The morning bell for the first school day of May rang . Soon after, Chiyabashira-sensei walked in, holding a poster rolled into a tube . Her face is always grim and serious . Are you in menopause? If I made that joke, I think an iron bat would come full swing at my face .

“Sensei~, are you in menopause?”

Ike really asked that out loud . However, I’m shocked that we were thinking the same thing .

“Alright, morning homeroom is starting . Are there any questions before we start? If there’s something on your mind, feel free to speak up . ”

Chiyabashira-sensei completely ignored Ike and continued to talk . She talked as if she was completely convinced that the students had something to ask . Immediately, several people raised their hands .

“Um, I checked my point balance this morning, and no points were deposited . Weren’t they supposed to be provided on the first day of the month, every month? I was impatient because I couldn’t buy the juice I wanted . ”

“Hondou, I explained it before, didn’t I? Points are wired to student’s accounts on the first day of the month, every month . They were wired without any problems this month as well . ”

“Uh, but… I didn’t get any points . ”

Hondou and Yamauchi exchanged looks . Ike was too surprised to notice their looks . Certainly, I went to check my points this morning too, but my point balanced hadn’t changed from yesterday .

So I thought they would’ve been deposited later .

“… Are you guys really that stupid?”

Is she angry? Delighted? Chiyabashira-sensei had an ominous feeling about her .

“Stupid? What?”

Chiyabashira-sensei had a sharp glint in her eyes as Hondou repeated her words like an idiot .

“Sit, Hondou . I’ll explain it again . ”

“S-sae-chan sensei?”

Surprised by her strict tone, Hondou slumped down into his seat .

“Points were deposited . Without fail . The likelihood that this class was left out is very low . Do you understand?”

“No, even if I say I do understand, we haven’t received our points…

Hondou had a dissatisfied expression on his face .

However, if we say that Chiyabashira-sensei is telling the truth…

Isn’t there some kind of contradiction? Does that mean zero points have been deposited?

I had a faint doubt, but my suspicions were raised .

“Hahaha, I see, it was like that, teacher . I’ve understood this riddle now . ”

Koenji said in a loud voice while laughing . Putting his feet on the table, he pointed at Hondou with his self-important attitude .

“We didn’t receive any points because we’re in class D . ”

“Hah? What’s that supposed to mean . They said we’d get 100,000 points every month…”

“I don’t remember hearing that . Right?”

Smirking, Koenji then turned and pointed his finger to Chiyabashira-sensei .

“Your attitude has some problems, but what Koenji is saying is on the right track . Not many people seem to have noticed my hint . How sad . ”

The classroom erupted in uproar and confusion .

“… Sensei, can I ask a question? I still don’t understand .

Hirata raised his hand . Rather than being concerned about his own points, it looks like he’s asking to help the worried students in the room . As expected of the class leader . He’s taking the initiative again .

“Please tell me why we didn’t get any points . If that’s not possible, we can never understand .

After all, we were never given the reason for why we were never given points .

“98 total absences and tardies . 391 incidences of talking or using cell phones in class . I counted every infraction . In this school, your class performance is reflected in the amount points received . As a result your behavior, the 100,000 points you could’ve gotten went down the drain . That’s all that happened .

I explained this all on the day of the entrance ceremony . That this school measures the abilities of its students . This time around, you guys were valued to be worth 0 . There’s nothing more than that . ”

Chiyabashira-sensei talked mechanically, without any expression . My initial doubts after coming to my school were finally answered . The worst way possible, but answered nonetheless .

In other words, even though we were given a great advantage of 100,000 points at the beginning, our class D lost all of it in a single month .

I heard the sound of a pencil on paper . Horikita was calmly trying to get the grasp of the situation as she noted the number of absences, tardies, and infractions of talking during class .

“Chiyabashira-sensei, I don’t remember ever hearing that explanation before…”

“What? Are you people incapable of understanding without any explanations?”

“Naturally . There was no mention of reducing the number of points transferred to us at the beginning of each month . If it was explained before, I’m sure that we would’ve tried not to be late and not to talk during class . ”

“An interesting argument, Hirata . I also don’t remember explaining the rules about the points received at the beginning of each month . However, haven’t you guys learned not to talk in class and get to class on time since elementary school?”

“That is…”

“I’m pretty sure you guys have learned . In the 9 years of compulsory education, they’ve always told you that such things are frowned upon . Talking in class and being late to class is bad . Also, did you say that you couldn’t understand because I didn’t explain it? That excuse doesn’t fly . If you behaved as a student should, your points wouldn’t have dropped to 0 . It’s your own self-responsibility . ”

Without any room for rebuttal, her argument was completely sound . Everyone knows what is good and bad behavior, after all .

