

Cote 691

Chapter 691: I'll Continue to Like You

Lunch break passed quickly.

The two of them originally wanted to escape, but fortunately Kaoru reacted in time and caught the isolated Kushida Kikyo.

"I need to talk to you about something." Kaoru said expressionlessly.

Now it was his turn to restrain Kushida Kikyo. This girl had secretly bought a pair of handcuffs, probably planning to unlock new ways to play.

Who would have thought she'd use them on herself? Not taking proper revenge on her made Kaoru feel somewhat dissatisfied.

"Wahh, I was wrong, I won't dare to do it again."

Kushida Kikyo looked at him with teary eyes, her pitiful appearance making it hard for anyone to be harsh.

The little angel cried for a while, then secretly glanced at Kaoru's expression.

Finding him completely unmoved, she immediately pouted.

"I'll settle today's matter with you later."

Kaoru raised his hand in a chopping motion and tapped her head. "Now take out your phone."

Hearing it wasn't about the handcuffs, Kushida Kikyo was actually a little disappointed, but she didn't mind too much and suspiciously took out her phone.

"You're not thinking of taking lewd photos, are you?"

The little angel blushed, slightly clamping her legs together.

She was wearing white stockings today that covered her entire calves but revealed her smooth, delicate thighs.

With her slight movements, faint marks could be glimpsed on the skin of her inner thighs.

The girl's skirt was pristine, and if one leaned closer, they might catch a faint scent.

To be honest, Kushida Kikyo was quite nervous now.

Watching Kaoru take her phone, a long-unfelt shyness welled up in her heart.

"You're overthinking it."

Kaoru operated the phone, "Someone saw Yagami greet you today. What did he say to you?"

Kushida Kikyo froze slightly, never expecting him to know even this.

Suddenly biting her lip, she feigned reserve while trying to playfully bat her eyes.

"Eh, are you jealous?"

The little angel usually adept at handling people still attempted to brush it off, but she failed to notice how forced her smile was—it could even be described as pitiful.

"I am jealous."

Kaoru bent his fingers and flicked her forehead, "A strange man comes over to approach my girlfriend—of course I'd be jealous. Especially since he has ulterior motives and might do something bad to my girlfriend."

Kushida Kikyo gazed at him pleadingly, clutching his sleeve as if finding her anchor: "I told you before, I already told you before—this guy definitely has problems."

Kaoru gently embraced the girl before him, speaking softly, "Sorry, I should have met him earlier."

Kushida Kikyo only felt her nose tingling with emotion.

The first time she mentioned this to Kaoru, he had asked Horikita Suzune to help test Yagami Takuya.

Now, just as Yagami Takuya had approached her and made her feel panicked, Kaoru already knew what she was worried about—even though she hadn't told him yet.

"Am I a coward?"

Kushida Kikyo nuzzled against his chest, her voice small, "Just knowing he holds knowledge of my past makes me terribly afraid. I'm so worried about losing everything I have now."

"Kikyo isn't a coward. you managed to make so many friends and withstand so much pressure—Kikyo has always been the most amazing girl, my most beloved girlfriend."

Kaoru stroked her back as if comforting a child, but his gaze remained fixed on the phone in his hand.

"I'm not that amazing. I know you've always thought I'm a fool, only thinking about making friends, and ended up having my weakness grasped by you."

Kushida Kikyo continued muttering softly, "At first, I actually resented it, thinking you were just a lewd guy only thinking about doing lewd things with girls."

"Now you finally realize the one with a mind full of lewd thoughts is yourself?"

Kaoru was used to it—it wasn't his first time being scolded.

"I'll bite you, you know?"

Kushida Kikyo snorted, "How could any girl have a mind full of lewd things? If such a girl really exists, I'm telling you—run away quickly! If she can do lewd things with you, she can do them with others too. You're absolutely not allowed to touch that kind of girl!"

Kaoru couldn't help but glance at her a few more times.

She seemed to notice his gaze and immediately raised her fierce yet pretty face.

"Hey! I really will bite you to death!"

Though Kaoru hadn't said anything, Kushida Kikyo was already flustered and furious.

"What's with that look? I only became this lewd because I want to do lewd things with you! I'll only do lewd things with you alone! I'm not interested in anyone but you—whether boys or girls!"

In fact, she no longer found even self-amusement satisfying—methods that used to bring her joy now felt utterly dull.

Nowadays, whenever she encountered anything unusual, she would immediately project herself and Kaoru into the scenario; otherwise, she couldn't bear to continue.

"You're the one who corrupted me!"

Kushida Kikyo glared resentfully at Kaoru. "You have to take responsibility for me for life!"

"Alright, alright, I'll take responsibility."

Kaoru felt she bore at least half the blame herself—he certainly wouldn't shoulder the entire burden.

Kushida Kikyo shot him a few sharp glances before huffing and asking, "Where was I just now?"

"You said I'm very lustful." Kaoru reminded her.

Kushida Kikyo seemed pleased—it appeared he had been listening carefully to her.

She continued, "That's not the main point. It's normal for you to like someone as cute as me. The real issue is that you actually managed to get leverage over me."

What frustrated her was how Kaoru could use her other side to control her, and how she had genuinely submitted to this man.

Now, with Yagami Takuya's appearance, Kushida Kikyo suddenly felt as though anyone could manipulate her.

"Did I do something wrong?"

Kushida Kikyo was reflecting on herself while feeling profoundly lost.

"Whenever I think about the past, I become disoriented. I clearly vowed not to repeat those mistakes and to do better this time."

"Why is Kikyo so fixated on making friends?"

Kaoru softened his tone, aware that Yagami Takuya's arrival had deeply unsettled her.

"Because... because I can't do anything... Like Horikita and Hirata—I've always envied them. They're more talented and capable than me, and everyone likes being friends with people like that."

Though she detested Horikita Suzune's attitude, Kushida Kikyo secretly admired her abilities.

Chapter 692: Do you think i'm useless?

Ever since last year's uninhabited island exam, where everyone learned Horikita Suzune had prioritized the class despite having a fever, their perception of her shifted significantly.

Subsequent exams further demonstrated Horikita Suzune's competence and determination.

Many concluded that while her temper was problematic, her intentions weren't malicious.

After all, who would dislike someone who constantly thought about the class's welfare?

"Don't judge Horikita solely by her demeanor. If her personality were slightly better, everyone in class would be willing to interact with her."

Kushida Kikyo felt dejected—this might be the first time she revealed such negativity to Kaoru.

"But I'm different. I have no talent. I can't achieve what she does. The only thing worth praising about me is my cute face—no one dislikes my appearance."

"I think Kikyo is actually quite remarkable for being able to befriend so many people."

Kaoru tried to comfort her.

"If making friends is a talent, you're better at it than Suzune."

Kushida Kikyo pressed her lips together, unable to feel happy. Instead, she forced a faint smile.

"You know? I was actually outstanding as a child—always first in my class. Everyone wanted to be my friend. But in middle school, I became... dull. There were always people better than me. No one clustered around me anymore. No one needed me. I grew so jealous of those with real talent."

Kaoru fell silent.

This was her deep-seated insecurity—the stark contrast between elementary and middle school likely fueled her obsessive drive to make friends.

"I get lonely very easily. When no one talks to me, I don't know what to do. So I started wearing a mask, trying hard to build good relationships with others. If everyone becomes my friend, I won't feel lonely anymore."

Kaoru could understand her perspective - some people enjoy solitude while others thrive in lively environments.

Kushida Kikyo couldn't stand being alone.

She wanted to talk with people, she wanted to chatter endlessly, she wanted someone to pay attention to her.

While she appeared to be a super extrovert, her true nature was simply someone afraid of loneliness.

If she were isolated and forced to live like Sakura Airi, Kushida Kikyo would immediately become withdrawn.

Back in middle school, when her classmates tried to ostracize her, she ended up exposing everyone's embarrassing pasts.

She simply couldn't accept that kind of life.

In a way, Kushida Kikyo was a creature who understood social dynamics perfectly.

Because she was so adept at reading the room, she navigated interpersonal relationships with ease, sitting at the top of this social food chain.

How could she possibly endure the feeling of falling from grace?

If she went to university, she'd probably become even more skilled at social manipulation, perhaps turning into the type of woman who toys with naive boys at mixers.

"Horikita thinks I'm just trying to please others, that I have no sense of self, that my mind is full of nothing but social maneuvering."

Kushida Kikyo's voice grew low. "She said that if you wear a mask for too long, you can't take it off anymore, and if someone forcibly removes my mask, it would be the death of me."

From Horikita Suzune's perspective, Kushida Kikyo was a hypocritical creature - always smiling at everyone, treating people gently, creating this little angel persona for herself.

In reality, the little angel was just the devil's mask.

Her persona was entirely fabricated because it allowed her to cater to everyone, to make people like her.

Her true nature was that of a little demon who toyed with people's hearts.

Therefore, Horikita Suzune particularly disliked Kushida Kikyo's behavior.

She felt that Kushida had no will of her own, merely maintaining several fragile relationships that held no real value.

When you thought about it carefully, to maintain these relationships, Kushida Kikyo sometimes couldn't handle the pressure and would often go home to vent her frustrations, only to continue pretending nothing was wrong afterward, treating people she despised with gentle smiles.

