Walking into the classroom, Chiyabashira-sensei looked around the classroom in surprise . Everyone was waiting in suspense for the results of the midterms .

“Sensei . I heard that the results will be released today, but when exactly?”

“There’s no need for you to be that excited about it, Hirata . You probably passed . ”

“…When will they be released?”

“Well, now is a good time . There isn’t much time for certain procedures if we did it after school . ”

At the words “certain procedures”, some of the students had a visible reaction .

“What… what do you mean?”

“Don’t be confused . I’ll explain it now . ”

After all, this school likes to explain the details all at once .

She stuck the paper with everyone’s names and scores on the board .

“Honestly, good job . I didn’t think this class would do this well . In math, Japanese, and social studies, there were over 10 perfects . ”

Looking at the row of 100s, the students were cheering . However, one group of students weren’t smiling .

The only grade is Sudou’s English score .

And then—

Four of Sudou’s grades were a solid 60 points . His english score was a 39 .

“Woohoo!!”

Sudou stood up and shouted in relief . Ike and Yamauchi stood up at the same time and cheered .

There was no red line to be found on the paper . Kushida and I glanced at each other and breathed a small sigh of relief . Horikita… wasn’t smiling or cheering, but she appeared to be relieved inside .

“You saw it, right Sensei? When we put our minds to it, we can do it!”

Ike had a triumphant smile .

“Yea, I recognize that . You did well . However—”

Chiyabashira-sensei had a red pen in her hand .

“Huh…?”

Sudou let out a concerned voice .

She drew a red line right above Sudou’s name .

“W-what the hell? What does this mean?”

“You failed, Sudou . ”

“What? That’s a lie, right? Don’t bullshit me, why did I fail!?”

Of course, Sudou was the first to protest .

The classroom did a complete 180 from cheering to an angry uproar in a split second .

“Sudou . You failed on the English exam . ”

“Don’t lie to me, the passing grade is a 32! I passed!”

“When did anyone say that the passing grade is a 32?”

“No no, Sensei said so! Right, everyone!?”

Ike shouted in support of Sudou .

“Nothing you say will help . This is the unmistakable truth . On this midterm, the passing grade was a 40 . In other words, you were one point short . Almost, but not quite . ”

“F-forty!? I never heard of this! I can’t agree to this!”

“Then, should I tell you how we decide what is a passing grade?”

Chiyabashira-sensei wrote a formula on the board .

She wrote, “79 . 6/2 = 39 . 8” .

“Last test, and this test as well, each class has a set passing grade . And that grade was half the average . ”

In other words, anything lower than a 39 . 8 was a failing grade .

“Well then, that shows how you failed . You got a lower score . ”

“Impossible… Does… does that mean, I am expelled?”

“Although it was a short time, you did well . After school, you will be asked to fill out a dropout form, but you will need a legal guardian . I’ll contact them for you afterwards . ”

Seeing everything progress so casually, all the students knew that it was actually happening .

“The rest of you, good job for passing . On the final, please work hard to do the same and pass the test . Well then, onto the next topic—”

“S-sensei . Is Sudou-kun really dropping out? Is there no way to save him?”

Hirata was the first to reach out to Sudou .

Even though Sudou hated him and verbally insulted him .

“It’s the truth . He got a failing grade, so he will have to drop out . ”

“…Can we see Sudou-kun’s answer sheet?”

“Even if you look at it, you won’t find any mistakes in the grading . Well, I expected you guys to make a fuss about it . ”

Taking Sudou’s English exam answer sheet, she passed it to Hirata .

Hirata looked through every question with a gloomy expression .

“There are… no mistakes . ”

“Well, if that’s all, homeroom is now over . ”

Without any sympathy or any second chances, Chiyabashira-sensei ruthlessly announced his expulsion . Knowing that any comforting words would have the opposite effect, Ike and Yamauchi stayed silent . Hirata was also the same . And sadly, it looks like one portion of the class was relieved . Are they happy a hindrance to the class has finally been kicked out?

“Sudou, come to the staff room after school . ”

“…Chiyabashira-sensei . Do you have some time?”

Although she had stayed silent until then, Horikita quickly raised her hand .

In her school life, Horikita had never made remarks during class voluntarily .

At the new sight, both Chiyabashira-sensei and the whole class were surprised .

