The Footsteps of Turmoil – part 4

Since we were headed to the same place anyway, I walked with Horikita to the special building.

When we arrived in front of the classroom that Satou had assigned us to go to, for some reason, we found Maezono there.

“Ah, I’m on watch duty. I don’t think anyone will come to the special building after school, but better safe than sorry, you know?”

“Watch duty? ….You guys are more elaborate than I expected.”

She seemed surprised with the fact that they had even set up a security system, although it was a prerequisite to keep the events a secret until the day of the festival itself.

It was the same for me. Not only did they ask the teacher to use a classroom in the special building, but they also set up a guard to prevent third parties from interfering. In addition, there was a simple but effective barrier to prevent anyone from seeing inside the classroom from the windows.

“Then, let’s take a look inside shall we?”

“Ah, wait a minute. From here on, it will be a practical format, so both Horikita-san and Ayanokoujikun, please experience this as if you guys were the customers.”

“So this was the reason why. Okay then, this is much easier to understand than looking at a poorly written proposal.”

Seeing how elaborate the process has been so far, Horikita would undoubtedly be raising her expectations.

Whether or not this’ll actually be accepted or not is another matter, but it’s clear at this point that they’re making a real effort to win the festival. Therefore, from Horikita’s perspective, this was certainly something for her to be happy about already.

Horikita and I checked again to make sure there was no one around. We gently opened the door.

The first thing that struck me was the unexpectedly colorful decorations.

The decorations were so bright that it was hard to believe that they were in a plain and bland classroom.

“This is…..”

“Welcome~ This is the maid cafe, Maimai-!”

All at once, three girls greeted us, each wearing a distinctive outfit.

Satou, the girl who called us here, and Matsushita, the girl next to her, were dressed as maids.

Mii-chan, who was looking at us shyly, was dressed in a Chinese-styled outfit.

By the way, although classrooms usually have monitors installed in them, it seemed that, because the special building is rarely used, the whiteboards still seemed to be in place. The name of the restaurant was written on the whiteboard in a cute way with a pen.

I was shown to my seat and handed a handmade menu list.

“What would you like to order, Master?”

“Wait a minute. May I ask you a question before ordering?”

“Eh? What is it?”

“This, wouldn’t this have taken a lot of time and money to prepare?”

Certainly, if I were to be asked to prepare all this within a day, it would have been difficult. Even if I did my best to get the decorations done, what would I do about the costumes?

“Matsushita-san, how long did all of this take?”

“The preparation took about four days. The cost was surprisingly reasonable. We used a total of 13,200 private points. The three of us here and Maezono-san planned it and split the cost, so each of us used around 3300 points. The breakdown was that we bought three rental outfits and some decorations such as origami and pens at a store. The tablewares are our own, so there were no points used on those.”

I see, so that was why the tablewares lacked a sense of uniformness. Of course, this was just a part of the planning process, so it was certainly not a negative factor. In fact, it was impressive how well they prepared for the event while keeping the costs to a minimum.

“The impact was perfect, better than anything I’ve ever seen. But——-”

Horikita praised their performance, saying that it was perfect in terms of appeal. However, she was not so naive as to make a rash decision and approve the proposal just because of that.

“The most essential thing, the overall budget. Do you have it done? I’d like to see the specifics of the process in details.”

As if responding to her question, Satou calmly turned her eyes to Mii-chan.

Taking out a clear file from her bag, Mii-chan handed it to Horikita. There were three pages with detailed information written in clean and beautiful letters, probably written by Mii-chan herself.

Although the costumes had been rented, they were chosen from three different companies at different prices. The price, quality, and variety of selections were compared. The difference in cost between the cheapest and most expensive tableware to be used on the day had been written down in details. The quantity of manpower needed, number of guests to expect, etc, had all been considered.

“It’s more complete than any proposal I’ve ever seen. This is as good as it gets.”

When she praised them honestly, Satou and Matsushita poked Mii-chan in the side, as if telling her that she was being complimented. She still looked embarrassed, but bowed her head lightly as if to say thank you.

However…….

“It’s definitely an interesting presentation. It may not be an uncommon genre, but it has a lot of potential if you put your mind to it. However, there are some disadvantages. The costume rental fee is 4000 points per outfit. If that’s the case as per the proposal, it would cost 40,000 points for 10 outfits. After that, the estimated cost of preparing drinks and foods is around 50,000 points. This alone is 90,000 in total………. The classroom decorations cost 5,000 points, and if you add in the cost of the location, you’re looking at…….It’s not a cheap price to pay.”

Even though the manpower did not require wages and can be secured without difficulty, nearly half of the current budget will be used for a single event.

“T-that’s true……but I think we should be able to raise our unit prices, though!”

The menu list made by Satou and the other girls, for example, showed 800 points for a cup of tea. This was more expensive than a cup of tea at a café in Keyaki Mall. Of course, the price could be revised downwards depending on future adjustments, but they still seemed to think that it had a good chance of selling.

Horikita’s reading of the three’s proposal was very serious.

However, the outfits of Satou and the others were like something out a fairy tale. There was a sense of fantasticalness, but there was a beautiful atmosphere about it.

Eventually, perhaps having come to a conclusion, Horikita looked up.

“Just to be clear……This plan of yours….Nobody else has seen it, yes?”

“Of course, there’s no doubt about it.”

Matsushita said and nodded her head confidently. Satou and Mii-chan followed suit.

“——–Okay. I’ll do my best to get this maid cafe approved. Would you guys be willing to further examine this proposal, including thorough cost reduction?”

“Really!? We did it!”

The three of them exchanged a delighted celebration.

