

Cote 711

Chapter 711: Was she that stupid ?

Although Kaoru had long considered the rumors and gossip, ever since his relationships with Ichinose Honami and others gradually became public, everyone had tacitly accepted him as a lecher.

Suppressing Nagumo Miyabi and seizing the Student Council president position—these should have been the hottest topics about him.

However, as Tachibana Akane and Asahina Nazuna successively became his girlfriends, the way people looked at him grew increasingly peculiar.

They suspected he suppressed Nagumo Miyabi because he had his eyes on Asahina Nazuna.

He hadn't even spared Tachibana Akane, his senior.

One could imagine what kind of lecher Kaoru was in the eyes of most people.

Moreover, some had noticed his ambiguous relationships with Morishita Ai, Kiryuin Fuka, Amikura Mako, Sakayanagi Arisu, and others.

They pessimistically estimated that once the third-year executives retired, the Student Council would become Kaoru's harem group.

The president could recruit his little girlfriends at any time.

By then, even if Kaoru wanted to play maid role-play in the Student Council, there would likely be no obstacles.

In truth, Tsubasa Nanase had noticed these rumors long ago.

After all, Kaoru was currently the most famous student at ANHS.

Whether it was his suppression of Nagumo Miyabi or his possession of a harem, both were enough to shock Tsubasa Nanase.

Some rumors were even more alarming, such as Kaoru taking a liking to this year's first-year students and preparing to hypnotize a few junior female students, just as he had hypnotized Asahina Nazuna and Tachibana Akane last year.

Tsubasa Nanase was initially skeptical; she felt she should minimize contact with this person as much as possible, even though she knew the Hypnosis App was an impossibility.

But now, she was genuinely starting to believe these rumors.

Leaving aside the matter of Kaoru collaborating with Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, why did he want to help her seek revenge?

Kaoru's reason was that it would reduce the number of enemies.

Under normal circumstances, Tsubasa Nanase might have believed this explanation, but faced with this lecherous individual, she instinctively recalled all sorts of rumors.

It was possible this person had taken a fancy to her.

Though Tsubasa Nanase tried her hardest not to let her thoughts stray in that direction, the notion inevitably surfaced.

Why did Ayanokoji call Kaoru?

Why did they coincidentally leave their phones behind and then conveniently double back?

She had deliberately revealed her past earlier, yet Kaoru showed little surprise.

Even with two people already dead, not even Ayanokoji Atsuomi's influence had caused Kaoru to bat an eye.

It was as if, to Kaoru, neither the White Room nor Ayanokoji Atsuomi mattered—he showed little interest in either.

From his reaction, Tsubasa Nanase saw no hostility or hatred, only disdain.

The crucial point was that Kaoru still hadn't provided a decent reason: why was he helping Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, and why was he opposing the White Room?

As Tsubasa Nanase carefully reflected on her experiences over the past few days, she realized that whenever she was with Kaoru, his gaze always lingered on her faintly, as if there were something peculiar about her.

Girls were more sensitive to such gazes, even though Kaoru hadn't actually done anything to her.

"So, the benefit you actually want... is me, isn't it?"

When Tsubasa Nanase said this, she was testing Kaoru.

If he denied it, it would mean she had indeed been overthinking things, and she would only feel awkward for a while.

But if he didn't deny it, Tsubasa Nanase felt it was all the more important to express her stance clearly.

To be honest, Kaoru's reputation was terrible.

With so many girls around him, Tsubasa Nanase's opinion of him was extremely poor.

The only reason she was willing to join the Student Council was because he might have the ability to help her get revenge.

Otherwise, few girls would willingly throw themselves into his arms.

At this moment, Tsubasa Nanase fixed her gaze intently on Kaoru's face, her slightly stern eyes unblinking, showing just how seriously she was taking this question.

"Yes, I like cute girls."

Kaoru answered straightforwardly, without a hint of concealment.

Tsubasa Nanase hadn't expected him to be so direct.

She had thought it would take some back-and-forth to force this answer out of him.

Stunned for a moment, she quickly regained her composure.

"Do you want to keep a pretty face in the Student Council?"

Tsubasa Nanase was growing angry. "Is the only reason you want to help me get revenge because I'm cute?"

She was being polite enough not to point at Kaoru and accuse him of lusting after her body—how shameless.

Kaoru, however, found it strange.

Every young girl he had met seemed to take it for granted that they were cute, and indeed, they were.

"I can't accept this!" Tsubasa Nanase's attitude was resolute. "Mitoma-senpai, you should care more about your own girlfriend instead of making moves on others."

The girl's righteous expression inexplicably gave Kaoru the feeling he was engaging in backroom deals with her.

Following the plot development, should he be threatening her harshly right now?

At this moment, Tsubasa Nanase was wearing her spring uniform.

The light blue long-sleeved shirt clung to the girl's figure, with her trembling large breasts straining the buttons tightly, revealing faintly outlined contours.

She sat on the sofa, legs mostly pressed together, the hem of her skirt revealing full thigh curves.

The black knee-high socks made her calves appear slender and long, tempting one to imagine the smooth sensation of caressing them with a palm.

Paired with her slightly angry pretty face, Kaoru somewhat understood the appeal of backroom deals.

"Having you join the Student Council counts as making a move on you?"

Kaoru smiled faintly. "If even this counts, then I've already made moves on many people."

"You just said you like..."

Just as Tsubasa Nanase was about to say something, Kaoru interrupted her.

"Yes, I do like cute girls."

Kaoru was very candid. "But am I making a move on you right now?"

Tsubasa Nanase was momentarily speechless, but soon said: "I'm not your trophy. If you don't intend to pursue me, I think we can still cooperate."

"No."

Kaoru flatly refused.

"Why not?"

Tsubasa Nanase found this unbelievable. "Do you really plan to pursue me?"

"I can't give you that guarantee."

Kaoru said. "For example, if you suddenly fall for me, can't I make a move then?"

"Don't worry, I won't like you!"

Tsubasa Nanase glared at him angrily. Was she that stupid?

Knowing how many girls were around Kaoru, who would voluntarily throw themselves at him?

"Maybe I'll force you to like me."

Kaoru chuckled.

Tsubasa Nanase's expression turned unpleasant, her voice growing cold: "Is this how you always treat girls? Did you also force Senior Ichinose and the others?"

Even now, she still had the mind to worry about Ichinose Honami.

"Do you know what backroom deals mean?"

Perhaps because both were being frank, Kaoru couldn't be bothered pretending anymore, watching the girl's reaction with interest.

As expected, Tsubasa Nanase's eyes turned completely cold, her pretty face frosty, as if she had heard something particularly disgusting.

[Ding, wish completely fulfilled - wanted to be looked at by Tsubasa-chan with garbage-disposal eyes
!!]

Chapter 712: I am not a vase!

Kaoru remained unmoved.

This wasn't his first time facing a beautiful girl's icy glare.

"If this continues, I'll get angry, Mitoma-senpai."

Tsubasa Nanase expressionlessly placed her fists on her thighs, seemingly forcing herself to calm down.

"I've said before that I can leave the Student Council anytime. Please be serious."

"Everyone subject to backroom deals says that. Unfortunately, their final outcomes never match their words."

Kaoru said leisurely. "Nanase-san, what is revenge to you? And what is Matsuo Eiichiro to you?"

If these words had been spoken a few days earlier, they might have simply been probing her thoughts.

But now, Tsubasa Nanase heard clear threats in them.

"I can do it without you!" Tsubasa Nanase gritted her teeth. "Neither [I] nor I will ever forget that time..."

"You can't do it."

Kaoru interrupted her once again, calmly denying her words. "Even if you continue pretending to be Matsuo Eiichiro, I don't see much vengeful anger in you. Do you even believe what you're saying yourself?"

"Wh-what... I'm not pretending! Eiichiro has always been by my side!"

Nanase found his words piercing.

She didn't know how much effort she needed to put in, didn't know how far she could go.

"[I] returned from that world to take revenge on Ayanokoji-senpai and the White Room!"

"Fine, I'll have Ayanokoji expelled right now."

Kaoru looked at her quietly. "And then what do you plan to do?"

Nanase was momentarily stunned.

Having Ayanokoji Kiyotaka expelled was originally her plan. If someone else accomplished it, what would she do?

If Ayanokoji Kiyotaka returned to where he belonged, her goal would be achieved.

"But, I wonder if Tsukishiro will let you meet with Ayanokoji Atsuomi."

Kaoru spoke up. "That's what you're thinking about, isn't it? Actually, you don't even know if Tsukishiro will follow through. You were just stimulated by Matsuo and decided to come to this school."

Nanase had intended to keep up the act, but facing Kaoru's gaze, she couldn't maintain the pretense any longer. It was just self-deception.

"Even if you say that, even if this plan is unreliable, do you have a better method than mine?"

"I can arrange a meeting between you and Ayanokoji Atsuomi."

Kaorui said calmly. "As long as you can prove you truly hold vengeful intentions toward the White Room and Ayanokoji Atsuomi."