Like with boys such as Ike Kanji - though she found him particularly annoying, she had to work hard to pretend they were friends.

Now even Kushida Kikyo herself was starting to wonder if she was doing something meaningless.

She was beginning to waver about her persona and her friendship kingdom.

If Yagami Takuya were to remove her mask, she didn't dare imagine what might happen.

"Kikyo, if someone looked at you with lecherous eyes and spread rumors about you behind your back, would you hate that person?" Kaoru asked softly.

"Of course I would. That kind of person is disgusting."

Kushida Kikyo answered without hesitation.

"Would you say it directly to them?" Kaoru asked again.

At this, Kushida Kikyo began to hesitate.

After a moment, she whispered: "Prob...probably not. That would offend people."

Kaoru remained silent for a while.

He wasn't angry, but continued asking: "If this person already makes you feel disgusted, why can't you say it?"

Kushida Kikyo was about to say something, but Kaoru already knew what she was going to say and couldn't help but sigh.

"Sometimes, when you care too much about other people's feelings and opinions, you end up losing yourself." Kushida Kikyo bit her lower lip.

She knew that too, but what could she do?

"Some people simply aren't worth making friends with. Hate is hate, love is love. Forcing yourself to like someone you dislike will only exhaust you."

"I never intended to be friends with everyone. I just don't want people to have a bad impression of me or speak ill of me behind my back."

"If anyone badmouths you, tell me. I'll take care of that trash for you."

In an instant, Kaoru's expression turned serious.

Kushida Kikyo felt her throat go dry, her already full chest growing even more stifled and heavy.

"There will always be people who dislike you in this world. Even if you care about their opinions, they won't cooperate with you."

Kaoru didn't want Kushida Kikyo to continue carrying such heavy pressure.

While he had remained silent and respectful toward her previous actions, that didn't mean he agreed with her mindset.

"So... do you think I was wrong too now?"

Looking into his eyes, Kushida Kikyo felt inexplicably wronged, as if he was teaming up with Horikita Suzune to bully her.

"My Kikyo did nothing wrong."

Kaoru said seriously, "She's always been my little angel. I just want to tell her she doesn't need to be afraid or worried this time. When no one stood up for her before, now someone will."

Don't be afraid of people disliking her. Don't worry that removing her mask will leave her with nowhere to belong.

Don't fear others' gazes, because Kaoru would stand behind her and support her!

"Even if many people come to dislike her after she removes her mask, I'll continue to love her. Like I said before, compared to a masked little angel, I prefer her true self."

At this point, Kaoru smiled.

"If you're just afraid of loneliness, I'll always stay by your side. Besides, it's not just me who knows Kikyo's true nature now - Honami and Kei both know, and they don't dislike Kikyo either."

Kushida Kikyo suddenly felt her nose tingling with emotion. She recalled scenes from middle school, when her alt account was exposed and the entire class isolated her, labeling her a hypocritical demon.

No one had stood up for her back then.

Those who were supposedly friends all treated her with cold indifference.

Kaoru returned her phone and said softly, "Let me handle this person. My little angel's secrets should only be in my hands."

"Mm."

Kushida Kikyo held her phone, carefully pressing it against her chest while gazing tenderly at him.

That's right.

Her secrets should only be in Kaoru's hands.

Only Kaoru could threaten her, and she would continue being his pet.

Because she knew her master truly loved his pet.

Chapter 693: The Final Meeting

Yagami Takuya knew he was about to succeed.

His suggestive words to Kushida Kikyo that morning had lodged in the girl's throat like a fishbone, faintly pricking at her sensitive heart.

A few days earlier, Yagami Takuya had calmly faced the probing questions from Horikita Suzune and Kushida Kikyo.

Of course he knew what they wanted to ask - he could even composedly suppress Kushida Kikyo's unease.

The more she dared not ask about the past, the more Yagami Takuya deliberately teased her sensitive nerves, the more uneasy and anxious she became, the more she forced a seemingly indifferent smile.

Yagami Takuya felt astonished—this was a reaction he rarely encountered in the White Room.

The outside world truly offered more opportunities to learn.

However, it was somewhat too dull.

Looking at the message she sent, Yagami Takuya noted how cautiously she invited him to meet that night.

Perhaps worried that Kaoru might discover their meeting, Kushida Kikyo specifically arranged it for 11 p.m. behind the dormitory building.

It seemed she couldn't wait to find out if he knew about the past incident. This woman really was foolish.

While feeling contempt, Yagami Takuya also thought of Kaoru, and a rare hesitation surfaced within him.

He knew he had been a bit impatient; he shouldn't have approached Kushida Kikyo so quickly.

But then again, Yagami Takuya reconsidered—even if Kaoru found out, what did it matter? He had never taken that person seriously in the first place.

His only rival was Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

Just hearing that name would evoke an inexplicable hatred in Yagami Takuya.

Since he could remember, every instructor had spoken that name to him.

Ayanokoji Kiyotaka was more outstanding than anyone else, no one in this world could surpass Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

Compared to Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, you are all just trash!

Ayanokoji Kiyotaka is the White Room's most perfect product.

These statements had essentially accompanied Yagami Takuya his entire life.

Even when he achieved first place, the instructors would coldly say, "You are far inferior to Ayanokoji Kiyotaka. Ayanokoji Kiyotaka could achieve such results two years ago."

No matter what he did, he was always negated.

In their eyes, it seemed he could never catch up to Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

What was even more ridiculous was that the children in the same batch as Yagami Takuya had even begun to idolize Ayanokoji Kiyotaka—like Amasawa Ichika.

Yagami Takuya harbored deep hatred for these people, and even more so for Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, the source of it all.

No matter what means he had to employ, he was determined to prove that Ayanokoji Kiyotaka was not a flawless being.

One day, he would drag Ayanokoji Kiyotaka down from his pedestal.

He had thought he would have to wait a long time, but unexpectedly, this opportunity was arriving soon.

At this thought, Yagami Takuya finally felt a surge of excitement.

He clenched his fist tightly, a fierce glint flashing in his eyes.

Only he could personally bury this so-called Greatest Masterpiece.

However, he deeply understood that, for now, he had no chance to get close to his target. He needed sufficient power.

At the most critical moment, he would deliver the most unexpected thunderous strike to Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

Therefore, Kushida Kikyo's weakness happened to be one of his best assets.

If even Kaoru could threaten this foolish woman, Yagami Takuya naturally didn't believe he would perform worse than Kaoru.

The reason he felt it was too rushed now wasn't because he feared Kaoru finding out, but because he regretted not having found a suitable pawn.

If he had a pawn to act on his behalf, he could remain hidden in the shadows.

Even if the plan were exposed, Ayanokoji Kiyotaka wouldn't connect it to him.

Ding—

Hearing the school bell ring, Yagami Takuya put on a smile and waved goodbye to his classmates as gently as a spring breeze.

When a bold girl invited him to karaoke, he politely declined.

Although he turned her down, these girls didn't blame him at all. Instead, they supported him even more. As expected, they're all a bunch of fools.

While smiling, Yagami Takuya couldn't help but feel the illusion that he had accidentally wandered into a kindergarten, his heart growing even more disgusted with these so-called classmates.

Despite such thoughts, Yagami Takuya knew these fools were among the tools he would use to deal with Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

Though he appeared reluctant to lead the entire class on the surface, he didn't believe anyone else was more suitable to lead Class B of the first year.

If he had to name someone, there was one particularly troublesome girl.

Before leaving, Yagami Takuya glanced at Komiya Kaho, aware that she was quite close to Kaoru.

It seemed this one needed to be dealt with.

Yagami Takuya held no favorable opinion of Kaoru either. While he clearly understood that Koudo Ikusei was Kaoru's territory, it didn't diminish his deep-seated contempt for him.

In this school, everyone besides him and Ayanokoji Kiyotaka was trash.

Kaoru was just a slightly larger piece of trash.

Amasawa Ichika, sharing the common background of being from the White Room, wanted to warn Yagami Takuya, but instead she only provoked his impatience.

He was the top student of the White Room—why should he worry about Kaoru?

Yagami Takuya was about to sneer coldly when he caught sight of the camera above and restrained himself.

Once he got his hands on Kushida Kikyo, he might even uncover leverage against Kaoru.

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"Whose leverage are you planning to get?"

At the sound of that voice, Yagami Takuya felt as if all the blood in his body were flowing backward—so cold, so chilling.

It was 11 p.m.

The night sky was pitch black, and the entire dormitory building was eerily quiet, with only the faint chirping of insects.

In the scenario Yagami Takuya had envisioned, the only people who should have appeared here were him and Kushida Kikyo, the latter putting on a facade of composure to face him.

He would gradually break through Kushida Kikyo's psychological defenses, turning this foolish woman into a tool to use against Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

That was how it should have played out, but the man now standing before him shattered his illusions.

Through the hazy darkness, Yagami Takuya saw Kaoru emerging from the shadows of the moonlight, slowly approaching him.

This was their first formal meeting.

In that instant, Yagami Takuya realized he had been deceived.

Kaoru had managed to control Kushida Kikyo to such an extent, paying such close attention to this woman.

