moment. "Now I understand her perspective. You should reflect on yourself, Mitoma."

"..."

Kaoru stopped thinking.

So it was his fault?

...

Meanwhile, Class D of the first year was also engulfed in heated atmosphere—though theirs was filled with arguments.

"Stop it! This is literally the worst exam possible!"

"Quiet down, boys!"

"You're probably planning to cast your Criticism Vote on me, aren't you!"

Horikita Suzune calmly observed the scene—boys and girls regarding each other with hostility, forming separate groups, their disputes fueled by distrust echoing incessantly.

She had thought that after a year of effort, the class atmosphere would be better than before, but it remains just as disappointing.

Surprisingly, she no longer felt any anger at all.

What puzzled Horikita Suzune now was that although both Kaoru and Horikita Manabu had taught her to value interpersonal relationships, the moment she heard Chabashira Sae mention the additional exam—

She realized she felt completely unperturbed, even accepting the reality immediately: someone had to be expelled.

Horikita understood that interpersonal relationships were indispensable tools.

She had come to know Kushida, Ayanokoji, Sudo, and others, but when it came time to make decisions, these were also people she could consider abandoning if necessary.

Thus, Horikita Suzune felt confused—was she somehow different?

From the class's perspective, someone was bound to be expelled in this exam.

Class 1-D had no contingency measures, and no one would step up with 20 million points to save them.

In that case, they had to cut their losses to survive.

Horikita Suzune thought this was entirely correct, yet she felt a slight unease.

After a while, she figured out where this unease came from.

She was merely pretending.

Pretending she could be like her brother—or even surpass him—but her true nature had never changed.

[Suzune, you don't have to force yourself to accommodate others. My experiences and lessons can't solve your problems. Others are just others; they can't help you. You have your own path.]

[But, Brother, didn't you want me to make friends and have a normal high school life?]

[Enjoyment means finding joy in what you do. As long as you can find joy, isn't that the best high school life?]

That conversation in the office still left a deep impression on Horikita Suzune.

What was her high school life like?

Horikita Suzune pursed her lips.

Before this, she had only thought about how to catch up to her brother.

Now, after Kaoru's influence, her mind was filled with rising to Class A.

But was rising to Class A enough?

She touched her stomach. Not just now—where should her future life go?

Just then, her phone vibrated a few times.

[Are you okay with this exam?]

Seeing Kaoru's message, Horikita Suzune was slightly taken aback, then suppressed the corners of her lips from curling up.

[Hmph, I don't think you need to worry.]

[The best outcome is that none of you get expelled.]

[In your eyes, everyone else is just disposable sacrifices?]

[I care about the people I like. Why should I care about those who have nothing to do with me?]

[I see.]

So this was his interpretation of interpersonal relationships.

Horikita Suzune held her phone, feeling that her earlier worries and unease might have been an overreaction.

Because they were people she liked, they couldn't be expelled.

Horikita Suzune smiled faintly.

She had just put down her phone to think of countermeasures but couldn't resist picking it up again to see if he had sent any new messages.

Finding none, she frowned, set it down, yet still couldn't help picking it up once more.

She edited a message and sent it to him.

[Don't wear it anymore from now on.]

Chapter 537: Startled by the Sound Party

After the final exams ended, spring break arrived quickly, and club activities became lively again.

"Hey, Saki-chan, are you going to the archery club today too?"

"Sorry, sorry! Today's a special case!"

"No worries. I was just thinking since we finally survived final exams, we should all have some fun together."

"I see. It feels like Nazuna has been sticking close to us lately. Are you worried about Nagumo-kun, or perhaps..."

"No, that's not it at all!"

"Is that so?"

Amidst the girls' laughter, one of them suddenly pointed somewhere, exclaiming with feigned surprise.

"Look who's over there!"

Asahina Nazuna instinctively turned to look and spotted a familiar figure.

Her pupils slightly dilated, but before she could blush, the girl beside her playfully nudged her shoulder with an elbow.

"Nazuna, aren't you going to say hello today?"

"H-he's talking to someone. Why should I bother him?"

"Eh? Didn't you say the same thing last time?"

"Honestly, why do you all care more about him than I do?"