“After becoming first year high schoolers, did you really think that you would get 100,000 points every month without any restrictions? In this school created by the Japanese government to train excellent people? That’s impossible, just use your common sense . Why leave doubts as doubts?”

Although Hirata looked frustrated by her sound argument, he recovered and immediately looked at her in the eye .

“Well then, can you at least tell us the details about how points are increased or decreased? We will always try to do our best from now on . ”

“That’s not possible . We are not allowed to divulge the details of how we assess merit to the students . It’s the same as the real world . When all of you enter society, and find work in some kind of business, they probably won’t tell you how you’re assessed—that’s up to the company, though . However… I’m not trying to be cold, nor do I hate you guys . This is such a pitiful sight that I’ll tell everyone here one thing . ”

For the first time today, I saw a faint smile on Chiyabashira-sensei’s face .

“For arguments sake, if we say that everyone stopped being late and stopped talking in class… your deduction would be zero, but that doesn’t mean you’ll get more points .

In other words, next month’s allowance is also 0 points .

Not being late or not talking to class won’t help you get back up from the bottom .

Keep that in mind—it’ll help you . ”

“Tsu…”

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Hirata’s face got even darker . A part of the class still failed to understand; her explanation had the opposite effect . The students who wanted to change their bad behavior had their mood dampened . That is Chiyabashira-sensei’s; no, the school’s aim .

The bell rang, signaling the end of homeroom .

“Looks like we had too much idle chit-chat . Hopefully you understood . Anyway, let’s move onto the main issue at hand . ”

She spread out the white poster that was rolled into a tube . Taking a magnet, she stuck it onto the board . The students looked at the paper, still confused .

“Is this… the results of each class?”

Horikita tried to explain the paper even though she was only half sure . Perhaps it’s true .

Classes A to D were listed on the paper, with numbers right next to them .

Our class D with 0 . Class C with 490 . Class B with 650 . And class A had the highest number with 940 . I guess 1000 points would mean 100,000 yen? All the classes lost points in some way .

“Hey, don’t you think this is strange?”

“Yea… the numbers are too clean . ”

Horikita and I noticed that there was something strange about the points .

“For the first month, all of you have been doing as you please . Now, the school’s not saying that this is prohibited . Your actions, such as talking during class and being late to class, just affects the number of points you get . It’s the same with how you use points . You have the freedom to use points how you want . We haven’t restricted how you use your points . ”

“This isn’t fair! We can’t lead a normal school life like that!”

Ike, who had stayed quiet until now, shouted out .

Yamauchi was also crying out in agony . That guy already used up all his points…

“Look carefully, you stupid kids . Every other class except class D got some points . The amount of points you guys have should still be plenty enough to last for a month . ”

“H-how do the other classes have any points left? That’s strange…”

“I’ll tell you, but it’s not like this is some kind of fraud . For this past month, all the classes were judged by the same rules . Nevertheless, they didn’t lose as many points as you guys did . That’s a fact . ”

“How… how is there so much difference in points between the classes?”

Hirata also noticed something odd about the numbers . The differences in points were too clean .

“Did you guys finally understand? Why you were put in class D . ”

“The reason we were put in class D? Isn’t that because we were appropriate for this school?”

“Eh? That’s how ordinary classes work, you know?”

Everyone exchanged glances .

“In this school, all the students are divided into classes by merit . The best students are put in class A . The worst in class D . Well, it’s a system that’s found in major cram schools . In other words, class D is the collection of leftovers . That also means that you are the worst students, the defective products of this school . This is really an outcome worthy of defective students . ”

Horikita’s face stiffened . Looks like the reason behind the class division really shocked her .

Certainly, it’s better to put smart people with other smart people, and incapable people with other incapable people . If you put rotten mandarins with good mandarins, the good mandarins will rot faster . It’s inevitable that the superior Horikita is in shock at this sort of division .

However, it’s probably good that I was put here . There’s only one way to go and that’s up .

However, this class D is the first one to lose all their points in the first month . On the contrary, I applaud you for living so lavishly until now . How praiseworthy . ”

Chiyabashira-sensei’s unnatural applause reverberated in the classroom .

“After hitting zero points, does that mean we will always stay at zero points forever?”

“Yea . Your points will stay at 0 until graduation . However, be at ease, since you can still use your dorms, and there are free meals in the cafeteria . You won’t die . ”

Although a student life with only the bare minimum is possible, a lot of the students probably won’t like it . After all, the students lived their lives this month while indulging in every single possible luxury . Suddenly, having to live a life a self-control looks really hard for a lot of the students .

