I don’t like the entrance ceremony. A lot of first years think the same way.

The principal and the students are all thanking each other annoyingly, there’s way too much standing, and it’s a pain in the butt because there are too many troublesome things.

But that’s not all I want to say.

The entrance ceremony for the elementary, middle, and high school marks the start of one major trial for students.

For the first few days after the entrance ceremony, students must make friends in order to enjoy the rest of their school life.

If someone fails at this task, it is said that a miserable three years awaits them.

Following my principle of avoiding trouble, I think it would be best to make some friends and establish decent human relationships.

The day before, I tried to practice making friends because I was inexperienced.

First scenario was bursting into the classroom and then talking excitedly.

Second scenario was secretly passing a note with my email address on it. then becoming friends afterwards.

In my case, I had to practice because this is a completely different environment than I had been used for my whole life. I am completely alone. I entered the fierce battleground all by myself.

Overlooking the classroom, I walked over to the seat with my nameplate on it.

A seat towards the back of the room and near the window. Generally a good spot to get.

The classroom was only about half full.

Students were either looking at their class materials by themselves or were talking to acquaintances and friends.

Now, what should I do? Should I get to know people during this free time? Sitting a few seats in front of me, a chubby boy seemed lonely all by himself (my selfish imagination).

He gave off an aura of that screamed, “Someone talk to me and be my friend!” (again, my selfish imagination)

However… if you suddenly walked up to someone and talked to them they would probably feel bothered.

Do you wait for the right time then? No, by then, he would probably be surrounded by enemies, and there’s a high chance I’ll become friendless.

As I expected, I should talk…

Wait, wait, don’t be hasty.

If I carelessly jump in and talk to the unknown student, I might be beaten by someone else.

This is useless, a negative spiral…

In the end, I couldn’t talk to anybody, and with the way things were going, I would soon be left all alone.

Is he still alone? Do I hear laughter? I must be hearing things.

I wonder what friends are. Where on earth do friends come from? Do people become friends after they eat with each other? Or do you become friends after going to the bathroom together?

The more I think about it, the more I don’t understand it. Is it something deep? I should think about it more.

Trying to make new friends is really troublesome and tiring. In the first place, should I be trying to make friends like this? Furthermore, don’t friendships form naturally over time? My mind is in complete disarray like a chaotic summer festival.

While my mind is still hazy and confused, the classroom quickly fills up as other students enter the classroom.

Oh well, I have no choice but to try.

After a long internal struggle, I started to get up from my seat. However…

As I got up, I noticed that the chubby boy wearing glasses was talking to another classmate.

“You, from before…!”

Feeling perplexed, I was doing some serious soul-searching.

Involuntary, I let out a deep sigh from the bottom of my lungs. My high school life seems very bleak.

I noticed that the classroom was nearly full, and then I heard someone putting down their bag on the seat next to me.

“That’s a heavy sigh, even though the school semester hasn’t even started yet. I feel like sighing after meeting you again.”

The person who sat next to me was the girl I argued with after getting off the bus.

“… So we were in the same class, huh.” After all, there are only 4 first-year classes. It’s not like it’s probabilistically impossible that we were put in the same class.

“I am Ayanokouji Kiyotaka. Nice to meet you.”

“A sudden self-introduction?”

“Even if you call it sudden, it’s our second time talking to each other. Isn’t an introduction fine?”

Anyway, I previously had no way to introduce myself to anyone. Even to this cheeky girl. Although, in order to become familiar with the class, I wanted to learn my neighbor’s name at least.

“Do you mind if I reject your greeting?”

“I think it would be awkward if we didn’t know each other’s names, even though we sit next to each other.”

“I think it would be perfectly fine.”

After glancing at me, she put her bag on the desk. It seems like she won’t even tell me her name.

The girl showed no interest in the rest of the classroom, and sat down in her seat like a model.

“Is your friend in another class? Or are you coming to this high school alone?”

“You’re a curious one, aren’t you. You shouldn’t talk to me, since you won’t find me interesting anyway.”