Asahina Nazuna puffed her cheeks in displeasure, only to have another girl poke her cheek.

"It's because you're always avoiding your kouhai, Nazuna. Last time, and the time before that."

Another girl spoke with a serious tone, "That's not good, Nazuna. If you don't like him, you should reject him clearly."

Asahina Nazuna stammered, unsure how to respond. Did she not like him? Or should she like him?

"Alright, hurry up and go say hello!"

Someone gave her a push, startling her. Before she could retaliate, the kouhai in question appeared before her.

"Good afternoon, Asahina-senpai."

Ugh, it seems there's no escaping today.

Asahina Nazuna composed herself, maintaining her senior's demeanor.

'Wait, why is he being so formal? Calling me "Asahina-senpai" so politely? Is our relationship that distant?'

"Good afternoon, Mitoma-kun."

The girl forced a smile. "It feels like it's been a while since we last saw each other."

The kouhai standing before her was naturally Kaoru, accompanied by Kiriya.

Kaoru couldn't help but observe the senpai before him.

She was only slightly taller than Tachibana Akane, with a slender yet curvaceous figure.

Dressed in her winter uniform, the fluffy shirt clung tightly to the softness of her chest, while the cinched waist design accentuated her slim waist.

The white pleated skirt covered most of her fair thighs but revealed her slightly flushed knees.

Her slender calves were encased in black stockings, clean and straight, with a captivating allure that made it hard to look away.

She still wore her cute hair clip, and on her wrist was a treasured omamori.

Kaoru noticed the gift he had given her dangling from her backpack zipper, sparkling brilliantly.

"It's fine. We didn't meet during winter break, but we can take our time during spring break."

Asahina Nazuna's face instantly flushed red.

What's going on? It was just one sentence, so why did her anger vanish?

Ah, this feeling again.

This was why she had been avoiding him—afraid she might impulsively agree to something again.

Kiriyama glanced at Asahina Nazuna, then at Kaoru, and said, "I'll wait for you at the café up ahead."

"Call the others over too. It doesn't matter now." Kaoru added an instruction.

Kiriyama seemed slightly surprised but quickly nodded in understanding.

'Huh?'

Asahina Nazuna grew nervous.

She wasn't an idiot; she understood what they were doing—deliberately leaving space and time for her and Kaoru to talk.

'Wait, wait. It shouldn't be like this.'

She quickly turned around, only to find that her close friends had already disappeared.

"Senpai, there's something I want to talk to you about." Kaoru said softly.

Asahina Nazuna immediately stood at attention, her mind already imagining what Kaoru might do to her—after all, she often chatted privately with Ichinose Honami.

Things like "two-person adventures" and "group activities"... she actually knew a little about them.

Although she didn't mind Kaoru having strange ideas about her, it was still too early now.

At the very least, she needed to wait a year or two to adjust.

However, Kaoru dispelled these thoughts in the next moment.

"I heard that Nagumo-senpai wants to reconcile with you?"

Instantly, Asahina Nazuna's expression became extremely complicated.

Seeing her expression, Kaoru softened his tone: "I don't mean to blame you, Senpai. The bond between childhood friends isn't something that can be easily severed—I understand that. Last time, you also asked me if you could reconcile with him, because you didn't know what to do or which side to take."

Perhaps because his words didn't sound accusatory, Asahina Nazuna whispered, "I'm sorry, but I really don't have romantic feelings for Miyabi."

"I know. Even if you did, I would still take you away from him." Kaoru said it as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

Asahina Nazuna was momentarily speechless, but because of his serious yet nonsensical words, she actually felt a little better.

"The fact that you didn't side with Nagumo-senpai means I've already won."

Kaoru said, "I'm just worried about whether my conflict with Nagumo-senpai might... cause you any distress?"

"If I said it would distress me, would you stop?" Asahina Nazuna retorted.

"No, unless he surrenders." Kaoru replied.

"So, does my distress even matter?"

Asahina Nazuna sighed, "Whether it's you or Miyabi, neither of you would listen to me anyway."

"You're the cunning one, Senpai."

Kaoru moved closer, and the moment she instinctively stepped back, he gently pinched her cheek.