"Are you disappointed that it's me who showed up?"

In contrast to Yagami Takuya's shock, Kaoru appeared remarkably calm.

He even took the time to assess Yagami Takuya—a boy with looks that could make girls' hearts flutter, giving off the impression of a gentle, considerate underclassman.

"No, just surprised."

Yagami Takuya quickly regained his composure and smiled refreshingly. "I thought it was Kushida-senpai who wanted to meet me. I didn't expect it to be Kaoru-senpai. Is there something you wanted to tell me?"

Even with the realization that his scheme had been exposed, Yagami Takuya remained calm, even attempting to seize the initiative.

Beneath the mask of the gentle underclassman likely lay a hidden side unknown to others.

However, Kaoru merely gave him another look.

"Is this carefully crafted persona really that entertaining?" Kaoru said coldly, "When you smile at your classmates, you're actually thinking 'let this end quickly.' Enduring your contempt for them must be quite painful for you. How long do you plan to keep up this act?"

Yagami Takuya withdrew his smile.

No matter who it was, having such private thoughts exposed directly was an unpleasant experience.

Given his status, how could he allow Kaoru to criticize him like this?

"Does Mitoma-senpai have some advice for me?"

Yagami Takuya suppressed his anger. If not for worrying that Kaoru might be recording, he wouldn't have continued pretending.

"Advice? Not really. I just want to ask you a few questions."

Kaoru suddenly smiled. "You have 15 minutes to earn my forgiveness, Yagami-kun."

This arrogant tone reminded people of Kaoru's audacity during the entrance ceremony, subtly stinging Yagami Takuya's heart.

What right did this guy have to adopt such an attitude in front of him?

"Is this because I also have matters with Kushida-senpai?"

Yagami Takuya feigned an apologetic expression. "Sorry, I attended the same middle school as Kushida-senpai, so I got a bit excited when I saw her."

Heh, he deliberately mentioned Kushida Kikyo's middle school again, wanting to convey to Kaoru that he knew all about Kushida Kikyo's past.

It wasn't just you who had dirt on Kushida Kikyo - if pushed too hard, he could also destroy her.

Yagami Takuya believed Kaoru would understand his meaning.

He even planned to use this opportunity to blackmail Kaoru, since the other party was controlling Kushida Kikyo through leverage.

If Kaoru didn't want the secret between him and Kushida Kikyo exposed, he would have to consider Yagami Takuya's existence.

Chapter 694: His Fear

Seeing Kaoru remain silent, Yagami Takuya couldn't help but show a slight smile.

Even if Kaoru took the initiative to confront him, he still held the upper hand.

To him, Kaoru was just a big fish that had willingly swum into his net, completely at his mercy.

"You attended the same school?"

Kaoru's expression remained calm.

"No, I didn't know her at all before."

Yagami Takuya initially wanted to nod, but halfway through speaking, he suddenly froze.

"If you didn't know Kikyo, why are you getting close to her?"

Kaoru seemed not to notice his reaction and continued questioning.

"To get dirt on her, use that to get close to Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, and when necessary, use her to find your weaknesses. With your help, dealing with Ayanokoji Kiyotaka would be much easier..."

At the last moment, Yagami Takuya covered his mouth, his eyes flashing with deep suspicion.

He inexplicably felt his scalp tingling - what was he saying?

It was as if some mysterious force was compelling him to speak all his inner thoughts without thinking, almost blurting them out!

Yagami Takuya was stunned, but then saw Kaoru suddenly sigh.

"Indeed there are loopholes. It can only force truth-telling, but covering the mouth prevents speech."

This was Kaoru's first time using [Truth Magic].

While the effect was certainly good, there were still problems.

As he had just witnessed, as long as Yagami Takuya noticed something wrong and covered his mouth, he couldn't speak anymore.

Seeing the slightly regretful expression on Kaoru's face, Yagami Takuya finally reacted.

In his eyes, the man who had emerged from the shadows suddenly took on a different form.

In just an instant, Yagami Takuya broke out in a cold sweat.

The eerie feeling from before returned, even more intense than earlier—his body's instinct was warning him, urging him to quickly escape this man's line of sight.

"Who... who are you?"

Yagami Takuya forced a smile, his thoughts in complete disarray.

"Don't be like that, Yagami-kun."

Kaoru said softly, "Right now, I'm the one asking questions, not you."

Yagami Takuya swallowed hard.

The composed expression he usually wore finally vanished from his face, and Amasawa Ichika's warning seemed to echo in his ears.

Could this person really have a Hypnosis App?

Impossible.

This person should only have leverage over Kushida Kikyo and Karuizawa Kei, which is why he can openly maintain a Harem.

But how to explain what just happened?

Yagami Takuya felt shaken.

For the first time in his life, he felt a deep fear toward someone other than Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

No, what he felt for Ayanokoji was hatred, but the man before him evoked a fear of the unknown.

"If Kikyo doesn't agree to your demands, what do you plan to do to her, Yagami-kun?"

Kaoru interrupted his thoughts, "This question is important, so please answer me quickly."

Yagami Takuya tightly closed his mouth.

He didn't have to answer.

Not only that, Kaoru could read defiance and the urge to flee in his eyes.

"Since you don't want to answer, I'll say it for you."

Kaoru's voice turned cold, "Armed with information, you would press Kikyo step by step. You'd keep hinting at her, even actively leaking things to others. But in everyone else's eyes, your persona is too deceptive. When people see you approaching Kikyo, they'll just think you're an admiring underclassman, perhaps even one with a secret crush on her."

"Because you think even I can threaten Kikyo, for you, it would only be easier. You wouldn't have to worry about Kikyo resisting at all. In fact, Kikyo might even be thinking of resisting me, and you could seize the chance to become her support."

"Kikyo is very popular, so getting close to her won't draw Ayanokoji's attention—it would just seem like another underclassman. Unlike Amasawa and Nanase, who are directly exposed to Ayanokoji's gaze, they've probably already caught his eye. You not only look down on their methods but also plan to use this to hide yourself."

"If you could get leverage on me through Kikyo, maybe even I would become your tool. Your ideas are truly wonderful, but unfortunately, they're just your ideas."

Kaoru's voice wasn't loud, but it struck like a hammer, shattering Yagami Takuya's psychological defenses and laying bare all his inner thoughts.

The exposure to the cold air made Yagami Takuya feel extremely uncomfortable.

By the time Kaoru reached the latter part, Yagami Takuya's anger had turned into shock and uncertainty.

How did the other party know these things?

"Strange, isn't it?"

Kaoru saw his expression, "Didn't expect me to know about the White Room? Amasawa didn't even tell you that? It seems there's a rift between you two as well. You look down on her."

"Enough, who exactly are you?"

Yagami Takuya felt anger.

Kaoru showed no change in expression.

Although the White Room personnel had reviewed intelligence beforehand, Yagami Takuya clearly wasn't qualified to know his information.

"I've already said there's no need for me to answer you."

Kaoru spoke, "In the eyes of someone like you, perhaps I'm no different from you all - only capable of relying on despicable methods. And Kikyo did indeed submit to me."

Rather than Yagami's thoughts, Kaoru was actually more concerned about his perception of himself.

Kaoru could understand Yagami Takuya's perspective.

After all, maintaining a Harem completely exceeded many people's imagination - otherwise, some wouldn't believe he possessed a Hypnosis App.

With the advantage of intelligence, Yagami Takuya naturally judged that he had successfully controlled Kushida Kikyo and Karuizawa Kei through despicable means.

Kaoru didn't want to deny this point.

He had indeed used underhanded methods - even Karuizawa Kei's belief that he was her savior was merely him seizing the opportunity to play the role.

What kind of good person would a man who maintains a Harem like him be?

Even now, Kaoru was still plotting about Asahina Nazuna, Amasawa Ichika, and Shiina Hiyori.

Whether he was a foot fetishist pervert or a lecherous person, as long as he could fulfill his desires and claim them, Kaoru didn't care.

Sometimes, Kaoru would also wonder - could this still be considered liking someone?

At best, it was just being attracted to their looks.

Though he thought this way, Yagami Takuya's appearance inexplicably made Kaoru feel disgusted.

Perhaps it was because Yagami Takuya's methods were similar to his, creating a mirror-like illusion.

The mere thought that Yagami Takuya might threaten Kushida Kikyo like he did made Kaoru even more irritable.

"Forget it, there's no need for me to waste time with you."

Kaoru shook his head, "I don't like people who are similar to me."

Yagami Takuya was stunned.

Only after Kaoru's figure disappeared from his sight did he react.

"That guy!"

Yagami Takuya gritted his teeth in hatred, "What exactly happened just now? I was actually afraid of that guy!?"

The more he realized his fear, the angrier he became.

Even Ayanokoji Kiyotaka had never given him this feeling.

No good, he needed to seriously consider how to deal with Kaoru.

The other party had given him more pressure than Ayanokoji Kiyotaka - he had to find a way!

Simultaneously, Yagami Takuya considered whether to inform Tsukishiro Kazunari, but then reconsidered - what just happened must have been an accident.

How could hypnosis possibly exist?

Perhaps Kaoru had used some psychological suggestion on him.