“… Will we be made fun of by the other classes now?”

Sudou kicked his desk with a bang . After having learned that the classes are divided by merit, everyone will probably make fun of class D as the group of idiots . It’s not unreasonable to be despairing .

“What, you’re still holding onto your pride, Sudou? Then do your best and try to make the worst class the best class . ”

“Huh?”

“These class points aren’t just linked to the amount of money you get each month . It’s also indicative of the class rank . ”

So, in other words… if, for example, class D had held onto 500 points, they would be promoted to being class C . This is really like a company assessment .

“All right, I have one more piece of bad news I have to tell you guys . ”

She put one more piece of paper onto the blackboard . The names of all the classmates were listed . Next to everyone’s name was a number .

“From looking at these numbers, I came to understand that there are a lot of idiots in this class . ”

She glanced at the students as her heels clacked against the floor

“These are the scores from the test a few days back . Sensei was glad after seeing your wonderful performance . Seriously, what the hell did you guys study in middle school?”

Except for the top students in the class, almost everyone got below a 60 . Ignoring Sudou’s wonderful score of 14 points, the next lowest was Ike’s score of 24 . The average score was about 65 .

“If this test was actually recorded, seven of you would already have to drop out of school . Good thing it wasn’t, right?”

“D-drop out? What do you mean?”

“Why, did I not explain? If you get a failing mark on either a midterm or a final exam in any subject, you have to drop out of school . On this test, that would be everyone who got below a 32 . Man, you guys are really foolish and stupid . ”

“W-whaaaaat!?”

The seven people who failed, or in other words, Ike and his group, let out a surprised voice .

On the paper, there was a red line separating the rest of the class and the seven people, the highest of which was Kikuchi with a score of 31 points . In other words, everyone after Kikuchi failed .

“Don’t fuck with me Sae-chan-sensei! Don’t joke about dropping out of school!”

“I’m also at a loss for words . It’s the school’s rules, so prepare for the worst . ”

“As the teacher said, there seem to be a lot of fools here . ”

While polishing his nails with his feet on the desk, Koenji had a smug smirk on his face .

“What’s that, Koenji!? Your marks are in the red too!”

“Fu . Where are your eyes looking at, boy? Look carefully . ”

“H-huh? Hey, Koenji’s name is… huh?”

Scanning from the bottom, his eyes gradually reached the top . And then—he finally saw the name Koenji Rokusuke .

To his disbelief, Koenji had tied for the top score in the class . 90 points . That means that he was able to solve one of the super hard problems .

“I never thought that Sudou would be a stupid character like me…!”

Ike said out loud with a sarcasm in his tone .

“Oh, and one more thing . This school, which is under the control of the country, boasts a high percentage of alumni going to higher education and a high employment rate . That’s a well-known fact . Most likely, many people in this class will go on to college or find work at a company . ”

That’s obvious . As she said, this school has the highest employment and college acceptance rate . There are rumors that if you successfully graduate from this school, a usually difficult college or company will become a lot easier to join . Other rumors say that graduating from this school is like getting a recommendation to be admitted to Tokyo University .

“But… things aren’t that easy in the world . People like you guys, who are of a really low level, will probably have trouble getting into college or getting a job . ”

Chiyabashira-sensei’s words echoed in the classroom .

“In other words, in order to make our dreams of getting a job or getting into college a reality, surpassing class C is probably a minimum . ”

“That’s also slightly incorrect, Hirata . There’s no way to achieve your dreams except for surpassing class A . The school doesn’t guarantee anything for all the other students . ”

“T-that’s… that’s something I never heard about! This is absurd!”

Yukimura, who wore glasses, stood up . She was the person who tied Koenji’s score .

“How shameful . There’s nothing as pitiful as boys making a commotion and panicking . ”

As if he felt something from Yukimura’s words, Koenji let out a sigh .

“… Koenji, do you not feel any resentment from being in class D?”

“Resentment? Why would I feel any resentment? I don’t understand . ”

“Because we’ve been told that our class is the collection of leftovers, and that our chances of getting into higher education or getting a job are slim!”

“Fu . That’s nonsense . I can’t even respond to that sheer stupidity . ”

Koenji didn’t stop polishing his nails . He didn’t even face Yukimura as he talked .

“This school just hasn’t seen my full potential yet . I value, respect, and regard myself greatly, more than any other person . Even if the school puts me in class D, it means nothing to me . If, for example, I have to drop out of school, it’s completely fine . After all, it’s the school that will come crawling back for me . ”

Sounds like something Koenji would say . Is it masculinity, or is it self-conceit? Certainly, if you don’t care about the school’s class rankings, it doesn’t matter at all . Considering his high intellect and physical ability, it is difficult to think that the students of class A are all better than Koenji . Or perhaps he was assigned to class D because of his personality .