"You promised to date me, but you've been avoiding me all this time."

His touch was light, but where his fingers had been felt as if burned, a faint blush spreading across her fair neck.

"I-I haven't been avoiding you! Didn't we meet at Christmas?"

"What about Valentine's Day?"

"It's... it's your fault! It's definitely your fault!"

In truth, Asahina Nazuna had prepared a Valentine's gift.

She had specifically sought advice from Ichinose Honami, only to be startled by the other girl's mention of a "sound party."

Unaware of this, Kaoru said expressionlessly, "Senpai, you're making it hard for me to decide what gift to give you this month."

"G-Gifts can wait until next time!" Asahina Nazuna stammered.

She knew Kaoru probably wouldn't do anything excessive to her, and Ichinose Honami likely hadn't meant to scare her intentionally.

Because she realized that Ichinose Honami genuinely believed hosting sound parties was normal—she had even suggested that Asahina Nazuna join one, though the Valentine's Day sound party never actually happened.

Oh no... What kind of influence had Ichinose Honami, such an innocent and adorable girl, been subjected to without her knowledge?

Chapter 538: What does it feels like ?

"When is 'next time'?"

"I-I-I... next semester... no, I mean spring break, this spring break would work?"

"Really?"

"Ugh... I'm sorry, I really can't do it!"

Watching Asahina Nazuna's flushed face, Kaoru found it amusing.

So she could show this girly side too.

"In that case, how about a date?" Kaoru said, "I know this might be too fast, but it wouldn't hurt to try getting to know each other a little."

Asahina Nazuna instinctively panicked slightly.

He could say the word "date" so casually—no wonder he was called the Harem Overlord.

He must be really skilled at handling girls.

But she couldn't panic. She was his senior, after all.

"O-okay, after exams are over, let's... let's go on a date! Just the two of us!"

Asahina Nazuna suddenly thought of something and immediately emphasized, "It must be just the two of us! Absolutely, positively no third person!"

Something like a sound party was completely beyond her comprehension as a senior.

She'd much prefer it to be just the two of them, slowly drawing closer in an ambiguous atmosphere, gradually touching each other's hands, and then their warm lips.

That would be a real date!

"Of course, it'll be just the two of us." Kaoru found it strange.

Why would anyone bring a third wheel on a date?

Asahina Nazuna couldn't help but sigh in relief.

As long as it wasn't a party, she wasn't afraid.

A girl's first experience couldn't possibly be a party—that would be way too indecent!

Wait, even if she wasn't participating in parties, as his senior, she still needed to lecture this guy.

What kind of ideas had he been putting into a good girl like Ichinose Honami's head?

"Mitoma-kun, I think this kind of..."

But before she could finish, someone wrapped their arms around her waist from behind.

"Eek!"

"Aha, are you two discussing how to go on a date?"

Kiryuin Fuka's breath brushed close.

"Even though you're Nagumo's childhood friend, you're planning to date this cute junior right in front of him? That's just wonderful, Asahina."

It was as if she had flipped a switch in Asahina Nazuna.

The corner of her mouth twitched. "Kiryuin-san, aren't you standing a bit too close?"

"Because your expression is so interesting, Asahina."

Kiryuin Fuka smiled faintly, her gaze shifting to Kaoru. "To be honest, what kind of expression should I use when facing you, cute junior?"

Kaoru looked back at her.

Although they hadn't seen each other for a while, she hadn't changed at all—the same familiar face, examining him with the expression of someone delighted to find fresh prey.

"Lately, rumors about you are flying everywhere. Dating multiple girls at once, stealing others' lovers, being a netorare enthusiast, the Harem Overlord... all these terrible deeds almost made me think I was back in my hometown."

No one would describe their hometown like that, right?

But Kaoru could tell her tone carried no hostility or disgust.

Asahina Nazuna subtly slipped out of her embrace and moved to stand on the other side, smiling as she said.

"Kiryuin-san, I can't just ignore what you said, you know?"

"You switch sides so quickly, though I'm quite happy about it."

Kiryuin Fuka chuckled. "You know, seeing Nagumo's expression was absolutely priceless!"

Asahina Nazuna looked startled, then heard her continue, "Let me ask just in case—are the two of you truly in love?"