Yagami Takuya gradually regained his confidence.

He took a deep breath - if Kaoru thought he could scare him like this, he was underestimating him too much.

Heh, before the main event arrived, Yagami Takuya didn't mind dealing with Kaoru first, making him understand the gap between himself and a White Room Student.

Yagami Takuya's expression grew increasingly dark.

Not only Kushida Kikyo - he also knew about Karuizawa Kei's past.

...

Soon, news spread throughout the first year, even reaching the upperclassmen.

Yagami Takuya from Class 1-B, who was always gentle and considerate, had voluntarily withdrawn from school this week.

Chapter 695: Who Is the Culprit

A single dropout wouldn't normally cause much of a stir—both second and third-year students had experienced withdrawal incidents before.

However, this time, the dropout was a first-year student.

Everyone had just been enrolled for half a month, still adjusting to the school environment.

Who would have thought someone would drop out, and voluntarily at that?

Voluntary dropouts were extremely rare.

Even Class B of the first year hadn't processed it in time—their gentle, handsome classmate had simply vanished.

Since Yagami Takuya hadn't informed anyone beforehand, his departure was completely abrupt.

Many didn't even know the reason for his withdrawal, leading to rampant speculation.

Various theories circulated, with some even suspecting that an ex-girlfriend had shown up with his child.

Amasawa Ichika learned the news on Saturday afternoon and was utterly stunned.

She could hardly believe what she was hearing.

Impossible—how could Yagami Takuya drop out?

How could he possibly withdraw voluntarily?

She knew full well how obsessed Yagami was with Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

As long as his mission remained unfulfilled, there was no way he would leave!

Abandoning the mission and slinking back to the White Room—that was completely unlike Yagami Takuya's style!

Amasawa wanted to call Yagami, but the prolonged ringing made her expression grow increasingly grim.

It felt as if something were slowly tightening around her heart, making it hard to breathe.

At the last moment, the call finally connected.

"Takuya, is it true? Did you really drop out?"

Amasawa didn't care about anything else.

Hiding in her room, she called Yagami Takuya, ready to rush to his dorm at any moment.

"Did Ayanokoji-senpai do something to you? What were you thinking? What exactly happened?"

Faced with her barrage of questions, there was silence on the other end for a moment.

Then, a voice emerged—but it wasn't the familiar one of Yagami Takuya.

"Yagami has already returned today. I can't disclose the specific reason."

The person holding the phone now was Tsukishiro Kazunari. "This account will be deactivated soon. I'm hanging up."

Amasawa felt as if all the blood in her body had turned to ice, her mind reeling.

"Wait!"

The girl desperately tried to stop Tsukishiro. "Isn't our mission to deal with Ayanokoji-senpai? Why did Takuya drop out?"

"As expected, you're too emotional. Yagami did something unnecessary, so naturally, he was eliminated. You should be happy about it."

Tsukishiro spoke indifferently. "Don't forget—we only care about who eliminates Ayanokoji."

"You can't do this! You can't eliminate Takuya without any reason! He's prepared for so long—all he wanted was to face Ayanokoji-senpai in a showdown..."

As she spoke, Amasawa grew increasingly incoherent.

The news was too sudden, she had no psychological preparation whatsoever.

In the blink of an eye, Yagami Takuya had vanished like a bubble.

She knew all too well what kind of feelings Yagami Takuya held for Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

A month before enrollment, Yagami had meticulously reviewed everyone's profiles, going over the sections about Ayanokoji Kiyotaka again and again.

The more she understood her childhood friend's feelings, the harder it was for Amasawa to accept this reality!

"At least give me a reason! What exactly did Takuya do that was so unnecessary?" Amasawa Ichika gripped her phone so tightly her knuckles turned white, waiting for Tsukishiro Kazunari's response even though she knew he might not answer.

Even so, she had to know the answer!

"Do you know who he's been in contact with recently?"

Though only seconds had passed, Amasawa Ichika felt as if centuries had gone by as she immediately began sifting through her memories, recalling scene after scene.

Yagami Takuya had always been playing the role of an ordinary student.

He never had direct contact with Ayanokoji Kiyotaka and devoted himself entirely to managing class relationships.

Who could he... Wait, he did interact with a second-year student!

"Was it Kaoru-senpai?"

Amasawa Ichika's voice was hoarse, though she didn't notice it herself.

"It seems you're not a complete fool after all. Don't provoke Mitoma-kun from now on."

Tsukishiro Kazunari had no intention of saying more. "Wait for my instructions next. Don't try to be clever on your own."

After saying this, Tsukishiro Kazunari hung up.

He had many matters to deal with now and genuinely lacked the energy to handle Amasawa Ichika.

Amasawa Ichika stood frozen, phone in hand, her thoughts circling around a single name—Kaoru.

Without her even noticing, this man had taken down Yagami Takuya.

To be honest, she could accept that Kaoru had defeated Yagami Takuya.

After all, the latter was a formidable opponent, making such an outcome plausible.

What Amasawa couldn't accept was how silently Yagami Takuya had fallen—so quietly that even Tsukishiro Kazunari was being evasive about it.

What exactly happened between them?

Amasawa bit her lip. She had clearly warned Yagami Takuya, so why hadn't he taken her words seriously?

Since Tsukishiro Kazunari refused to tell her, she might as well get the answers from Kaoru herself.

The thought of standing by while Yagami Takuya was forced to withdraw from school was unbearable to Amasawa.

She couldn't feign indifference—her eyes were already red-rimmed.

Kaoru Mitoma!

...

"Yagami withdrew from school?"

Upon hearing this news, Ishikami Kyo from Class 1-A was stunned for a long moment.

Although his classmate Takahashi Shu was equally surprised, he nodded with a slightly serious expression.

"I asked around with Class B. They say Takuya submitted a withdrawal application and left the school this morning."

Takahashi Shu added, "I confirmed this with Class B's homeroom teacher too. Takuya really did withdraw."

Ishikami fell into deep thought.

This news was too unexpected, especially since he knew Yagami Takuya's true identity.

"Could he not adapt to the school environment? Did he think he couldn't compete with us?"

Takahashi clicked his tongue.

This was their first withdrawal case among first-years—truly unexpected.

Ishikami shook his head: "Don't say that. Yagami was an exceptional person. He wouldn't withdraw without reason."

No one understood the terror of White Room Students better than him.

Though Yagami Takuya wasn't equal to Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, he was still the top-ranked White Room Student of his generation.

Yagami's capabilities shouldn't be underestimated.

"Are you suggesting someone interfered?"

Takahashi easily jumped to the opposite conclusion. "Takuya left too abruptly. Even Class B students don't know the reason. Was he caught with some weakness and had to flee?"

Ishikami was momentarily speechless.

What weakness could a White Room Student possibly have that would force them to flee?

Nevertheless, Yagami Takuya's withdrawal had indeed raised Ishikami's vigilance and attention.

How could he voluntarily withdraw without even completing his mission?

Could it be that Ayanokoji-senpai took action himself?

While Ishikami maintained a calm exterior, he increasingly felt this was the correct answer.

After all, Ayanokoji Kiyotaka was the White Room's most perfect creation—fully capable of eliminating Yagami Takuya without leaving a trace.

Ishigami Kyo was somewhat excited. As expected of Ayanokoji-sensei's Greatest Masterpiece.

He had been wondering how to help Ayanokoji Kiyotaka eliminate the White Room Student and Tsukishiro Kazunari, but Ayanokoji Kiyotaka effortlessly took down a White Room Student.

It wouldn't be long before someone discovered Ayanokoji Kiyotaka's true abilities and genuinely appreciated the Greatest Masterpiece that represented the pinnacle of human aesthetics.

Ishigami Kyo suppressed the urge to call Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, deciding instead to quietly observe his maneuvers from the sidelines.

Lost in his thoughts, he didn't notice Takahashi Osamu still rambling on.

"Hey, is it because Takuya made a move on Mitoma-senpai's girlfriend? Some say Mitoma-senpai taught that persistent pursuer Takuya a lesson."

Even if Ishigami Kyo heard this gossip, he probably wouldn't be interested, especially since even Takahashi Osamu himself considered it a joke.

There were too many rumors about this Mitoma-senpai!

Chapter 696: Bet

Meanwhile, Class C of the first year also learned about Yagami Takuya's withdrawal from school.

"Yagami-kun withdrew voluntarily?"

Riku Utsunomiya was stunned for a moment, and Tsubaki Sakurako beside him also froze slightly.

At that moment, the two were discussing in a café whether to approach second-year students when they overheard people nearby talking about Yagami Takuya's withdrawal.

After a while, Utsunomiya gathered all the information and sat opposite Tsubaki Sakurako with a grave expression.

"With Yagami-kun's withdrawal, Class B will likely be without a leader in the short term."

Utsunomiya was aware of the situation in Class B of the first year.

Without someone like Ryuen Kakeru or Hosen Kazuo, it was usually someone well-liked and capable who would step up to unite the class.

Yagami Takuya happened to possess both qualities.

He not only got along well with his classmates but also had excellent grades, earning the trust of many in Class B.

"An unexpected development," Tsubaki Sakurako said lazily, a lollipop in her mouth, her tone making it hard to guess what she was thinking.