“If I’m being a bother to you, just tell me to shut up.”

I thought that the conversation was over, but after a sudden change of heart, she sighed and looked at me.

“My name is Horikita Suzune.”

I didn’t expect to receive an answer, but she… no, Horikita, introduced herself.

For the first time I saw her face.

… Wow, she’s cute.

I mean, she’s a beauty.

Even though she was in the same grade, she could probably pass as a second or third year student.

She looked like a mature woman.

“Let me start off by telling you a bit about myself. I have no particular hobbies, but I have an interest in everything. I don’t have too many friends, but I think it would be good to have some friends.  Well, that’s the kind of person I am.”

“Sounds like a reply from someone who avoids troublesome situations. I don’t think I’ll ever like someone who thinks like that.”

“It feels like my whole existence has been denied in a single second…”

“I pray that no more misfortune befalls me.”

“I sympathize with you, but I don’t think that’ll come true.”

I pointed at the door to the classroom. The one standing there was───

“The equipment in this classroom seems to be in order! The classroom looks just like what the rumors say!”

It was the boy who argued with the girl in the bus.

“…… I see. Certainly is bad luck.”

It seems like not only us, but that problem child is also in the D class.

Without noticing us at all, he sat down at the seat marked “Koenji”.  I wonder if he knows what the term “friendship” means. Let’s try observing him for a bit.

Koenji then propped his legs onto the desk, took out a pair of nail clippers, and started doing maintenance on his fingernails. He acted as if he was the only one there and ignored all of his surroundings.

His remarks on the bus seem to have come from his true thoughts.

In less than ten seconds, more than half the class backed away from Koenji. Even here, his self-important attitude penetrated the classroom.

Looking next to me, I noticed that Horikita was looking down at her desk, reading one of her own books.

Oops, I forgot that talking back and forth was one of the basics of holding a conversation.

One of my chances to become friends with Horikita was crushed.

Peeking at the title of the book, I saw that she was reading “Crime and Punishment”.

That’s interesting. Whether there is any reason to kill a person or not, it advocates killing. Maybe Horikita’s hobbies are similar to the ones in the book. (T/N scary…)

Anyway, since self-introductions were finished, it seems like we won’t be interacting very often.

After a few minutes, the first bell rang.

Almost at the same time, a woman wearing a suit walked into the classroom.

On first impression, she seems like a teacher who finds strict classroom discipline important. She looks about 30 years old. Her long hair was tied back into a ponytail.

“Ahem, good morning new students. My name Chiyabashira Sae and I am in charge of class D this year. I teach Japanese history. This school doesn’t rearrange the classes every year, so over the next three years, I hope I get to know all of you. Best regards. Although the entrance ceremony will be one hour from now in the gym, I will now distribute the list of special rules of this school and the matriculation guide.”

From the front, the handouts were passed around.

At this school, there are special rules that make it different from every other high school. All students are required to live on campus, and are forbidden from contacting anyone outside the school.

Even contacting immediate family is impossible without the permission of the school.

Leaving school grounds is also forbidden.

However, there are also many other facilities so that students don’t suffer from being restricted. There are karaokes, theater rooms, cafes, and even boutiques—you can say it made up a small town. And in the middle of the big city, the huge campus took up more than 600,000 square meters.

There’s one more special characteristic of this school, though. The introduction of the S system.

“I will now hand out student ID cards. With this card, you can buy anything from any of the shops and facilities around campus. It works like a credit card. However, be careful of how many points you use. There’s nothing you can’t buy at school. If there’s something on school grounds, it’s purchasable.”

This point system associated with the student card essentially replaced money.

This way, every student would start off with the same amount of money and would be forced to check their consumption habits. In any case, all of the points are provided at no charge from the school.

“Student cards can be used by swiping them on the machines. Using the machines are really easy, so you won’t have any trouble with them. The points will be automatically credited on the first day of the month. Everyone should already have 100,000 points on their card. Also, 1 point is worth 1 yen. Any more explanation is unnecessary.”