Nanase didn't know what expression to make. Could she trust this man before her?

At that moment, Kaoru suddenly laughed.

"Nanase-san, this is what backroom deals are about."

He spread his hands. "See? As long as you're tempted, I can reel you in."

Backroom deals naturally had different approaches.

Some people used rough methods, simply forcing girls, while others employed much gentler tactics.

If Nanase was truly concerned about revenge, in a sense, this was her vulnerability.

With Kaoru slightly controlling the situation and deliberately guiding Nanase, he could quickly make her throw herself into his arms.

However, to Nanase, his words carried a different meaning.

Her face flushed red, feeling not only looked down upon by Kaoru but also foolishly taking the bait.

"Mitoma-senpai, is this kind of prank fun for you?"

Nanase was reaching her limit. "I suspect you have no intention of cooperating at all!"

Kaoru suddenly let out a soft sigh. "Don't be like this, Nanase-san. Don't stay here while being angry—it'll reveal your thoughts. Because you want to cooperate with me, but you don't know how to proceed."

Nanase's surface attitude was tough, but her lack of any actual action was enough to expose her inner thoughts.

From the beginning until now, the initiative had already fallen into Kaoru's hands.

Now it only depended on whether Nanase had strong enough determination for revenge.

"You..."

Nanase was speechless.

She genuinely didn't understand what Kaoru meant now.

"Actually, I can help you right now. But like you, I also have doubts about trusting you." Kaoru said calmly, "Two consecutive deaths—this is quite a serious incident. And the person involved is Tsukishiro, who happens to be Ayanokoji Atsuomi's client. Can I trust you, Nanase?"

Tsubasa Nanase had never considered this perspective.

She didn't trust Kaoru, and he similarly held a suspicious attitude toward her.

"Do you want me to prove my relationship with Eiichiro?"

Tsubasa Nanase bit her lip.

At this moment, how could she prove she was capable of leaving the school?

"The facts are clear—you're the one who needs to earn trust now, Nanase."

Kaoru didn't feel he was manipulating Tsubasa Nanase at all. "It's somewhat laughable when you think about it. Even you believe there's nothing you can do to help me, so why does it anger you so much that I keep you by my side?"

Tsubasa Nanase's thoughts were in disarray. She instinctively felt something was wrong, but she couldn't pinpoint what exactly felt off.

"Cooperation is about mutual benefit. I find you adorable, so is it strange that I want you around?"

Kaoru continued, "In return, I'll help you achieve your revenge. It should be a win-win situation. What exactly are you dissatisfied with about me?"

"No, I just think what you're doing isn't right. When you have a girlfriend, you shouldn't flirt with others."

Tsubasa Nanase rebutted earnestly.

Soon, Kaoru's next statement shattered her reasoning.

"Even my girlfriend has no objections, so why are you interfering with my thoughts, Nanase?"

For once, Tsubasa Nanase showed a confused expression.

In her view, remaining loyal to one's girlfriend was taken for granted, but what if the girlfriend allowed her boyfriend to cheat?

It seemed bizarre—like a girlfriend being happy upon learning her boyfriend was dating someone else. No matter how you looked at it, it was strange.

"Nanase, if you want revenge, you need to prove to me what value and capabilities you possess."

Kaoru said, "I don't mind bringing along an extra person, but I do mind if that person objects to my methods."

Tsubasa Nanase lightly bit her lip, resembling many young girls on the verge of yielding to backroom deals.

Her mind was entangled in the most conflicted and struggling state.

"I... I can help you deal with the White Room students..."

"Sorry, I've already made Yagami drop out. The remaining White Room students probably won't pose much challenge."

"You... you need helpers in your first year..."

"Sorry, I have Kaho. Don't be fooled by her soft appearance—she's actually very capable."

"I... I..."

Faced with Kaoru's successive rejections, Tsubasa Nanase couldn't think of any way she could be useful.

"If even you can't figure it out, is it so hard for you to just be a decorative piece?"

Kaoru sighed. "To be honest, if I were to make backroom deals with you, I'd be the one at a disadvantage. I don't lack women. If I just wanted to have fun for a few days, I'd rather not touch you from the start."

Tsubasa Nanase was left speechless.

She now felt she had been unreasonable earlier—unable to help yet suspecting Kaoru of ulterior motives.

"I... I'm not just a decorative piece..."

The girl tried to make an effort. "I can be useful. I can help you."

"You want revenge that badly?"

Kaoru looked at her with skepticism.

"I truly can't accept it! Eiichiro had such a bright future ahead of him. Because of Ayanokoji-senpai, because of their personal reasons, he had to die... I can't accept it!"

Tsubasa Nanase grew more determined. "If you want me to prove myself, I can't prove right now whether I'm lying or not, but I can do anything you ask!"

The girl bravely met Kaoru's gaze, with no trace of the coldness she had shown him earlier.

It seemed Tsubasa Nanase had completely forgotten what Kaoru had just said.

Despite being reminded this involved backroom deals, she had taken the initiative to offer herself.

"No matter what I ask you to do?"

Kaoru inquired.

Just as Tsubasa Nanase was about to respond, she hesitated inexplicably. A girl's instinct made her sense danger.

"You hesitated, Nanase."

Kaoru shook his head, "You can leave anytime. I won't stop you."

"No, I was just..."

Halfway through her sentence, Tsubasa immediately abandoned the thought of explaining, "I won't leave! I can be very useful!"

"We'll talk another time. Only when you've figured out what you can do and what you can offer me will I consider whether to help you."

Kaoru felt somewhat disappointed.

He hadn't made any demands of Tsubasa Nanase because he genuinely had no need for her assistance.

After all, Tsubasa couldn't even accept being a mere vase, and she hadn't even considered staying.

Tsubasa could discern Kaoru's thoughts, and most of her earlier hesitation and doubt vanished.

If Kaoru had wanted to do anything to her, he could have easily given orders taking advantage of the situation.

Yet, Kaoru had refused her.

Tsubasa Nanase's heart grew heavier. She wanted to say something to Kaoru, but in the end, she only moved her lips without uttering a word.

What could she say now?

She didn't even know what she could do for Kaoru—how could she possibly persuade him?

Perhaps noticing her expression, Kaoru fell silent for a moment before speaking: "This cooperation is unequal. If you truly stay, I might genuinely engage in backroom deals with you. After all, what I'm interested in is your body."

This could be considered Kaoru's warning, and the girl could understand it as such.

However, since Kaoru had emphasized this point repeatedly and considering the numerous rumors she'd heard, Tsubasa Nanase had already accepted in her mind that Kaoru was a lecherous person.

Therefore, the girl didn't react much at this moment.

"I'm not a vase."

Tsubasa Nanase was stubborn; she was determined to make Kaoru believe in her capabilities.

Chapter 713: PUA Tactics

Regardless, Kaoru still sent Tsubasa Nanase back, telling her to think it over carefully.

Although Tsubasa might eventually realize that Kaoru was using PUA tactics on her, Kaoru believed this approach would actually yield better results.

If he acted too hastily and tried to do something while Tsubasa was still unclear about the situation, it might provoke her aversion.

She might even regret it immediately and decide not to continue cooperating with Kaoru.

Therefore, Kaoru hit the brakes.

He wanted Tsubasa to make her own decision, rather than coercing her through manipulative tactics.

A decision made personally by the individual would be more effective than his inducement.

That said, Kaoru admitted he was indeed using some PUA tactics on Tsubasa Nanase.

However, he was merely reframing her words to make her consider things from his perspective, without much intention to truly manipulate her.

Moreover, Kaoru straightforwardly admitted that he did have some ulterior motives regarding Tsubasa Nanase.

If he wanted to achieve his desires, it would inevitably involve doing some questionable things to Tsubasa.

After all this talk, it essentially boiled down to playing hard to get.

Kaoru took a step back voluntarily to make Tsubasa take a step forward.

...

After sending Tsubasa Nanase away, Kaoru himself prepared to leave the Student Council office.

Since Tachibana Akane's birthday was approaching, Kaoru planned to go out.

Both Ichinose Honami and Karuizawa Kei wanted to accompany him, while Kushida Kikyo and the others had no desire to go out, simply entrusting their gifts to Kaoru Mitoma to pass on to Tachibana Akane.

After finishing the Student Council's work for the day and arranging for Katsuragi Kohei and Kiriyama Ikua to handle duties for the next two days, he prepared to go out.

Coinciding with a day off, Kaoru didn't need to request leave this time.

...

"Suddenly feeling a bit nervous. I thought there'd be no chance to leave throughout high school, but tomorrow we get to go out again," Ichinose Honami whispered that night, tightly clutching Kaoru's hand on the bed.

Restless, she didn't notice her nightgown strap slipping off her smooth shoulder, her full breasts pushing up the fabric and faintly revealing soft, snow-white skin.

Kaoru Mitoma could see clearly as she lay beside him, her sparkling eyes fixed on him.

"I think staying here is quite nice, though sometimes it's terrible - exams, potential expulsions, such hassles," Karuizawa Kei chimed in from the bed, habitually hugging Kaoru's arm. "But I'm going out with you all tomorrow too."