"Although it's good for us, this matter is too suspicious."

Utsunomiya felt puzzled. "Yagami-kun doesn't seem like the type to withdraw without reason. Even his classmates don't know why he left. I think we need to be cautious from now on."

Tsubaki Sakurako remained silent, unconsciously playing with the lollipop in her mouth.

The round candy rolled around in the girl's mouth. If Kaoru were here, he would undoubtedly stare at her intently.

Utsunomiya didn't know the inside story, so he couldn't guess who the culprit was.

But Tsubaki Sakurako knew.

Could it be that person?

Tsubaki Sakurako silently recalled her sister's face—how the other person had turned away heartlessly, never looking back no matter how much her sister cried and pleaded.

Feeling somewhat irritated, she bit down on the candy.

Utsunomiya didn't seem to notice her expression and spoke up, "By the way, regarding the showdown between Nagumo-senpai and Mitoma-senpai, I think it's best we don't get involved."

Hearing that familiar name again, Tsubaki Sakurako's eyes flickered slightly.

However, within a few days, Nagumo Miyabi once again took the initiative to seek them out.

...

On the other side, Tsubasa Nanase also received the news.

Though surprised, she didn't pay much attention to it, as she was more concerned about the cooperation between Class D of the first year and Class C of the second year.

"Heh, Nanase, you're really fixated on this person. Is he worth you being so serious?"

Hearing Tsubasa Nanase's arrangement, Hosen Kazuo grew somewhat impatient.

This arrangement was related to Class 2-C. From the start of the school year until now, Tsubasa Nanase had been inexplicably obsessed with Class 2-C.

If not for her having some value, Hosen Kazuo wouldn't be this polite to her.

"If we can make this person drop out, I'll follow your orders from now on."

Tsubasa Nanase took a deep breath. "This person specifically—I must make him drop out."

Hosen found it quite interesting.

While the entire class was subservient to him, only Tsubasa Nanase held different opinions.

"Nanase, don't talk to me like that. Don't think I won't hit a woman."

Hosen Kazuo curled a smile at the corner of his mouth. "But if you tell me why you want this person to drop out, I might help you."

"There are things I can't forgive him for."

Tsubasa Nanase stubbornly met Hosen's gaze. "Helping me is actually helping yourself. With Yagami-kun having dropped out, Class 2-C will definitely need collaborators."

Hosen's face darkened instantly.

He suddenly shoved Tsubasa Nanase against the wall, his smile turning vicious. "Are you trying to tell me what to do?"

Suddenly subjected to such rough treatment, Tsubasa only let out a muffled grunt but showed no trace of fear.

"Is it really that troublesome for you to make him drop out?"

Hosen acted as if he'd heard something hilarious.

His eyes were extremely fierce, while Tsubasa met his gaze head-on.

The two stood in stalemate for a brief moment.

"Heh, what a pathetic look."

Hosen withdrew his fist. "Not to mention a second-year student—I wouldn't even bat an eye at Ryuen."

It seemed the provocation had worked. Tsubasa secretly breathed a sigh of relief.

"This person—I'll take care of him for you incidentally."

Hosen said, "But as payment, you'll help me deal with the trash from other classes. Then Ryuen and Mitoma."

Tsubasa was slightly taken aback.

She hadn't expected to hear Kaoru's name from Hosen Kazuo.

Ryuen Kakeru was understandable—Hosen and he were acquaintances from middle school, often at odds, and Hosen was eager to challenge Ryuen's position.

Now that Hosen had come to ANHS, of course he wanted to settle scores with Ryuen Kakeru.

But Kaoru shouldn't be included here.

Why would Hosen Kazuo notice Kaoru?

In Tsubasa's eyes, Kaoru's image was currently terrible—practically just a womanizing playboy.

Hosen didn't miss Tsubasa's expression. "You don't want to?"

"No, I'm just curious."

Tsubasa collected herself. "Does Hosen-kun want to cooperate with Nagumo-senpai?"

Nagumo Miyabi had secretly contacted first-year students, proposing cooperation with the target being Kaoru.

If they could deal with Kaoru, he would offer all his Personal points as reward.

Tsubasa had seen Nagumo's personal balance—nearly ten million Personal points was truly tempting.

She thought Hosen was attracted by those Personal points, but unexpectedly, Hosen just burst into laughter after hearing this.

"Cooperate? Even if he hadn't begged me, I would have made a move on Mitoma!" Hosen Kazuo declared loudly.

"Since Mitoma could proclaim himself the Apex during the entrance ceremony, I can personally shatter the so called Apex too!"

Tsubasa Nanase was stunned—so Hosen Kazuo had set his sights on Kaoru himself.

"Daring to issue a challenge on stage—no matter what, I'll accept it!"

Hosen Kazuo spoke with unwavering conviction, "This guy is the real prize, the strongest in this school!"

The mere thought of a man who could suppress both Ryuen Kakeru and Nagumo Miyabi sent a thrill of excitement through Hosen Kazuo.

As early as the entrance ceremony, his beast-like intuition had sensed the danger emanating from Kaoru.

If he could defeat Kaoru, by any means necessary, Hosen Kazuo was brimming with confidence.

Therefore, Yagami Takuya's expulsion and the students Tsubasa Nanase wanted expelled meant nothing to him—they were merely trivial matters.

The strongest in this school should be Kaoru!

Chapter 697: The Service Was Too Swift

The day before Yagami Takuya's expulsion, Kaoru took a day off.

Perhaps because exams were approaching, no one paid much attention to what he was doing during his absence.

Even Ichinose Honami assumed he just wanted to meet with Tachibana Akane.

It wasn't until Saturday evening that Kaoru finally returned.

Expecting a silent room, he was surprised to see a soft glow of light emanating from within.

The moment he opened the door, he found Kei Karuizawa lying on the bed playing with her phone.

She wore a thin white nightgown, her soft small chest pressed against the pillow, while her fair and smooth calves swayed up and down behind her.

With the slightest movement, the curve of her hips trembled faintly, creating an almost indecent sight.

For some reason, Kaoru froze in place.

"You're back?"

Kei Karuizawa on the bed quickly noticed the movement at the entrance.

Turning her head and seeing Kaoru, she grew excited but then guiltily hid her phone.

"I—I wasn't doing anything!"

Bored, she had been secretly reading romance manga, delightfully immersing herself in the stories—something she was too embarrassed to admit.

Blushing slightly, Kei Karuizawa hugged her pillow and sat up.

The hem of her nightgown didn't cover her legs, revealing the smooth, delicate skin of her thighs.

"It's been two days, Kei."

A faint smile touched Kaoru's lips. "I'm glad you're not immediately angry with me."

From yesterday until now, it could indeed be considered two days apart.

He had only hurriedly informed Kei Karuizawa, Ichinose Honami, and the others before leaving the school.

"I—I am a little angry, but it was for Tachibana-senpai, right?"

Kei Karuizawa pouted, feeling slightly conflicted.

"How... how is she now?"

"She's doing well. I sneaked a visit to her university. At first, she didn't recognize me, but later she showed me around her campus."

Kaoru sat down beside Kei Karuizawa. "She rented an apartment near the university—the environment is quite nice. I spent the whole day with her today."

"Another date."

Kei Karuizawa felt a twinge of jealousy. Even though she had asked, she was the one getting upset.

"Why did you come back so soon? Tomorrow is a rest day too—couldn't you stay with Tachibana-senpai a little longer?"

"If I'm away for too long, people will notice."

Kaoru gently took her hand.

The reason sounded plausible but was far from enough to dispel her jealousy.

Kaoru's outing wasn't solely for Tachibana Akane's sake—it was also about dealing with the aftermath of his previous excursion.

Sakayanagi Narumori had arranged a meeting for him, finally giving him the opportunity to face these so-called influential figures.

Several old fossils were eagerly anticipating his abilities, hoping he could replicate the miracle he'd performed on the head of the Shijou family.

Kaoru granted them a miracle they would remember for the rest of their lives, effortlessly rounding up these powerful individuals.

Not only that, Kaoru reactivated the pawns he had planted before his staged suicide attempt, which now came in handy at just the right moment to seize the foundational assets of the financial conglomerates.

While he couldn't take everything, he could certainly extort considerable resources—enough to make these zaibatsu bleed heavily.

The once-arrogant big shots who had even threatened to expel Kaoru were now completely silenced.

Even the current Prime Minister, who had been pushing for Koudo Ikusei, became noticeably more polite.

The Prime Minister specifically instructed Tsukishiro Kazunari to revise ANHS regulations, allowing Kaoru to freely enter and leave the school from now on—a rule created exclusively for him alone.

Amid these circumstances, Kaoru encountered Ayanokoji Atsuomi, the founder of the White Room, who was now a local assembly member with boundless influence.

Well, this was also the reason why Yagami Takuya would voluntarily withdraw from school.

Just by mentioning Yagami Takuya's name, Ayanokoji Atsuomi immediately understood what it meant.

If it were an ordinary student, it wouldn't have been resolved so quickly, since expelling a student without cause would violate ANHS rules.

Unfortunately, Yagami Takuya was from the White Room—he operated under a different set of rules.

ANHS couldn't control Yagami Takuya, but the White Room could.