For a moment, the classroom got loud.

In other words, for being admitted to this school, we got a 100,000 yen monthly allowance from the school. As expected from a school created by the Japanese government.

100,000 yen is a considerable amount of money given to students as a monthly allowance.

“Were you guys surprised by the amount of points given? This school measures the abilities of students. Everyone here, who passed the entrance exam, has shown some level of merit and worth. The amount of money is a reflection of your skills. Use without holding back. After graduation, however, all the points will be taken back. Since it’s impossible to change these points into cash, there’s no point in saving up the points. How the points are used are up to you. Use it on things you like or need. If you feel that no use for some of your points, you can always transfer them to someone else. However, bullying other people for points is prohibited. The school is very strict on matters concerning bullying.”

Chiyabashira-sensei looked around the room.

“It seems like no one has questions. Well then, please lead a good student life.”

A lot of the classmates can’t hide their surprise at the size of the allowance.

“It isn’t as strict of a school as I thought it would be.”

I thought I was talking to myself, but Horikita was looking my direction and thought that I was talking to her.

“It certainly seems like a lax school.”

Although they force us to live in dorms, forbid us from going off campus, and prohibit us from contacting anyone on the outside, they give us a lot of points for free usable anywhere on campus.

It could be said that the students are put in paradise with preferential treatment.

And the biggest merit to Koudo Ikusei High School is their 100% employment rate.

Under the thorough guidance of the government, the school works towards a better future with all of its resources. In fact, many of this widely publicized school’s alumni are famous people. Usually, no matter how famous and good a school is, its area of specialization is narrow. A school might specialize in sports, or specialize in music.  Or maybe it specializes in computer related topics. But this school fulfills any wish in any genre that someone may wish to study. This is a school that has that kind of system and value.

That’s why I thought the class atmosphere would be more competitive and bloodthirsty, but the majority of my classmates seemed like ordinary students you could find anywhere else.

No, maybe that’s why everyone’s so normal. We were already recognized as students who passed the entrance exam. Can we graduate peacefully and without incident…? I wonder if it’s even possible.

“This much preferential treatment is a bit scary.”

After listening to Horikita say that, I also felt the same way.

I think it would be better to stay ignorant of the details about this school.

Because they are able to fulfill any wish, I think there would be some risks associated with the school.

“Ne ne~, don’t you want to go see those shops? Let’s go shopping!”

“Un. With this much money, we can buy anything. It’s great that I got into this school~”

After the teacher left the room,  the students who received the large amount of money were restless.

“Everyone, can you guys listen to me for a bit?”

A student who had the air of a young man raised his hand and spoke.

His hair is not dyed and looked like an honors student. He didn’t look like delinquent either.

“Starting from today, we will be in the same class for the next three years. So, it would be great if all of us could introduce ourselves and become friends. We still have time until the entrance ceremony, so what do you think?”

Oh… he said something amazing. A majority of the students couldn’t find words to say.

“I agree! After all, we don’t know each other names, let alone anything about each other.”

After the first person agreed, the previously hesitant students subsequently voiced their support.

“My name is Hirata Yousuke. Because I was often called by my first name, Yousuke, in middle school, feel free to use my first name. Although I like all sports, I like soccer in particular, and also plan to play soccer at this school. Please take care of me.”

The young man who proposed that the class introduce themselves smoothly and impeccably did his self introduction.

You really have a lot of guts. And you even talked about soccer. After talking about soccer with that refreshing expression, his popularity multiplied by 2 times, no, 4 times. Look, look, all the girls near Hirata have hearts in their eyes.

Like this, Hirata became the central figure of the class, and would probably draw everyone’s attention until we graduated.

And then he would probably go out with the cutest girl in the class That’s probably how things will end up.

“Well, if that was satisfactory… then, can we start self introductions from the beginning?”

Being smooth to the very end, Hirata asked for confirmation.

Although the first girl was perplexed and nervous, she soon made up her mind and stood up.