Both girls wore nightgowns, fresh from bathing and emanating a faint fragrance.

Squeezed between them, Kaoru found himself surrounded by sweet, soft, alluring scents.

"How about we go on a date outside?"

When Kaoru tried to move, he found Karuizawa Kei holding him too tightly, while Ichinose Honami's breasts pressed against his left side, leaving him completely immobilized.

The double bed was somewhat inadequate for this - Kushida Kikyo had previously tried squeezing in too, but gave up after a night or two.

Hence, they'd established an unspoken rule: no more than two people could stay overnight each day.

Tonight it was Karuizawa Kei and Ichinose Honami, tomorrow would be Kushida Kikyo and Horikita Suzune, and so on.

Of course, exceptions occurred occasionally.

If schedules didn't align, sometimes only one person would come, or Kaoru would return to solitary living.

These weren't Kaoru's requirements but rather arrangements the girls had settled among themselves - even he didn't know who would show up tomorrow night.

As for orgies, they rarely happened.

The room was too small, and frequent such activities might overwhelm them.

Kaoru didn't want them obsessed with such matters, though he personally struggled to control his hormones.

Thus, pairs became the frequent occurrence.

"Great idea! Tokyo has so many fun places!" Karuizawa Kei eagerly agreed, having already considered this.

"Since it's Tachibana-senpai's birthday anyway, let's all go out together!"

Her reasoning was simple: if Kaoru spent time alone with Tachibana Akane, they might soon receive the bad news of Akane's pregnancy!

After Kushida Kikyo had learned from Tachibana Akane that the younger senior didn't even use protection, Karuizawa Kei had become highly vigilant.

Though she accepted Kaoru's harem, Karuizawa Kei maintained a competitive spirit.

If she couldn't outperform everyone on the main battlefield, she'd take a different approach - aiming to become the first mother.

In that case, they might end up with a marriage certificate—Kei Karuizawa was quite fixated on that notion.

She had never voiced these private thoughts to anyone, not even when Kushida teased her about wanting to become a mother.

However, she felt a bit guilty toward Honami Ichinose, Kei thought with a twinge of conscience.

"Two days would indeed provide plenty of time for a date."

Honami Ichinose felt somewhat embarrassed; using Tachibana Akane as an excuse to go on a date with Kaoru felt like she was betraying the others.

She sensed that Kushida Kikyo had been interested too but had held back, worried that a larger group might cut into Akane's time with Kaoru.

"You haven't seen your little sister in a while—why not bring her along?"

Kaoru gently wrapped his arm around her waist.

The girl's body was so warm and soft, he couldn't resist the urge to hold her close.

"Let's not this time; it's not like we can only go out once."

Honami knew he was being considerate of her feelings. "There's always next time, right?"

As she spoke, the girl adjusted to his movements, though the position pressed her full, soft chest against Kaoru's body.

At the same time, Kaoru's hand not only caressed her slender waist but also felt the smooth, delicate skin of her thighs, even grazing her pert bottom.

It was less like a small, perky rear and more like a ripe peach—Honami's body had matured fully, with a figure so appealing that every curve, from her ample bosom to her alluring hip line, was exquisitely captivating.

Even though he often touched her freely, Kaoru still felt the same initial awe, reluctant to let go.

That unique smoothness was something he could savor all night.

Blushing slightly, Honami wriggled a bit—not to resist his advances, but to adjust her posture for his convenience.

Not just Kushida, but even she had grown accustomed to Kaoru's hands-on behavior.

"Next time, I want to join too. I've never met Honami's sister."

Kei Karuizawa was curious about Honami's family; she had heard snippets about Honami's past.

Mentioning her sister brought a smile to Honami's face.

"Hehe, I think she'd love to meet everyone. When Kei sees her, you'll be really surprised."

"Tch, Honami, you've got such a siscon vibe."

"No way! Kei would think Hizuki is adorable too!"

"That's exactly what a silly siscon would say."

"Mm-hm!"

The two girls giggled together, their relationship growing closer than Kaoru had anticipated—perhaps from acknowledging each other's roles, or maybe due to Kushida's twisted logic that frequent, candid encounters naturally deepened bonds.

Likely, it was a mix of both, allowing Kaoru to experience a warmth distinct from the atmosphere at 283 Agency.

Still, he knew the responsibility didn't lie with 283 Agency, but with who he was back then.

"Alright, time to sleep. We need to wake up early tomorrow."

Kaoru patted Honami's bottom. "If you don't sleep soon, the big bad wolf will gobble up the little rabbit."

Honami shot him a flustered glare. What big bad wolf and little rabbit? He'd been fondling her nonstop.

Under normal circumstances, he probably would have taken action already.

"Hmph, go ahead and let that big bad wolf out if you dare."

Karuizawa Kei sneered disdainfully.

Ever since she and Kushida Kikyo had exhausted their safety measures, this guy had become much more restrained.

For instance, punitive cooking sessions like before—Kaoru now rarely disciplined her and Kushida Kikyo in that manner unless absolutely necessary.

Chapter 714: Honey Trap

"The big bad wolf doesn't want to come out, but he can still spank you."

Kaoru turned around just in time to encounter the increasingly bold little rabbit.

Even Ichinose Honami's "big rabbit" didn't dare act recklessly, so he wondered what gave her the confidence to speak to the big bad wolf like this.

Sure enough, Karuizawa Kei's expression shifted slightly, and she instinctively tried to shrink away, but Kaoru grabbed her wrist and pulled her over forcefully.

"Don't you dare hit me!"

Karuizawa Kei warned Kaoru with a false show of strength—being spanked was just too embarrassing.

"Fine, no hitting then."

Kaoru smiled faintly; he had plenty of other ways to torment her.

Before the girl could react, Kaoru had already pulled her into his embrace, his fingers slipping under the hem of her pajamas, the smooth skin beneath giving off an exceptionally pleasant sensation.

"Mmm..."

Karuizawa Kei bit her lip, her breathing becoming somewhat enticing.

She couldn't push Kaoru away, so she could only let this tingling, numbing sensation gradually intensify.

However, at the last moment, Kaoru stopped.

"Go to sleep early, or you'll miss the bus."

Kaoru withdrew his fingers as if nothing had happened, then picked up Ichinose Honami on the other side, intending to use her as tonight's hugging pillow.

Karuizawa Kei stared at him blankly, finally realizing this was his form of punishment.

She couldn't help feeling a bit puffed up with anger, wanting to bite this guy to death.

Ichinose Honami stifled a laugh, but she didn't dare move recklessly either, because she could feel Kaoru's reaction. She just quietly extended her small hand.

Of course, she wasn't going to do anything—she simply wanted to help Kaoru relieve some tension.

By the time Karuizawa Kei fell asleep behind them, Ichinose Honami finally withdrew her small hand, though her clothes were already somewhat disheveled.

"Should we meet them?"

Perhaps due to the feverishness, the girl's cheeks were flushed, and her heart was beating rapidly.

Kaoru knew exactly who she was referring to and couldn't help holding the girl in his arms tighter.

"Next time."

After all, it was Tachibana Akane's birthday, and Kaoru didn't want to make things messy.

Ichinose Honami gave a soft "mm" in response, then pushed Kaoru lightly, saying shyly, "Stop hugging me, let me change my clothes."

Kaoru hadn't done anything with her, but he had slightly soiled her clothes.

...

Since the school hadn't made any public announcements, and Kaoru had always kept a low profile, no one knew he could leave the school.

The only potential trouble was Ichinose Honami and Karuizawa Kei—their friends could easily notice something off, so they had to come up with excuses to brush it aside.

Thus, Ryuen Kakeru remained completely unaware of Kaoru's disappearance.

He was currently in negotiations with Koenji Rokusuke, who had previously taken a considerable amount of his Personal points.

"I can let last time slide," Ryuen said. "But if you take the money, you do the job. Pay attention during the next exam."

"I've already spent it all."

Koenji Rokusuke wore an expression that said, "Do whatever you want."

Hundreds of thousands of Personal points, gone in just a month or two—what a spendthrift!

Ishizaki Daichi, who had been standing behind Ryuen, took a small step forward upon hearing this but forcibly restrained himself.

Ryuen Kakeru had anticipated this and sneered coldly, "Don't forget, we have transaction records between us. If I expose them, you won't come out unscathed either."

"Is that a threat?"

Koenji Rokusuke glanced at him a moment longer. "I think if you want to deal with Kaoru, you don't need me at all."

"Do you have any advice?"

Ryuen showed a bit of patience.

Koenji pointed at Ibuki Mio behind him and dropped a bombshell: "Some people like beautiful girls. Why not just gift him one?"

Ibuki Mio's expression instantly darkened. She was here to supervise what Ryuen was doing, not to be treated as a present!

"Say that again!"

Faced with Ibuki's fury, Koenji remained unfazed. "I heard you're investigating a spy in your class. Why not send one to his side instead?"

Ryuen fell into deep thought, while even Daichi Ishizaki was stunned.