This was what Kaoru had referred to as underhanded methods—as long as Yagami Takuya could be dealt with, he was willing to accept any means necessary.

Officially, it was a voluntary withdrawal, but in reality, the White Room had stepped in and taken Yagami Takuya away.

Despite all this, Kaoru didn't request any special privileges from the Prime Minister beyond the freedom to enter and leave the school.

He remained, for all intents and purposes, an ordinary high school student.

As for those shocking miracles, Kaoru did demand they be kept confidential.

It wasn't that he necessarily wanted to hide them, but rather that he was acutely aware of his own limitations.

Forget about taking on an army single-handedly—no matter how powerful Kaoru might be, he was still only human.

He needed to eat when hungry, drink when thirsty, and would die if killed.

In other words, Kaoru wasn't particularly strong at all—he needed more rewards.

Therefore, some things still had to remain hidden.

For now, Kaoru only needed to demonstrate the ability to decapitate powerful figures, maintaining a delicate balance in his relationship with these people.

Of course, Kaoru would also appropriately display his god-like miracles—nothing captivated their desires more than the promise of a healthy body.

These thoughts flashed through Kaoru's mind one by one, when Kei Karuizawa beside him nudged his shoulder and wrinkled her small nose.

"Hurry up and take a bath—you're covered in sticky sweat."

Kaoru snapped back to reality. He didn't think he smelled particularly sweaty today, concerned about Kei Karuizawa and the others' sensitive noses, he had specifically bathed with Tachibana Akane before returning, eliminating any extraneous odors long ago.

Still, since Kei Karuizawa said so, Kaoru didn't feel like arguing.

"Can I take a bath with Kei?"

"I've already bathed!"

"But I haven't been with Kei for two whole days."

"Guh..."

Kei Karuizawa hit this pervert several times with her pillow, as if trying to hide the blush on her lovely face.

If they really bathed together, he might do something bad again.

Though the girl wouldn't mind, her face was too thin-skinned - wouldn't her earlier anger become meaningless then?

Thus, Kaoru could only hold his clothes and enter the bathroom alone. The bathtub had no hot water left by now, but he didn't mind - a quick shower would suffice.

Perhaps because he was alone, Kaoru found himself recalling today's events again.

His biggest gain from this trip was actually the [Bloodstained Holy Grail].

Thanks to the assistance of [Truth Magic] and [Explosion magic], he now only needed one final [Miracle Power].

Kaoru had initially thought he could farm [Miracle Power] using [Invisibility Magic], but it turned out the second attempt wasn't recognized as a miracle.

The reason given by the Wish Machine was simple: what kind of miracle can be called a miracle if it can be replicated?

Only the first occurrence counts as a miracle.

Kaoru felt slightly frustrated, but he knew he could complete the final [Miracle Power] anytime - the [Bloodstained Holy Grail] was practically his already.

The reason he hadn't immediately completed it was because Kaoru was considering how to maximize its effect.

Chapter 698: Underhanded methods

According to his original plan, the [Bloodstained Holy Grail] could unleash divine power, which could completely cure Sakayanagi Arisu's heart condition.

Kaoru was now hesitating - not because he didn't want to cure Sakayanagi's heart disease, but because he was considering whether he could make better use of this effect.

For example, could he retain the divine ability?

[Don't be silly, this Chalice summons a god for you - the deity personally handles one matter for you. Do you want to heal her or rule the world?]

The Wish Machine finally couldn't take it anymore and interrupted his train of thought, feeling like this guy was being ungrateful despite getting such a good deal.

[It's about the deity using their power once, not you making a wish, you idiot.]

Kaoru realized it made sense.

He had just been feeling somewhat unwilling earlier, since this was one of the best effects he'd encountered so far.

It felt like finally gathering the three legendary gods and being able to summon the creator deity - he couldn't help but think about how to show off in the most impressive way.

But the creator deity's effect is to help you end the game, not to help you show off.

Kaoru could only abandon this unrealistic idea, while the Wish Machine secretly breathed a sigh of relief.

If he had managed to intercept the divine power, she would have been fired.

However, she soon froze.

Because Kaoru naturally came up with another idea.

Since it could only be used once, why not draw another [Bloodstained Holy Grail]? Wouldn't that allow continuous use of divine power?

As long as [Miracle Power] could be replenished, Kaoru could completely treat the [Bloodstained Holy Grail] as a disposable tool - use and discard as needed.

With the keyword search function, there was no need to worry about not drawing the Chalice - at most, it would just waste some drawing opportunities.

The Chalice's effect was too comfortable - Kaoru didn't want to give it up.

Just as Kaoru was thinking about how to use the next Chalice, the bathroom door suddenly opened.

"Ehehe, Master, I'm here." Kushida Kikyo appeared before him with a cheerful smile.

The girl wore a sky-blue one-piece swimsuit, her full, soft curves nearly stretching the entire chest area.

A pale collarbone was partially exposed, with her name tag modestly attached beside it.

Clearly, this was the girl's school swimsuit—what is commonly known as a "school swimsuit."

Kaoru was slightly taken aback, but the girl walked into the bathroom as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

She paid no mind to his gaze, her exposed thighs incredibly fair and delicate.

The small piece of fabric hugged her perky bottom, subtly outlining an alluring shape.

"Did I surprise you?"

Kushida Kikyo blinked at Kaoru, making him suspect she had conspired with Karuizawa Kei.

"A little. This is my first time seeing you in a school swimsuit."

There had been swimming lessons last year, where Kaoru had seen Kamuro Masumi and Morishita Ai in their swimwear, which were indeed somewhat lewd.

Even though nothing was revealed, it gave off a lewd feeling.

"Ehehe, do I look good?"

Kushida Kikyo looked rather pleased with herself.

She knew she was cute and was well aware of how tempting her figure was to men.

"If you like it, I can wear it for you anytime."

Since swimming lessons were over, Kushida truly intended for Kaoru to be the only one to see her in the school swimsuit from now on, the only one to witness her figure.

Not only that, but Kushida was also sneaking glances at a certain area.

Noticing Kaoru's reaction, her smile deepened, radiating smug satisfaction.

"You're trying to seduce me right after I got back, aren't you?"

Kaoru couldn't block her gaze and somehow felt she was more of a pervert than he was.

"Not at all. I'll only fulfill your desires if you want to do something to me, Master."

Kushida put on an innocent expression and naturally moved closer to Kaoru. "Mhm, let me scrub your back."

Humming a little tune, she coated her hands with soap bubbles and began rubbing Kaoru's back.

Seeing this, Kaoru had no choice but to let her have her way, gradually surrendering to the girl's attentions.

However, this enjoyment soon turned into teasing.

Kushida suddenly pressed against his back, her full, soft breasts surprisingly elastic.

As she moved, the foam multiplied, and even through the fabric, he could feel her softness.

"Master... you're reacting..."

At some point, she leaned against Kaoru's shoulder, her soft voice like a succubus's temptation.

"Hey, hey, Master, do you want to do something to me?"

"You're being too direct. Kei is still outside."

Kaoru was struggling to hold back.

Ichinose Honami would blush when scrubbing his back, but Kushida didn't even feign shyness, not even for a second.

"Aha, so you're planning to call Kei in too?"

Kushida seemed a bit embarrassed, clinging tightly to him. "Master, you really like us that much, don't you?"

Just as Kaoru was about to say something, another girl entered the bathroom.

It was, of course, Karuizawa Kei, also wearing a school swimsuit.

Meeting Kaoru's gaze, she blushed, having likely returned to her dorm to fetch her swimsuit.

If she were alone, Kei would have been somewhat shy and awkward, but with Kushida present, she didn't feel as indecent—after all, someone was even more shameless than her.

"If you keep this up, I can't guarantee what will happen tonight."

Kaoru looked expressionlessly at Karuizawa Kei and Kushida Kikyo.

Having just settled matters outside, he had plenty of energy to spare.

"Master can do whatever you want." Kushida Kikyo hooked her arms around his neck, her gaze as gentle as spring water.

"Yagami's expulsion was your doing, wasn't it, Master?"

Her swimsuit was already soaked through, clinging tightly to her body and perfectly outlining her voluptuous figure.

It seemed as if one could see her delicate skin through the thin fabric, even her lower abdomen.

"I used some rather underhanded methods," Kaoru murmured.

Yet Kushida Kikyo merely smiled sweetly.

"Even if they were underhanded, to me, you are the most amazing man."

Kushida didn't know what methods Mitoma had used, and she didn't care.

All she knew was that he had made Yagami Takuya drop out for her sake.

That alone was enough.

Kaoru slightly averted his gaze, but Kushida giggled and tightened her embrace, whispering in his ear, "I've decided. I'll help you manage your Harem. I'll do my best to become good friends with everyone."

Kaoru was taken aback for a moment.

Was she planning to aim her Friendship kingdom at his Harem?

Karuizawa Kei seemed unable to bear their clinginess any longer.

She quickly moved closer to Mitoma, her small rabbit bravely launching an attack against the menacing bad thing!

...

By the time Kaoru regained his composure, the two girls were already lying on the bed.

Looking at their sticky, wet school swimsuits, Kaoru felt a rare moment of exhaustion.