"Re...really... Wh-what are you suddenly saying!"

Asahina Nazuna's face flushed bright red.

As soon as she finished speaking, she realized her reaction was too intense and hurriedly added, "I told you, Kiryuin-san, no gossiping about other people's business!"

Kiryuin Fuka shrugged: "You had the same reaction last time."

"D-don't even mention last time! Who would go to someone else's classroom and ask about such things outright?"

Asahina Nazuna seemed genuinely angry, making it clear the two had some minor history.

"Because I wanted to see what reaction Nagumo would have."

"That's just terrible!"

"My, you're making me a bit shy with such praise."

"I wasn't praising you!"

That tone, that personality - Kiryuin Fuka truly hadn't changed at all.

"Kiryuin-senpai, are you really just here to gossip?"

Actually, Kaoru felt her personality was quite similar to Sakayanagi Arisu's - treating others like interesting toys to play with, though her way of doing things was more like Koenji Rokusuke.

In other words, she did as she pleased, following her own whims without considering anyone else's feelings.

"Gossip?"

Kiryuin Fuka pondered for a moment, "That's part of it. For example, do you think you're being genuine? Or is it just teenage lust, wanting to play around with more girls?"

Perhaps it was too direct - Asahina Nazuna instinctively turned to sneak a glance at Kaoru's expression.

"What if it's both?"

Kaoru didn't feel there was anything to be ashamed of.

Smack!

Asahina Nazuna slapped her own forehead.

What was she expecting? This man was even worse than Nagumo Miyabi.

A man who could host sound parties with beautiful girls would naturally have extremely strong lust!

To be completely honest, he was actually more impressive than Nagumo Miyabi, being able to make them willing participants.

"What an honest child."

Kiryuin Fuka smiled faintly, "So, is that how you see me too?"

Kaoru remembered - he had done quite a few things to Kiryuin Fuka in the past.

"I..."

"Whatever you say doesn't matter to me."

Kiryuin Fuka cut him off, "I'm just somewhat looking forward to what Nagumo will do to you, and how you'll fight back. As for me... I'm so cute and charming, it's inevitable that you'd like me too."

"What a narcissistic thing to say."

Asahina Nazuna retorted.

Though she had to admit, Kiryuin Fuka did have her own charm.

The black pantyhose enveloped her entire slender legs, her tall figure was quite striking - one wouldn't doubt her legs could crush arms, and she could kick several men flying with one foot.

Her ample bust was even more eye-catching - in certain scenarios, she'd probably be the haughty queen type.

"Did you come here just to say these things?"

Kaoru said, "I admit I have feelings for you, but I can't afford to pay attention to you right now, Kiryuin-senpai."

As he spoke, he pulled the nearby Asahina Nazuna over, wrapping his arms around the senior's slender waist.

"Like Nazuna-senpai - she's just too adorable."

Asahina Nazuna's pretty face instantly turned crimson, steam practically rising from her head.

No matter how many times she told herself to stay calm internally, she still felt dizzy, her heart beating rapidly.

The feeling of being forcibly kissed by him returned - her whole body grew hot and weak, stiffly staring at his face, his lips, his chin without moving.

On the other side, Kiryuin Fuka's smile gradually faded as she furrowed her brow.

"I don't know what you're talking about. I just came over to say hello."

"Is that so?"

Kaoru chuckled, "I thought Kiryuin-senpai was curious about what dating feels like, which is why you specifically came to greet me."

"Oh my, does my cute kouhei-kun think I don't know what dating feels like?"

Kiryuin Fuka maintained her smile.

Of course, she had no idea what dating felt like—she had never even held a boy's hand since childhood. But so what?

"Nothing, really. I'm just happy that Nazuna-senpai agreed to go on a date with me."

Kaoru gently stroked Asahina Nazuna's cheek, lightly brushing her lips.

Just as she was about to speak, he suddenly lowered his head and whispered, "It tastes really nice, sweet."

Asahina Nazuna slowly covered her flushed face.

What was this? Wasn't he quite skilled at handling girls?

She couldn't bring herself to dislike this kind of kiss.

If the party involved kisses like this, she might reluctantly consider attending!