"You want me to be a spy?"

Ibuki couldn't accept it. "I'd rather die than get close to that guy!"

"I never specified it had to be you. Why are you so worked up?"

Koenji seemed to have discovered something amusing. "Do you dislike Mitoma?"

Ibuki was momentarily speechless, then stiffly replied, "I look down on lecherous types like him from the bottom of my heart."

"Hahaha, perfect! If you take on this role, Mitoma would never expect it!"

Koenji seemed even more pleased but added, "Of course, this is just my suggestion. Whether you act on it or not has nothing to do with me."

"..."

Ibuki took deep breaths, trying to calm herself before she really punched this tasteless jerk.

"I gave you so many Personal Points, and all I get is one suggestion? Doesn't seem quite fair, Koenji."

Ryuen didn't comment on Ibuki being a spy but instead looked playfully at Koenji.

"I know rich kids like you look down on people like us. You probably wouldn't even glance at Class A."

"I'm indeed not interested in any of you. Are you threatening to make me drop out?" Koenji said flatly.

"If it works on you, I'll use it."

Ryuen smiled fearlessly. "But right now, I just want you to play this Game with us a little longer."

Koenji sighed. "How troublesome. I thought my idea was quite good."

Still, he wasn't worried about any transaction records. If anything, he had previous transaction records with Kaoru too—they proved nothing.

After securing Koenji's assurance, Ryuen left the restaurant.

"Hey, you're not actually planning to make me a spy, are you?"

Ibuki couldn't help asking.

"Ibuki, can't you even handle this much?"

Ryuen raised an eyebrow. "If it means defeating Mitoma, I'd even cross-dress. Are you really going to let a mere spy assignment break you?"

Ibuki felt inexplicably aggrieved. "I think there are other ways!"

"Heh, other ways are other ways. To deal with Mitoma, we must use every means possible."

Ryuen dismissed her concerns.

Seeing this, Ibuki's face flushed with frustration.

Asking her to use a Honey Trap on Kaoru? She'd rather die!

After holding back for a long time, the girl finally blurted out: "What about Manabe and the others?"

"Don't worry about them. Keep lulling Mitoma into a false sense of security."

Ryuen Kakeru was brimming with confidence. "Once he lets his guard down around us, that'll be his end."

Daichi Ishizaki scratched his head and muttered quietly, "I think Shiina would be more suitable than Ibuki. Ibuki is too fierce."

"What did you say?!"

Mio Ibuki bristled like a provoked cat.

What did he mean by "too fierce"? She had always been this way.

"That makes sense."

Ryuen Kakeru stroked his chin. "Hiyori has been getting quite close to Kaoru lately. Perhaps she's more suitable."

"I'll do it!"

Mio Ibuki declared firmly. "Shiina-san isn't cut out for this kind of mission at all!"

What a joke—sending Shiina Hiyori on this mission would be like throwing meat buns at a dog, with no hope of return.

However, she didn't know that Ryuen Kakeru smiled silently to himself.

This was exactly the answer Ryuen had wanted.

How could he not know that Shiina Hiyori was unsuitable? Asking a literary girl to carry out a honey trap would be far too difficult for Shiina Hiyori.

Besides, Shiina Hiyori would never agree to it anyway.

The only person who could handle this mission was Mio Ibuki, because her personality ensured that this girl would never fall into Kaoru's hands.

Although Ryuen Kakeru wouldn't stake all his chips on this so-called honey trap.

Chapter 715: Kiryuin Fuka Dilema

Lately, Asahina Nazuna had been getting the feeling that someone was following her.

Every so often, she would catch sight of a familiar figure drifting around nearby, making absolutely no effort to hide.

In the end, Nazuna had no choice but to confront her.

"I'm studying romance between boys and girls."

The person openly tailing her was none other than Kiryūin Fūka. "Relax. You're one of the people I'm paying close attention to, but I'm not planning to do anything to you."

The third-years were currently in the middle of a special exam, and the two of them belonged to different classes.

Add in the competition between Nagumo Miyabi and Kiriya Ikuto, and Fūka even went out of her way to put on a harmless smile.

Still, her words left Nazuna completely baffled.

"You're studying romance?"

Nazuna believed Fūka meant her no harm, but the way she said it made her expression turn incredibly strange.

This girl, who had always lived however she pleased and never seemed to care what anyone thought, was suddenly interested in romance?

That was so absurd it felt like watching an iron tree bloom.

Just who in the world had given Fūka that idea?

Gossip was practically a girl's instinct.

Like a shark catching the scent of blood, Nazuna instantly perked up, completely missing what Fūka meant by "paying close attention."

"To be more precise, I'm trying to make someone fall for me."

Fūka smacked her lips. "It does sound a little funny, but I think it'll be interesting."

She had never seriously thought about love before, much less imagined that anyone could win her over.

But ever since Kaoru had deliberately brought the subject up, she had found herself somewhat interested.

For Fūka, romance was an entirely new experience, something both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time.

She had often seen it in movies and novels, this behavior driven by hormones, dopamine, and endorphins.

She could watch a grand love story like Titanic, but she had never been able to truly place herself inside that feeling.

Because of that, Fūka was curious about what romance actually felt like. She knew Kaoru was teasing her, but she had still agreed without the slightest hesitation.

The reason Fūka had never dated anyone was simple. She had never believed there was anyone capable of giving her that kind of experience.

In other words, Fūka had yet to meet someone who could truly draw that side of her out.

"You have someone you like?"

Nazuna could not help blurting it out.

In her eyes, this was huge news. "Who is it? Who?"

Everyone in their year knew Fūka as a proud, untouchable flower.

Because she was usually so forceful and did whatever she wanted, quite a few people thought she had the looks but not much softness to her.

Some had even bet that she would stay single for the rest of her life.

If those people found out that Fūka had started thinking about romance, it would be massive news.

Nazuna's gossip instincts burned brighter than ever. Her little head spun at full speed as she quickly went through the boys in their year who seemed most likely.

"I'd like to have someone like that, but unfortunately, I only have half of one right now."

Fūka blinked, and a mischievous impulse rose in her for no reason at all.

She suddenly wanted to see how Nazuna would react.

"If he's willing to give up his girlfriend, maybe I'll consider dating him."

"Huh? He already has a girlfriend?"

Nazuna, completely unaware of the truth, was only surprised.

How had Fūka ended up interested in a boy who already had a girlfriend?

"I've thought it over. Even if he has a girlfriend, I still want to try."

"Th-that doesn't sound very good, does it?"

"Oh, come on. Isn't romance just a game where you make the other person fall for you?"

"..."

Nazuna realized she could not actually refute her.

Even if she said that doing something like this would interfere with someone else's relationship, or that it was unfair to the girlfriend, Fūka probably would not care.

Just as Fūka herself had said, what was one girlfriend supposed to mean? As long as she made the other person like her, she would win the game.

"Can you tell me who it is?"

Nazuna did not try to interfere with Fūka's thinking. She was simply curious about who this person was.

"Is he a student in our year?"

For some reason, Fūka's lips curved into a strange smile.

"No. You'll find out soon enough."

She looked mysterious and unreadable. "Before that, I want to know how you started dating Kaorukun."

The sudden mention of Kaoru made Nazuna's face turn red. She had thought nobody was paying attention to her and Kaoru anymore, only for Fūka to suddenly appear out of nowhere.

"I-I can't really explain it. Every time I saw him, my heart would start racing, and then I ended up accepting his confession."

As she spoke, Nazuna suddenly came back to herself. "Wait, why are you asking about that all of a sudden, Fūka-san?"

"Because I don't know how to go on dates."

Fūka said it as though it were the most obvious thing in the world. "I want to know how you made him fall for you, and what your relationship is actually like."

Nazuna finally understood what Fūka meant by paying close attention to her. She was curious about Nazuna's relationship with Kaoru.

That left Nazuna not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

Because she wanted to study romance, she had decided to observe someone else's relationship? What kind of idiot logic was that?

"Ahem. Well, I think romance really isn't that complicated. If seeing him makes you feel satisfied and happy, and you often find yourself spacing out because of him, then that means you already like him."

Nazuna put on the air of someone with plenty of experience, suddenly eager to share a bit of wisdom with Fūka.

"So that's how it works?"

Fūka tilted her head in confusion. "But what I want is for him to like me. What do I have to do to make him feel that way?"

Nazuna froze for a brief moment.

Right. Fūka was the one doing the pursuing here.

When it came to chasing someone herself, Nazuna had absolutely no experience.

But she had theory!

"Well, for that, you can invite him out, dress nicely, and show off your charm a little. A girl's appeal really does come from how she presents herself. Then, you can casually create small moments of closeness. Even a little bit of contact can make the other person more aware of you."

The more Nazuna talked, the more enthusiastic she became. After a while, she even began borrowing from her own experience with Kaoru.

If she had not been worried about her image and too embarrassed to say it out loud, she might have even shared a few small tips about kissing.

People should not underestimate kissing. If someone got too nervous, they could accidentally bump teeth with the other person.