Nevertheless, he mustered some energy and picked up his phone.

With exams only a week away, he needed to contact Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

Next, it would be Sakayanagi Arisu's turn to wear the school swimsuit

Chapter 699: The Plan Fails.

Although much earlier than planned, Horikita Suzune still arrived at the karaoke bar.

She chose this place because the private rooms offered privacy.

Conversations here wouldn't be seen by outsiders, making it a much better option than a café.

As before, Ayanokoji Kiyotaka and Sudo Ken had followed her for some reason, claiming they wanted to back her up, afraid she might be at a disadvantage facing Hosen Kazuo alone.

Horikita had no reason to refuse, especially since Sudo had finally told her about the previous incident.

Ryuen Kakeru and Nagumo Miyabi had targeted him, seemingly planning to use him for something.

Yamauchi Haruki was essentially a pawn, and his fate had made Sudo distrustful of both Ryuen and Nagumo, leading him to confess to Horikita.

Horikita felt a pang of fear. She genuinely admired Sudo's athletic abilities.

If he had defected to another class, it would have been a significant blow to Class 2-C.

But back to the matter at hand.

Right now, Horikita was more concerned about Hosen Kazuo than Ryuen.

With Yagami Takuya's expulsion, the connection she had established with Class 1-B was severed.

Amasawa Ichika was also an elusive character, leaving Horikita with fewer and fewer options.

However, their class had Kushida Kikyo and Hirata Yosuke, two popular Extroverts who had helped many form teams these past few days, giving Horikita some relief.

Before long, Hosen Kazuo and Tsubasa Nanase finally appeared in the karaoke room.

"Sorry for keeping you seniors waiting," Tsubasa Nanase apologized

Horikita Suzune pondered for a moment before speaking.

"It's fine. We just arrived earlier."

"Heh, so polite. Had I known, I would've let you wait a bit longer."

Hosen Kazuo sprawled casually opposite Horikita Suzune, stretching his arms and sinking deeply into the soft sofa.

He carelessly propped his feet on the table. "From what Nanase said, how exactly do you plan to beg me?"

This wasn't their first meeting, so Horikita Suzune remained unfazed by his behavior.

Only Sudo Ken beside her showed clear displeasure.

"My intention is to establish an equal cooperative relationship between us. Learning to cooperate is a crucial lesson in this school. If you understood what we second-years have experienced so far, I believe you'd grasp my meaning."

Hosen Kazuo acted as if he'd heard something utterly uninteresting, even picking at his ear.

The gesture made Horikita Suzune frown slightly before Hosen spoke again.

"Cut the nonsense. What you want is for us to provide people to help your failing students."

"We would likewise assist your failing students," Horikita Suzune replied coolly. "Even if you can currently suppress your entire class and completely neglect your classmates, it will likely cause trouble for you eventually."

Hosen Kazuo sneered, "I don't need you to tell me that! I'll deal with anyone who disobeys me!"

As he spoke, his gaze swept over Ayanokoji Kiyotaka and Sudo Ken.

"These two are the deadweights in your class, right? Give me 1 million Personal Points, and I'll help you solve your problem with them."

The moment the words left his mouth, Sudo Ken's temper flared.

This guy was way too arrogant!

"Hey, watch your mouth!"

Hosen Kazuo glanced contemptuously at Sudo and grinned. "I'm talking to Horikita right now. Who gave you the right to interrupt?"

"What did you say...?"

Sudo grew even angrier. Just as he was about to make a move, Ayanokoji Kiyotaka beside him stopped him.

"Hosen-kun, I hope you can show some respect for others," Horikita Suzune's voice turned colder, clearly containing suppressed anger toward Hosen.

"Did I say anything wrong?" Hosen actually laughed. "You brought these guys along precisely because you want to solve their problems, don't you?"

Horikita Suzune took a deep breath. "I'd like to know if Hosen-kun is the leader of Class D, first year?"

"Who else would it be?" Hosen snorted coldly.

Horikita continued, "Do you possess the capability to bear responsibility and risks for your classmates?"

"What do you mean by that?" Hosen's expression darkened immediately.

"A leader, regardless of the methods used to unite everyone—even if it's violence—can be acceptable as long as they represent the interests of the majority." Horikita ignored his expression.

"Since Hosen-kun is the leader of Class D, first year, many must have placed their hopes in you. However, I don't see the aura of a true leader in you. You're merely treating the class as your plaything, nothing more."

BANG!

With a loud noise, Hosen Kazuo stood before Horikita Suzune like an enraged lion.

Beside them, Sudo Ken rose to his feet, equally unwilling to back down.

Horikita Suzune met Hosen Kazuo's gaze without a trace of panic.

"As far as I know, about half the students have successfully formed teams by today, yet two-thirds of Class D first-years still lack partners—most of whom are low-scoring students."

"Your initial refusal to let classmates attend Ichinose's exchange event directly cost you access to Class B second-year connections. Class A second-years have no interest in low-scoring students either. Your only remaining options are us or Class D second-years."

"Even if you fail this exam, the punishment may be light. But what about next time? How will these students who lost their Personal points view their leader—one who only leads them to failure?"

At this point, Hosen Kazuo reached to grab Horikita Suzune's collar, but Sudo Ken immediately stepped between them.

"You bastard!"

"Let go! Since when does trash like you get to act tough?"

"Attacking a woman? What kind of man does that?!"

"Heh, I'd even beat you up. How about we fight? If you've got the guts to take me down, we'll cooperate directly!"

Hosen Kazuo's superior strength momentarily overpowered Sudo, whose face flushed red with strain, yet he stubbornly held his ground.

The tension between them escalated dangerously, nearing the brink of an actual fight.

Just then, Tsubasa Nanase restrained Hosen Kazuo while Ayanokoji Kiyotaka simultaneously pulled Sudo back.

"Hosen-kun, calm down!"

"Stop this, Sudo. Don't start a fight here."

Not only Nanase, but Horikita Suzune also coolly called for Sudo to stand down.

Sudo reluctantly released his grip, earning a cold sneer from Hosen Kazuo.

"Horikita-senpai, please refrain from using such provocation next time."

Nanase turned to Horikita Suzune, "But you're right—we can't casually abandon our classmates."

She felt surprised that Horikita understood their class situation so well, though upon reflection, the school's Overall Ability Assessment likely provided the data.

"Hah! Nanase, don't be naive. What would we gain by meekly accepting their terms?" Hosen Kazuo said coldly.

"They call it equal cooperation, but the truth is they need our help. And what they offer in return? Heh."

Though Horikita spoke eloquently about helping classmates, everyone knew Class C second-years needed Class D first-years more desperately.

While Classes A and D second-years were willing to spend heavily on top students, Hosen Kazuo firmly controlled Class D's high-achievers—the only ones remaining available in the first-year cohort.

Class C second-years, unwilling to pay premium prices, had no choice but to consider Hosen.

Exceptional students like Amasawa Ichika and Yagami Takuya volunteering themselves were rare exceptions.

Horikita understood this perfectly, yet remained unshaken—Hosen's outburst only strengthened her position.

"What if we offer a commitment?" Horikita proposed. "There will surely be more joint exams like this. Having additional allies would change your situation. You're Class D, we're Class C—we share a common goal."

Hosen Kazuo sneered coldly: "You make it sound so nice, but the actual benefits are still vague. If I ask you to do something, will you really help me?"

"As long as it doesn't cross our bottom line."

Horikita Suzune believed she had already made significant concessions.

Hosen Kazuo merely snorted coldly without speaking.

"I'd like to ask, how many people is Horikita-senpai planning to have cooperate with us?"

Tsubasa Nanase occasionally glanced at Sudo Ken and Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, clearly considering them as candidates who needed assistance.

"About half, but don't worry, we've reserved several top students."

Horikita Suzune mentioned several names and asked Tsubasa Nanase to check their OAA.

Although Class 2-C's performance was poor, they indeed had several excellent students - Koenji Rokusuke, Hirata Yosuke, Yukimura Teruhiko, Wang Meiyu, Horikita Suzune herself, and others including students with academic evaluations around B level, probably close to ten in total.

This was also why Horikita Suzune had previously been confident enough to challenge Ryuen Kakeru to an academic competition.

Tsubasa Nanase had some understanding of Class 2-C's situation, and checking the OAA was initially just for show.

However, her pupils suddenly contracted.

Horikita Suzune didn't notice this reaction and continued, "When we first met, you actively came to the second-year classroom. I think you're also students hoping to change your current situation. We could have guaranteed just some Personal points, but that kind of relationship is too fragile. I hope our relationship can be deeper and more solid."

Horikita Suzune had considered this thoroughly.

Thinking about Kaoru's approach with upperclassmen, she inevitably wanted to emulate him and seek partners outside her own grade.

If there were another joint exam, she could cooperate across grades to deal with her opponents.

Well, she was already in Class C, and her next opponent would be Ichinose Honami.

She needed to be stronger than Ichinose Honami.

"Oh? So I can order you around as I please?"

Hosen Kazuo seemed somewhat interested. "If you obey me in the next exam, I might consider this cooperation."

Horikita Suzune frowned: "Our relationship should be mutually equal, not a superior-subordinate one."