"By the way, Kiryuin-senpai..."

Kaoru's voice suddenly trailed off as he noticed Kiryuin Fuka lowering her index finger, which had just touched her lips, acting as if nothing had happened.

"What? Do you want me to keep watching you two flaunt your affection?"

"No, it's nothing."

"Next time, remember to remind me. If I had taken a photo and sent it to Nagumo, I wonder what kind of expression he would make. Hehe."

Kiryuin Fuka turned around, wearing her usual intrigued smile, and slowly walked down the hallway. She paused abruptly at a corner.

"The feeling of dating?"

Her index finger touched her lips, as if pondering the "taste" he had mentioned.

"Hehe, it's just... I haven't met a boy who can 'develop' me yet."

Whether out of reluctance or a return to her usual composure, Kiryuin Fuka scoffed disdainfully.

She couldn't care less about Kaoru's provocation.

Chapter 539: Different People.

Perhaps someone with ulterior motives had spotted Kaoru and Asahina Nazuna and captured the moment from a distance.

Soon after, Nagumo Miyabi received a photo.

The image, blurry yet clear, showed Kaoru holding Asahina Nazuna by the waist.

Though taken from afar, it was evident that he was leaning down, seemingly kissing the girl in his arms.

She had her hands raised, pressing against his chest, her fingers clutching his clothes tightly.

Even from the side, her slightly flushed cheeks were visible.

It had to be said—the photographer knew exactly how to capture a girl's shyness in that fleeting moment.

Bang!

The moment he saw the photo, Nagumo Miyabi hurled his phone to the ground.

The crisp sound of the screen shattering echoed as countless tiny cracks caused the screen's light to flicker several times before fading into darkness, reflecting the man's livid face.

"You think I'd care about this? She's just a woman—a woman who's been following me around since we were kids. Women like her are a dime a dozen. In terms of looks, I've played with plenty of girls like her!"

"Hmph, had I known earlier, I would have taken matters into my own hands. What's with this act? Always lecturing me with that childhood friend demeanor, yet deep down you're just another woman craving male attention. Your taste is truly terrible—what difference is there between him and me? Doesn't he toy with countless women too?"

"In the end, I've grown tired of you as well, Nazuna. Aside from scolding me, what else can you do? Always saying I shouldn't be too harsh on others, that I should understand their feelings—constantly accusing me of being cold and heartless, claiming I never see you. But isn't it you who fails to understand and support me?"

"If you had agreed to date me, would I have sought out other women? Just because we've known each other a little longer, you put on such airs. If not for our childhood connection, I wouldn't have given you a second glance. Perhaps you only managed to stay in Class A by currying favor with me, wagging your tail like a desperate dog."

"Enough. It's not like I ever expected much from you anyway. You're just an ordinary woman."

No one knew how long Nagumo Miyabi had been muttering to himself, but his eyes burned with intense fury and hatred toward Kaoru—and especially toward Asahina Nazuna.

His resentment toward Asahina Nazuna ran particularly deep.

He had always viewed her as an inevitable conquest, even considering her his exclusive property—something that would inevitably belong to him, thus requiring no particular effort.

Yet Asahina Nazuna had told him she held no romantic feelings toward him.

How ridiculous.

What an ugly excuse.

Hadn't she been the one who willingly developed feelings for him? The one who always followed him around?

Weren't you overjoyed when we enrolled in ANHS?

Thrilled at the prospect of being together with him?

Like praying for fate at a temple, their union seemed predestined—a destiny even he had gradually accepted over all these years.

So why betray him, Asahina Nazuna?

Nagumo's face darkened, consumed by a single thought: ruthless retaliation.

First, naturally, was this additional first-year exam.

How perfect.

Rumor had it the acting chairman requested it—what a favor to grant so soon after taking office.

Without lifting a finger, Class 1-A was destined to lose 20 million Personal Points. Meaning Kaoru had lost his lifeline.

Only the Protection Points posed a slight complication.

If they landed on Kaoru, it would cause significant trouble, so they must be given to someone else.

Nagumo had already devised a plan: he would make Ryuen Kakeru play the role of the benefactor. After all, Class 1-C had 40 freely circulating Praise Votes.