"I didn't expect dating to have so many tricks to it. I'll think about it carefully."

Fūka listened to Nazuna's advice with great interest, and from the look of her, she had taken it all seriously.

"No, no, it's nothing. Just a few little suggestions from me."

Nazuna acted modest, probably because she was looking forward to finding out who Fūka liked and could not help offering her some advice.

"Can I watch one of your dates with Kaoru-kun?"

Fūka suddenly asked. "I have no experience with romance. Without an example, I won't know what to do."

Nazuna stared at her, dumbfounded.

How exactly was she supposed to let someone watch her date with Kaoru?

Chapter 716: Teasing

"Mm-hmm. Guess who?"

Just like usual, Nazuna gently covered Kaoru's eyes from behind.

This kind of sneak attack had become something she had done far too many times already.

"Asahina-sen—"

Kaoru had only just opened his mouth when something was suddenly placed against his lips, cutting off the rest of his words.

It was sweet, with the rich, milky flavor of candy.

"A friend gave me some candy."

Nazuna giggled, clearly feeling that her little prank had succeeded again. "Is it good?"

"It's sweet."

Kaoru's words came out a little muffled.

This senpai of his really liked ambushing him from behind, and whenever she did, she would unconsciously lean in close.

Sometimes, that faint closeness, along with the pleasant scent around her, made his heart itch in a way that was hard to ignore.

"Why didn't I see little Honami with you today?"

Nazuna had already let go of his eyes.

Although school was over and most people had already left the building, the girl still felt a little embarrassed.

Even though she had spoken so confidently to Fūka earlier, when it was her turn to actually demonstrate anything, she became shy.

Of course she could not bring herself to keep clinging to Kaoru out in the open.

"She had something to do today."

"Oh. Did the birthday present I gave you arrive?"

"It did. Tachibana Akane was very happy."

"Mm-hmm. Speaking of that, the way you address Tachibana-senpai feels kind of strange."

"What's strange about it?"

"You're still calling her senpai. It gives off this feeling that you're close, but there's still a little distance."

"Should I call her Akane?"

"If she agrees, sure. Why are you asking me?"

Kaoru looked at Nazuna beside him as she hummed softly to herself.

Although she was his older schoolmate and had a softer, more mature air than the girls in the lower years, in his eyes, she was still very much a girl her age.

Compared with the underclassmen, she had already grown into herself completely. Her delicate face no longer carried any trace of childishness and instead hinted at a faintly mature charm.

Her smooth long hair fell over her shoulders, with a few loose strands resting against her uniform.

Her fair skin had a gentle glow, and the small bow at her collar made her slender, graceful neck stand out in a way that felt distinctly youthful.

What made that impression even stronger, though, was the sunflower hair clip she wore.

"Nazuna, can I call you that from now on?"

Kaoru asked softly.

Nazuna realized he had reacted very quickly.

The truth was, even she herself had not noticed she had been feeling jealous, yet he had already seen through it.

Sometimes it was only after she calmed down that she realized, 'Oh, I was jealous just now.'

"You already called me that, didn't you? What am I supposed to do about it now?"

Nazuna sounded shy, but deep down, she also felt happy. Having a boyfriend this perceptive gave her a sweetness she could not quite put into words.

"What do you mean, what are you supposed to do? You have to call me by my name too."

Kaoru put on a stern face, though under the table, his fingers brushed against Nazuna's hand before gently holding it.

"I already call you that sometimes. Don't get so smug about it, you flirt."

Nazuna naturally let him hold her hand. "Akane told me I can't be too nice to you, or you'll get carried away way too easily."

"With that arrogant attitude of hers, she should be grateful I haven't taught her a lesson already."

Kaoru curled his lips. Akane was clearly the one who teased him all the time, yet somehow she had turned around and blamed him instead. There was simply nowhere for him to complain.

Seeing his expression, Nazuna secretly pressed her lips together to hold back a smile. She actually knew what his relationship with Akane was like.

She often saw the two of them bickering with each other while on Student Council duty.

Right after that, for some reason, she felt a little envious of the relationship Akane had with him.

"Do you have any more candy?"

Kaoru had already finished the piece from earlier, and the sweet taste of milk still lingered in his mouth.

"A few more."

Nazuna rummaged through her pocket several times and pulled out a few pieces of candy.

"I'll give you all of them. I already ate quite a few."

"I want to eat them together with you, Nazuna."

Kaoru looked at her with a deliberately restrained expression.

In the past, Nazuna definitely would not have misunderstood him.

Unfortunately, like Akane, she had been gradually influenced by this guy, so she immediately understood what this shameless flirt was hinting at.

"Eat them or don't!"

Her face flushed red as she shoved all the candy into his hand, refusing to deal with him any further.

"I just wanted to share something tasty with you."

Kaoru tried to defend himself. He had shared chocolate with Akane before, but he had never shared candy with Nazuna.

"Yeah, right!"

Nazuna felt that he was far too shameless. "I'm not eating anything from you!"

Kaoru could only put the candy away in disappointment before asking, "Then can I at least get a kiss?"

A kiss, Nazuna did not really mind.

In fact, she wanted to kiss Kaoru too. It was just that sharing candy like that felt far too embarrassing.

She had been about to agree, but when she remembered Fūka, she suddenly felt guilty.

"Ahem. I'm hungry."

Nazuna kept her face straight. "You should be hungry too, right? I know a really good place. I waited for you to finish today on purpose."

Kaoru found that a little strange.

They had all been at Tokyo Metropolitan Advanced Nurturing High School for so long, so where could there still be a place good enough to surprise him?

Still, if he could eat with his cute senpai, he had no complaints.

"Sure. Do you want to go on a date after dinner?"

"Don't you have to spend time with someone else tonight?"

"Nazuna, I actually think we could have a date in my room once in a while too."

"I'm not walking straight into that on my own."

Nazuna puffed out her cheeks.

She knew exactly how easily she might get swept up by him if she went there.

Ichinose Honami had left too deep an impression on her, and with Kushida Kikyō's mischievous personality added into the mix, Nazuna felt like she might walk in perfectly composed and come out completely flustered.

Although she had also thought about whether she should take the next step with Kaoru, anything too bold was still far too much for her nerves.

Even Akane had been startled by that sort of thing, let alone the more conservative Nazuna.

Even so, the fact that Kaoru had agreed to go on a date with her already made her feel satisfied.

That was, assuming Fūka was not following her.

Nazuna felt deeply guilty.

There was nothing strange about her dates with Kaoru themselves, and she did not know how other people dated, but she did know that Kaoru would definitely find ways to tease her.

Kaoru liked getting close to her and making her flustered, which made Nazuna too embarrassed to date him openly outside most of the time.

More often than not, she would have him come to her room instead, close the door, and spend time together where no one else could see.

To be honest, Nazuna did not dislike those private, slightly intimate dates, but she also knew she absolutely could not let anyone see them.

And yet Fūka had leaned in with that sly look on her face, saying she wanted to see how Nazuna and Kaoru went on dates.

How was she supposed to let her watch that?

Nazuna was screaming internally.

She was starting to regret letting her curiosity get the better of her, even though she also understood that Fūka had only been informing her.

If Fūka wanted to follow her, Nazuna had no way to stop her.

So Nazuna decided to put on a show and try to fool Fūka just enough.

If Fūka was not satisfied, then there was nothing Nazuna could do. After all, Kaoru only knew how to tease her whenever they were alone!

Nazuna hummed twice. In any case, her boyfriend could date her however he wanted. If anyone wanted to blame someone, they should blame that shameless flirt.

That said, she still had not realized that the person Fūka had her eye on was her own boyfriend.

Fūka's goal was to steal a few lessons from her experience.

Chapter 717: Watch your date

Kaoru could tell that Asahina Nazuna was feeling restless.

Ever since they entered the restaurant, she had been sneaking glances around from time to time, clearly distracted by their surroundings.

"I'm going to the restroom for a bit," Kaoru said.

"Ah... oh, okay. Hurry up, or I'll secretly eat everything."

As if trying to cover up how absentminded she had been, Nazuna quickly brushed the hair beside her cheek back and stuffed a few bites of beef into her mouth, her cheeks puffing slightly as she chewed.

"If you eat it all, then I'll have to make do with you for dessert tonight."

Seeing the faint blush rise on her face, Kaoru laughed.

"You're thinking way too much. I'm not spending tonight with you."

Nazuna gave him a small protest.

Kaoru did not take that protest seriously at all.

At worst, he could simply follow Nazuna all the way back.

After all, he had already been acting shameless for so long.

There were not many people near the restroom at the moment.

Kaoru deliberately waited by the entrance for a short while, and before long, Kiryūin Fūka appeared in front of him.

"Why are you following us?"

Kaoru looked at her in confusion. She had not even changed out of her school uniform and had been trailing behind them with such open confidence that it would have been harder not to notice her.

"To watch you date."

Fūka answered very directly. "I've been observing you for a while. You're pretty awful, aren't you?"

She had realized that Kaoru was even more outrageous than Nagumo Miyabi.