“However, I’m not looking to go to college or find a job somewhere after I graduate . It’s been decided that I will lead the Koenji Conglomerate in the future . It doesn’t matter whether I’m in class A or class D . ”

For someone whose future has been guaranteed, there certainly is no need to be concerned about the class .

Without any words to retort, Yukimura sat back down .

“Looks like your happy mood has been dampened . If you guys understood the harsh environment you were put in from the start, we wouldn’t have need this long homeroom . The midterm is in three weeks, so please avoid getting kicked out of school . I’m sure everyone here can survive without getting any red marks . If possible, please challenge your situation with a behavior appropriate for a capable person . ”

Closing the door for emphasis, Chiyabashira-sensei walked out of the classroom .

The red-mark students were crestfallen . Even the normally proud Sudou hung his head down in shame .

“What am I going to do without any more points…?”

“I used up the remainder of my points yesterday…”

After Chiyabashira-sensei left the room, the whole classroom was in an uproar .

“Even more than the points, this is a problem with the class… Why was I put in class D!?”

Yukimura vented in frustration . There were beads of sweat on her forehead .

“Wait, does that mean we won’t be able to go to a college we want to go to? Then why did I come to this school in this first place? I wonder if Sae-chan-sensei hates me…”

None of the students can hide their confusion .

“I understand that everyone is panicking right now, but calm down . ”

Hirata took control of the class, trying to calm down the sense of impending crisis .

“How can we calm down in this situation? Are you not frustrated that we are the class of leftovers!?”

“Even if I say I am, isn’t it better to work together to get out of this situation?”

“Get out of this situation? In the first place, I don’t even agree with this hierarchy of classes!”

“I completely understand your feelings . However, there’s no use in sitting here and complaining about it . ”

“What!?”

Yukimura walked up to Hirata and grabbed him by his collar .

“Calm down, you two . Ok? Surely, Sensei must have explained it to us sternly in order to cheer us up, right?”

Kushida spoke up . She broke the two apart and gently took Yukimura’s balled fist in her hand . Yukimura, as one would expect, tried not to hurt Kushida and unintentionally took a step back .

“Also, it’s only been a month since school has started . As Hirata-kun said, I think that it’s better for all of us to persevere through this situation . Do you think I’m wrong?”

“N-no, thats… Certainly, I don’t think what Kushida said is wrong, but…”

Yukimura’s wrath has already dissipated away . Kushida sincerely looked at everyone in class D, wishing for everyone’s cooperation .

“T-that’s right . We shouldn’t be impatient . There’s no need for Yukimura and Hirata to fight . ”

“… My bad . I lost my composure for a bit there . ”

“It’s fine . I should’ve chosen my words more carefully as well . ”

With the help of Kushida Kikyou, the fight was resolved in an orderly way .

I took out my phone and took a picture of the class points . Noticing my actions, Horikita looked at me with a curious expression .

“What are you doing?”

“I haven’t been able to figure out the specifics behind the points yet . Haven’t you also taken some notes?”

If I can figure out the exact number of point deductions from being late to and talking in class, we can probably come up with some counter-measures .

“Wouldn’t it be hard to calculate the numbers with this little information? Also, even if you managed to figure something, I don’t think it will help resolve this problem . Simply speaking, everyone is always late and talks way too much during class . ”

As Horikita said, it’s hard to come up with a conclusion with the amount of information at hand . She seems to be strangely impatient; her usual calm attitude seems to be missing .

“Are you also at this school to get into college?”

“… Why are you asking that?”

“It’s just that when she talked about the difference between class A and class D, you looked really shocked . ”

“That was more or less everyone’s reaction in the class, no? Even though we were given an explanation on the first day of school, I can’t understand this new development . ”

Well, that’s reasonable . The people in classes B and C are probably grumbling in discontent just like us . Every other class other than class A is treated as leftovers by the school . Trying our hardest to increase our class rank seems to be the best course of action here .

“I think that before thinking about class A or class D, we should probably work to guarantee some points . ”

“Points are only a byproduct of our efforts in class . Not having any points won’t hinder our school life . After all, this school provides everything for free at some capacity . ”

Even if you think that, this is relief for those who lost all their points .

“Won’t hinder our school life, huh…”

It’s not an issue for living on bare minimum . However, there are a lot of things that can only be obtained by points . For example, leisure and entertainment . Not having any means of entertainment will probably only hurt us in the future…

“Last month, how many points did you use Ayanokouji-kun?”

