

Cote 73

Chapter 73: Seventy-Two Hours

Taking advantage of the moment while they were watching the surveillance footage, Kaoru quietly asked Tachibana Akane beside him.

"So, how do you usually handle something like this?"

"It depends on what the person wants. We'll consider the owner opinion, then deal with it according to the school rules." Tachibana shot him a sideways glance.

"You really went all out, calling the president over for something this minor. I'm here, aren't I? That should be enough." Kaoru winked at her.

She froze for a second, then realized what he meant, quickly turning her gaze away, her face flushed red. Embarrassed and annoyed, she muttered, "If you keep looking at me, I'll kill you!"

That last comment had sounded a bit ambiguous, as if there was something going on between her and Kaoru Mitoma. Of course, Kaoru understood what his senpai really meant. She just thought he was making a fuss by involving Horikita Manabu, when she could've handled this little dispute herself without bothering him.

"Will she get expelled?" Kaoru asked.

"No, it should just be a warning and a punishment, probably a one-month suspension, and the class will lose some points too." Tachibana Akane sounded all business.

A one-month suspension, and with midterms coming up, Kaoru couldn't help but feel a bit surprised at Ryuen. This delinquent leader of Class C really would do anything to win. He just wondered if the school had ever handled something like this before.

"So, now that the evidence is clear, what's the student council going to do about this thief?" Manabe Shiho tone was laced with impatience.

The people from Class B were angry but didn't dare speak up. Amikura Mako looked like she was about to cry, like a college student who just got a harsh reality check and had no idea what to do.

"Mitoma, what do you think?" Instead, Horikita Manabu turned to Kaoru Mitoma.

As soon as he spoke, everyone's eyes landed on him, a little surprised that the student council president would actually ask a freshman for his opinion.

Kaoru Mitoma glanced at Manabe Shiho. She was clearly eager for a decision—if he sided with Class C, things would get even worse for Class B. And judging by how much Horikita Manabu valued his opinion, maybe just one word from him could decide everything!

However, Kaoru Mitoma's gaze quickly shifted toward Class B. Ichinose Honami bit her lip at that moment. Noticing his gaze, a hint of pleading appeared in her eyes.

"I think, even though Manabe and the others found the bracelet in Amikura-san's bag, we still can't jump to conclusions just yet." Kaoru Mitoma paused, catching the stunned look on Ichinose Honami's face.

"After all, there's no direct evidence that Amikura-san stole the bracelet." Originally, Amikura Mako had lowered her eyes in despair and bitterness, feeling utterly hopeless. But when she heard his words, she suddenly looked up at the boy, her eyes full of surprise.

Meanwhile, Manabe Shiho stared at Kaoru Mitoma in disbelief. Wasn't this all agreed upon already?

"There are still a lot of questionable points in this incident. For example, where exactly was Manabe's bracelet during the time the building was closed? When did Amikura discover the bracelet..." As he spoke, Kaoru fell silent for a moment.

"If possible, why don't we give it a few days? Both sides can submit any evidence or clues they have to the student council."

"Why make it so complicated? It's obvious she stole my stuff!" Manabe Shiho was getting anxious.

Why wasn't he following the plan?

"I agree with Mitoma-kun. Class B has objections to this matter, and the student council should handle it according to the rules. You can't just make a decision right away!" Ichinose Honami seized the opportunity.

"Hey, hey, hey, you're a member of the student council, of course you want to cover for someone from your own class!"

Manabe Shiho wasn't about to let her catch slip away—how would she face Ryuen if she did?

"Watch your words, please,"

Tachibana Akane frowned slightly, her face serious. Did these freshmen not even know basic manners?

Even though Tachibana Akane wore her hair in a bun and looked small and cute, she was a little intimidating when she was angry. Plus, she was an upperclassman, so Manabe Shiho had no choice but to shut her mouth. At that moment, Horikita Manabu finally spoke up.

"I've already looked into this. From the surveillance footage, the bracelet was indeed found in Amikura bag, but since the most direct part is missing, we can't say for sure that Amikura stole it."

"Most direct part" was, of course, Amikura Mako actually finding the bracelet and putting it in her bag. The video didn't show Amikura Mako doing anything like that, and the people from Class B also said they never saw her take anything.

As the student council president, Horikita Manabu wouldn't make a hasty judgment. Right now, Amikura Mako eyes lit up with hope.

"But, based on the current situation, if Amikura can't provide valid evidence to the student council within 72 hours, we'll have to consider the accusation true." Horikita Manabu paused.

"According to the school rules, Amikura Mako will be suspended for a month, and her class will lose the corresponding points as a warning."

There was nothing more to say—after all, Amikura Mako couldn't explain herself right now.

In fact, Horikita Manabu was actually pretty fair. If this had happened in front of other people, he might have just punished Amikura Mako on the spot.

Ichinose Honami let out a sigh of relief. This outcome wasn't too bad—they still had time to prove their innocence.

"Tch, whatever, it's not like a little more time will make a difference." Manabe Shiho also relaxed, then shot Class B a cold smile. Right after, she and the rest of Class C left the conference room, ready to report back to Ryuen.

"Thank goodness, that was scary." Shiranami Chihiro finally let herself relax a bit.

Just now, she'd really thought Amikura Mako was going to get punished—her heart had been pounding the whole time. But Horikita Manabu demand for evidence within seventy-two hours made Shiranami Chihiro anxious all over again.

Ichinose Honami patted Shiranami Chihiro head, then looked at Amikura Mako and reassured her,

"Don't worry, everything's going to be fine."

At this point, no matter how hard it was, she was determined to clear Amikura Mako name.

No, Amikura Mako herself is completely innocent!

Ichinose Honami wanted to convey this feeling to Amikura Mako, to cheer her up so she wouldn't look so down. Yeah, it seemed to be working a little. But for some reason, Amikura Mako wasn't looking at her. Instead, she kept sneaking glances at Kaoru Mitoma.

Whenever she accidentally met Kaoru eyes, the girl would quickly lower her head, looking a bit shy.

"I still have work to do. Mitoma, Ichinose, see you later."

Horikita Manabu was about to leave the conference room with Tachibana Akane when Kaoru suddenly called out to him.

"President, what happens if someone misses the midterm exam?" Before Horikita Manabu could answer, Akane Tachibana scoffed, "If you're absent, you miss the test. Miss the test, you get a zero. Anyone who gets a zero can pack up and leave."

"What about being absent for a reason, like being sick or taking a leave?" Kaoru pressed.

"In principle, it's still considered missing the test. No grade means you have to withdraw," Horikita Manabu added. "This is to prevent students from intentionally hurting themselves before exams to get out of taking them."

Kaoru Mitoma looked weirded out.

So people have actually tried that before?