“It’s too early to celebrate. Don’t forget that we’re still in the process of discussing the matter.”

Even though she said that, it was a big gain to get a pledge from Horikita, saying that she would try her best to get it approved.

As the two of us walked out into the hallway, Maezono, who had been watching over the area, waved at us happily.

The noise in the classroom must have reached Maezono’s ears.

“You actually bought the idea. I didn’t think you’d say that you’d try to get it approved.”

“I wouldn’t have said so if I didn’t think there was a chance of it winning. In fact, most of the proposals that were brought to me were rejected on the spot, or at best put on hold. That in itself shows that there’s power in the proposal you girls came up with.”

A maid café was not all that unusual.

However, it seemed that Horikita was willing to help because she saw the potential for our class to demonstrate its strengths and impress the guests.

“Even if another class adopts the same maid cafe plan, we would still have the upper hand. Is that what you mean?”

“Yes. Do you not think so too?”

“No, you’re certainly right.”

Even if we were to open up a food stall, we would have to compete with several rivals. On the other hand, even if there are one or two maid cafes, we might be able to overpower them with our unity as a class. Aside from the three students who wore the sample costumes earlier, there were still strong talents lying dormant in the class.

“Which is why to assure that their plan can be carried out smoothly, you’ll have to help out too.”

“Help out? Don’t tell me, you want me to wear a costume too?”

“What nonsense are you saying? If we’re going to do something, we need to give it our all. Therefore, it is necessary to have the best people on the job. I think you should be the one to do that.”

“No……well, I know what you mean, but……there are others more suitable for the job.”

“Indeed. Ike-kun and Hondou-kun may be more discerning with this kind of thing. But if I tell them about this, it could potentially lead to a leak. Their mouths aren’t exactly tight after all.”

“…..I can’t deny that.”

They are the students who might inadvertently do something without intending to leak it.

“I do not want to add to the number of people who have inside knowledge about this. You understand, right?

“I see. So that’s how it is.”

Perhaps it was just my bad luck that Satou had called me, and it’s become my fate.

“So, I’ll be leaving the recruitment to you first. Of course, you can tell whoever you choose about the project, but remember to keep it a secret. If something goes wrong, the project will disappear.”

That was how important it was to protect our information.

“Additionally……adding onto what I said earlier, I want you to keep the number of people that you will be telling this to kept to a minimum. Can I leave everything to you? We’ll come up with a formal budget later, so i’m counting on you for the recruitment, management, and expenditure as well.”

“Wait, wait, wait. You’re really just throwing everything onto me. Are you just going to leave everything up to me alone?”

“The number of events we’ll be holding isn’t going to be just one. We’re definitely going to have more than one stall, considering the balance of men, women and human resources. It’s going to be quite a challenge to figure out how to increase our sales with a low budget, so I’d rather concentrate on that.”

As much as I wanted her to focus on that, I still wondered why she handed this position to me.

“I am assuming you are accepting my formal offer, correct?”

Although I don’t recall showing any pretense of accepting, the decision was made without question.

“I’m beat……”

Was it even possible for me to run this perfect maid cafe? I for one, wasn’t confident.

Satou, Matsushita and Mii-chan have already been decided upon……but how many more should I recruit?

Although there was still a lot of time, to me, it seemed to be necessary to decide on this as early as possible.

“I’ll be heading to the student council room then. See you later.”

“Ah, sure……”

On my way back, after taking care of a case that made me want to hold my head in my hands, I was about to leave the special building when I spotted Chabashira. Given the location it certainly didn’t seem like a coincidence that she was here.

“Did you see Satou and the others? I’ve heard about their proposal. I assume they wanted to show you something. It certainly doesn’t seem like a bad idea.”

“That’s quite right. Satou and the others will have to make sure that the application is approved before they can start preparations.”

It’s no laughing matter to have prepared so much in earnest without knowing if you’ll get permission.

“I was also wondering about it personally, so I thought I’d go check it out. How’d it go?”

“Even Horikita was positive about the idea. She probably thinks it has a good chance. They’re working out the details now.”

“I see. Then I guess there is no need for me to go and check it out.”

“I’ve been forced to be involved in it though, so it’s quite a problem for me.”

“Which means?”

“Under Horikita’s orders, I’m to be the overseer of the event.”

“Ayanokouji will? That’s really…….”

Chabashira laughed somewhat strangely as she gave me a pitying look.

“It’s a good thing actually. Horikita has made quite the interesting move herself.”

“I think someone like Ike or the Professor would be better suited for this though.”

Although I was soon going to be running a maid cafe, I didn’t know a single thing about it.

“As for understanding otaku culture, that may be true. However, the most important thing in a cultural festival is sales. They may be able to improve the quality of the performances, but they’re not good at the meticulous calculations of profit. That’s why it’s important for you to supervise them. If it’s necessary, why don’t you ask them for their opinions? That might solve your problems.”

Easy for her to say. In order to learn from others’ advice, I myself need to acquire a minimum level of understanding. There is no guarantee that I would arrive at the right answer if I just listened to someone else’s advice with zero knowledge beforehand. Instead I’d be hard-pressed to point out any areas of concern.

“It’s a great opportunity for you to learn more about things other than just your studies. Mr. Maid Cafe Manager.”

“……Indeed.”

I was about to leave, Chabashira suddenly stopped me in my tracks.

“Ayanokouji. Later….. can I have some of your time later?”

“Later? When exactly?”

“I’ll send you a message about it shortly. Would that be okay?”

“Well, I don’t mind. I’ll leave my schedule open even if I have plans.”

I could have refused, but after receiving a serious look from Chabashira, I decided to accept.