“Hmm? Oh, how many points I used . I used roughly 20,000 points . ”

The students who used up all their points were in trouble . Like Yamauchi, who had been panicking for some time now .

Ike also spent all his points .

“Even though I think it’s unfortunate, they’re paying for their own mistakes . ”

Certainly, using up all 100,000 points in a single month is a small problem .

“We were baited by the lure of the points in the first month…”

100,000 points a month . Even though we thought it was too good to be true, everyone celebrated .

“Everyone, once classes starts, I ask that everyone pays attention earnestly . Especially you, Sudou-kun . ”

Hirata attracted the attention of the noisy classroom by standing up at the podium .

“Tch, what is it . ”

“This month, we didn’t get any points . This is a problem that will hugely affect our future student life . We can’t go on like this and graduate with 0 points, can we?”

“Definitely not!”

One girl shouted at Hirata’s words . Hirata gave a gentle nod .

“Of course not . So, we have no choice but to try and get some points next month . That’s why everyone in the class has to work together to fix our problem . We should refrain from being late to and talking during class . Naturally, using cell phones during class is also prohibited . ”

“Ha? Why do we have to listen to what you say? If the points stay constant, there’s no reason to stop . ”

“However, if we continue being late and talking during class, our points will not increase . Although we can’t go further down from 0 points, it still counts as a negative . ”

“I don’t understand . Even if we work hard during class it’s not like our points will go up . ”

Feeling dissatisfied, Sudou snorted and crossed his arms . Noticing Sudou’s feelings, Kushida spoke up .

“Didn’t the school say that not being late and not talking during class should be an obvious mentality?”

“Un, I also think the same way as Kushida-san . It’s the natural thing to do . ”

“That’s just an explanation for your own convenience . If you understand that our points won’t increase, it’s pointless . Talk after you figure out how to increase our points . ”

“I don’t think there’s anything wrong with what Sudou-kun’s saying . Sorry for making you feel uncomfortable . ”

Hirata bowed his head towards the disgruntled Sudou .

“However Sudou-kun, it is a fact that if we don’t cooperate, our points will never increase . ”

“… It doesn’t matter what you do . Don’t involve me . Do you understand?”

As if he felt uncomfortable from staying in the classroom, Sudou left the room .

Is he gone only until class starts, or will he never return?

“Sudou-kun really can’t read the atmosphere . He’s the one that’s late the most . Even without Sudou-kun, can’t we still get some points?”

“Yea… he’s the worst . Why is he in the same class as us…”

Well, everyone was having the time of their life until this morning . There was no one complaining about Sudou then .

Coming down from the podium, Hirata walked to the front of the room .

“Horikita-san and Ayanokouji-kun, do you have time later? After school, I want to talk about how we can increase our points . I want you guys to participate . Can you?”

“Why us?”

“I want to hear everyone’s thoughts . However, even if I ask for everyone to speak up, I think more than half will not listen seriously . ”

So that’s why he thought to ask the two of us in particular . I don’t think we can give any helpful ideas, but I guess it’s fine to participate . Even though I thought that—

“Sorry, but can you ask someone else? I’m not very good at discussing things . ”

“You don’t have to force yourself to say anything in particular . It’s good enough to just be there . ”

“I’m sorry, but I have no intention of meeting for a pointless reason . ”

“I think that this is our first trial as a united class . So—”

“I already refused . I am not participating . ”

Calm yet strong words . Despite considering Hirata’s standpoint, Horikita rejected him again .

“I-is that so . Sorry… If you ever change your mind, please participate . ”

Horikita already stopped paying attention to Hirata, who had given up .

“How about you, Ayanokouji-kun?”

Honestly, I thought it would be good to participate . After all, most of the class would probably participate .

However, if Horikita was the only one to not participate, she would probably get the same treatment as Sudou .

“Ah… I’ll pass . Sorry . ”

“… No, I’m the one that should be sorry, If you ever change your mind though, feel free to join . ”

Hirata probably understood what I was thinking . I didn’t reject him strongly like Horikita did .

Now that the discussion was over, Horikita started preparing for the next class .

“Wow, Hirata is pretty remarkable . He was able to get everyone in action . It’s not unusual to feel depressed by the situation . ”

“That’s one way to look at it . If you’re good at solving problems with discussions, there won’t be any difficulties . However, if a student that’s not very smart tries to hold a discussion, it would probably fall into mayhem . Also, I can’t bring myself to accept the situation right now . ”

“Bring yourself to accept the situation? What do you mean by that?”

Horikita, without answering my question, said no more .