“That’s unusual, Horikita . You’re raising your hand . What’s your question?”

“Earlier, Sensei said that the previous test had a passing grade of 32 points, which was calculated by the formula you wrote earlier . Is there no mistake in calculating the last test’s passing grade?”

“Yea, no mistake . ”

“Then, I have one more question . I calculated the mock test’s average to be a 64 . 4 . Dividing that by two, you get 32 . 2 . In other words, higher than a 32 . Despite that, the passing grade was a 32 by truncating the decimal point . That’s contradictory from this time . ”

“Y-yea . The passing grade should be a 39 then!”

In other words, Sudou’s grade of 39 should’ve just barely passed .

“I see . You anticipated Sudou’s grade to barely pass . Only your English grade was low, after all . ”

“Horikita, you…”

Sudou noticed something . The other students, in surprise, looked at the paper once again . Even though four of her five grades were perfect, she got a 51 on her English score .

“You really—”

Sudou realized what she did .

And by no mistake, too . In order to lower the average grade, she purposely lowered her own grades .

“If you think my opinion is wrong, please tell me why the calculation differs between the last test and this test . ”

The last ray of light . The last bit of hope .

“I see . Well then, let me tell you one more thing . Sadly, there’s one error in your formula . Rather than truncating, we rounded the tests . Last test rounded down to 32, this test rounded up to 40 . ”

“Tsk…”

“In your mind, you probably noticed that the score was rounded . But holding onto that possibility… well, that’s too bad . First period will start soon, so I will leave now . ”

Horikita had no more ways to retort and stayed silent . She wasn’t able to counter her words, and her last hope was shot down . After leaving the classroom, the door slammed shut and the whole class was silent .

While trying to face the reality of having to drop out, Sudou looked at Horikita, who tried to stop him from failing by dropping her own grades .

“…I’m sorry . I should’ve dropped my points even further . ”

Horikita slowly lowered her hand .

Even 51 points was considerably low .

If she dropped her grade to the 40s, she herself would be at risk for dropping out .

“Why… You said that you hated me, didn’t you?”

“I’m just doing this for myself, don’t misunderstand . It was in vain, though . ”

I slowly got out of my seat .

“W-where are you going, Ayanokouji!?”

“To the bathroom . ”

I exited the classroom and quickly walked towards the staff room . While wondering whether or not Chiyabashira-sensei had already reached the staff room, I saw her looking out the window, standing still in the hallway . As if she was waiting for someone .

“Ayanokouji, class will start soon . ”

“Sensei . Is it fine if I ask you one question?”

“…A question? Is that why you ran after me?”

“I have something to ask of you . ”

“Starting with Horikita, and even you . What is it?”

“Do you think that today’s Japanese society is fair?”

“What a sudden change in topic . Do you get anything out of it even if I answer?”

“It’s very important . ”

“If I speak my opinion, then no, it’s not fair . Not one bit”

“Yes, I also think the same way . Fairness and equality is a lie . ”

“Did you chase after me to ask that question? If that’s all, I’m leaving . ”

“One week ago, when you told us that the test material had changed, you said something like this: ‘I forgot to tell the class . ’ Because of that, the notice reached us about a week after the other classes were informed about it . ”

“I said that in the staff room . So what?”

“Even though all the questions, our points, and the threat of expulsion is the same among all classes, only class D is treated unfairly . ”

“Are you saying you can’t agree to that? But it’s a good example . I guess you could call it a micro example of our unfair society today . ”

“Of course, no matter how positively you look at it, the world is an unfair place . However, we are humans that can think and act . ”

“What are you trying to say?”

“I’m trying to say that it should seem equal at least . ”

“…I see . ”

“It doesn’t matter whether or not ‘forgetting’ to tell us was on purpose . However, it’s a fact that one person is now being forced to leave the school because of those unequal conditions . ”

“What do you want me to do?”

“That is why I came to you . I want to meet with the school, who is perpetuating this inequality . ”

“To say you don’t agree?”

“I just want to confirm the school’s decisions with the right people . ”

“Sadly, even though you aren’t wrong, I cannot let you . Sudou will drop out . It’ll be very difficult to overturn that ruling at this time . Give up . ”

She ignored my argument . But that doesn’t mean there’s no meaning in her words

As expected, this person is someone who always has a hidden implication in her words .