In other words, she was flustered by Hirata’s words.

“M-my name Inogashira K-ko—”

As she tried to introduce herself, her words stopped in her mouth.

Whether her mind went blank or she couldn’t collect her thoughts fully, she was unable to speak clearly. When words no longer came out, her face became pale in embarrassment. It’s rare seeing someone get so nervous.

“Do your best~”

“It’s ok if you don’t rush~”

Those kind words came from a classmate. But those words backfired, and the words stuck in her throat disappeared. The silence continued for 5 seconds, then 10 seconds. The pressure was palpable.

Small giggles came from some of the girls in the classroom. She was paralyzed in fear. One of the girls spoke up.

“Doing it slowly is fine, don’t rush through it.”

Although her words were similar to “Do your best~” and “It’s ok if you don’t rush,” the meaning her words held was completely different.

To the nervous girl, the boys’ words seemed a bit forceful.

On the other hand, the girl’s words told her to go at her own pace, and felt more reassuring.

After regaining a bit of her composure, she breathed in and out to calm herself down.

Then after a little while…

“My name is, Inogashira… Kokoro. Um, my hobby is sewing and I’m good at knitting. P-please take care of me.”

From the first word, she said all she wanted to say without stopping.

With a relieved, delighted, and slightly embarrassed expression, Inokashira sit down.

Thanks to the help, Inogashira’s introduction finished without any trouble. Other self-introductions followed.

“I’m Yamauchi Haruki. In elementary school, I played table tennis at the national level, then was the baseball club’s ace in middle school—I had uniform number 4. But since I got an injury during Inter High recently, so I am currently in rehab. Nice to meet ya.”

I don’t think the number 4 has any meaning to it…

And Inter High is a sports tournament for high schools… You can’t compete as a middle schooler.

Or was he trying to tell a joke? I got the impression that he was a frivolous and loose-mouthed type of person.

“Then I’m next, right?”

The cheerful girl who stood up next was the one who told Inogashira to introduce herself at her own pace.

And the girl that helped out the old woman on the bus that morning.

“My name is Kushida Kikyou, and since none of my friends from middle school came to this school, I want to get to know everyone and become friends!”

Most students finished their greetings after a few words, but Kushida continued to talk.

“First of all, I want to become friends with everyone here. After all of you are done with your introductions, please exchange contact information with me!”

Her words weren’t just words. I could tell immediately that she was the type of girl to open up her heart immediately.

Her words to Inogashira weren’t just encouragement that seemed appropriate for the situation, but were her true feelings.

Also, she seemed the type of person who would get along with everyone.

“Then, during vacations or after school, I want to make memories with many people, so please invite me to many events. I’ve been talking for a while, so I’ll end my self-introduction here.”

She’d definitely get along with all the boys and girls in the class.

… Of course, it’s not like I’m critiquing other people’s self-introductions.

I’m feeling a bit restless for some reason.

What I should say in my introduction… should I try to tell a joke too?

Or should I bring out laughs by creating high tension during my speech?

No, but I wonder. High tension would probably just ruin the mood. To begin with, I’m not that kind of character.

While I was lost in my own worries, the self-introductions continued.

“Then, the next one is───”

As Hirata looked at the next student, the next student shot him a sharp glare.

With bright red hair, the boy looked like a delinquent and spoke in a manner that matched his appearance.

“You guys idiots? I don’t wanna introduce myself, just leave me alone.”

Red hair glared at Hirata. Tension hung in the air.

“I can’t force you to introduce yourself. But, I don’t think that it’s a bad thing to get along with your classmates. If you thought I was being unpleasant, I apologize.”

After watching Hirata bow his head towards red hair, some of the girls glared at red hair.

“Isn’t it fine to do a simple self introduction?”

“Yea, yea!”

As expected from the ikemen soccer boy. He seems to have quickly attracted the attention of the girls.

However, starting with red hair, the about half of the other boys stirred with jealousy towards Hirata.

“No. I don’t want to pretend that we’re good friends.”