As long as it wasn't Kaoru, any outcome was acceptable.

Moreover, he had seen through Ichinose Honami's nature—a good person, an absolute pushover who would always prioritize her companions.

Would such a "good person" allow her comrades to be expelled?

Heh. When your girlfriend faces difficulties, as her boyfriend, you'd naturally step in to help, wouldn't you?

How many Personal Points would you have left then?

A sinister smile crept across Nagumo's face. If the boyfriend's Personal Points run out... well, apologies, but he might have to step in personally.

After all, whose fault is it that your girlfriend is so charming?

Although he had recently spent several million to suppress the entire grade and win over many people, he still possessed as much as fifteen million personal points.

Oh, right, he also needed to give Ryuen Kakeru some benefits this time, so he would keep at least ten million in wealth.

This wealth could even help him get a cute girlfriend—not a bad deal at all.

"Hehehe, this still isn't secure enough. Losing just this much isn't sufficient, Kaoru."

Nagumo Miyabi picked up the phone from the ground, which still seemed functional, so he contacted his most capable subordinate nearby.

Iijima Ryota.

[Have you uncovered his network?]

Nagumo Miyabi had heard rumors about Kaoru.

Unlike the casual observers, he immediately recognized this as an opportunity.

Especially during the training camp exam, Kaoru's inexplicable actions had given him a whiff of something unreasonable.

[Almost done. I'll send it to you right away.]

Seeing this reply, Nagumo Miyabi's smile grew even more eerie.

"Heh, since I can't touch you for now, I'll just have someone you care about expelled instead."

...

"Let's impeach Nagumo and force him to step down."

Horikita Manabu silently watched the unexpected visitor before him.

He initially thought it was a joke, but the visitor was completely serious.

"I've already contacted Sato-senpai, Kiryama-senpai, and Tonokawa-senpai. The first-year classes will also impeach him. If we add you to the list, I believe we'll have eight classes supporting the impeachment."

As he spoke, Kaoru added another point.

"Besides the eight classes, I've secured the support of the entire student council except for him. The student council will also impeach their president."

On the day the supplementary exam began, Kaoru immediately took action - though not against the exam itself, but against Nagumo Miyabi.

Earlier that afternoon, he had been discussing this matter with Kiryama Ikua when he unexpectedly ran into Asahina Nazuna along the way.

Though it caused some delay, he eventually met with Kiryama Ikua and Sosuke Tonokawa.

Thanks to Nagumo Miyabi's current displeasure with Sosuke Tonokawa and others, they found themselves isolated in their class with no support - which was precisely why they responded to Kaoru's call.

From the moment they decided to betray Nagumo, there was no turning back.

"What grounds do you plan to use to impeach Nagumo?"

This was the first time Horikita Manabu had heard someone propose impeaching their own student council president, though it wasn't impossible.

Besides normal retirement, if everyone was dissatisfied with the current student council president, they could initiate impeachment proceedings to remove him.

However, this would create too many enemies, which was why no one had ever attempted it before.

"Grounds?"

Kaoru looked puzzled. "Can't we just make up a few? What matters to the school is that we're impeaching Nagumo, not the specific reasons for the impeachment."

Horikita Manabu remained silent for a moment. "That's too frivolous. To remove him from power, we need legitimate reasons, otherwise the school won't intervene."

"I never said this impeachment must necessarily remove him from power. It would be great if he steps down voluntarily, but regardless, this impeachment will definitely cause him significant trouble."

Kaoru said calmly, "I just want him deeply entangled in this, completely unable to think about anything else, even forced to follow my rhythm. That's enough."

Horikita Manabu was full of doubts. Was that all?

Just to cause trouble for Nagumo Miyabi and keep him occupied, he would initiate an impeachment?

"Do you think I'll fail?" Kaoru asked.

Horikita Manabu responded strangely, "I feel like you have other intentions. The first-years have a supplementary exam today, I heard it's a class vote."

"Our class has always maintained reserve points, so this exam is a minor issue for us."

Kaoru replied. Horikita Manabu's expression grew even more peculiar.

"I wasn't asking about that. With your class having so many Class Points, I'm not at all surprised you could retain 20 million Personal Points."