He spent time with different girls every day, and most of them were apparently his girlfriends in name, practically forming a harem around him.

"I thought you already knew that, senpai. Thank you for going out of your way to remind me."

Kaoru sighed. "Anything else?"

"What does being in love feel like?"

Fūka asked next. "When you're with Asahina, does your heart race?"

"Love is something you experience for yourself. Even if I explain it, you won't truly understand the feeling."

Kaoru smiled faintly. "Are you that curious now, senpai?"

Fūka frowned slightly. In truth, she felt that she understood far more than Kaoru did. She simply had not met the person meant for her yet, so for now, she was temporarily behind.

"You've been staring at me and Nazuna this whole time. You're making her embarrassed, and I'm trying to enjoy a date with her."

Hearing that, Fūka seemed to come back to herself a little before letting out a small scoff. "I'll watch whoever I want to watch. If she's embarrassed, that just means the two of you usually act too guilty when you're alone together."

Although Fūka sounded arrogant, she was not exactly wrong. Her eyes were sharp enough to see through what both Nazuna and Kaoru were thinking almost immediately.

"We're going back later. Are you planning to listen through the door too?"

Kaoru raised an eyebrow.

"If you're willing to let me watch."

Fūka smiled as if she were only half joking. She was not some delicate, innocent girl who would get flustered over that kind of provocation.

If Kaoru dared to agree, she would dare to follow him in.

For once, Kaoru was left speechless. He glanced toward Nazuna not far away. If he kept wasting time here, she would probably start getting impatient.

"If senpai is that interested, I'll teach you properly next time."

Kaoru said, "But right now, I have another cute senpai to take care of."

That sounded truly awful.

Fūka curled her lips, not believing for a second that Kaoru could teach her anything useful.

Kaoru washed his hands in the restroom. By the time he came out, Fūka had already disappeared.

"You're so slow. I'm almost done eating!"

"That's exactly what I was waiting for. Nazuna, can you feed me?"

"Hey, don't think you can order your senpai around just because you're younger!"

"Nee-san, I want to live off your kindness."

"Can you have even a little shame when you're with me?"

Even though Nazuna knew Kaoru was deliberately taking advantage of the situation, she still half-resisted and half-gave in, actually reaching out to feed him a few bites.

By the time she came back to herself, her pretty face had turned completely red.

"Delicious."

Kaoru smacked his lips, clearly not satisfied yet.

As expected, as long as he was shameless enough, Nazuna would eventually give in.

"Nee-san, one more bite."

"No more. Eat by yourself!"

Nazuna raised her fist and lightly hit him several times in a row.

He was way too shameless!

They were outside right now, so why had she agreed to that? She must have lost her mind for a second!

After hitting him, Nazuna felt her heart beating faster again.

Feeling guilty, she glanced around nearby. Kiryūin Fūka had not seen that, right?

To be honest, Nazuna felt conflicted.

On one hand, she was very curious about who Fūka liked.

On the other hand, having Fūka watching from somewhere nearby made her unbearably embarrassed.

Kaoru finished eating his meal, then noticed Nazuna's conflicted expression.

He reached out and gently brushed aside the loose hair near her face. Girls with long hair always had a bit of trouble while eating.

Thankfully, they were not eating ramen right now. Otherwise, Nazuna would have needed to tie her hair up.

"Do I look good?"

Nazuna's voice held a faint sweetness.

Many people thought Kaoru and Nagumo were both shameless flirts, but in her view, they were completely different.

Nagumo would never be this thoughtful with her.

"Of course you do. But shouldn't you be asking whether something got stuck in your hair?"

Kaoru said casually.

"Huh? Did something really get stuck?"

Nazuna was instantly alarmed and had just been about to check when she noticed the smile on Kaoru's face.

"I'm kidding. Don't move."

Kaoru gently touched her cheek. Nazuna was not the overly thin type, her face had a soft roundness to it that made her look especially cute.

When their eyes met, Nazuna's heart began to race. His palm was warm against her cheek, and his fingers lightly brushed her hair and the side of her ear.

Her thoughts immediately started wandering. Based on past experience, Kaoru would probably try to kiss her.

If it was only a kiss, Nazuna did not mind that much.

The problem was that Kaoru always liked to tease her until she became flustered.

Someone might see them.

Nazuna's lips moved slightly, but she could not bring herself to say it out loud. She was too embarrassed.

"Want a kiss?"

Kaoru lowered his voice, a trace of amusement tugging at his lips.

Nazuna's face instantly went bright red.

He had seen through what she was thinking again.

Seeing through it was one thing, but why did he have to say it out loud? This jerk!

"Who wants to kiss you? Who knows how many girls you've already kissed?"

Nazuna pushed against his chest, her cheeks still warm. "If you're done eating, hurry up and pay."

"As you command, Nazuna-nee-san."

Kaoru smiled.

Without realizing it, he had changed what he called her again.

Nazuna was too lazy to argue with him.

She honestly had no idea how he could say those things so easily.

After paying the bill, Kaoru held hands with a reluctant-looking Nazuna as the two of them strolled through Keyaki Mall.

"Do you feel like someone is watching us?"

Kaoru suddenly asked.

Nazuna instinctively looked around several times, but she did not see Fūka anywhere.

Then she realized Kaoru was talking about a few passersby.

They seemed to be students from their year, and she had some impression of them.

"Am I causing trouble for you?"

Nazuna bit her lip.

Ever since she started dating Kaoru, those kinds of stares had become more common.

Chapter 718: You cant escape

"No, I'm the one who should be asking that."

Kaoru's voice softened. "Because you're with me, your classmates probably say things behind your back. Add in your relationship with Nagumo, and honestly, I've always wondered if confessing to you back then made things difficult for you."

Nazuna fell silent for a moment. Then she reached out and poked Kaoru's cheek.

"What?"

Kaoru looked confused.

"Don't say things like that. I'm the one who accepted your confession. What am I supposed to do if you start regretting it?"

Nazuna kept poking his face. "Honestly, I don't care what people say. They say you have some kind of hypnosis app and that I fell under your spell, but who would believe a rumor like that? All I know is that I'm happy when I'm with you."

"Sorry."

Kaoru suddenly felt guilty.

Nazuna thought he was apologizing for what he had just said, so she withdrew her finger

. "That's more like it. You're usually shameless, but I'd rather you stay shameless all the way through."

"What if I really did use a hypnosis app on you?"

Kaoru asked.

"See? I knew you wanted to do something sneaky to me."

Nazuna glared at him indignantly. "You hopeless pervert."

Kaoru fell silent for a long moment. The words he had prepared suddenly had nowhere to go.

"Wait, is there really one?"

Seeing his expression, Nazuna grew a little uneasy, worried that she might have gone too far with her joke.

"Okay, okay. You can use it on me. Hypnotize me into whatever you want."

Her cheeks turned faintly red. Clearly, she understood how suggestive her own words sounded.

Of course, when girls said "whatever you want," most of the time, they only meant a certain range of things, not literally everything.

"You said it yourself. Then I'm hypnotizing you to come back with me."

Kaoru decided not to overthink it. His hypnosis was not truly hypnosis anyway. It simply doubled affection.

"You're so annoying!"

Nazuna shot him a bashful glare. "I have a hypnosis app too. I command you not to hypnotize me."

"Too late. I already hypnotized you in advance. You're actually inside my illusion right now."

Kaoru answered.

Nazuna thought about it. "I don't see anything."

"Hearing it counts too. You can't escape."

Kaoru said.

"Fine, fine. What are you planning to hypnotize me into doing?"

Nazuna puffed out her cheeks. Even she did not realize how much she sounded like she was acting spoiled.

"Anyway, you're not allowed to hypnotize me into anything weird."

"Does hypnotizing you into liking me count?"

Kaoru looked into her eyes.

For some reason, Nazuna suddenly wanted to raise her hand and block his gaze.

Why would he need to hypnotize her into liking him? Did she not already like him now?

"It counts."

Nazuna muttered, "I already like you, so why would you need to keep hypnotizing me?"

"I mean before you liked me."

Kaoru felt his heart stir. He did not know why, but seeing her like this made him want to kiss her.

"Oh, so you really did fall for my looks."

Nazuna somehow managed to twist his meaning in another direction. "No fair. Then I'm hypnotizing you too! I'll make you like me sooner!"

Kaoru froze slightly. The way she looked so excited made it obvious that she did not take his so-called hypnosis seriously at all. I

nstead, she seemed to think it would only be fair if she got to hypnotize him too.

"Nazuna-nee-san, right now I'm the one with the hypnosis app."

Kaoru's voice turned faintly ominous. "What should I do? I'm starting to feel like teasing you."

"No!"

Nazuna was both shy and annoyed. Boys really were like this. Give them the slightest chance, and they immediately started thinking of ways to mess with you.

"What about a kiss?"

Kaoru still refused to give up.

Nazuna secretly glanced around and, after seeing that nobody was paying attention to them and that the passersby from earlier had already left, she grabbed Kaoru by his tie.

"Come down a little." She said it softly.