Red hair got up from his seat. At the same time, several other students left the room. They probably had no intention to get to know their classmates. Horikita also started to get up from her seat.

She looked at my direction, but when she realized that I wasn’t moving, she started walking out the room. Hirata looked a bit lonely as he saw the group walk out the classroom.

“They’re not bad people. I’m also at fault since I asked them to stay out of my own selfishness.”

“Hirata-kun did nothing bad. Let’s just leave those people alone.”

Even though some people left after not wanting to do self-introductions, the remaining students continued to go around and introduce themselves

“I’m Ike Kanji. The things I like are girls, and the things I hate are ikemen. I’m looking for a girlfriend at any time, so nice to meet you! Of course, you better be cute or beautiful!”

It’s hard to tell if he said that as a joke or if it his true thoughts, but he earned the ire of the females.

“Wow, cool~. Ike-kun, you’re so smooth”, said one of the girls with a completely emotionless voice.

Of course, it was obvious that it was 1000% a lie.

“Really, really? Wow, I thought I wasn’t bad, but… hehe.”

Apparently Ike thought it was true and became a bit embarrassed.

Suddenly all the girls laughed.

“Wow, everyone, he’s cute. He’s recruiting girlfriends!”

No you’re being teased.

Ike waved his hand cheerfully while being teased. It doesn’t seem like he’s a bad person though.

Then, the boy who fought on the bus, Koenji, was up next.

After checking his bangs with a hand-mirror, he used a comb to arrange his hair.

“Um, can you introduce yourself”

“Fu~. Ok.”

While smiling like a young noble, he showed glimpses of his impudent behavior.

I thought he would stand up, but Koenji kept his feet on the desk, and started his self-introduction while sitting like that.

“My name is Koenji Rokusuke. Being the only heir of the Koenji conglomerate, I am a man who will be responsible for Japanese society in the near future. Pleased to meet you, ladies.”

It was an introduction for the women, as opposed to the whole class.

Some girls looked at Koenji with glittering eyes after hearing he was rich, while the others looked at him like he was crazy. … That’s natural.

“From now on, I will relentlessly punish anything that makes me feel uncomfortable. Be careful in that respect.”

“Eh… Koenji-kun. What do you mean by ‘anything that makes me uncomfortable’?”

Feeling uneasy at his words, Hirata asked him again.

“Exactly as I said. But if I were to give an example───I hate unattractive things. If I saw something ugly, I would do as I said.”

He combed his hair upwards.

“Oh, thank you. I will make sure to be careful.”

Red hair, Horikita, Koenji. Then Yamauchi and Ike. Apparently all the odd students were gathered in this class. During this short time, I was able to see a glimpse of the various students in my class.

I also have a an odd quirk───no, there’s nothing special about me.

I wanted to become a free bird, but I flew from the cage all alone.

Without putting much thought into it, I wanted to experience the freedom.

If you look outside, you can see the gracefulness of the birds… which you can’t see at this time.

I’m that kind of man, anyway.

“Um… the next person───please introduce yourself.”

“Eh?”

My turn had come while I was still lost in my delusions. A lot of the students were waiting for me to give my introduction. Oi oi, don’t look at me with that much anticipation (my imagination).

Oh well, I’ll go all out for for this self-introduction.

Alright! Get up and start.

“Well …… Um, my name is Ayanokouji Kiyotaka. The, er… there’s nothing particular about me, I will do my best to get along with everyone, uh, nice to meet you.”

After finishing my greeting, I quickly sat back down.

Fu… Did everyone see it? My self introduction.

… failed!

I buried my face in my hands.

I was too busy lost in my delusions, so I couldn’t come up with the proper words in advance.

It was such a boring, lame introduction that no one will remember later.

“Nice to met you Ayanokouji-kun. I also want to get alone with everyone, so let’s do our best.”

Hirata said with a refreshing smile.

Everyone clapped. I feel like everyone clapped after seeing through my mistake.

At the same time, I felt strangely hurt from their pity.

I was still happy, though.