Kaoru took a sip of barley tea and glanced around the room: "Your room is more spartan than I imagined, senpai. Aren't you going to buy anything?"

"I'll be leaving this month. Buying more things would just be a hassle."

Horikita Manabu rarely showed a smile, "But seeing you like this, I can truly feel at ease today. You're really different from Nagumo-kun."

"Am I?"

Kaoru felt he was just a despicable person.

"Yes. Many people think they're the most important, that the world must revolve around them. They can't hear or see others' suffering, and might even find it irritating."

Kaoru felt a slight incongruity, but he understood this older brother figure likely considered him one of their own.

"Suzune is that kind of child too, which is why I criticize her. We can't change the world, and often we can't even change others' thoughts."

Horikita Manabu smiled faintly, "That's precisely why I've always been trying to understand, to salvage something bit by bit. When someone asks for my help, I'll assist them - not because I'm remarkable, but because I know there are things I can't do, and others have things they can't do either. If we can help each other, I believe we can change something."

"Is that why you applied to ANHS, senpai?" Kaoru asked.

Horikita Manabu shook his head: "No, this is what I learned here. Tachibana and Fujimaki taught me these things, though we've lost companions along the way."

Facing such an older brother, Horikita Suzune would probably need considerable time to catch up, Kaoru thought to himself.

"Do you understand, Mitoma-kun?"

Horikita Manabu smiled, "This is where you differ from Nagumo-kun. You clearly understand how to comprehend this world, to understand their thoughts, and you'll even step forward to protect them like you're doing now. Nagumo-kun wouldn't do that."

Because Nagumo Miyabi only ever wanted others to satisfy his demands, never taking the initiative to fulfill others' wishes.

Chapter 540: Losing in Development

After discussing specific details, Kaoru took his leave from Horikita Manabu.

The moment he left the room, he suddenly recalled various past experiences.

"Actually, I haven't always been like this. It seems like after getting lectured by Honami, I started trying to rein myself in a bit."

If this were a classic story, it felt like there would soon be a soul-searching scene where the protagonist finally understands their feelings after repeated confusion.

However, Kaoru had no such confusion.

Whether in the past or present, he was simply following his true nature.

Having died and been reborn, with a completely new life and rewards beyond reality, based on these premises, he could act as he pleased.

Kaoru walked through the corridor and stood at the elevator door, noticing someone coming downstairs.

This was the third-year dormitory building - he'd have to call everyone senpai, which annoyed him somewhat.

Since he was wearing casual clothes, no one would probably realize he was a stray first-year, so he might as well ignore them.

Ding—

The elevator door opened. Kaoru froze for a moment, and the girl inside did too.

"Wah! You... what are you doing here?!"

Tachibana Akane widened her eyes as if encountering a supernatural event, startling completely.

"I came over because I needed to ask Horikita Senior and Sato Senior for a favor."

Though Kaoru was equally surprised, Tachibana Akane was originally a resident here, so running into her was normal.

"Is that so?"

Watching him enter the elevator, Tachibana Akane instinctively retreated slightly, hiding in the corner behind him, before suddenly realizing something.

"Wait, why didn't you come find me too?"

"After 8 PM, boys are strictly prohibited from entering the girls' dormitory, right?"

Kaoru cited the dormitory management rules repeatedly emphasized by the school.

Tachibana Akane stammered, "N-No one would know anyway. Rules like these don't matter as long as you don't get caught."

It seemed she had uttered something quite bold. Despite always forcing herself to follow discipline before, she herself didn't take it seriously.

"Where are you planning to go?"

Kaoru observed the girl's current appearance. Though it wasn't his first time seeing her in casual clothes, this homely style was new to him.

The weather in March was already early spring. The snow and ice outside had long melted, and the temperature was gradually warming.

Thus, Tachibana Akane only wore a coat over her clothes, faintly revealing the long sleeves underneath.

Though there was hardly any exposure, he felt an inexplicable stir—especially when catching the faint fragrance emanating from her, a mix of shower gel and her natural scent, subtly captivating Kaoru.

Perhaps just for a quick outing, she wore shorts below, leaving her slender, smooth legs completely visible.