Kaoru obediently leaned down. Nazuna stood on her tiptoes and lightly pecked him on the lips.

"There. That's the kiss you wanted."

Nazuna smiled a little mischievously, though there was also a faint thrill in her expression.

"That was way too light. I barely felt anything."

Kaoru immediately pushed his luck. "How about I kiss you too?"

"No. That was a goodnight kiss from an older sister to her little brother."

Nazuna giggled and pushed him away. "We just finished eating, and you already want kisses. Gross."

"What goodnight kiss? It's still way too early."

Kaoru sounded a little depressed. "Does Nazuna not want to keep dating me?"

"Nee-san has a feeling that if I stay with you any longer, I'll end up getting swept along by you before I even realize it."

Nazuna hummed several times.

Kaoru opened his mouth, then stopped. Right afterward, he saw her face suddenly turn red again. He had lost count of how many times she had blushed today.

Nazuna had probably realized what she had just said.

If she could not let him "sweep her along" now, then when exactly would she let him?

"Can I change my hypnosis command?"

Kaoru suddenly asked.

Nazuna tensed at once.

What did he want to make her do?

Was he going to ask for something embarrassing, like the kinds of things Kushida Kikyō teased her about?

Or maybe something related to what Ichinose Honami had once told her he liked?

All sorts of thoughts flashed through Nazuna's mind.

She did not want Kaoru to feel disappointed in her, but at the same time, she could not help feeling nervous and hesitant.

Being his girlfriend and stepping fully into the complicated circle around him were two different things, and she did not think she was ready for anything too bold.

If Kaoru really asked for something embarrassing, Nazuna felt that she might grit her teeth and somehow get through it.

"Can you go on another date with me tomorrow?" Kaoru said.

Nazuna froze for a good while.

Then she suddenly realized she had trusted Kaoru too little.

He could usually see through her thoughts so easily, so how could he not know what she was worried about?

"You're planning to keep taking advantage of me, aren't you?"

As she said that, the corners of Nazuna's mouth lifted without her noticing.

If he really did have a hypnosis app, she was sure she would let herself be hypnotized willingly.

"I want to every day."

Kaoru glanced at her, his gaze full of open affection.

Nazuna was a little embarrassed at first, but she was his senpai, wasn't she?

Why should she always be the one getting teased?

"Take out the candy."

She held out her hand toward Kaoru.

Kaoru did not understand what she was planning, but he took out the candy she had given him earlier.

Then he watched as she unwrapped one piece and held it between her lips.

In the next moment, she hooked her arms around Kaoru's neck and leaned in close.

A sweet, milky flavor passed between them, soft and warm, carrying the candy's gentle sweetness.

Kaoru instinctively held her by the waist.

Nazuna was pressed close to him, shy but determined, and for a brief moment all he could feel was her warmth and the sweetness she brought with her.

After a little while, Nazuna loosened her arms.

Her lips looked slightly glossy, and her eyes sparkled as she looked up at Kaoru.

"This is today's reward. As long as you keep dating your senpai, you won't miss out on the good stuff."

The moment she finished speaking, her own face went bright red.

She clearly could not pull off the act, yet she still insisted on pretending to be the mature senpai doing the teasing.

Chapter 719: My boyfriend is Kaoru-kun

The next day, Mitoma Kaoru took Asahina Nazuna for a walk around campus.

Nazuna had long since grown tired of the school scenery, but somehow, being with Kaoru made everything feel different. It made her want to treasure this quiet time a little more.

Maybe because the sight of the two of them together was no longer rare, not many passersby paid attention to them today.

They looked more like an ordinary young couple than anything else.

What Nazuna did not know was that Kaoru had caught a few of those nosy students behind the scenes and given them a small warning.

After that, they behaved themselves very quickly, terrified that Kaoru might steal their girlfriends next.

"I'll make you a bento tomorrow."

Nazuna suddenly said it on a whim.

She had not really done anything girlfriend-like for him yet, and she had heard that Ichinose Honami, Karuizawa Kei, and Horikita Suzune had all made bentos for Kaoru before.

Making one every day was definitely impossible. Even if Nazuna wanted to monopolize that role, the others probably would not agree.

Breakfast was still somewhat negotiable, but lunch and dinner had always been fiercely contested territory.

Komiya Kaho, Sakura Airi, Kei, Honami, Suzune, and the others had all fed Kaoru so many times that even he had lost count.

"Sure. I'll wait for you at the Student Council room."

Kaoru figured that eating on the rooftop every day was not a long-term solution. He might as well move the battlefield to the Student Council room.

After all, that place was basically his territory.

"Eh?"

Nazuna froze.

She could not forget the scene she had once witnessed in the Student Council room. "I-Is Honami going to be there too?"

"She usually isn't there at noon. She eats with her friends."

Kaoru smiled. "What's wrong? Are you afraid Honami and I will gang up on you?"

Nazuna let out a quiet breath of relief, then mumbled, "It's because the two of you are too scary. The Student Council room has probably turned into your love nest by now."

As she said it, even she could not help laughing.

"What's scary about it? You were watching pretty seriously back then, weren't you?"

Kaoru lightly tapped the tip of her nose. That moment had probably left quite the impression on this senpai of his.

After all, watching two people being that close had clearly challenged Nazuna's more conservative view of romance.

"I wasn't! Don't make things up!"

Nazuna's face turned red as she smacked him a few times. In truth, even thinking back on it made her heart beat a little faster. "It was just... too much. A normal person definitely wouldn't be able to handle you."

"What was too much?"

Kaoru gave her a sidelong glance.

That was just how men worked. Hearing her say something like that not only made him feel pleased, it made him want to tease her even more.

"You're so annoying!"

Nazuna glared at him in embarrassment. "Keep that up, and I'm not making you a bento tomorrow."

"Okay, okay, I'll shut up. Tomorrow, I'll look forward to living off Nazuna-nee-san's kindness."

Kaoru was already a little excited. With Nazuna's personality, there was a real chance she might feed him by hand.

Nazuna realized she could now see through what he was thinking too, and her cheeks grew even hotter. What exactly did this guy think about every day? She was older than him, so shouldn't a younger student be obedient to his senpai?

Should she teach him a lesson?

No, that would probably just end with him turning it back on her again. Nazuna had already suffered that kind of loss more than once.

When it came to taking advantage of a situation, nobody could beat him.

Nazuna felt a little defeated, but more than that, she felt a faint sense of anticipation.

It seemed she was also looking forward to tomorrow.

After the two parted ways, Nazuna walked back alone, already thinking about what kind of bento she should make.

Then a familiar figure blocked her path.

"So you went running over to him again today?"

Nagumo Miyabi sneered. "It's been this long, and you still haven't realized what kind of person he really is?"

Whenever Nazuna was with Kaoru, Miyabi would usually hear about it.

He had questioned her like this so many times that she had lost count.

At first, Nazuna had still tried to speak to him gently, but even someone as patient as her could not help getting angry after it happened again and again.

"I think I understand what kind of person Kaoru-kun is better than you do."

Nazuna sounded angry. "Nagumo-kun, instead of spending all your time and energy on me and Kaoru-kun, shouldn't you be thinking about how to lead your class properly?"

To be honest, Nazuna thought her childhood friend was capable.

Even if Kaoru currently had the upper hand, as long as Miyabi stabilized his own foundation, it was not impossible for him to turn things around.

But in Miyabi's ears, her words sounded painfully harsh, almost as if she were mocking him for being inferior to Kaoru. His entire face flushed with anger.

And more than that, she was calling him Nagumo-kun now.

That form of address felt far too distant.

"If you really understood him better than I do, you wouldn't keep going near him!"

Even now, Miyabi could not understand why Nazuna would choose Kaoru.

"That guy only wants to play around with you. Once the novelty wears off, do you really think he'll still care about you?"

Miyabi had once treated relationships lightly himself.

How could he not understand what Kaoru was thinking? In fact, he even suspected that Kaoru was worse than him.

Otherwise, why would Kaoru try to surround himself with so many girls? That was obviously the behavior of someone shameless and greedy.

Miyabi believed his words made perfect sense, but Nazuna only felt more disappointed in him.

"Nagumo-kun, you weren't always this suspicious."

Nazuna looked hurt. "The old you wouldn't talk badly about people behind their backs like this, and you wouldn't look at everyone through such a twisted lens."

She felt as though the confident Miyabi from before had vanished, leaving behind someone overly suspicious, extremely sensitive, and quick to anger.

"What did I even say? Why are you criticizing me for someone else's sake?"

Miyabi's expression darkened.

He was clearly trying to help Nazuna, yet this was her reaction.

It truly disappointed him. "Don't tell me you've already let him get too close to you."

Nazuna froze for a moment, and then she could no longer suppress the anger in her heart.

"Nagumo-kun! Show me some respect!"

"Respect? I'm thinking about you. Don't wait until you've been fooled and come crying back to me."

Miyabi was furious. "Remember this. Don't give yourself to that bastard. You're supposed to be with me!"

He and Nazuna were childhood friends.