“Difficult to be overturned at this time . In other words, there is a way to change the outcome . ”

“Ayanokouji, I personally have a high opinion of you . Certainly, getting the old test questions was a correct solution . Furthermore, coming up with that idea even goes beyond common sense . But you distributed the questions to the class and raised the average test score . I think there’s merit in coming up with that idea . ”

“Kushida also helped in getting those questions, so I did nothing special . ”

“I know that you didn’t openly admit it, but there are upperclassmen too . I also know that you got the test questions from a third year . ”

Somehow, my actions were discovered .

“However, despite having a solid start by getting a hold of the test questions, you messed up at the end . That was why your plan didn’t work . If he memorized them more thoroughly, Sudou probably wouldn’t have gotten a failing grade in English . Why don’t you give up and let Sudou drop out? Won’t his future be more comfortable then?”

“To be honest… probably . However, I decided to help out this time . Or rather, I should say that I’m not giving up yet . I have one last attempt . ”

From my pocket, I took out my student card .

“What do you mean?”

“Please sell me one point for Sudou’s English test . ”

“…”

Looking at me in astonishment, she laughed loudly .

“Hahahahaha . That’s an interesting proposal . As I thought, you’re different . I never imagined you would try to buy points . ”

“Sensei, you said so on the first day . There’s nothing that can’t be bought by points in this school . The midterm is one such thing in this school . ”

“I see, I see . Certainly, you could think of that way . Do you even have the money to pay me, though?”

“Well then, how much is one point?”

“A very difficult question indeed . No one’s ever asked to buy a point before . Let’s see… I’ll give you a point for 100,000 points . ”

“Sensei, you’re cruel . ”

There isn’t a single person in the school who hasn’t used a point at all .

In other words, there isn’t anyone who has 100,000 points .

“—I will also pay . ”

A voice came from behind me . Turning around, I saw Horikita standing there .

“Horikita…”

“Kuku . As I thought, you two are interesting . ”

Chiyabashira-sensei took both our student cards .

“Alright, I’ll agree to sell you a point . I’ll take a total of 100,000 points from the two of you . Tell the rest of the class that Sudou’s expulsion has been canceled . ”

“Is that fine?”

“You promised to pay 100,000 points, so it can’t be helped . ”

Chiyabashira-sensei talked with an amused tone as she continued to look at us in wonder .

“Horikita, you also understand, right? Ayanokouji’s skill . ”

“…Well… I only see an unpleasant student . ”

“What do you mean by unpleasant…”

“You purposely got low scores on tests, thought to get old test questions and give the credit to Kushida-san, and came up with the idea of buying test points . I don’t think you’re particularly special, you’re just unpleasant . ”

Somehow, it looks like she heard about the test questions too .

“If it’s you guys, you might actually be able to move your class up . ”

“I don’t know about him, but I will definitely rise up . ”

“In the past, there’s never been a case where a class D has been promoted . It’s because the school immediately labels you as inferior and pushes you aside . How are you going to accomplish that?”

“Sensei . ”

Without wavering, Horikita returned Chiyabashira-sensei’s gaze .

“Honestly, many of the students in class D are inferior . However, that doesn’t mean they’re trash . ”

“What’s the difference between inferior goods and trash?”

“There’s a paper thin difference . I think that with a little help, there is the possibility of improving an inferior good to a superior quality . ”

“I see . When you say it, it sounds oddly persuasive . ”

I had to agree with her words as well . Her words were certainly significant . .

Horikita, who previously looked at other students and people as a hindrance, was slowly changing .

Of course, it’s not that simple . Even though it’s a tiny glimpse of her change, it’s a huge change . As if she noticed as well, Chiyabashira-sensei faintly smiled .

“Well then, I look forward to it . As your homeroom teacher, I’ll make sure to watch attentively to future events . ”

Chiyabashira-sensei walked away, towards the staff room .

We were left behind in the hallway .

“Shall we go back too? It’ll be class soon . ”

“Ayanokouji-kun . ”

“Hmm? Ow!”

She struck my sides with her hand .

“Hey, the hell was that for!?”

“I just felt like it . ”

With that, she left me behind and walked away .

Good grief, what a bother… I looked at her as she walked away .

While thinking that, I decided to chase after her .