Her slightly plump thighs even glistened with a dewy sheen, looking so delicate they might redden or hurt with the slightest touch—a unique tenderness of youth.

"I ran out of snacks and wanted to buy some from the convenience store."

Tachibana Akane answered hesitantly.

So it was a spontaneous snack run—no wonder she was dressed like that.

"I'll go with you."

"Huh, why?"

"Senior, you're too cute. I'm afraid someone might not be able to resist."

"D-Don't say things like that so seriously!"

The elevator soon reached the first-floor lobby.

The layout here was mostly similar to the first-year dormitory, with many passersby lingering around and occasional young couples whispering to each other.

Were they getting bolder as graduation approached?

Kaoru averted his gaze from a couple secretly touching each other, followed closely by his junior senior tugging at his sleeve.

"Um, our graduation exam is next week."

March 24th was the graduation ceremony.

Regardless of whether they graduated from Class A or not, all graduates would leave the school this month and embark on their next journey.

In other words, there was less than a month left.

"How long will it last?" Kaoru asked.

"I don't know. Maybe a week, or possibly until the day before the graduation ceremony."

Tachibana Akane whispered, "The point gap between Class B and us is nearly 300 points. It seems like a lot, but they might still overtake us in the graduation exam."

"No wonder you've been so tense lately, rarely replying to my messages."

Kaoru remarked thoughtfully. "Not at all! I always reply properly, don't I? It's you who never responds to me! You're always asking me for selfies, saying you want to save them as wallpapers!"

Tachibana Akane glared at him angrily, truly unable to understand how he could be so shameless.

"And you never asked me for photos?"

Kaoru retorted rudely, "One moment you'd tell me to strike this pose, the next you'd tell me to change clothes. After spending hours, you'd finally say 'The first one was still the best. I'm lucky I didn't die of frustration!'"

Tachibana Akane immediately flushed red: "I-I don't care! Boys who ask girls for leg photos are the worst!"

"Girls who send leg photos on the condition that you delete all other girls' photos are even worse."

Kaoru didn't hesitate to expose her weakness - this senior was sending him leg photos while forcing him to use only her leg photos as... material.

"Wah!"

Tachibana Akane headbutted him, "Shut up, just shut up! Anyway, it's all your fault!"

After playing around for a while, the two finally arrived at the convenience store.

As soon as they entered, Tachibana Akane immediately abandoned him and happily rushed toward the snack section.

Kaoru followed behind her, watching as she gathered a large pile of snacks like a squirrel preparing to bring food home.

He couldn't help but ask in confusion, "Didn't you eat dinner?"

"I did! I had pork cutlet rice, then had sundaes and crepes with Nene and the others."

Tachibana Akane counted on her fingers, "Oh right, I later ran into Honami on the way, so we went to try the new souffle and daifuku."

Kaoru silently watched her back. Her slender, petite figure - from behind, her waist was so thin it could be described as delicate enough to be grasped in one hand, as fragile as a willow branch.

When she crouched down, the curves of her shorts-clad bottom stood out prominently and plumply.

There was no doubt that her feel wouldn't be inferior to Ichinose Honami's.

Aside from small buns, her figure could probably compete evenly with Ichinose Honami's.

However, Kaoru always felt that no matter how much she ate, she probably wouldn't grow a pair of big rabbits, since her adolescent development was coming to an end.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

Tachibana Akane suddenly looked at him warily, "Your eyes are so gross. Even though I don't know what you're thinking, it feels really unpleasant."

"Nothing, I was just admiring senior's figure."

Kaoru openly admitted his desire, "Senior really is the cutest."

Tachibana Akane stiffened for a moment, her face turning bright red as she quickly stood up, as if realizing where he had been staring.

"W-well, you are a perverted junior after all, so I won't mind this."

She nodded, pretending to be calm, "If you're willing to get on your knees and beg me, I might actually... Eh!?"

Before she could finish, Kaoru immediately started to kneel.

"Wait a minute! Where's your dignity as a man?! Even if you don't kneel, I'll still show you! I'll satisfy you, really!"

In the end, Kaoru of course didn't kneel.

When dealing with this stubborn, foolish senior, sincerity was always the ultimate weapon.