Even if he had never chosen her properly, he still could not stand the thought of anyone else taking her away.

"You've lost your mind!"

Nazuna looked at Miyabi as if she were seeing him for the first time.

How had she never noticed this unhealthy possessiveness before?

Thinking about it carefully, the fact that she had never had any public suitors since entering school was already proof enough of the reason.

The more Nazuna thought about it, the angrier she became. She had always wanted Miyabi to restrain himself a little, yet he had ignored her every time.

He spent his days around other girls, but when it came to her, he acted like no other boy was allowed to approach.

"In any case, get yourself together. Once I defeat Mitoma, you'll understand who's more suited to be your boyfriend."

Even now, Miyabi believed that Nazuna was disappointed in him only because of his repeated losses.

Once he defeated Kaoru, she would definitely see reality clearly.

"My boyfriend is Kaoru-kun."

Nazuna's pretty face turned cold. "Sorry, but things may not be the way you imagine. I've already chosen him."

Miyabi stiffened as if he had been struck by lightning.

"No... impossible!"

Miyabi trembled with anger.

The veins in his neck stood out, and his jaw clenched so hard he looked as though he might growl.

"You were always reluctant with me, but with him, you're willing?"

"I was never with you in the first place. We were childhood friends. That's what we are now, and that's what we'll be in the future."

Nazuna corrected him firmly.

She did not want Kaoru to misunderstand. Nothing inappropriate had ever happened between her and Miyabi.

They had never crossed that line.

"You idiot!"

Miyabi had almost cursed even more harshly. "Just wait until you regret it!"

Nazuna shook her head. "I won't regret it, Nagumo-kun. If you can calm down, I think we can still go back to how we used to be."

"Back to how we used to be?"

Miyabi laughed coldly. "For all I know, you've already betrayed me more than once and leaked my information to him while whispering sweet things in his ear."

"Nagumo-kun, is insulting people all you know how to do now?"

Nazuna was finally truly angry.

She was far too disappointed.

The current Miyabi was nothing like the person she remembered. "I'm not getting involved with you anymore. Keep losing to Kaoru-kun if you want. Maybe then you'll finally wake up!"

This time, she did not give Miyabi a chance to respond.

Nazuna turned and left without looking back.

If she stayed any longer, their argument would draw attention from passersby, and she did not want to embarrass herself here.

Chapter 720: Should I call you Nazuna-mama instead?

Miyabi's face was dark with rage.

So she really did not believe he could beat Kaoru.

What right did she have to criticize him? She had chosen Kaoru, as if Kaoru were somehow nobler than him.

Wasn't Kaoru also the kind of person who used leverage and pressure to get what he wanted?

He was even more shameless when it came to girls.

Whether they were his classmates, his seniors, or his juniors, he did not let any of them slip away.

How was he any different from Miyabi?

Damn it.

Miyabi regretted not being harsher with her from the start.

He could hardly believe there would come a day when someone else would take the girl he had always assumed would stay by his side. It was humiliating.

Miyabi could not stand it.

Just imagining Kaoru laughing at him made it feel as though all the blood in his body had rushed straight to his head.

He gritted his teeth and made up his mind.

Next time, even if he could not get Kaoru expelled, he would at least take down a few people around him.

...

Although there had been a small incident, Nazuna still brought her bento and secretly slipped into the Student Council room.

"Nazuna-nee-san's cooking is so good."

Kaoru opened his mouth. "I'm tired. Can Nazuna-nee-san feed me?"

"Pfft, shameless."

A shy blush spread across Nazuna's cheeks.

He had been calling her Nazuna-nee-san every day lately, and it made her feel strangely embarrassed.

"Don't you have hands? Why do you need someone else to feed you? Are you three years old?"

It was currently lunch break, and there was no one else in the Student Council room. Naturally, Kaoru continued being shameless.

"I'm Nazuna-nee-san's kid, after all. Should I call you Nazuna-mama instead?"

Nazuna stared at him in disbelief.

Then she raised her fist as though she was about to hit him and threatened, "Y-you dare say that again, and I'll beat up this shameless underclassman."

This guy was becoming more shameless by the day. Nazuna suspected that Honami had spoiled him too much.

Her suspicion was not wrong. Honami really did cooperate with Kaoru very well.

More than that, she had a habit of indulging him in a way that was almost too nurturing.

Even so, under Kaoru's shameless persistence, Nazuna puffed out her cheeks and reluctantly fed him for a little while.

Then Kaoru said he wanted to feed her too, and she immediately went red, stammering as she tried to shrink away.

In the end, she could not escape Kaoru's teasing and ended up sitting close beside him while the two of them fed each other.

After the first wave of embarrassment passed, Nazuna discovered that it was actually kind of fun.

A sweet feeling rose in her chest for no reason.

Maybe this was what being in love felt like.

After lunch, Nazuna took out a handkerchief and wiped Kaoru's mouth for him.

Looking at his face from such a close distance, her heart suddenly skipped a beat.

"What hypnosis app... this is basically it..."

The girl muttered quietly. Even she had to admit that this man's face was the best hypnosis app there was.

"Hm?"

Kaoru had not heard her clearly. "Is there still something on my face?"

"N-no, nothing."

Nazuna suddenly felt guilty for some reason. "Can you let me go now?"

At the moment, she was still sitting very close to Kaoru, held in the warmth of his arms.

Even though nothing improper was happening, the closeness alone was enough to make her cheeks heat up.

Kaoru was clearly reluctant to let go.

"There's still plenty of time. Stay with me a little longer."

Nazuna did not know whether to laugh or cry at the way he acted.

But when she remembered what Miyabi had said yesterday, ripples stirred faintly in her heart, and she bit her lip.

"Kaoru-kun, do you really want to do something bad with me?"

Kaoru paused slightly.

He saw the way her eyes wanted to dodge his.

"Yeah. Emotionally and honestly, I do want to get closer to you."

Kaoru had never been the type to deny that he was attracted to the girls around him.

If he liked someone, he liked them.

There was no need to dress it up with excuses.

"But to me, Nazuna's feelings always come first."

He was drawn to her, but that was separate from pressuring her.

They were boyfriend and girlfriend.

Their relationship was not something forced. Kaoru did not want Nazuna to think only of awkward or uncomfortable things whenever she saw him.

By the same logic, he did not want Kushida Kikyō, Kei, or the others to feel as though the only thing he cared about was teasing them.

If all he wanted was to play around, he would not need to consider their feelings at all, let alone try to keep everyone close in his own troublesome way.

"But I haven't really done anything for you yet."

Nazuna could feel what Kaoru meant, and she hugged him tightly. "Compared to little Honami, am I a lot of trouble?"

Sometimes, she envied Honami.

Even though Kaoru was her boyfriend too, Honami could share him so selflessly.

Nazuna knew she would never be able to do that.

"Not at all. Nazuna is my girlfriend too."

Kaoru smiled. "If anyone is troublesome, it's me. I'm the one always trying to take advantage of my senpai."

Nazuna blushed. Every time Kaoru called her "senpai" or "nee-san," she felt like she did not fit the role at all.

What kind of older girl let her junior tease her like this?

"What if I want to get closer to you too?"

Nazuna leaned against him and whispered.

Kaoru held his breath.

All he could feel in his arms was her warmth and the faint sweetness around her.

"Why?"

"Eh? I'm saying I want to be closer to you, and you're asking why?"

"I want to know if that's truly what you want."

"...And if it isn't?"

"Then I'll wait until you've thought it through. Until you're truly ready."

"Isn't that troublesome? You just said you wanted to get closer to me."

"Wanting to be closer to you and liking you aren't contradictory. Nazuna is my girlfriend, so of course I'm thinking about being with you for a long time. That's why I'm not in a rush."

"You're too good at saying the right things. You must have fooled a lot of girls like this."

Kaoru smiled.

Back at 283 Production, he also had to act as a sort of counselor, often helping the girls there relieve their stress and sort through their worries.

Seeing him smile, Nazuna somehow smiled too and lightly hit him. "You're so annoying. I'm clearly your senpai, but somehow I still got fooled by you."

What Miyabi had said to her was wrong after all.

Nazuna was not conflicted anymore, and she had no intention of telling Kaoru about what had happened yesterday.

"What if I'm saying it because I really do want to be closer to you?"

Nazuna sat close to him, her arms already around his neck, her eyes filled with softness.

Kaoru seemed surprised.

His breathing grew a little uneven, as though he was struggling to hold himself back.

"This isn't the right time." Kaoru answered with surprising calmness.

Nazuna froze for a moment.

He could still hold himself back even now?

"Idiot!"

The girl raised her fist and hit him several times in a row, then could not help laughing.

"But you're right. Now really isn't the right time."

Kaoru was just about to say something when she suddenly lowered her head, and a sweet warmth spread gently between them.

"After a little more time, maybe."

Nazuna breathed softly, looking straight at Kaoru with glistening eyes. "When I'm ready... I want it to be with you. That's your reward from your senpai."

For a moment, Kaoru could not help wondering if she understood just how much weight those words carried.