"If you can't even meet my demands, how can I trust you, Horikita?"

Hosen Kazuo scoffed contemptuously.

As Horikita Suzune was about to rephrase her position, she suddenly heard Tsubasa Nanase ask.

"Have Ayanokoji-senpai and Sudo-senpai found partners yet?"

Caught off guard by this sudden question, Horikita Suzune was momentarily stunned.

Tsubasa Nanase seemed to realize something and showed some apology: "Sorry, I thought Horikita-senpai was planning to find partners for Sudo-senpai and the others..."

Without thinking too much, Horikita Suzune replied: "Someone agreed to partner with them a few days ago, so it's settled."

Despite saying this, Horikita Suzune subtly straightened her posture, wanting to convey to Tsubasa Nanase and Hosen Kazuo that Class 2-C didn't necessarily need to cooperate with Class 1-D.

Chapter 700: Recording?

"I see..."

Tsubasa Nanase forced a smile.

"Seems there's nothing more to discuss. Since someone's already willing to help you, this cooperation doesn't need us at all."

Hosen Kazuo's expression changed, becoming frighteningly dark.

Horikita Suzune was slightly taken aback.

Before she could react, Hosen Kazuo made an exorbitant demand like a roaring lion.

"Either give us 3 million points, or fight and defeat me. Otherwise, there's nothing to discuss!"

After hearing these words, Horikita stood frozen in place, unable to comprehend why Hosen would suddenly make such an outrageous demand.

Shouldn't they be the ones feeling pressured right now?

Instead of showing any sense of crisis, they were making unreasonable demands to Horikita?

"You bastard!"

Sudo Ken rolled up his sleeves, "So you want a fight? I'll take you on today!"

Hosen Kazuo smiled fearlessly: "Fine, make your move, trash."

"Sudo!"

Horikita suddenly called out to stop Sudo, who glared at Hosen with unwillingness.

Hosen clicked his tongue and continued: "So, what do you think? This condition is acceptable, right? 3 million is a bargain."

Horikita remained silent for a moment: "May I ask why?"

"Not satisfied with the price?"

Hosen said, "Heh, I don't like your lecturing tone. I'll do whatever I want. If you're unhappy about it, then defeat me!"

Sudo stared angrily - even though Hosen looked tough to deal with, he still wanted to teach this big guy a lesson.

Horikita gently closed her eyes. After a moment, she opened them again.

"My proposal remains valid until the exam. If you change your mind and are willing to cooperate, I'll be waiting anytime."

With that, Horikita stood up, "Let's go back, Sudo, Ayanokoji."

"Heh, you're quite a bold woman."

Hosen seemed to look at Horikita with appreciation.

No matter how dissatisfied he felt, Sudo could only follow Horikita back.

At the last moment, Tsubasa Nanase stared at Ayanokoji Kiyotaka's retreating back, as if intending to call them back.

However, she ultimately remained silent.

"Your plan failed. That guy found a partner."

Hosen sounded somewhat dispirited, "I told you to listen to me - find an opportunity to frame him, plant a knife on him. He'll have to drop out whether he wants to or not."

Nanase's plan was simple: one playing the good cop, the other the bad cop.

As long as they could deceive Horikita and Ayanokoji, making Ayanokoji team up with her people, the plan would succeed.

This exam was very difficult.

If Ayanokoji wanted to hide his abilities, he couldn't stand out too much.

Getting perfect scores in every subject would be truly astonishing.

However, even if Ayanokoji eventually realized something was wrong and tried to score perfectly, as long as his partner scored zero, he would still be expelled.

This was Nanase's plan - to deceive Horikita and make the other party voluntarily team up with them.

Who would have thought that when she checked Class 2-C's OAA just now, she suddenly discovered Ayanokoji had already successfully formed a team.

Thus, Nanase's plan directly fell through.

Hosen thought Nanase was too gentle - either beat Ayanokoji until he voluntarily dropped out, or find an excuse to frame him.

Simple and brutal, why bother being so careful?

"I don't want to stoop to his level."

Nanase took a deep breath. Even though the plan failed, she still had time to come up with another one.

Hosen crossed his arms and snorted: "Just leave it to me then."

Framing someone - such underhanded methods were nothing unfamiliar to him.

"Don't do anything reckless."

Tsubasa Nanase frowned.

Hosen Kazuo smiled: "I've already asked our homeroom teacher. The school hardly cares about occasional fights at most they'll just deduct points."

This could potentially lead to suspension or even expulsion. Tsubasa Nanase strongly disliked this violent approach to solving problems.

"This is the only option available now. If you want Ayanokoji expelled, you'll have to listen to me."

Hosen Kazuo said, "Find an opportunity to lure him out alone. Throw a few punches at him, then shove a knife into his hand. A guy like him will definitely lose control and stab me a few times. You just need to bring people over to catch him in the act."

His plan shocked Tsubasa Nanase—wasn't it too simple and brutal?

"What if he doesn't use the knife?"

"Fine, then I'll use the knife to threaten his partner."

"..."

Nanase increasingly felt that this hulking guy was an irredeemable violent maniac.

Still, his idea had some merit. If they couldn't touch Ayanokoji Kiyotaka directly, targeting his partner might work.

Just then, the private room door suddenly opened again.

Nanase's heart jumped as she saw Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, who had just left, return.

"Sorry, I came back to get my phone."

Ayanokoji met Nanase and Hosen's gazes calmly as he entered the room.

He walked over to the table, picked up a phone from underneath it, and Nanase's mood instantly plummeted.

"You bastard, were you recording us just now?"

Hosen, drawing from plenty of past experience, wore an extremely hostile expression.

He couldn't believe he'd slipped up here.

After all, Ayanokoji had arrived earlier than them, giving him both the means and time to prepare a recording.

But how could he have known something was wrong?

Hosen hadn't considered this possibility at all, so caught off guard, he only felt provoked and intensely irritated by Ayanokoji's actions.

Similarly, Nanase was filled with a sense of foreboding.

"Recording?"

Someone chuckled.

"No, Ayanokoji was just calling me."

Both Nanase and Hosen froze—the voice was coming from Ayanokoji's phone.

...

When Kaoru entered the private room, there was an inexplicably awkward atmosphere.

Ayanokoji sat silently to the side, Nanase seemed dazed, and Hosen lounged on the sofa, brazenly waiting for Kaoru.

The moment Kaoru stepped inside, all their attention focused on him. Hosen grinned widely.

Kaoru's eyes were immediately drawn to the muscular giant, who reminded him of his classmate Kito—both gave off a dangerous vibe.

However, Kito was merely eccentric-looking, while Hosen resembled an untamed beast.

"Giving me such a grand welcome on our first meeting, Mitoma. Seeing you really makes my fingers itch."

Hosen provoked without restraint. "Hey, want to fight me?"

His eyes, like those of a tiger or leopard, locked onto Kaoru.

It felt as though if Kaoru nodded, this beast would charge instantly—a truly chilling sensation.

Most people would struggle to withstand such pressure. If even a hint of fear showed, Hosen would press relentlessly, shattering their mental defenses.

This was the favorite intimidation tactic of delinquents: overwhelm the opponent with sheer presence from the start.

Especially with a violent-looking guy like Hosen, the intimidation was overwhelming, as if he might genuinely attack at any moment.

"Don't be so tense. I'm just here to see what's going on." Kaoru wasn't intimidated by him in the slightest; instead, he smiled and said, "To be honest, I bear no ill will toward any of you."

"What if I bear ill will toward you?"

Hosen Kazuo stared fixedly at Kaoru.

He didn't believe Kaoru's explanation at all.

Seeing Ayanokoji Kiyotaka pick up a phone from under the table would make anyone feel extremely threatened.

He had initially thought Ayanokoji was recording the conversation, but it turned out he was calling Kaoru, meaning today's negotiation couldn't escape Kaoru's ears.

Not only had his dialogue with Horikita Suzune been overheard, but even his previous plans had inadvertently been exposed under Kaoru's watch.

This sudden setback filled Hosen Kazuo with deep wariness and hostility toward Kaoru.

Hosen Kazuo hated this feeling of being manipulated!

He was genuinely considering whether to use violence to eliminate Kaoru.

After all, this was a private karaoke room—if they kept the noise down, chances were no one would hear.

"Many people bear ill will toward me; one more won't make a difference."

Kaoru naturally took a seat on the sofa opposite. "Shall I order a fruit platter and have the server bring up a fruit knife?"

Ayanokoji Kiyotaka stood silently behind him, giving off the vibe of a subordinate guarding his boss during negotiations.

"Heh, as long as you dare to agree."

A hint of madness flashed in Hosen Kazuo's eyes. "Why don't we find a secluded spot? I'm curious whether the Apex of this school has fists hard enough to back it up."

Kaoru studied this violent fanatic.

Ryuen Kakeru was at worst a delinquent who used underhanded methods, but this guy seemed utterly confident in his own brutality.

Given the chance, he'd probably not hesitate to resort to violence.

Hosen Kazuo met Kaoru's gaze fearlessly.

Even though he realized he'd been caught off guard, he refused to be outdone in terms of presence.

In fact, one could say he was deliberately provoking Kaoru.